

California State University, Northridge

A STUDY OF WOMEN IN AMERICAN
JOURNALISM FROM 1696 TO 1972

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in

Mass Communication

by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this thesis was to identify and describe those women who received professional and/or public recognition as American journalists from 1696 to 1972.

The focus was on reporters, editors and publishers (excluding for the most part columnists, society and women's page editors), tracing their careers and their role within the mainstream of journalistic history in America.

Data were gathered from a variety of sources, including history texts, contemporary biographies and autobiographies and, in the main, from such trade publications as Editor & Publisher, Quill, The Matrix, Journalism Quarterly, and news magazines, Time and Newsweek.

Of particular value was a 1936 text, Ladies of the Press: The History of Women in Journalism By An Insider.

Written by Ishbel Ross, the volume is the sole definitive book written on the subject to date.

Over 300 newswomen are identified in this survey, tracing their involvement in journalism from colonial days through the nineteenth century, then spotlighting their contributions as "stunt women," "sob sisters" and "tabloid heroines," before going on to analyze their role as highly professional competitors within the news media of modern America.

The study reveals that women indeed have played a larger part in American newsgathering than many journalism texts have given them credit for. In addition, certain historical patterns are identified and described under various chapter headings.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Women's Liberation Movement--born with the decade of the 1970's--surprised many Americans into taking a second look at the nation's female population. At few times in history has the feminine role been so thoroughly scrutinized: Who is the American woman?...where has she been and where does she go from here?

One of the places she's been for a long time is in the newspaper city room. Though her presence may not always have been conspicuous to readers, the lady journalist has long labored behind the scenes, risking life and limb--not to mention reputation--to provide the public with what it had "a right to know." Since 1696, when the first colonial printer's widow decided to carry on her husband's trade, women have played a part in gathering and reporting the news. Yet, "journalism texts refer to women most often in footnotes and only briefly in texts,"¹ points out Marion Marzolf, journalism lecturer at the University of Michigan.

Thousands of pages could be devoted to these news-women, chronicling everything from their dress to their courage, their individual writing styles to their political views. However, this study will concern itself primarily with simply identifying chronologically those women who achieved professional and/or public recognition as news reporters or editors in America during the period 1696 to 1972. It will attempt, too, to enlarge upon the little that can be gleaned from the footnotes of traditional texts and, to some extent, to interpret the roles which these women have played in the history of American journalism.

Since the period under investigation spans nearly three centuries, two factors had to be dealt with at the outset. First, implicit in a survey of this scope is the exclusion of hundreds of women who, regardless of their contributions to the field, did not receive "professional and/or public recognition" and are therefore lost to record.

Second, a decision was made to deliberately omit those women--with rare exceptions--who worked solely as columnists, social page, or "women's page" editors and writers. Admittedly, these women too have contributed to the nation's news media but for the purpose of this study,

only those who worked in the competitive world of the "hard news" and "feature stories" of the front and near-front pages of American newspapers and magazines were included.

Marion Marzolf's preliminary bibliography, "Women in American Journalism," provides a useful tool in analyzing the available literature in this field. While the bibliography is by no means complete, it suggests some of the difficulties implicit in a survey of this type; specifically it points up the dearth of detail available on the vast majority of journalists in general.

Professor Marzolf lists 256 sources; of these, more than one-third are concerned solely with a handful of the few "well-knowns" in the field: Nellie Bly (6), Dorothy Dix (4), Mary Baker Eddy (4), Margaret Fuller (9), Marguerite Higgins (5), Sara Josepha Hale (6), Clare Booth Luce (3), Eleanor "Cissy" Patterson (3), Anne Royall (4), Agnes Smedley (6), Gloria Steinem (3), Anna Louise Strong (12), Ida Tarbell (4), Dorothy Thompson (3) and Margaret Bourke-White (9). Of the remainder, another third also deal exclusively with individual personalities.

The single history of women in American journalism to date was written by Ishbel Ross in 1936. Entitled "Ladies of the Press: The Story of Women in Journalism By

An Insider," the volume is a masterful collection of anecdotes and a rich vein of information about U. S. newswomen through the early 1930's. Miss Ross assembled her materials primarily through personal acquaintance and correspondence, thus the book gives heavy emphasis to East Coast news personalities active during the period 1900 to 1930.

Research for this study was initiated by reviewing historical literature and trade publications to discover, insofar as this is possible, the names of those women who were working journalists during the study period.

Besides those books listed in the bibliography, the following references were invaluable in "uncovering" possible candidates for this survey: Atlantic Monthly, Collier's, Editor and Publisher, Harper's Magazine, Journalism Quarterly, The Matrix, McClure's Magazine, Newsweek, Saturday Evening Post, Time and microfilmed back issues of the New York Herald, Journal, Times, Tribune and World.

Once this list of individuals was compiled, the career of each was traced exhaustively (frequently the biographies of male contemporaries yielded important clues to the women's careers). Finally the material was organized historically in an effort to place these newswomen

and their activities into greater perspective. Wherever possible, analogies are drawn between women of different eras.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER I

¹"Women in American Journalism: A Preliminary Bibliography" (compiled and mimeographed Winter 1971), p. 2.

CHAPTER II

PRINTERS' WIDOWS: 1696-1800

The first daily newspaper printed in English, the Daily Courant, appeared in London on March 11, 1702.¹

Very little, except for a name on the sheet's masthead and a signature affixed beneath the opening announcement, is known about the paper's pioneering publisher. Still, the name alone--Elizabeth Mallet--gives English-speaking newspaper women everywhere a starting point from which to trace their role in journalistic history.

The Daily Courant, printed on one side of a single sheet, was, according to its publisher, "confin'd to half the Compass, to save the Publick at least half the Impertinences, of ordinary Newspapers."²

Though its publisher guided the infant paper just two weeks before handing it over to the excellent care of Samuel Buckley, she offered two policy statements to guide her successor: First, "at the beginning of each Article he will quote the Foreign Paper from whence 'tis taken, that the Publick, seeing from what Country a piece of News comes with the Allowance of that Government, may be better

able to Judge the Credibility and Fairness of the Relation," and, second, "Nor will he take upon him to give any Comments or Conjectures of his own, but will relate only Matter of Fact; supposing other People to have Sense enough to make Reflections for themselves."³

The circumstances of Elizabeth Mallet's proprietorship of the Daily Courant are not known, however, if the experience of her American contemporaries is any indication, it might be fair to assume that she was the widow or daughter of an English printer.

The history of the newspaper, thus of journalism itself, is inextricably bound in America and elsewhere with the development of printing. "It might even be said that the newspaper was the most significant contribution of the printing press..." notes Dr. Edwin Emery, professor of journalism at the University of Minnesota. "With a publication of this type, there was some incentive for gathering and processing information of interest to the general public--news. News thereupon became a commodity, like food or merchandise, produced for profit to meet a demand."⁴

Therefore, it is not unusual to discover that the first newspapers in America were offered to the public by colonial printers or that their widows and descendants

figure prominently in the nation's earliest journalistic efforts.

The women included in this chapter, by and large, were thrust into the world of newspapering quite by accident. Often, the sorrow and economic hardship wrought by a spouse's premature death accompanied the decision to begin or to continue to "market" that fragile commodity known as "news."

During the late seventeenth century and into the eighteenth, a parade of widows offered printing services and newspapers to American colonists from New York to South Carolina. Donning new responsibilities with their widow's weeds, the wives of colonial printers were frequently forced to either sell or carry on their husband's businesses. A sturdy handful of these chose the latter.

The first of these widows Dinah Nuthead, concentrated purely on printing, foregoing the complications of news offerings. Mrs. Nuthead was living in St. Mary's, Maryland, when her husband, William, died in 1695.

Gathering her courage and his printing press, she moved her household to the newly-established state capitol in Annapolis and petitioned the Governor for a printing license. With the help of friends, who posted bond for her, Mrs. Nuthead was established as a government printer

in 1696⁵--thus, making her the first woman to own and operate a printing press in the New World.

Twenty-five years later, James Franklin, older brother of Benjamin Franklin, launched his innovative New England Courant in Boston. Franklin's crusades against the stern edicts of Massachusetts' Puritan leaders made him popular with readers but also established him as persona non grata with authorities. When the pressure became too great in Boston, James moved his family and presses to Newport to become government printer for the colony of Rhode Island.

When James died in 1735 his widow, Anne Franklin, determined to continue his business. Aided by her two daughters and son, James (youngest of the three), she carried on as government printer. According to Isaiah Thomas:

Her daughters were correct and quick compositors at case; they were instructed by their father whom they assisted. A gentleman who was acquainted with Anne Franklin and her family informed me that he had often seen her daughters at work in the printing house, and that they were sensible and amiable women.⁶

When James Franklin Jr. died prematurely in 1762, Mrs. Franklin carried on her son's Newport Mercury--Rhode Island's first daily newspaper--until her own death in 1763.⁷

Another of the colonies' first-rank journalists, Andrew Bradford, entrusted his printing business and the American Weekly Mercury (Philadelphia's first newspaper, founded December 22, 1719⁸) to his widow.

Bradford died, "after a lingering illness," on November 24, 1772. His death was reported in the Philadelphia Gazette⁹ but it was not until December 2, that a black-bordered issue of the Mercury appeared to explain the lapse:

As Mr. Andrew Bradford departed this Life on the 24th of November last, I hope those who were pleased to be Customers for the American Weekly Mercury (of which my deceased Husband was the first Publisher) will excuse the Omision of the last Week's Paper at the usual Time; and for the future they shall be serv'd carefully: And all Persons who have any Printing Work to do, or have Occasion for Stationary Ware, shall be thankfully serv'd at the lowest Prices.¹⁰

Cornelia Bradford "serv'd" her husband's printing, bookselling and newspaper clients for about four months, then took on a partner. Isaiah Warner, who called himself "a young Beginner,"¹¹ took over as editor for a brief time before leaving Cornelia to go it alone once more. According to Isaiah Thomas, Mrs. Bradford published the paper from 1744 to 1752,¹² but accounts differ to such a degree that it is impossible to discover just how long the Mercury actually survived--its final issue might have

appeared anytime from 1746 to 1752.¹³

Perhaps the best remembered journalist of the colonial era is John Peter Zenger, a German immigrant, who published the New York Weekly Journal. In December 1733, New York Governor William Cosby charged Zenger with "Scandalous, Virulent and Seditious Reflections upon the Government,"¹⁴ then prodded a reluctant group of legislators into starting action against him.

It is generally acknowledged that Zenger's publication was financed by those whose interests it supported--in particular Rip Van Dam, a Dutch colonial merchant, and James Alexander, surveyor general of the New York and New Jersey colonies. Both of these men and the growing faction which they led strongly opposed Governor Cosby's high-handed rule of the colony and urged his removal.

While being held over for trial, Zenger was allowed to talk only to his wife, and even she had to speak through a keyhole.¹⁵ Still, during the thirty-five weeks of his imprisonment, Anna Catherine Maul Zenger kept the Weekly Journal going, missing only one edition. Trial chronicler Vincent Buranelli notes:

During all the printer's imprisonment the Journal failed of but that one issue. The credit

for its punctual appearance every Monday thereafter belongs to his wife, Anna Catherine Zenger, who stepped into his shoes back at the shop. Anna Catherine has a real claim to fame for standing by her husband, a loyalty by no means insignificant in a woman with a family. She may have been emboldened by her ability to keep the press going in his absence, but even so it would have been a crushing blow if he had been given a harsh sentence as, for all she knew, might have been the outcome. The little evidence there is indicates that she never pressed him to give in and name the men who actually were responsible for the Journal. She must have known that the New York administration would gladly trade the printer for the editor, a comparatively minor figure for the archenemy--that is, Peter Zenger for James Alexander--but there is no record of her ever complaining that the Zenger family was suffering for someone else.¹⁶

Andrew Hamilton, a Philadelphia lawyer and outstanding liberal, agreed to defend Zenger. He began his defense by defying tradition--he admitted that his client had indeed published the offending articles, a confession which would normally be construed as grounds for conviction. However, Hamilton went on to present a powerful argument (against deciding the case) on this basis alone; he persuaded the jury that Zenger was not guilty since he had simply printed the truth, and truth is not libelous. Hamilton's brilliant handling of the case remains a milestone in the road to press freedom and, incidentally, enabled Zenger to go free at last in 1736.

Ten years later, on July 28, 1746, Zenger died,

leaving his business once more in the capable hands of Anna. Mrs. Zenger supervised the Weekly Journal and her husband's printing house until 1748 when her stepson, John, was ready to take control. Something of the difficulty of this task can be glimpsed from her printed warning to unscrupulous competitors:

This is to acquaint the Public that some Evil minded Persons have been pleased to spread a Report abroad that the Widow Zenger, Publisher of this Paper, had entirely dropped the Printing Business, &c. This is therefore to give Notice, that the said Report is Notoriously False, and that the said Widow still continues the Printing Business, where any Person may have their work done reasonable, in a good Manner, and with Expedition.¹⁷

The Goddard family of Providence, Rhode Island, was the next to provide women publishers. William Goddard, born 1740, was a journeyman printer with an urge to wander. In June of 1762, he borrowed three hundred pounds from his mother, Sarah Updike Goddard, to finance the start of the Providence Gazette.

The paper was fairly well read but when Goddard failed to make a go of his printing business he sought greener pastures in New York in 1765, leaving his mother to recoup what she could. Mrs. Goddard resurrected the Gazette in 1766 and ran it successfully until November 1768 when she sold it to John Carter.

Meanwhile William continued to move; he lived for awhile in Philadelphia, then settled in Annapolis to edit the Maryland Gazette. Still, by 1774 he was restless once more and headed for Washington, leaving the paper "temporarily" in the hands of his sister, Mary Katherine Goddard. Mary waited a full year before she dropped his name from the masthead and threw herself into the task of making the "journal second to none in the colonies in Interest"¹⁸ during the Revolutionary War.

When William returned from the war in 1784, Mary relinquished the paper to him and stayed on as post-mistress of Annapolis until 1789.

Just prior to and during the war years, a Mrs. Mary Crouch, is believed to have owned and operated a press in Charleston, North Carolina,¹⁹ and later established another paper in Salem, Massachusetts. Not much is known about Mrs. Crouch or her publications except that her chief concern was opposition to the Stamp Act.²⁰

Nevertheless, despite the impressive array of female forebearers already described, modern newsgatherers would undoubtedly credit Elizabeth Timothy with being the first "true" journalist of the colonial era.

While Anne Franklin was still stewing over the in's and out's of the printing-house business, Mrs.

Elizabeth Timothy, in 1738, slipped quietly into the editor's chair of the South Carolina Gazette--a position left suddenly vacant by the accidental death of her husband, Lewis.²¹ Mrs. Timothy continued to publish the paper for six or seven years before relinquishing control to her son, Peter. Interestingly enough, Peter's widow carried on for him as well, until their son, Benjamin, was old enough to acquire control.²²

John Green, founder of the Annapolis Gazette, died in 1767, leaving little but his newspaper to support his wife and fourteen children. It is small wonder that Mrs. Green's announcement of her husband's death holds a faint tinge of panic:

I presume to address you for your countenance to myself and numerous Family, left, without your Favour, almost destitute of Support by the Decease of my Husband, who long, and I have the Satisfaction to say, faithfully served you in the Business of Provincial Printer; and, I flatter myself, that with your kind Indulgence and Encouragement, Myself and Son will be enabled to continue it on the same Footing.²³

Mrs. Green was obviously equal to the challenge, however. Still publishing the Gazette, she carried on her husband's government printing business at a rate voted upon by the State Assembly: "Nine hundred and forty eight dollars and one-half dollar," and, thereafter, "48,000 pounds of tobacco annually for years when the assembly was

in session, and 36,109 pounds for other years."²⁴

Nevertheless, her eight years as government printer were considerably less eventful than the controversies in which the paper embroiled her. Mrs. Green, otherwise known by her maiden name of Clementina Rind,²⁵ at one time found herself forced into a political battle with a correspondent from a rival paper. Signing his letters "Attentive Observer"²⁶ her detractor threatened to smash her press if she stopped printing his missives and continued to run articles championing views which opposed his.

Mrs. Green replied that she ~~she~~ would reprint his letters only under his true name and only if he would absolve her from any slander suits which might arise from them. He refused to do either and, fortunately, the controversy died out before he could make good his threat.²⁷

While Mrs. Green backed the colonial cause in her writing, a rival paper, published by a Mrs. H. Boyle, propounded the Loyalist position.²⁸

Another prominent Loyalist publisher was Mrs. Margaret Draper, widow of Richard Draper, and owner of the Boston Newsletter.

In June 1774, Mrs. Draper assumed control of the newspaper and filled her husband's role as printer for

the Governor and Council. When the British finally evacuated Boston, Mrs. Draper shut down her establishment and fled to Halifax.²⁹

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II

¹Edwin Emery, The Press and America: An Interpretative History of Journalism. 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 21.

²Willard Grosvenor Bleyer, Main Currents in the History of American Journalism (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Co., The Riverside Press, 1927, p. 16.

³Ibid., p. 16.

⁴Emery, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

⁵Mrs. Elisabeth Dexter, Colonial Women of Affairs (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924), p. 167.

⁶Isaiah Thomas, History of Printing in America, 2 vols. (Worcester, Massachusetts: Isaiah Thomas, Jr., 1810), p. 420.

⁷Dexter, op. cit., p. 169.

⁸Emery, op. cit., p. 55.

⁹Anna Janney DeArmond, Andrew Bradford: Colonial Journalist (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1949), p. 37.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 49.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Thomas, op. cit., p. 32.

¹³DeArmond, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

¹⁴Emery, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

¹⁵Charles R. Hildeburn, Sketches of Printers and Printing in Colonial New York (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1895), p. 22.

¹⁶Vincent Buranelli (ed.), The Trial of Peter Zenger (Washington Square: New York University Press, 1957), pp. 38-39.

¹⁷Dexter, op. cit., p. 170.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 172-173.

¹⁹Fred Hartmann, Checklist of Printers in the United States till 1783 (New York: Dutton, 1915), p. 17.

²⁰Ishbel Ross, Ladies of the Press: The Story of Women in Journalism by an Insider (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1936), p. 37.

²¹Dexter, op. cit., p. 173.

²²Ibid., p. 174.

²³Ibid., p. 175.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Julia Cherry Spruill, Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1938), p. 265.

²⁶According to Dexter, the pseudonym was "Bystander."

²⁷Spruill, op. cit., pp. 265-266.

²⁸Ross, op. cit., p. 37.

²⁹Dexter, op. cit., p. 177.

CHAPTER III

TERMAGANTS AND TEMPTRESSES: 1800-1890

If widowhood produced the majority of female journalists in the 18th century, "self-expression" prompted a varied assortment of 19th century ladies to enter the news profession. Unlike their predecessors or followers however, women journalists in the 1800's were not content to reflect their age but strode boldly beyond it.

Reared in an age and culture which viewed the feminine role strictly in terms of homemaking and child-bearing, these women shared a single attitude--"society be damned." They were mavericks one and all, from bellicose termagants whose vituperous tongues gave constant offense to alluring temptresses whose company men cultivated. Yet they acknowledged their difference and strove to give public light to their peculiarities. The medium for their expression was the newspaper.

Perhaps the best known of the early termagants was Anne Royall, a wealthy widow from Virginia who, following her husband's death, rampaged up and down the Eastern

seaboard.

Mrs. Royall was critical of everything and everyone; in fact, her displeasure was so apparent that she was known as the "widow with the serpent's tongue."¹ Nevertheless, as disappointed as she was in humanity, she persisted in proving herself right by perpetually prying into the affairs of others. Appropriately her first publication--began in 1831--was called the Paul Pry.

Described as a "four-page paper, spiced with invective,"² the Paul Pry carried advertising on the front page and editorials, political and local news on the inside. Mrs. Royall's editorial policy was stated in the first issue: "No party, the welfare and happiness of our country is our politics."³

However, most of the news was fashioned in the light of Anne's own particular prejudices. "Her obsessions were Free Masonry, which she advocated fiercely; Evangelicism, which she fought tooth and nail; her pension, which she never got; and propagation, in which she had an abstract interest."⁴

Mrs. Royall's chief claim to local fame was her exclusive interview with President John Quincy Adams. Washington was astonished at the amount of information she was able to extract from the taciturn chief executive

(regarding the Bank of the United States), until it was discovered that she had interviewed him while he bathed in the Potomac; she sat on his clothes and refused to budge until he answered all of her questions. The President called her the "virago errant in enchanted armor."⁵

Some historians, including Florence Finch Kelly, look back on Anne's exploits as proof that she was far ahead of her time:

She was more of a "newspaperman," in the modern sense, than any man journalist of her time. She saw at least a little of what a newspaper ought to do and be decades before the vision dawned on anyone else, and in her conception of what a woman could do in a newspaper office she was so blazingly futuristic that she defeated her own purposes...She went after corrupt politicians and all manner of rascality in public affairs with such vigor and such spectacular methods that her Paul Pry deserves to be named the first yellow journal in this country. She set an example for the "stunt girls" of a later day that not even the most dauntless of them would have dared to follow, and she could have shown the muck rakers of two generations later how to do a really effective job of that kind; while no columnist of the present day would be willing to emulate the "ginger" of unique individualism, scathing comment and untamed invective with which she spiced her personal column.⁶

Nevertheless, most of her readers were fonder of a local verdict, passed by a jury of peers in 1829, which pronounced that Mrs. Royall was a "common scold," and fined her \$10; she was saved from the ducking stool only because of her age (she was over sixty years old).

Soon after Mrs. Royall's death in 1854, two more female publishers thrust themselves into the public spotlight. Two sisters, Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin, caused commotion wherever they went; like their predecessor, they vigorously stirred the waters of public opinion, but the ripples churned up in their wake traveled farther than Anne Royall would ever have dreamed possible.

The reason, perhaps, could be attributed to physical differences: While Mrs. Royall was "small and stout," with "glittering blue eyes,"⁷ the sisters were acclaimed by friend and enemy alike to be "raving beauties"--angels or temptresses, depending on the point of view.

Born in Homer, Ohio, eight years apart, the girls shared a colorful parentage: "Ma Roxie, an illiterate religious fanatic, was regarded in town as a hexed lunatic. Pa Buck was a two-bit gambler, a horse trader, a jug-toting moonshine peddler and a general no-good whose idea of providing for his family seldom got further than his own belly."⁸

Throughout their teens, the sisters traveled about the country with their flim-flamming family (peddling home-made elixirs and specializing in psychic readings

which were guaranteed to cure cancer). Then, in 1868, the pair marched on New York, conquering that sophisticated city with astonishing ease.

Their entrance into society was guaranteed since they started at the top, paying their first call on "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt; Irving Wallace describes their reception:

It is not surprising that they were promptly admitted. Commodore Vanderbilt was an ailing man who had become impatient with conventional medicine and was now employing the services of a Staten Island seer and an electrical wizard to give him hope and comfort. He was ready to listen to almost any miracle worker. Mrs. Woodhull quickly explained that she was a successful medium, and that her sister Tennie was a magnetic healer who gave patients strength through physical contact. This last, as well as the provocative appearance of his fair guests, convinced the blasphemous old Commodore that he could do worse than put himself in their hands.⁹

Thus, with the help of the 75-year-old Vanderbilt, the sisters launched a brokerage house, and, incidentally, a publication called Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly. Actually the paper was written and edited by Mrs. Woodhull's second husband, Colonel James Blood, but its editorial policy was purely a product of Claflin philosophy. The Weekly advocated free love, women's rights, female emancipation and abortion, editorialized on such unpopular subjects as social disease and prostitution, and

specialized in scandal.

On May 14, 1870, the Weekly vowed that it would "support V. C. Woodhull for President with its whole strength and will advocate suffrage without distinction of sex."¹⁰

On the same day, the New York Herald duly reported Victoria's announcement of her candidacy:

While others of my sex devote themselves to a crusade against the laws that shackle the women of this country, I assert my individual independence; while others argue the equality of woman and man, I proved it by successfully engaging in business. I therefore claim the right to speak for the unenfranchised women of the country and believing as I do that the prejudices which still exist in the popular mind against women in public life will soon disappear, I now announce myself as a candidate for the Presidency.

While Victoria did nothing for her reputation as a prophetess--since neither she nor any member of her sex has yet managed to capture that high office--she did succeed in bringing a great deal of public attention to herself and to her sister.

Some of the larger newspapers, including the New York Daily Graphic and the Police Gazette, gleefully reprinted the scandalous tidbits which Victoria and Tennessee carefully combed from their exalted circle of friends and acquaintances. Yet, the New York Times repeatedly censured this dynamic duo, particularly for

their treatment of the city's famous clergyman-orator Reverend Henry Ward Beecher.

It was common gossip in the city that the Reverend had a way with women. His name was linked to a dozen ladies in his congregation, but Victoria was particularly interested in his rumored alliance with the pretty wife of one of his closest friends, Theodore Tilton.

Mrs. Woodhull broke the "social scandal of the century" on November 2, 1872. She had ferreted out and now reported each tiny detail of the affair. Her motive? She certainly did not object to the preacher's behavior, she simply wished to censure him publicly for not openly advocating free love as she did:

I condemn him because I know, and have had had every opportunity to know, that he entertains on conviction, substantially the same views which I entertain on the social question; that he has permitted himself to be overawed by public opinion, to profess to believe otherwise than he does believe...and that he has, in a word, consented and still consents to be a hypocrite. The fault with which I therefore charge him is not infidelity, to the old ideas, but unfaithfulness to the new...for failing to stand shoulder to shoulder with me and others who are endeavoring to hasten the social regeneration which he believes in.¹¹

The Police Gazette reprinted the entire Woodhull self-interview the next day under the headline: "Pew Converts Pulpit."

Subsequently, this scoop was to result in more publicity for the sisters, for they were arrested on a charge of sending obscene literature through the mail, i.e. their description of the Beecher-Tilton affair. In fact, they were arrested, tried and freed on this charge five separate times. The accompanying trials were fraught with moral and political overtones.

Originally the charges brought against them were made by Anthony Comstock, head of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Committee for the Suppression of Vice. Comstock had devoted his life to erasing unrighteousness and he was particularly obsessed with the notion of destroying those materials--especially erotic materials--which might sully a young man's imagination. Comstock's moral wrath against Woodhull and Claflin was mirrored in a Thomas Nast cartoon widely copied at the time which pictured Victoria as "Mrs. Satan."¹²

The moral indignation which surrounded these court appearances was matched only by the furor aroused by Victoria's choice of victims: The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher was both politically powerful and a very popular religious figure. Thus, while the sisters faced the bench on obscenity charges, they were simultaneously tried in public and found guilty of libel and moral turpitude.

Harriet Beecher Stowe demanded, with no success, that the sisters cease their chronicle of her family's activities. Even the cuckolded husband, Theodore Tilton, went to Victoria to beg her to hold up further publication. Yet, the New York Sun reports that Mr. Tilton returned from the interview smitten by the publisher:

"She has entertained angels, and not unawares," he said.

"These gracious guests have been her constant companions ...They dictate her life with daily revelations."¹³

Later Tilton wrote Victoria's biography and enobled her further in his own magazine, The Golden Age, thus:

If the woman's movement has a Joan of Arc, it is this gentle but fiery genius...Little understood by the public, she is denounced in the most outrageous manner by people who do not appreciate her moral worth...Her bold social theories have startled many good souls, but anybody who on this account imagines her to stand below the whitest and purest of her sex will misplace a woman who in moral integrity rises to the full height of the highest.¹⁴

In May 1873, just before the Weekly ceased publication altogether and before Victoria and Tennessee traded New York society for the excitement of London and new husbands, the New York Times intoned its final disapproval: "...license never had been carried to such an extent as in the free love journal of Woodhull and

Claflin, and the female name never had been more disgraced and degraded than by these women."¹⁵

As usual, however, Victoria had the last word:

Let him who is without sin cast his stone. I do not intend to be the scapegoat of sacrifice, to be offered up as a victim to society by those who cover the foulness and the feculence of their thought with hypocritical mouthing of fair professions, and by diverting public attention from their own iniquity and pointing their finger at me...I shall continue to make it my business to analyse some of these lives and will take my chance in the matter of libel suits.¹⁶

PUBLISHERS

Like the 18th century, the 19th century in America produced an unusual number of women publishers. Besides the redoubtable Mrs. Royall and the Claflin sisters, the 1800's saw a succession of women in control of growing publications.

Some, like their pre-Revolutionary War predecessors, rode the coattails of male relatives to gain publishing power. Ellen Browning Scripps was the daughter of an English couple who crossed the Atlantic to settle on a farm in Illinois. Ellen was a middle child--born somewhere between her oldest brother James and the Scripps' thirteenth child, Edward. Despite parental and societal disapproval, Ellen determined to go to college and she

graduated from Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois in 1858.¹⁷ She then taught school in Galesburg before moving to Detroit to aid brother James in launching his first newspaper, the Detroit News.

Ellen proved to be of considerable help, besides her writing and editing skills (she worked for a short time as an editor on the Detroit Tribune), she offered her savings as well. Gradually the Scripps family acquired the Detroit News, the Buffalo Evening Telegram, the Cleveland Press, the St. Louis Chronicle, and the Cincinnati Post.¹⁸

Another publishing pioneer was "Minnie Lee" Wood. Minnie and her Kentucky-born husband were pioneers in every sense of the word--they trekked to Sauk Rapids, Minnesota in 1849 when that tiny village was nothing more than a trading post of the American Fur Company. Minnie, whose maiden name was Julia Amanda Sargent, combined her flair for sentimental-folksy writing with her husband's printing expertise, to found the Sauk Rapids Frontiersman. Later, they added a second publication, the Sentinel, and produced a son, Delacey, who would one day create a chain of thirty-three papers in Minnesota, Dakotas, Michigan, and Wisconsin.¹⁹

Also hailing from Minnesota, and a contemporary of Mrs. Wood's was Jane Grey Swisshelm. Though she "attained some fame by her clever editing of the Pittsburgh Saturday Visiter [sic] in 1848-52, her letters from the national capitol in her own paper and the New York Tribune earned her distinction as the first woman of the Washington press corps."²⁰

Mrs. Swisshelm literally opened the door for female political writers when she crashed the Congressional Press Gallery in 1850. She described the coup upon her return to Pittsburgh:

There was yet one innovation I wanted to make, although my stay in Washington would necessarily be short. No woman had ever had a place in the Congressional reporters' gallery. This door I wanted to open to them, so I called on Vice President Fillmore and asked him to assign me a seat in the Senate Gallery. He was much surprised and tried to dissuade me. The place would be very unpleasant for a lady, would attract attention, I would not like it; but he gave me the seat. I occupied it one day, greatly to the surprise of the Senators, the reporters, and others on the floor and in the Galleries; but felt that the novelty would soon wear off, and that women would work there and win bread without annoyance.²¹

Unlike the enchanting Mrs. Woodhull, however, Mrs. Swisshelm scorned such personal enhancements as fashionable attire and pleasing demeanor in her battle for increased opportunities for women. "When a woman starts out on a mission, secular or religious," she said, "she should

leave her feminine charms at home."²²

Jane was a crusader long before women were expected to "bother their heads" about social and political ills. She specialized in exposes and gleefully took credit for ruining Daniel Webster's shot at the presidency (she reprinted some rumors which were circulating in the capitol regarding his drinking habits), drove Minnesota's Governor Lowrie into a sanitarium by exposing corruption within his administration, and campaigned for abolition, co-education of the young, woman suffrage, and better health care.

She won the aloof Mary Lincoln's support when she toured army hospitals after Chancellorsville, handing out cups of lemonade to the wounded to ward off gangrene. Yet, her first words to the country's Chief Executive were hardly soothing: "May the Lord have mercy on you, poor man," she said to President Lincoln, "for the people have none."²³

Another lady publisher of this era, Cornelia Wells Walter, of the Boston Transcript, could easily equal Mrs. Swisshelm in the acerbity of her pen. Though she concentrated on literary, social, dramatic and musical news, she made her presence felt. She scorned Ralph Waldo Emerson in print, and when Edgar Allan Poe spoke in Boston

On October 16, 1845, she judged the performance a flop, laying particular blame on the "singularly didactic exordium"²⁴ of Mr. Poe's recitation of "The Raven."

A story, signed "Straws Jr.," appeared in the New Orleans Picayune in 1848. It was the work of the eight year-old daughter of Joseph M. Field, one of the founders of the newspaper and a frequent contributor to its pages under the pseudonym, "Straws."²⁵

That story was the first published work of Kate Field, a woman of extraordinary talent and varied interests. During her fifty-six years, Kate traveled throughout Europe, gathering as close friends such notables as Anthony Trollope, the Brownings, George Eliot, Henry Ward Beecher and Horace Greeley. She wrote books and comedies and played, among other roles, Peg Woffington at Booth's Theatre in 1874.

Kate's performances as an actress seldom received critical acclaim but her melodious voice and the logic of her lectures brought her praise everywhere she went. Once, speaking on Charles Dickens in an Alaskan dance hall, an audience of miners showed their approval of the beautiful Kate by presenting her with a bottle of gold.²⁶

Miss Field was a crusader and a feminist and when she launched her own publication in 1890, she was

undoubtedly motivated by the same urge for "self expression" which spurred Anne Royall and the Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly publishers. Yet Kate Field's Washington, a weekly review, was a far more credible journalistic product than the flamboyant journals of her predecessors. Kate's style was delicate and vivid, yet her interests were as varied as they were short-lived. She peppered her publication with news of whatever current cause struck her fancy:

Her aim was to mirror the men and events of the time but she rode her own hobbies hard. She campaigned on Hawaiian annexation, international copyright, temperance, and prohibition of Mormon polygamy, and dress reform. On her return from one of her trips to Europe she decided that the dress of the American woman was ugly and overburdened. She established her own Cooperative Dress Association, but it made no dent in fashion and died a natural death within a year.²⁷

In addition, she dabbled in spiritualism and animal magnetism, advocated cremation and a national marriage law, fought to preserve John Brown's farm as an historical site, and championed civil service reform.

Her interest in popular science "involved her in a historic moment, for the first time Queen Victoria picked up a telephone receiver it was Kate Field who sang to her over the wire. The Bell Telephone Company gratefully gave her shares that helped to amass a fortune of \$200,000."²⁸

The New Orleans Picayune also launched a young poetess, Eliza Jane Poitevant, who, before her twenty-eighth birthday, became the paper's owner and publisher. Better known under her pen name, Pearl Rivers, Eliza submitted her first verses to the Picayune and the New York Journal in 1863 when she was just fourteen years old.

Soon her poetry adorned the Southern paper's pages regularly and its owner, Colonel Alva Morris Holbrook, invited Eliza to join his staff as literary editor. Ignoring her family's protests, Eliza braved the terrors of New Orleans' business district and showed up in the newsroom daily--first as literary editor, then as women's page editor, and finally as the wife of the publisher.

Eliza married the sixty-four-year-old Colonel in May 1872 and two months later became a "news item" in New Orleans when the ex-Mrs. Holbrook paid her a visit:

Learning of the marriage, Mrs. (Jennie) Bronson returned to New Orleans, scourged by jealousy and hate; and on the morning of June 17, 1872, entered the Holbrook home on Constance Street, just above Orange, when the bride was alone in her bedroom, and at point-blank range, shot at her twice with a revolver, and missed; then beat her over the head with a bottle of bay rum. Two servants ran in and saved the young woman's life. While she fled, covered with blood, to the protection of a neighbor, Mrs. Bronson rushed into the yard, seized an ax and vented her hate on the furniture.²⁹

Holbrook, who had sold the paper in 1872 and bought it back a year later, died in 1876--leaving his widow with an \$80,000 debt and a difficult dilemma. She could declare bankruptcy or take the helm and hope to reverse the newspaper's failing fortunes despite the "carpetbagging" which still plagued the South.

Overriding family disapproval once more, Eliza chose to stick with the paper and she assembled the Picayune's staff to tell them so:

I am a woman. Some of you may not wish to work for a woman. If so, you are free to go, and no hard feelings. But you who stay--will you give me your undivided loyalty, and will you advise me truly and honestly?³⁰

A number of her husband's former employees did leave, but those who stayed proved their loyalty. Jose Quintero, the paper's chief editorial writer, "polished up his pistols and passed out the word that if anybody craved satisfaction for what the Daily Picayune said, come to him!"³¹

Thus Eliza Holbrook became the first woman publisher of an important U. S. daily and she soon proved herself an able newspaperwoman. She never shied away from controversy and she gathered around her the best people she could find--including two Yankees, Major Nathaniel Burbank and Major Henry Robinson. Both of these writers

held executive posts on the Daily Picayune, working side-by-side with a veteran of Lee's army, Major Thomas E. Davis.

Mrs. Holbrook valued her employees and they returned her admiration. "My boys work hard to please me," she told Eliza Putnam Heaton on October 8, 1887, "and I verily believe, value a word of commendation from me more than they would the same praise coming from a man."³²

Eliza also proved herself a capable administrator. She put the paper back in the black and watched with satisfaction her growing subscriber lists. According to the American Newspaper Directory, the Daily Picayune's circulation in 1878 was approximately 6,000--the September 1, 1880 edition (containing the annual business review) required a press run of 40,000 copies.

Still, Pearl Rivers--who became Mrs. George Nicholson in June 1878--is perhaps best remembered in newspaper circles for her innovative approach to a daily's contents: While James Gordon Bennett was experimenting with society coverage in the New York Herald, Eliza loosed the "Society Bee" on New Orleans' "best families" on March 16, 1879.³³ She inspired the popular "Weather Frog," drawn by cartoonist L. A. Winterhalder, which became the "Peanuts" of its day, hopping onto the paper's front page

on January 13, 1894.³⁴

Moreover, Mrs. Nicholson made the Daily Picayune real family reading fare: She added Lilliput Land for the youngsters, Sunday funnies and the daily comic strip, popular fiction, household hints, health care suggestions, popular science topics, and men's and women's fashions. She also launched the career of Dorothy Dix and sent a woman reporter, Catherine Cole (whose real name was Martha Field) to cover the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893.

When Pearl Rivers died in 1896 it was apparent that she had established for herself and her newspaper an unparalleled reputation in New Orleans. The Times-Democrat paid her this tribute:

Hardly a philanthropic institution in the city, hardly one of the many benevolent schemes constantly set up in New Orleans to benefit the deserving poor or the helpless found in Mrs. Nicholson an ardent sympathizer, a powerful helper with voice, money, labor, time and pen.³⁵

While few women anywhere in the country could equal Pearl Rivers' entrepreneurial journalistic sense, two more lady publishers reigned in the South during this era.

Mrs. Elia Goode Byington saw to it that the Columbus (Georgia) Evening Ledger employed as many women as possible. Mrs. Byington, who was co-owner of the paper

with her husband Edward Telfair Byington, hired women at "equal pay" to take on such tasks as typesetting, proof reading and reporting; she also employed a female foreman, artist and mail clerk.

Another Georgia native, Ellen J. Dortch, decided to buck tradition and prejudice and, at age 17, launched the Carnesville Tribune. At first Miss Dortch was obliged to run the newspaper singlehandedly but, before long, circulation grew and she allowed to spend the balance of her career as the paper's owner and managing editor.³⁶

REPORTERS AND EDITORS

Not all the female scribes of the nineteenth century were publishers, however, some were simply hard-working reporters and editors. One of these was a Miss Sally Joy, who began her journalistic career at age 18 in 1870.

A male reporter on the Boston Herald was so impressed with Miss Joy's presence at an 1871 suffrage convention in Vermont that he incorporated her into his account of the event:

Miss Sally Joy of Boston has a portfolio at the Reporters' table in the Convention for the POST of her native city. She is pretty, piquante, and dresses charmingly. She has a high regard for

Mrs. Bloomer, although she diverges from that good lady on the science of clothes. Miss Joy has made a reputation as a newspaper correspondent and reporter of which any man might well be proud. And this is saying a good deal for a woman. Miss Joy is as independent as she is self-supporting and she votes for Women's Suffrage.³⁷

Later Miss Joy left the Post to join the Boston Herald and called herself Penelope Penfeather, writing a column on fashions and the home.

Better known to Bostonians, perhaps, were "Old Lady Magennis" and Mildred Aldrich. Mrs. Margaret J. Magennis, who served on the staff of the Boston Traveller from 1874 until 1918, edited the paper's weekly religious review and at the same time covered the municipal court beat. Mildred Aldrich, wrote for the Boston Journal and later for the Boston Herald, at the same time publishing her own paper, The Mahogany Tree. The Tree was not a success and Mildred, at age 45, left Boston in 1898 to join Gertrude Stein's group in Paris. Her subsequent book, A Hill on the Marne, described the 1914 battle from the vantage point of her hilltop house in France.

In Baltimore, the city which first read the Declaration of Independence in Mary Goddard's Maryland Journal, was still unaccustomed to a woman laboring in the newspaper field in 1888 when May Garrettson Evans signed on as a reporter for the Baltimore Sun.

Miss Evans was so much of a novelty that she had to explain herself everywhere. She was always being interviewed on her own emotions, and what her family thought of her hazardous undertaking. The general opinion was that it was a shame to expose a girl to such fearful pitfalls. One warm evening she arrived in the office unexpectedly. She saw that something was wrong. The city editor was overcome with amusement. No one would tell her what was up. So she lingered about and finally went out on an assignment. Later she learned that the assistant city editor had been caught in his shirt sleeves and suspenders. On seeing her coming, he had dived quickly under the city desk to conceal this disgraceful disarray from the SUN's Miss Evans. He had stayed doubled up in great discomfort until she went away.

'Now look here,' she announced to the city room at large after hearing this story. "This will never do. You simply must treat me like one of the boys."³⁸

Miss Evans' plea was echoed in city rooms throughout the country but tradition died hard. A woman reporter was a novelty on even the largest newspapers and, by and large, an unwelcome one.

In the Midwest, Minnie Roswell Langstadter became the first woman reporter in Chicago. Minnie, aged 15, landed a reporting job with the Chicago Record in 1878--a position which brought her an opportunity to interview some of the top financiers of the day, including John D. Rockefeller, J. Pierpont Morgan, and William E. Vanderbilt.

In 1868 Mrs. Emily Verdery Bettey joined the Sun as the first female general reporter in New York City.

Forty years earlier Frances "Fanny" Wright had charmed the city with her editorship of the Free Enquirer, a publication which supported--among other social issues--the cause of organized labor.³⁹

Colonel John A. Cockerill, who a decade later would become managing editor of the New York World, hired Calista Halsey as the first distaff reporter on the Washington Post.⁴⁰

Iowa-born Mrs. Emily Edson Briggs, was among the first to take advantage of the political portal forced open by Jane Grey Swisshelm. Mrs. Briggs headed east in 1861 to cover the Congressional Press Gallery first for the Washington Chronicle and later for the Philadelphia Press. Mrs. Briggs' dispatches were known to her readers as the "Olivia letters."⁴¹

Two more women followed Jane Swisshelm's steps into the Washington Press Corps: Gail Hamilton and Grace Greenwood. Miss Hamilton's real name was Mary Abigail Dodge; she was a New Englander, the product of a strict Calvinist upbringing, and her writing was scathingly satirical. One of her contemporaries, Fanny Fern, characterized her in this way:

A lady, at whose mention stalwart men have been known to tremble, and hide in corners; who

'keeps a private graveyard' for the burial of those whom she has mercilessly slain; who respects neither the spectacles of the judge, nor the surplice of the priest; who holds the mirror of men's failings till they hate their wives merely because they belong to her sex.⁴²

Gail was a cousin of Mrs. James G. Blaine. Blaine, a former newspaper editor, was a long-time Speaker of the House of Representatives; he failed to capture the Republican presidential nomination in 1880 and in 1884 but went on to serve both President Garfield and President Harrison as Secretary of State. Gail wrote Blaine's biography and the book suggests that much of her political acumen comes from the fact that he welcomed her into his inner councils.

Grace Greenwood, actually Sara Jane Clarke, found a far warmer welcome from the capitol's citizens. Grace had been a regular contributor to Godey's Lady's Book before her twentieth birthday. A collection of her articles for Godey's and various newspapers were released in 1850 under the title Greenwood Leaves. In 1852 she went to Europe as a traveling correspondent, sending back chatty letters describing the doings of such American favorites as Thackeray and Dickens.

When she returned to America she married Leander K. Lippincott but she was one of the few newspaperwomen of

her era who managed a career as well as a household.

During the Civil War years she toured the country, lecturing and writing. President Lincoln called her "The Patriot,"⁴³ and women across the country began to identify "newswoman" in the image of Grace Greenwood.

One of the most colorful reporters of this period was a six-foot-two, gun-slinging Irish lass named Marie "Midy" Morgan. Midy's journalistic specialty was as unusual as her appearance--she was the livestock reporter for the New York Times from 1869 until her death in 1892.

Midy was born in County Cork, in 1828; her father was a large landowner and horsebreeder. By her fourteenth birthday, Midy was already an exceptional rider, an animal expert, and demonstrated an amazing flair for language. In 1865 she put these talents to use, touring Europe and crowning the trip with a visit to King Victor Emmanuel of Italy. Introduced through a family friend, Midy left the royal presence with a commission to buy six mares for the King's stable.

When Midy delivered the animals several months later, the delighted monarch "approved of her choice and gave her a doublecase hunting watch with his initials encrusted in diamonds, a token of his gratitude."⁴⁴

Despite this royal esteem, Midy found no special welcome when she traveled next to America. She worked as a chambermaid until Manton Marble of the New York World gave her a crack at reporting on the Saratoga races in 1869. The resulting story earned her only "probationary" employment at the Times as livestock reporter (it was the only job open), but within a week there was no doubt that the position was hers for as long as she wanted it. Midy knew her subject; she rose before dawn, tramped through mud, and traveled hundreds of rural miles to gather the minute details which earned her the respect of breeders and livestock judges throughout the United States and Europe.

Two more ladies deserve special mention before moving on: Jennie June and Fanny Fern were wayfarers in the female press corps, receiving only incidentally, a modicum of recognition in their own time.

Jennie June (Mrs. David Goodman Croly) specialized in the woman's point of view, but she was first and foremost a reporter. Unlike most of her predecessors and many of her contemporaries she went out to get the news instead of creating her own. She worked for the New York World, Tribune, Herald, Times, Daily Graphic and Noah's Sunday Times and brought to each a style and point of view which

resulted in the "women's page."

Jennie soon earned the respect of her male colleagues for she avowed: "There is no sex in labor and I want my work taken as the achievement of an individual, with no qualifications, no indulgence, no extenuations simply because I happen to be a woman, working along the same line with men."⁴⁵

Two things brought Jennie into the public eye: First, she became an authority on women's fashions--a speciality which culminated with an article for the New York Daily Graphic called "Returning to Town."⁴⁶ Second, she played a big role in establishing the Sorosis Club in 1868--the feminine equivalent of the New York Press Club--at a time when clubs, particularly women's clubs, were very rare.

Jennie pioneered what would now be termed the "shopping column," comparing various brands of merchandise and listing the stores and shops where they could be found. The "Town" article mentioned above traced the transition of trade from small shops to the big department stores and established the daily newspaper as an important factor in popular merchandising.

Like Kate Field, Jennie June disapproved of the way American women dressed. She campaigned in 1873 for

uniform evening dress and devoted many column inches to scorning the "foreign" fashion fads which sent American females scurrying to the yardage racks in an effort to be up-to-the-minute.

If her disapproval of their attire did not make any lasting impression on her countrywomen, her activities as a clubwoman did. Jennie was a sophisticate; she was conversant on most of the major issues of her day and she debated them with friends who numbered among the country's most important personages. Thus, when the New York Press Club held a special banquet honoring Charles Dickens and barred the ladies of the press from attending, Jennie was provoked enough to do something drastic in retaliation.

Jennie "made it clear that if women writers and editors could ride in the same hansoms and sleep in the same beds as their lords and masters who belonged to the Press Club, they could also join them in honoring Dickens."⁴⁷ Her rebuttal was the formation of the Sorosis Club.

Jennie June also earned herself a place in academic annals as "the first known woman to teach journalism at the college level...at a time when there were no schools of journalism."⁴⁸ Jennie's journalism course in 1896 was a "novel feature" of the New Rutger's Institute

for Young Ladies in New York.

While Jennie earned her reputation step by step, weaving an impressive counterpane of achievements, Fanny Fern attained overnight notoriety. Fanny's popularity rested solely with her extravagantly sentimental treatment of topical subjects. She wrote a regular column, first for True Flag, then for the Philadelphia Ledger; these short pieces were eventually collected and bound into a best seller, Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio, published just three years after Grace Greenwood's less successful Greenwood Leaves.

Immediately following the book's release in 1853, Harper's Magazine acknowledged Fanny as the creator of a new literary style:

She has won her way unmistakably to the hearts of the people; this we interpret as a triumph of natural feeling. It shows that the day for stilted rhetoric; scholastic refinements and big dictionary words, the parade, pomp and pageantry of literature is declining.⁴⁹

Fanny, born Sara Payson Willis in 1811, came from a literary family in Maine. Her father edited the Puritan Recorder and Youth's Companion, and her brother, Nathaniel, became a well-known poet and editor of the Home Journal. Still, Fanny herself showed no interest in journalism until two broken marriages left her in need of funds. She

had never had any particular regard for the talents of her brother, so it was characteristic that she viewed writing as an easy way to earn a living. She dashed off a piece on the "model minister," sold it to the Mother's Assistant for fifty cents and, at age 40, was launched on a new career.

Fanny's first editor on the True Flag, worked hard to translate her prose into print. He describes her writing style thus:

The manuscript was characteristic--decidedly Ferny--dashed all over with astonishing capitals and crazy italics--and stuck as full with staggering exclamation points, as a pin cushion with pins. In print, the italics were intended to resemble jolly words, leaning over and tumbling down with laughter, and the interjections were supposed to be tottering under the weight of double-entendre and puns. At first sight, the writing looked as if it might have been paced off by trained canary birds--driven first through puddles of ink, then marched into hieroglyphic drill on the sheet like a militia company on parade. All Fanny's manuscripts demanded a good deal of editorial care to prepare them for the press; her first productions, particularly, requiring as thorough weeding as so many beds of juvenile beets and carrots.⁵⁰

Still, by the time Fanny transferred her column and her allegiance to the Philadelphia Ledger, editor Robert Bonner proclaimed: "We never think of cutting down, or even altering a word in Fanny Fern's articles."⁵¹ Either her manuscript preparation had improved or the

prima donna's power as a circulation getter forbade any tampering with the unvarnished Fern.

The latter explanation seems the most appropriate for Fanny's literary outpourings, from 1851 until her death in 1872, were awash with hearts and flowers, a harbinger of the "sob sisters" of the early 1900's.

CHANGING TIMES

The last half of the nineteenth century was an era of extraordinary change in American life. Every facet of the century-old United States was undergoing dramatic metamorphosis--the nation's social, political and cultural institutions were being reshaped by a burgeoning industrial economy.

The galloping technology of this age invaded the newsroom too, bringing not only electric light bulbs and fantastic new presses which printed thousands of sheets per hour, but also the telephone and an increasingly practical instrument known as the typewriter.

Innovation was the by-word of the late 1800's and, while railroads and telegraph lines were fast connecting all parts of the nation, a soon-to-be-famous journalist named S. S. McClure imported an English concept known as "syndication." In 1884 McClure began to seek topical

rather than timely material to market as "fillers."

By the end of the year McClure was supplying his customers with approximately 30,000 words a week,⁵² most of it in short stories and general interest articles. In 1885 he launched one of his most popular features--a weekly sampling of his own favorite recipes appearing under the name "Patience Winthrop."

Edward W. Bok, who later became editor of the Ladies Home Journal, initiated a second American syndicate two years later. Mr. Bok started it off with a weekly article penned by Victoria Woodhull's victim, Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, and followed up with "a bright letter of New York gossip...called 'Bab's Babbble.'" This last item helped him to "secure a clientele of some ninety newspapers in various parts of the country."⁵³

The nature of this syndicated material reflects another current of social upheaval--the "woman's role" in American life was undergoing a dramatic change. Women inside the home were finally being recognized as an important "consumer group" by merchandisers and, equally significant, growing numbers of women outside the home were demanding larger responsibilities, wages and political voice.

Historian Willard G. Blyer notes:

In the early nineties, three New York papers, the World, the Sun, and the Recorder, were all devoting considerable attention to their departments for women. Articles on fashions, cooking recipes, and similar material were grouped together, often with society news, in women's departments or women's pages. In 1892, the New York Recorder, a well-edited general newspaper, was characterized by the New York Herald as 'pre-eminently a women's paper' that was read by a hundred thousand women. The large Sunday editions of the New York papers gave considerable space and prominence to departments primarily of interest to women. In the latter part of the year 1896, the New York Journal added to its Sunday edition a supplement, the Woman's Home Journal, part of which was printed in colors. With the aid of the first newspaper syndicates, newspapers the country over were able to follow the example of the New York papers in appealing to women readers.⁵⁴

Bok himself identified this theme in explaining the premise upon which he based his syndicate: He had decided "that the American woman was not a newspaper reader," and "the absence of any distinctive material for women was a factor."⁵⁵

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, the author of Poems of Passion, was perhaps the best known authoress of the time to contribute to Bok's syndicate but the most famous by-line to emerge from this venture was "Ruth Ashmore."

Bok hit upon the idea of a column devoted to the more delicate problems in a girl's life. He ran two trial columns under the heading "Side Talk With Girls," then

promptly turned the whole project over to "Bab Babbles" authoress Mrs. Isabel Mallon.

Later Bok wrote of Mrs. Mallon: "She was the most ridiculed writer in the magazine world, yet the most helpful editor that ever conducted a department in periodical literature."⁵⁶ During her sixteen years as "Ruth Ashmore," Mrs. Mallon received and answered 158,000 letters, blazing the trail for generation after generation of followers--from Beatrice Fairfax, through Dorothy Dix and Abigail "Dear Abby" Van Buren.

Magazines

This growing awareness of a feminine reading audience was also evidenced by a mounting number of publications created solely for "m'lady."

As early as 1834 a penny paper, patterned after Benjamin Day's famous New York Sun, was introduced--it was called, simply, Woman, and was edited by "Ann Oddbody." Its raison d'etre: "There is a paper Man published," stated the first issue of Woman, "why shall not a paper Woman also be seen daily in the city of Gotham?"⁵⁷

The next of these early efforts was The Ladies Morning Star, published by William Newell. Mr. Newell outlined his purpose and philosophy in the first issue,

printed April 23, 1836:

The Ladies Morning Star will sustain the character of a Literary Moral Newspaper, which it shall be the endeavor of the proprietor to enrich with every variety that may improve and adorn the female mind, enlarge and strengthen the understanding, purify the soul, and refine the senses...⁵⁸

Staggering under the weight of so heavy a load of virtue, the Morning Star lost readers and advertisers and soon folded. Numerous magazines and papers aimed at the woman's interests were begun during this period, then abandoned, but Ladies Magazine, founded in Boston in 1828 by Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale, was the first to survive its fifth birthday.

When Sarah's husband, David, died of pneumonia in 1822, the thirty-four-year-old widow for some reason chose not to return to the work she had trained for--teaching. Instead, she labored listlessly at millinery eeking out a subsistence for herself and her five children, and secretly poured her grief into verse.

Mrs. Hale's book, The Genius of Oblivion; and Other Original Poems, signed decorously, "By a Lady of New Hampshire," drew little interest but it did provide her with enough income to start another work. This volume, Northwood, which appeared in December, 1827, brought her wide recognition and sufficient confidence to launch the

Ladies Magazine.⁵⁹

Mrs. Hale's chief interest lay in promoting "female education," but she proved herself a capable editor, guiding the literary efforts of her contributors with such skill that she attracted the attention of publisher Louis A. Godey.

Nine years after its first issue appeared on city newstands, Ladies Magazine was joined with Godey's to become Godey's Lady's Book, owned by Godey and edited by Mrs. Hale. Together they determined to capture the American woman's interest and, incidentally, her subscription, but Mrs. Hale was fearful of stepping on masculine toes. Her reticence is obvious in the very first issue: "Husbands," she promised, "may rest assured that nothing found on these pages...shall cause her (the wife) to be less assiduous in preparing for his reception," or encourage her to "usurp station, or encroach on the prerogatives of men."⁶⁰

In the same issue she outlined a goal for herself from which she never deviated:

The work will be national...American...a miscellany which, although devoted to general literature, is more expressly designed to mark the progress of female improvement.⁶¹

Thus, "the progress of female improvement" remained

the underlying theme of the publication which enjoyed an unprecedented half century of success from January 1828 to December 1877. Mrs. Hale, gingerly juggling her subjects, rarely failed to delight her audience and just as rarely gave their husbands an opportunity to take offense at this female periodical. Her success by any reckoning was outstanding; a simple quantitative measure proves the point--the magazine's circulation exceeded even its owner's hopes by piling up an unprecedented 150,000 readers.

During Godey's "best literary period" (1837 to 1850), Mrs. Hale managed to attract to its pages the foremost popular writers of the day:

Among the "authoresses" were Miss (Eliza) Leslie, at one time an assistant editor...a trio of prolific writers of serial fiction, Mrs. Anne Stephens, Mrs. E. F. Ellet, and Mrs. Caroline Lee Hentz, a trio of much admired poetesses--Mrs. Frances S. Osgood, Mrs. Seba Smith, and Miss Hannah Gould; "Grace Greenwood," who edited Godey's Lady's Dollar Newspaper for a time; Miss Catherine M. Sedgwick, author of Hope Leslie, and much else; Mrs. Caroline M. S. Kirkland, notable for her western sketches and stories; and Harriet Beecher Stowe, not yet famous. This was a great galaxy in the forties...

Also associated with Mrs. Hale at that time was the most popular poetess who ever wrote in America--Lydia H. Sigourney. Her popularity was equalled only by her industry; her posthumous memoirs record over two thousand contributions to more than three hundred periodicals, and she published forty-six volumes of all sorts--poetry, essays, travel, fiction, historical sketches,

cookbooks, etc. She is omnipresent in the magazines of the period, and she had editorial connections with several...⁶²

One of the most successful of the Godey's copyists was Peterson's Ladies National Magazine, financed by Charles J. Peterson of the Saturday Evening Post, and edited by one of Godey's contributors, Mrs. Ann S. Stephens. Mrs. Stephens, who started work on Peterson's in 1842, was "a prolific writer of serial fiction who had been editor a few years before of the Portland Magazine."⁶³

In 1854 Frank Leslie's Gazette of Fashion, parent of the popular Frank Leslie's Lady's Magazine was born. The Gazette took to task ideas espoused by Mrs. Amelia Bloomer in her publication--Lily, A Ladies Journal, Devoted to Temperance and Literature. Taking up where Kate Field and Jennie June left off, Mrs. Bloomer introduced the Lily in January 1949 and soon became associated in the public mind with a costume advocated by the publication consisting "of heavy, extremely wide trousers (sometimes bound at the bottom by an ankle cuff and sometimes open and practically covering the foot) and a heavy coat with its skirt coming well below the knees."⁶⁴

On July 1, 1856, Dr. Lydia Sayer initiated still another publication aimed at reforming feminine costumes. She called her magazine (published in New York) the

Sibyl: A Review of the Tastes, Errors and Fashions of Society and kicked off the first issue with this broadside:

We do decidedly object to such a pyramidal redundancy as the present fashion suspends over hoops, destroying all idea of the beautiful form of woman; and since the bottom of the waist has been located just beneath the armpits while the hoops reach above the hips, the once huge cone of dry goods looks more like a hogshead shuffled along by some propelling power save feet (for such articles are not supposed to be on ladies nowadays), while a pair of arms and a head stick out over this redundancy of dry goods and cooerage.

Among the magazines tailored to satisfy the American woman's "new" interests were: Genius of Liberty, published monthly from 1852 to 1854 by Mrs. E. A. Aldrich, of Cincinnati; Pioneer and Woman's Advocate (1852) begun by Anna W. Spencer and Paulina Wright Davis' UNA (1853) both of Providence; Mrs. F. H. Day's Hesperian (1858-62) begun in San Francisco, and Anna McDowell's Woman's Advocate (1855-60) in Philadelphia.

Frank Luther Mott in his impressive "History of American Magazines" also notes:

The Family Newspaper is interesting for its claim that it was 'the first and only successful paper ever published by a lady'--but it was not the first, and it was not successful. The lady in question was Marie Louise Hankins. Her paper was an eight-page illustrated folio--'a mammoth pictorial'--issued monthly in New York at seventy-

five cents a year; it claimed a big circulation in 1855, but soon thereafter was lost to view.⁶⁵

A new emphasis on women's rights were reflected in a spatter of new publications born in the 1870's and 1880's. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton launched their Revolution in 1868; Boston's Woman's Journal was edited first in 1870 by Mary A. Livermore and thereafter (for more than twenty years) by Lucy Stone; Mrs. Helen Barnard, of New York, began the Woman's Campaign in 1872 and one presidential term later Mrs. Sarah Langdon Williams, former woman's department editor of the Toledo Blade, launched a new publication called the Ballot Box. The Box moved from Ohio to New York in 1878, and there, under the direction of Matilda Joslyn Gage, met success under the name National Citizen and Ballot Box.⁶⁶

Mrs. Charlotte E. McKay's was the lone voice of dissent among the lady publishers. Her True Woman (1870-73) was a monthly magazine published in Baltimore.

Mr. Mott points out that during this era there were an unusual number of publications "published, edited, and sometimes set in type and printed, by women for women."⁶⁷ Among these: Julia M. Purington's St. Louis Ladies Magazine (1871-1892); Inland Monthly Magazine

(1872-1876) published by Charlotte Smith; Mary Nolan issued the Central Magazine (1872-1875) which "was written, set in type, printed and mailed out entirely by women. It printed pictures of its composing rooms, showing women workers, to prove its complete feminization."⁶⁸ In addition, the Ladies Own Magazine (1869-74) in Indianapolis was edited and published by Mrs. M. Cora Bland, and Woman's World: An Original Review of What Women Are Doing (1877-81) was edited by Mrs. Juan Lewis of Philadelphia.

Jennie June joined forces with publisher William Jennings Demorest's wife to edit Demorest's Monthly Magazine in 1865 but Harper's Bazaar, first issued in 1867, rapidly took the lead in the fashion world.

Mary Mapes Dodge and Harriet Beecher Stowe teamed up editing Hearth and Home in 1868 but no publication of this era was destined to greater success than the Ladies Home Journal, founded in Philadelphia in 1883 by Cyrus H. K. Curtis and edited by his wife under the name "Mrs. Louisa Knapp."

By the late 1800's and well into the infancy of the twentieth century, an interesting phenomenon can be observed: While the number of monthly women's magazines soared, fewer and fewer of these were either published or edited by women. Women's periodicals had suddenly become

big business, thus making this particular literary field both attractive and respectable for men with ambition.

Edward Bok noted in 1890 that "an examination of subscription lists of magazines showed seven-eighths of the subscribers to be women."⁶⁹ Numerous explanations were offered for this fact, but Mrs. Belva A. Lockwood (a presidential candidate twice nominated by the Equal Rights Party) explained it thus: "The emancipated woman wanted to read about the world she now lived and worked in."⁷⁰

Under Bok's editorship the Ladies Home Journal thrived; Morris Phillips edited Home Journal with some success while Charles Dwyer headed Butterick Company's popular Delineator. Clarke W. Bryan issued the first Good Housekeeping from Holyoke, Massachusetts in 1885 and Frank A. Munsey backed a mediocre publication entitled the Puritan: A Journal for Gentlewomen (1897-1907).

Arthur Capper edited the very successful Household Magazine soon after Karl Edwin Harriman (who would later become editor of Redbook Magazine) began his term of office as associate editor of the Pilgrim (1899-1907).

The most exceptional success stories, however, centered around McCall's and Cosmopolitan. Frances M.

Benson was editor of the Queen of Fashion when James H. Ottley took over the McCall Company in 1893; three years later she yielded to a newcomer, Miss E. B. Clapp, and the fashion house's publication became known as McCall's Magazine: The Queen of Fashion. Under Miss Clapp's reign circulation reached 100,000 in 1899, doubled during the next two years and rose to one million in 1908. Dress patterns still abounded in the book, but Miss Clapp introduced modern typography and page layout and added articles and short fiction as well as a bonus of "two big fashion plates in each number, produced in brilliant chromolithography."⁷¹

Cosmopolitan, on the other hand, was begun with the woman in mind but soon gained general recognition and readership as a literary periodical. In Volume 1, Number 1, issued in March 1886, Cosmopolitan's founder, Paul J. Schlicht, described the new monthly as "a first-class family magazine...There will be a department devoted exclusively to the interests of women, with articles on fashions, on household decoration, on cooking, and the care and management of children, etc." However, under the editorship of Frank P. Smith, the publication was chiefly devoted to the works of popular authors of the day; in 1912 Cosmo was purchased by William Randolph Hearst and

the magazine immediately took on a more sensational tone--adding muckraking and general interest articles to its repertoire.⁷² In the 1950's the magazine went into a slump from which many predicted it might never recover--it took a flamboyantly innovative new "editress" Helen Gurley Brown to turn it around--but more about that later.

Women's Clubs

The emerging feminine self-consciousness mirrored in this sudden wealth of women's magazines was also reflected in a great ground swell of women's clubs across the country. Heretofore, women had generally sought no greater contact with one another than the random association provided by church and social activities; they left "organized interests" to the men. However, just about the time that Jennie June was campaigning for the formation of the Sorosis Club (1868), other American women were beginning to glimpse the potential benefits of such organizations--and women journalists led the way with a sudden spattering of special interest groups throughout the country.

Mrs. Emily Briggs, known to the Washington Press Corps as "Olivia," founded the Woman's National Press Association in 1882.⁷³

Sally Joy, of the Boston Herald, and a Vermont reporter, Helen Winslow, whose by-line appeared in the Transcript, the Beacon, the Herald, and the Globe, organized the New England Woman's Press Association in 1885.⁷⁴

When Jennie June, Fanny Fern, Kate Field and Alice Cary organized first the Woman's Press Club in 1889, then a national association known as the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1890, Helen Winslow was an enthusiastic supporter. It was Helen who published and edited the first really successful woman's club "house organ," Club Woman, created in 1895.⁷⁵ Mrs. Eliza "Pearl Rivers" Nicholson, publisher of the New Orleans Daily Picayune, served as the first president of the Women's International Press Association, formed in 1885.⁷⁶

Out West, Mrs. Isabel Worrell Ball, a pioneer woman journalist, formed the Western Authors and Artists Club in Kansas City in 1885. Mrs. Ball, born in Illinois, was a teacher by profession, but when her husband moved his family to New Mexico she pestered the editor of the Albuquerque Journal into giving her a job. From 1881 to 1883, when the family moved to Kansas City, Mrs. Ball earned her reportorial stripes by covering everything

from Indian raids to blizzards--all the while dodging bullets and the dangers of roving wolf packs. In Kansas she exchanged her saddle horse for a carriage and became editor of the Chronoscope, then moved briefly to the Daily Commonwealth and Kansas City Times, and finally covered the Washington Press Gallery for the Kansas City Star in 1891.⁷⁷

WAR CORRESPONDENTS

Grace Greenwood's chatty missives from Europe became a popular newspaper style in the late 1800's. Henry J. Raymond, editor of the New York Times, sent Nancy Johnson to Europe in 1857 as a traveling correspondent and Times readers avidly followed "Minnie Myrtle's" accounts of European social life.

Raymond first thought of hiring Nancy when he read her Letters from a Sickroom, penned while she was recuperating from the amputation of one of her legs. Nancy dedicated her book, The Myrtle Wreath, to the Times editor.

Another popular European correspondent was Laura Catherine Redden, from Maryland, who wrote for the Times soon after Nancy Johnson's return to America. Laura also wrote for the St. Louis Republican and the New York Mail.

Her dispatches from the Congressional Press Gallery during the Civil War were enjoyed by many who had no idea that "Howard Glyndon" was a woman.⁷⁸ Miss Redden's journalistic achievements, though impressive, were almost secondary to her personal victory over physical handicaps. Spinal meningitis left her deaf and dumb at an early age and it was not until her return from Europe in 1868, when she studied with Alexander Graham Bell, that she learned to speak once more. She married Edward W. Searing in 1876 and gave up her newspaper career to travel with him to the healthier climate of California.

While these lady correspondents were well read and well received abroad, none laid claim to pioneering the political and war coverage which would later characterize the glamorous "war correspondents" of fact and fiction.

There is some dispute over which woman owns the honor of being the first true American war correspondent of her sex. Stephen Crane's wife, Cora, has been nominated on the basis of three articles which she penned for the New York Journal regarding the Spanish American conflict.⁷⁹ This claim is discounted by some, however, because Cora Crane "was not a professional journalist and... another woman, Harriet Boyd, a volunteer nurse in the war, also wrote stories for the Journal, one about her nursing

training on April 25, 1897, and one about the fighting on May 5, 1897."⁸⁰

Actually the front-running candidate for this honor comes from a much earlier era. Margaret Fuller, who wrote for the New York Tribune, reported on Louis Napoleon's siege of Rome in 1849.

Margaret Fuller is probably more properly classified a literary figure than a journalist; her poetry and prose is ranked among the best efforts of such notable contemporaries as Carlyle, Emerson, and her arch-rival Longfellow. Yet it was Margaret's preeminence in this group which brought her the editorship of the Transcendentalists' quarterly publication, the Dial--and it was her sparkling writing in the Dial which prompted Horace Greeley to offer her a position on the staff of his New York Tribune.

Margaret joined the Tribune as literary editor in 1844, irking and delighting the fussy Mr. Greeley with frequently tardy delivery of excellent copy. Later, he ranked the following essays, as among the most important of her contributions to the Tribune: "Thomas Hood," "Edgar A. Poe," "Capital Punishment," "Cassius M. Clay," "New Year's Day," "Christmas," "Thanksgiving," "St. Valentine's," "Fourth of July," "The First of August"

(commemorating the anniversary of slave-emancipation in the British West Indies).⁸¹

Following the fad of the day Margaret sailed for Europe in 1846, eager to meet those whose works she had so fearlessly reviewed. And she did meet them--the Brownings, Wordsworth, DeQuincey, George Sand, Rachel, Mazzini, Carlyle--and, an obscure Italian nobleman as well. Margaret became the Marchessa Giovanni Angelo Ossoli in December 1848⁸² and followed with intense interest the military and political contests being waged within her husband's homeland.

Margaret's dispatches traced the downfall of the republican cause and when French troops marched into Rome, the Marchessa fled with her husband and young son. The ship on which they were traveling to America was wrecked on Fire Island beach in 1850 and all aboard were lost.

Perhaps the first female foreign correspondent to draw notice and comment from her male counterparts, however, was Anna Benjamin, writing for Leslie's on the Philippine uprising against the United States in 1899. James Creelman, correspondent for the New York Journal commented:

Time was when the war correspondent had only men to contend against, men--and censors. The adventurous scout of the Press could swing himself into the saddle and ride on the rim of great events with a light heart, knowing the ways and weaknesses of the male intellect. But with the advent of woman came sorrow. The swish of the journalistic petticoat on the edge of the military camp meant the hidden leaking of news...For a woman, when she cannot drag forth the secrets of an army by strength, will make a sly hole in some men's discretion, and the news will run out of itself.⁸³

While Fanny B. Ward, representing the New Orleans Picayune, was actually in Cuba in 1898 and covered the Maine explosion, three other ladies are actually credited with covering the Spanish American conflict: Miss Benjamin for Leslie's, Mrs. Kathleen Blake Watkins, for the Toronto Mail and Express, and Mrs. Katherine White, of the Chicago Record. Nevertheless, one important distinction separated Miss Benjamin's reporting efforts from those of her colleagues. Mrs. Watkins and Mrs. White specialized, a la mode, in the "woman's angle" while Miss Benjamin's dispatches could be interchanged imperceptibly with copy being sent by the seasoned Mr. Creelman for example.

Mrs. Watkins, "in the sob-sister convention of the time, arranged a reunion between a maid working in the hotel who had followed her husband to Tampa and wrote a tears and sunshine story on their meeting or described the

life of the women with the Cuban exiles."⁸⁴ Mrs. White, meanwhile, "had joined the staff of the Red Cross and served on Clara Barton's relief ship the 'State of Texas,' originally chartered to take food, clothing and medical supplies to the starving Cubans before the war. Her articles dealt mostly with health problems and later with the care of the wounded and sick in the hospitals."⁸⁵

Anna Benjamin, on the other hand, wrote from a man's point of view--at least from what was traditionally considered a man's point of view. She wrote critically and intelligently on what she saw and she was a keen observer wherever she went. She covered preparations for the Cuban invasion from Tampa and Key West in Florida, and prepared to follow the expedition to Santiago.

When British correspondent Charles E. Hands asked if she hoped to follow the American forces to Cuba, she replied: "Oh yes. I know what you think. You think it ridiculous my being here, you are laughing at me wanting to go that's the worst of being a woman. But just let me tell you. I'm going through to Cuba, and not all the old generals in the army are going to stop me."⁸⁶

At least one old general--General William R. Shafter of the Fifth Army Corps--did indeed try to stop her. But Anna, undaunted, begged passage on a coal scow

headed for Santiago and not only accomplished her goal but beat out many of her competitors by sending back some of the first dispatches chronicling the defeat of Spanish forces.

Anna's first important story from this theater of war was critical of the army, it was titled, "The Truth About Army Rations." Another of her pieces took to task the famous Rough Riders group, commanded by Colonel Leonard Wood and Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

In truth they did make so free with everything that they came across on the way down that their fame spread before them, and when they reached Tampa, Colonel Wood was greeted with a petition from Tampa citizens requesting him to keep the Terrors (Teddy's Terrors) within camp grounds and he did.⁸⁷

Anna was just twenty-three when she went to war. The New York Tribune described her as "slight and girlish in appearance,"⁸⁸ a deceptively innocent covering for an adventurous soul. After the Spanish-American War and the Philippine insurrection, Anna traveled to Japan and China (escaping on the eve of the Boxer Rebellion which brought to a quick end the lives of many foreigners visiting in that part of the world). Next, she rode alone the brand new Trans-Siberian Railroad from Siberia to Moscow, then went on to Paris. Her reports, sent back to Leslie's, the New York Tribune, Outlook, and the Atlantic Monthly,

were factual and concise.

Unlike her contemporary Nellie Bly, Anna Benjamin foreswore the temptation to include herself as part of any news story. Though she was frequently the only woman within miles of the conflicts she chronicled, her readers were given no inkling of this:

...her news articles did not dramatize her own exploits. Her most exciting experience came on Sept. 22 when she was under heavy fire when rebels wrecked a train running from Manila north to Dagupan. The first news reports of the attack in American papers on Sept. 23 said that after derailling the cars the rebels fired on the train from bamboo thickets along the track, killing two U. S. soldiers and wounding five. Miss Benjamin's letters gave complete details about her trip, and described the countryside and the people but said nothing about the raid by rebels. Her presence during the attack was brought out in an interview after she had completed her trip around the world.

I had been in Manila so long that I felt I should also know something of the islands at the north, so I determined to board a train going to Dagupan at the end of the line (130 miles), and carrying soldiers and supplies. The train was a tiny and ancient affair and I took my place in the officer's car. I was the only woman there, and rather expected to be put off, but I got through the lines. The train was wrecked by insurgents and I was forced to make part of the trip in army wagons, burned flat cars, and cattle cars. But it was a great experience and I don't regret it.⁸⁹

Miss Benjamin's life was crammed full of such experiences; she marched boldly where no woman had dreamed of going before. She tarried in her quest for adventure

only once: She stopped briefly in France to visit her sister at Chateau de la Lande, Villiers-sur-Marne and to begin work on a book--the book and her life were suddenly cut short, for there she died of a tumor on January 22, 1902, at the age of twenty-seven.⁹⁰

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER III

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³Ibid.

⁴Ross, op. cit., p. 29.

⁵Ibid., p. 28.

⁶Florence Finch Kelly, The Flowing Stream (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1939), pp. 448-449.

⁷Ross, op. cit., p. 29.

⁸Walter Davenport and James Derieux, Ladies, Gentlemen, and Editors (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1960), pp. 111-112.

⁹Irving Wallace, The Nympho and Other Maniacs (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1971), p. 324.

¹⁰Davenport, op. cit., p. 115.

¹¹Ibid., p. 120.

¹²Johanna Johnston, Mrs. Satan: The Incredible Saga of Victoria Woodhull (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967), p. 141.

¹³Davenport, op. cit., p. 123.

¹⁴Johnston, op. cit., p. 115-116.

¹⁵Ross, op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁶Emanie Sachs, The Terrible Siren: Victoria Woodhull, 1838-1927 (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1928), pp. 96-97.

¹⁷Oliver Knight (ed.), I Protest: Selected Disquisitions of E. W. Scripps (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), p. 27.

¹⁸Emery, op. cit., pp. 359-60

¹⁹Ross, p. 558.

²⁰Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 260 Years 1690-1950 (New York: Macmillan Co., rev. ed. 1950), p. 313.

²¹Arthur J. Larsen (ed.) Crusader and Feminist: Letters of Jane Grey Swisshelm (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1934), p. 171.

²²Ishbel Ross, Sons of Adam, Daughters of Eve (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969), p. 131.

²³Ross, op. cit., pp. 131-132.

²⁴Ross, Ladies, p. 482.

²⁵Thomas Ewing Dabney, One Hundred Great Years: The Story of the Times-Picayune From Its Founding to 1940 (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1944), p. 124.

²⁶Ross, Sons of Adam, p. 126.

²⁷Ross, Ladies, p. 37.

²⁸Ross, Sons of Adam, p. 126.

²⁹Dabney, op. cit., p. 265.

³⁰Ibid., p. 266.

³¹Dabney, p. 266.

³²Ibid., p. 306.

³³Dabney, op. cit., p. 308.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵New Orleans Times-Democrat, February 15, 1896,
Sec. II, p. 2, col. 4.

³⁶Ross, Ladies, p. 597.

³⁷Ross, Ladies, p. 3.

³⁸Ross, Ladies, p. 494.

³⁹Emery, op. cit., p. 202.

⁴⁰Homer W. King, Pulitzer's Prize Editor: A
Biography of John A. Cockerill 1845-1896 (Durham, North
Carolina: Duke University Press, 1965), p. 188.

⁴¹Ross, Ladies, p. 326.

⁴²Ibid., p. 329.

⁴³Ross, Sons of Adam, p. 133.

⁴⁴Ross, Ladies, p. 146.

⁴⁵Ross, Ladies, p. 44.

⁴⁶New York Daily Graphic, September 11, 1873,
Section II, p. 1, col. 1.

⁴⁷Ross, Sons of Adam, p. 129.

⁴⁸Henry L. Smith, "The Beauteous Jennie June,
Pioneer Woman Journalist," Journalism Quarterly, Spring,
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⁴⁹Ross, Ladies, p. 42.

⁵⁰Ross, Ladies, p. 41.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Peter Lyon, Success Story: The Life and Times of
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1963), p. 79.

⁵³Edward Bok, The Americanization of Edward Bok: The Autobiography of a Dutch Boy Fifty Years After (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 105.

⁵⁴Bleyer, op. cit., p. 399.

⁵⁵Bok, op. cit., p. 104.

⁵⁶Davenport, op. cit., p. 178.

⁵⁷Bleyer, op. cit., p. 168.

⁵⁸Bleyer, op. cit., p. 169.

⁵⁹Ruth E. Finley, The Lady of Godey's: Sarah Josepha Hale (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1931), p. 61.

⁶⁰Finley, op. cit., p. 39.

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⁶²Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines 1741-1850 (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 584-585.

⁶³Ibid., p. 352.

⁶⁴Mott, A History of American Magazines, Vol. II: 1850-1865, pp. 50-51.

⁶⁵Mott, op. cit., p. 58.

⁶⁶Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler. Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Movement (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), p. 123.

⁶⁷Mott, op. cit., p. 95.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Woman's Column v. 3, Feb. 4, 1890, p. 4.

⁷⁰Mott, Vol. IV: 1885-1905, p. 353.

⁷¹Mott, Vol. IV: 1885-1905, p. 582.

⁷²Ibid., p. 492.

⁷³Ross, Ladies, p. 326.

⁷⁴Aileen S. Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920 (New York: Columbia University Press 1965), p. 31.

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⁷⁶Dabney, op. cit., p. 306.

⁷⁷Ross, Ladies, pp. 331-332.

⁷⁸Ross, Ladies, p. 332.

⁷⁹New York Journal, April 26, April 29, and May 9, 1897.

⁸⁰Charles B. Brown. "A Woman's Odyssey: The War Correspondence of Anna Benjamin," Journalism Quarterly, Autumn, 1969, p. 523.

⁸¹Julia Ward Howe, Margaret Fuller (Marchessa Ossoli) (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1970; originally published in 1883 by Roberts Brothers of Boston), p. 133.

⁸²Ibid., p. 234.

⁸³Brown, op. cit., p. 522.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 523.

⁸⁵Brown, loc. cit.

⁸⁶Charles E. Hands, "The Lady War Correspondent and How She Proved Herself One of the 'Boys'" London Daily Mail, June 13, 1898.

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⁸⁸New York Tribune, January 22, 1902, p. 23, col. 1.

⁸⁹New York Tribune, January 22, 1902, p. 23,
col. 3.

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CHAPTER IV

STUNT WOMEN: 1890-1900

Around 1890 two phenomena combined to forge a new era for the lady journalist. The first was the lady herself. Up until this time, except for those unusual women mentioned in the foregoing section, the vast majority of female newspaper contributors were simply "letter writers." These women, often from wealthy families, toured North America and Europe, sending back a deluge of letters for the edification of the folks back home. These missives described in the elaborate, flowery Victorian vein of the day, the places, customs and people they encountered.

As the turn of the century crept closer, however, editors found themselves faced with a new and inexplicable breed of female--the "working girl." Particularly in New York, a new generation of women were everywhere in evidence; by choice or necessity, these ladies were in pursuit of a living, and many saw in news writing an occupation peculiarly suited to their interests and abilities. Some editors dismissed them out of hand; others were willing to employ them, but wondered vaguely just how to

put them to work.

The answer to this dilemma was, in part, provided by William Randolph Hearst. Early in the 1890's, Mr. Hearst decided to invade the New York newspaper field, building up the failing Journal to compete with Mr. Pulitzer's World. Both publishers went in heavily for sensationalism, and their editors were quick to realize that the simple addition of a girl reporter to a story could add spice to an otherwise humdrum event.

Soon these "yellow journalists" perfected a brand new recipe for increasing readership; using the newswoman as the key ingredient, they whipped up elaborate, toothsome concoctions around her--all designed to whet the public's appetite for even more sensationalism. Thus, the "stunt" era was born.

While many male reporters added greatly to the fine art of the trumped-up news event, these outlandish bids for the reader's attention--created to amuse, entertain and flabbergast--offered the woman reporter the chance she had been seeking.

The girl most closely identified with this era was an enterprising young lady from Pennsylvania named Elizabeth Cochrane whose pen name was Nellie Bly. World editor John A. Cockerill's biographer, Homer King, provides

an interesting picture of the male domain into which Miss Cochrane thrust herself:

Prior to the invasion of a pint-sized, hazel-eyed, auburn-haired girl of twenty, the World newsroom was a stronghold of tough, proud masculinity, its atmosphere polluted by cigar smoke and profanity. Placed strategically among the desks, chairs, wastebaskets, and littered papers were brass cuspidors that occasionally provoked tests of marksmanship. The misses added nothing to the cleanliness of the room. A decent girl had to be a little mad just to show up. The prevailing view was that respectable girls stayed home until they were married, or failing to snare husbands they could teach or take up nursing. There had been stirrings of discontent in feminine circles but trouble makers like Susan B. Anthony, Belva Lockwood, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were not to be taken seriously. Womanhood was noble as long as home ties held it in check. If such bonds gave way, in the orthodox male view, the whole fabric of society could be ripped to shreds. This meant, of course, that hiring women to gather news was simply out of the question.¹

Despite the prevailing convention, Col. Cockerill was so impressed with Miss Bly's life-and-death earnestness that he promptly gave her a job.

During her tenure with the World, Nellie handled hundreds of stories but in 1889 she made headlines and history when, at age twenty-two, she circumnavigated the globe faster than the fanciful record of eighty days set by Jules Verne's Phileas Fogg--she circled the world in seventy-two days, six hours and eleven minutes.

On November 14, 1889, the World carried this small story on page one:

On four day's notice Miss Bly starts out with a gripsack for the longest journey known to mankind--she knows no such word as fail, and will add another to her list of triumphs--circumnavigation of the globe. The World today undertakes the task of turning a dream into a reality.

With all the millions now invested in methods and modes of communication, interstate and international, the story of Miss Bly will give a valuable pointer in enabling the reader to appreciate these avenues of intercourse at their full value, to see their merits and their defects and note the present advanced state of invention in these lines of human effort.

As a news event it was not much of a story, for, despite her age and sex, the trip simply required that Miss Bly stick to her schedule and make the transport connections which had been prearranged for her in New York.

Nevertheless, the World's editors worked hard to dramatize Nellie's first-person reports; for seventy-two days, copywriters bent their brains to come up with suitable heads for Nellie's on-going travelogue. Their efforts usually resulted in such inspiring prose as "Nellie Bly's Rush" or "Nellie Bly on the Fly."

On those dreaded occasions when Nellie's copy failed to get through, the men at the World simply created stories, like "Some of the Queer Things Nellie Bly Will See During Her Stay in Japan."

Still, toward the end of her journey, Nellie found that she had indeed succeeded in attracting attention. By the time she had traversed the required 24,899 miles, she was mobbed at every stop by reporters and well-wishers.

The World welcomed her back on January 25, 1890, with the entire front page and most of the inside pages devoted to her exploits, leading off with a series of exuberant headlines:

FATHER TIME OUTDONE!

Even Imagination's Record Pales Before
the Performance of "The World's"
Globe Circler

Her time: 72 days, 6 hrs., 11 min., - sec.

Thousands Cheer Themselves Hoarse
at Nellie Bly's Arrival

Welcome Salutes in New York and Brooklyn

The Whole Country Aglow with Intense Enthusiasm

Nellie Bly Tells Her Story

The male reporter assigned by the World to cover Nellie's return was obviously touched by the solemnity of the occasion. He wrote:

It is finished.

Sullen echoes of cannon across the gray waters of the bay and over the roofs and spires of three cities.

People look at their watches. It is only 4 o'clock. Those cannot be sunset guns.

Is someone dead?

Only an old era. And the booming yonder at the Battery and Fort Greene tolls its passing away. The stage-coach days are ended, and the new age of lightening travel begun.

And, amid all the tumult walks the little lady, with just a foot of space between her and the madly joyous mob. She is carrying a little walking stick in one hand and with the other waves her checkered little fore-and-aft cap, and laughs merrily as her name is hoarsely shouted from innumerable throats. Tense faces stare from the long galleries that bend ominously beneath their awful load of humanity. The tops of passenger coaches lying upon the side tracks

are black with men and boys.

But the little girl trips gaily along. The circuit of the globe is behind her. Time is put to blush. She has brushed away distance as if it were down. Oceans and continents she has traversed.

Even Jules Verne contributed to the publicity of the occasion by cabling to the World: "I never doubted the success of Nellie Bly. She has proved her intrepidity and courage. Hurrah for her and for the director of the World. Hurrah! Hurrah!" The welcoming committee, which met her at the dock went even further, saying: "Miss Bly has done for American journalism what Stanley did for it in 1873."²

Actually this was neither the first nor the last of Nellie's stunts. She launched herself as a prototype for her sisters in the journalistic profession and her style was assiduously copied throughout the country.

Nellie "manufactured" news wherever she went; she assumed disguises, posing as a shop girl, a lunatic, a beggar, a factory worker and Salvation Army lass--she would try anything and everything, from riding in a high-flying balloon to descending to the ocean floor in a new diving bell.

Still, there was more than a little of the social crusader in Miss Bly's character, and more than one of her

stunts paid off in positive reforms. For example, New York's Grand Jury, following up her expose of the lunatic asylum on Blackwell's Island, egged the state legislature into voting \$3,000,000 for improvements to that institution. Similarly, when she took on Albany's "lobby king," Edward R. Phelps, she smashed his career with a single article which began:

For I'm a Pirate King!
I'm in the Lobby Ring!
Oh! what an uproarious
Jolly and glorious
Biz for a Pirate King!

I was a lobbyist last week. I went up to Albany to catch a professional briber in the act. I did so. The briber, lobbyist and boodler whom I caught was Mr. Ed Phelps. I pretended I wanted to have him help me kill a certain bill. Mr. Phelps was cautious at first and looked carefully into my record, He satisfied himself that I was honest and talked very freely for a king...³

Dozens of girls, anxious to land jobs on the "big" papers, followed Nellie's example, risking their lives and reputations on any stunt which might bring public attention.

Of course there were many lady scribes who refused to succumb to the self-immolation of this era; their work appeared modestly on the women's pages of less sensational publications--their beat was clothes or cookery. They resented the stunt girls and one embittered

colleague wrote that Nellie had "prostituted her womanhood for the sake of a good story."⁴ Nevertheless, the girls who risked all earned from \$50 to \$100 a week, while their more conservative counterparts commanded only \$25 to \$50--if they were lucky enough to have jobs at all.⁵

Two more of Colonel John Cockerill's "finds"--Elizabeth Jordan and Polly Pry--gained widespread recognition as representatives of this stunt age.

Miss Elizabeth Jordan, born in Milwaukee in 1867, trained for her World role on Milwaukee, St. Paul and Chicago papers. Her work on the Chicago Tribune attracted Cockerill's attention and it was at his invitation that she crashed New York in 1890. Ishbel Ross describes her arrival:

She made an impression from the first moment. She had an elaborate wardrobe and was dashing in appearance, and she managed to get into the most inaccessible places. She was never bothered with minor women's page assignments, but combined the best features of the stunt age with sound writing. She tested the accommodations of jails and asylums, rode an engine cab, interviewed social leaders, and covered the news of the town. She traveled through the mountains of Virginia and Tennessee on horseback, fording rivers, climbing forges, forcing her way through thick forest, her only companion a Negro guide. She visited a lonely mining camp in the mountains, in which no woman had ever set foot. Armed with a Spanish stiletto she explored the camps of the moonshiners and did a series for the Sunday World that was copied widely.⁶

The series, entitled "True Stories of the News," was gleaned from her visits to "hospitals, morgues, police courts, and tenements" and provided the background for a book she later wrote called Tales From the City Room. In April 1892 Miss Jordan was appointed assistant Sunday editor of the World, working with Arthur Brisbane. She held this post for nine years before moving on to edit Harper's Bazaar, but during the first few weeks she was a constant source of amazement to her co-workers:

She used to bedazzle the compositors by showing up in immaculate shirt-waists and sling-type with an experienced hand. When everyone else was sweating and in a state of collapse from heat and overwork, Miss Jordan would look completely self-possessed. At the end of a particularly frenzied night one of the editors exclaimed ferociously as he waited for the elevator: 'Good God! What a job. Can you imagine anything worse?'

'Oh yes,' laughed Miss Jordan, waving her dummy pages. 'To lose it.'

Leonel Campbell, who later adopted Polly Pry as her nom de plume, came to New York just a few years prior to Miss Jordan. Also unlike Miss Jordan, Polly had more going against her than for her when she knocked on John Cockerill's door: First she was just seventeen, she had married a rich Mississippian two years before and she was determined to carve out an exciting career for herself, never to return to the drudgery of housewifery. Second,

she had virtually no writing experience, and, third, Cockerill had not invited her.

According to Polly, the World editor greeted her thus: "Give you a job? I ought to spank you and send you home to your husband."⁸

Instead he sent her to South America, launching her writing career at \$6 a week. Polly soon established herself as an able reporter and when she met Fred G. Bonfils on a train trip West he offered her a job on the Denver Post. Polly hesitated; she was both repelled and fascinated by stories which were already circulating about Bonfils, his partner Harry H. Tammen, their raucous gaudy publication, and the topsy-turvy world which centered around their office, known locally as "The Bucket of Blood."⁹ Fascination apparently prevailed for Polly accepted Bonfils' offer and thereafter immersed herself in the Post's crusading spirit.

It was Polly who carried the Post's banner in a prison reform campaign which ultimately lent a certain grisly validity to the name "Bucket of Blood." Polly toured Colorado's jails and prisons and interviewed numerous inmates as she gathered material for a series of articles aimed at improving the state's penal institutions. On one of these inside trips she met Alfred Packer, a

"lifer" who had been convicted of cannabilism--he allegedly ate five prospectors during the winter of 1873.

Polly convinced herself that Mr. Packer was innocent, and, with the backing of her editors, she set out to free him--presenting his appeal directly to the public through the pages of the Post. Public interest and sympathy was aroused and, with the help of a lawyer named W. W. Anderson, Mr. Packer was freed. However, Mr. Anderson was not satisfied with a mere legal triumph--he had been led to hope, he later testified, for a substantial monetary reward from the Post editors. When it was not forthcoming, he visited their office. Polly was present when the counselor demanded additional remuneration from Bonfils and Tammen and it was her screams which startled a petrified office staff into action when Mr. Anderson pulled out a pistol.¹⁰ The lawyer fired, hitting Bonfils twice (one bullet grazing his heart), and Tammen three times, then grappled with Polly over possession of the gun.

"I'll kill you," he said.

"Go ahead," said Polly, guarding the kneeling Tammen behind her voluminous skirts. "Then hang for it."¹¹

Fortunately Mr. Anderson did not fire again and subsequently gave himself up to the police. Nevertheless, after this episode neither of the Post's owners--both of whom recovered from the experience--were able to back Miss Pry's projects quite so wholeheartedly. According to Bonfils and Tammen biographer Gene Fowler:

Bonfils never entirely forgave Polly Pry for saving his life. She had done something for him which he had been unable to do for himself. He was under an obligation, a condition abhorrent to his strange, defiant nature.

He picked quarrels with her over small matters. Finally he accused her of lying to him. A woman who wrestles with a smoking pistol--a beautiful woman from Virginia--does not take the lie when passed. Nor did Polly. She left Bonfils and passed to other literary fields--a great and tender character, with courage unbounded.¹²

Polly left the Post in 1902 to publish a short-lived periodical known as the Polly Pry. Vaguely reminiscent of Anne Royall's Paul Pry, the new publication devoted itself chiefly to scrapping with the Western Federation of Miners and lasted just two years. Miss Pry resumed her reporting career, this time working for John C. Shaffer at the Rocky Mountain News.

Another New York World reporter, Dorothy Dare, claimed to be "the first woman to take a spin through the streets of New York in a horseless carriage." According to Frank Luther Mott, "Miss Dare's vehicle at one time

attained the dizzy speed of thirty miles an hour, but for the most part proceeded at one third of that rate; it finally broke down and had to be towed to a livery stable, but Miss Dare had had her ride and wrote her story."¹³

The story appeared in the World on May 3, 1896.

Meanwhile in California, Helen Dare outdid her like-named rival by riding a lumber flume in the Sierras tied to a log! Helen, born Elizabeth Brough, was a reporter on Hearst's San Francisco Examiner at the time; she willingly participated in whatever stunts her editors could dream up and worked successively for the San Francisco Call, Examiner, and Chronicle.

A rare handful of lady journalists managed to move forward their careers while remaining aloof from the exploitive news stunts. One of these worked with Helen Dare on the San Francisco Chronicle, her name was Mabel Craft. Miss Craft, a law graduate of the University of California, was made assistant Sunday editor in November 1899; she was a good reporter but her specialty was in-depth feature material. Miss Craft and Alice Rix, also of the Chronicle, went to Hawaii in 1899 to cover its annexation to the United States for the Chronicle, the Oakland Tribune, the New York Sun, and the New York

Tribune.

In Boston Mrs. A. Lincoln Bowles, better known as Nancy Hanks, took up where Cornelia W. Walter left off at the Boston Transcript as reporter and literary editor, while Lilian Whiting labored quietly at the Boston Traveler before earning a spot as editor-in-chief of the Boston Budget.

Another important by-line which emerged from this era was Beatrice Fairfax. Though Beatrice never got around to passing judgment on the exuberant antics of her fellow journalists, she was never reticent about expressing her views on the manners and morals of the rest of the female population. Beatrice was a columnist, specializing in letters from the lovelorn. She was the "Dear Abby" of many past generations, descended directly from "Ruth Ashmore," she was popular from the moment she was born--full grown--in the office of the New York Journal in August 1898.

Arthur Brisbane, managing editor of the Journal, is credited with siring this phenomenal young lady. He brought two letters--both seeking advice of a personal nature--to the editor of his women's page, Marie Manning, and asked her if they might provide the basis for a column.

Miss Manning responded enthusiastically that they would and promptly created the pseudonym, "Beatrice" (taken from Dante which she happened to be reading), and "Fairfax," (the name of the county in Virginia where Miss Manning owned a home).

Neither Miss Manning nor her successor Lilian Lauferty ever achieved anywhere near the recognition that was heaped on their fictitious mouthpiece. For decades Beatrice Fairfax was the nation's chief mother-confessor.

While Nellie Bly raced to circumnavigate the globe faster than Phileas Fogg, another girl reporter, Elizabeth Bisland, sped in the opposite direction competing with Nellie herself. Miss Bisland, who started her career with the New Orleans Times-Democrat, was representing Cosmopolitan as she headed west, hoping to beat her rival. She lost by four days (though she did manage to better Fogg's imaginary feat) and soon thereafter quit her career to marry Charles W. Wetmore of Washington. Nevertheless her attempt was not made in vain for her departure from San Francisco provided Winifred Black with her first big assignment for the San Francisco Examiner.

Mrs. Black, also known as Annie Laurie, might be seen in this survey as a transitional figure, for her career began in the stunt age, but she gained the greatest

public attention as one of the original "sob sisters."

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

¹King, op. cit., p. 147.

²Ross, Ladies, p. 56.

³New York World, April 1, 1888, p. 2, col. 3.

⁴Ishbel Ross, "Those Crazy Ladies," The Matrix, Winter 1938, p. 16.

⁵Ross, Ladies, p. 53.

⁶Ross, Ladies, pp. 177-178.

⁷Ross, Ladies, p. 177.

⁸Gene Fowler, Timberline: A Story of Bonfils and Tammen (New York: Covici-Friede Publishers, 1944), p. 101.

⁹Fowler, op. cit., p. 107.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 155.

¹¹Fowler, op. cit., p. 157.

¹²Ibid., p. 159.

¹³Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 260 Years: 1690-1950 (New York: MacMillan Company, revised edition 1960), p. 599.

CHAPTER V

SOB SISTERS: 1900-1910

Winifred Black, who eventually married Charles A. Bonfils younger brother of the Denver Post founder, enjoyed a newspaper career that might well arouse the envy of even the most experienced of today's reporters. Writing for Hearst's San Francisco Examiner, she covered the biggest news stories of her day--from the Galveston flood to the San Francisco earthquake. Her very presence at so many major events might have made her a newsworthy figure but it was the character of her paper's policy and her own social convictions which pushed her into the national limelight.

Miss Black's career paralleled in many ways the professional life of Nellie Bly. Once she landed a job with the Examiner, Winifred copied Nellie's example and promptly "fainted" in front of a receiving hospital, emerging four hours later with a full expose of the hospital's personnel.

Annie Laurie, as she was known primarily in the West, was amazingly resourceful and thorough in her

coverage of any event; her writing style, like Nellie's, was first-person and she brought to life for the reader the major protagonists in any conflict. As often as not, she was one of the protagonists.

Red-haired and strikingly attractive, Miss Black was a chorus girl with a touring theater company when she first saw San Francisco. She had written a few letters which were published in the Chicago Tribune and on the strength of these she went job hunting.

She approached Sam Chamberlain, the Examiner's managing editor. The newspaperman was dubious about her qualifications but Winifred rarely failed to bring a man around to her point of view. Mr. Chamberlain was no exception; he even took time out to critique her first news story:

This is a bad story. Very bad, indeed. We don't want fine writing in a newspaper. Remember that. There's a gripman on the Powell Street line--he takes his car out at three o'clock in the morning, and while he's waiting for the signals he opens the morning paper. It's still wet from the press, and by the light of his grip he reads it. Think of him when you're writing a story. Don't write a single word he can't understand and wouldn't read.¹

Winifred quickly acquired the necessary knack and when the Examiner's famous owner, William Randolph Hearst, succumbed to her charms. They met, not in the news room,

but in a park where he helped her to quiet a barking dog. Later he welcomed her into his inner councils--one of the few women to be so honored--and insisted that she alone write the obituary when his mother, Phoebe Hearst, passed away.

Though she is perhaps best remembered by Examiner readers for sentimental human interest stories such as the "Little Jim ward" articles written to aid in raising funds for a children's hospital,² Winifred's beat was literally the world. She covered everything from natural catastrophes to first ladies, and from visiting royalty to the most sensational criminal trials of her time. It was her coverage of the Thaw trial in 1907 that earned for her the dubious title of "sob sister."

The Thaw trial was a sensational rape case--its central characters were Evelyn Thaw and Stanford White. Evelyn was young and naive, "a pale and trembling child," while White was characterized as a villainous rich man--the case had every ingredient required by the sensational press of the day and it was played for every bit of reader interest they could find.

By this time the fine journalistic art of capturing each heartbeat and quick intake of breath had been perfected by the leading lady writers of the time; four of

them sat at a table in the center of the courtroom taking notes. One of their colleagues, Irvin Cobb, "looking a little wearily at the four fine-looking girls who spread their sympathy like jam, injected a scornful line into his copy about the 'sob sisters.'"³ The four thus branded were Winifred Black, Nixola Greeley-Smith, Dorothy Dix and Ada Patterson.

Nixola Greeley-Smith, the granddaughter of famous editor Horace Greeley, was perhaps unfairly classified when she was lumped with the sentimental writers of her day. Nixola joined the staff of the New York Evening World in 1901 and wasted no time in proving her skill as an interviewer; in fact, New York was so agog over Nixola's artful sketches of its leading citizens that one would think the interview a new art form.

Perhaps the reason for Nixola's success can best be gleaned from an excerpt of a speech which she gave at the Waldorf-Astoria. Addressing the Entertainment Club, she remarked:

I describe myself as a cream-colored journalist because I prefer the rich cream of fancy to the skimmed cream of the baldest fact. Some people I know don't like cream in their journalism any more than they do in their tea and I have no quarrel with them if they prefer lemon in both...A cream colored journalist is one who interviews a distinguished clergyman in the morning, stops by the Tombs to obtain the

views of a condemned murderer, gets a pen picture of a big Wall Street man, and then goes out of town and gets the opinion of a prima donna about some vital subject and telegraphs it in for the first edition the following morning ...If a man you are interviewing hasn't a personality, it is the correct thing to give him one, and if he hasn't sense or tact enough to express an opinion, you should branch out with a brilliant epigram or some other pearl of thought and wind up with the question, 'Don't you think so?'⁴

Whatever her technique--be it personal charm or outrageous impertinence--Nixola was renowned for her ability to capture the substance of her subject. Theadora Bean, a reporter for the New York Sun, gave public light to this skill when she quoted society matron Mary Heaton Vorse:

I pity the unwary who are interviewed by Nixola Greeley-Smith. She has the smile of a happy child, the inscrutability of a sphinx; she has wisdom and philosophy, yet behind the sweetest smile she hides a disdain and a bitterness that in point⁵ and scope can surpass anything I have ever known.

Evelyn Thaw's counsel, Delphin Delmas, was intrigued by the ladies' coverage of the trial:

What strikes me most forcibly in the accounts of the Thaw trial is the power of analysis and description displayed by the women writers...I would say that the writing of Miss Nixola Greeley-Smith is a most remarkable illustration of feminine intuition brought to a logical conclusion.⁶

In the public mind Dorothy Dix took up where Beatrice Fairfax left off; both played adviser to the

heart sick, but Miss Dix, whose real name is Elizabeth Meriwether Gilmer, was a flesh-and-blood reporter long before she became a lovelorn columnist.

Starting out on the New Orleans Times-Picayune, under the aegis of Pearl Rivers, Miss Dix covered most of the "big news" stories of the day. In 1901 she left the Picayune to join Hearst's New York Journal and from there went to the Philadelphia Ledger before attaching herself to the Wheeler Syndicate as a column counselor.

Miss Dix was in her sixties when she covered the Thaw trial; scarcely five feet tall, with silver hair, she looked strangely out of place among her more robust contemporaries.

Ada Patterson, youngest of the four sob sisters, began her career on the St. Louis Republican where she was known as the "Nellie Bly of the West." Though she performed her share of stunts, Miss Patterson's real forte was crime news; the New York American encouraged her in this talent and soon her by-line was a sure clue to the most important or sensational criminal trials of the day.

With grandmotherly concern, Dorothy Dix spent a portion of her Thaw trial sojourn instructing a fledgling illustrator named Nell Brinkley in the intricacies of

trial coverage. Miss Brinkley, who sold her first sketches at age thirteen, was nervous but determined to make good on her first big assignment for the New York Journal. She spent hours working on sketches of Evelyn Thaw, the jury, judge and the defendant. Apparently she need not have worried quite so much for it seems that her talent was obvious to everyone but Nell herself. Several years later she was persuaded to create the Fluffy Ruggles girl and thereafter:

Her pictures spread romance and glamour over the country like spun sugar. Her lovely girls, her dimpled babies, her fields of flowers, her floating bubbles, her young Adonis, became familiar wherever the Hearst syndicate feature appeared. She took the town by storm. The Nell Brinkley girl succeeded the Gibson girl. She started an era of curls, dimples and cuteness. There were Nell Brinkley hats, blouses and perfumes. Mae Murray launched the Nell Brinkley girl in a Follies scene, with the chorus in white satin, their costumes outlined in black.⁷ The same idea was repeated in a Parisian revue.

All this was pretty heady stuff for a girl who started out in Denver with only a vague idea of what newspapering was all about. Right out of high school Nell timidly approached the reigning monarchs of Denver-- Messieurs Bonfils and Tamm--and asked if they might be able to use one or two of her sketches. The Post's managing editor, Josiah Ward, agreed with the owners that the paper could use some illustration to offset the gaudy

red and black headlines and Nell was asked to submit some sample sketches. Soon Miss Brinkley was illustrating editorials as well as turning out quick likenesses of news personalities.

Sam Chamberlain, who had proved such a boon to Winifred Black's career, noticed the Post sketches and mentioned them to Hearst. Nell was promptly invited to New York, working first for the Journal then devoting her time exclusively to the Hearst syndicates.

Though Denver's Bonfils and Tammen were still a bit female-shy after Polly Pry, the shooting spree which climaxed her career with the Post did not sour them completely on lady news gatherers; in fact, the Denver and Kansas City Post's probably employed more ladies of the press than any other publications of this era. One of the most prominent of these was Frances "Pinky" Wayne.

The red-haired Mrs. Wayne started her newspaper career as society editor for the Denver Post and soon expanded her activities to include drama criticism (her frank reviews alienating both theater owners and advertisers). When the stage and social whirl became too tame, Pinky convinced the Post owners that she had earned a place on the paper's reporting staff. She covered strikes and politics, interviewed Presidents and murderers, then moved

to Bonfils' and Tammen's Kansas City Post and donned the cloak of a reformer.

Mrs. Wayne campaigned for improved psychiatric care and a multitude of other humanitarian causes which earned her numerous civic commendations and awards.

A number of Bonfils' and Tammen's best reporters divided their efforts between the Denver and Kansas City Post's. Elizabeth Kelly was one of these.

Elizabeth started her career on the Denver Times, working out a probationary period as society reporter before she was allowed to assume a regular reporting role. Her special "beat" became the criminal courts and her "sob-sister" style was applied to most of the major trials in the Post circulation area.

Malvina Lindsay landed a job on the Kansas City Post while she was still attending the University of Missouri's School of Journalism. She worked as a general reporter-photographer enjoying to the fullest the free range of assignments allowed by the Post. Her city editor, she remembers, would instruct her daily to "Go out and get a feature story."⁸ Each day she did just that, poking her nose into the comical and the criminal, writing human interest stories and "hard" news. In 1921, when the

Kansas City Journal bought out the Post, she moved east to become women's page editor for the Washington Post.

In Boston, Peris Dwight Hannah talked her way into a reporter's job on Frank Munsey's Boston Journal. Starting out at nothing-a-week, she worked her way up to \$40 a month, writing sob-type features and covering a variety of news beats. Later she wrote under the name Phoebe Dwight for the Boston Traveller and finally found her niche as "Ruth Cameron" a syndicated columnist.

Nell Brinkley was not the only woman whose artistic talents led her into newspaper work during this decade. Marguerite Martyn's distinctive sketches enabled her to hurdle the formidable obstacles put in her way by Oliver Kirby Bovard, city editor of Pulitzer's St. Louis Post Dispatch. According to Bovard's biographer, James Markham, the editor's aversion to women on his staff may be attributed to his basic chivalry toward the fair sex.

It was only fair to subject women reporters to the same rigors of the job as men, but he personally could not bring himself to do it. Two men were to be hanged for murder, and for some unaccountable reason, Bovard decided that the story might be more interesting if written from a woman's viewpoint. He asked Marguerite Martyn to go, and she reluctantly agreed. On the day of the hanging she gathered up her copy paper, pencils, and hat, knowing the boss was watching her but paying no attention. It was an assignment, and she had a wholesome respect for O. K. Bovard. A few minutes

before she was to leave, Bovard called out, 'Miss Martyn, take your hat off. Hurd, get over to the county jail and cover that hanging.

Carlos Hurd went and reported it the worst hanging⁹ he had ever witnessed.

Bovard reluctantly employed at least two more lady writers; Rose Marion became a city-side reporter and Mabel Green "pestered Bovard until he gave her a difficult detective job promising her a news staff position if she succeeded. She did succeed--by finding the missing defendant in an alienation of affections suit."¹⁰ A third girl, Lorene Squire, also owed her career to O.K.; Lorene was a photographer and her specialty was wildlife subjects. During his reign the Post Dispatch ran a number of roto-gravure displays of her photoes and Bovard "persuaded her to make a photographic expedition to his own favorite hunting grounds in Saskatchewan."¹¹

Following in the footsteps of Nixola Greeley-Smith, Marguerite Mooers Marshall joined the Sunday World in May 1909. Like Nixola, Miss Marshall was an adept interviewer but unlike her predecessor, who died before her thirty-ninth birthday, she was not trapped personally or professionally in the sob-sister style of her early career. Like most good reporters Miss Marshall simply

adjusted her style to fit the mood of her readers and the policy of her paper--she started as a sob-sister but as her audience and editors demanded greater sophistication she provided it. During her long career, Miss Marshall produced an impressive variety of fine writing including editorials, straight beat coverage, original trials, in-depth features and finally, in 1922, joined the staff of Hearst's Journal to write a column titled "Just Like A Woman."

Helen Dare, the derring-do-girl-reporter of log-riding fame on the San Francisco Examiner, showed a similar adaptability. Her early days with Hearst were devoted to stunts--the wilder the better--but her career reached a turning point in 1906 when she was first on the scene with reports about the San Francisco earthquake:

...she put across a neat piece of work on this occasion by sending through the first detailed story of the disaster. She started out for San Jose, looking for a telegraph office that was still intact. But the wires were down there, just as they were in San Francisco and Oakland. So she detoured through the San Joaquin Valley to Stockton, knowing that she had the story of a century, desperate to get it on the wire. At Stockton the telegraph office was about to close. But she happened to know the operator. She had once done him a service, so she dragooned him into action. The office stayed open. She managed to file 4,000 words of graphic copy before this wire petered out too. It was the first coherent eye-witness story of the earthquake to reach the outside world.¹²

Thereafter she devoted most of her energies to covering social reform movements and events.

Another California girl, Sophie Treadwell, upheld the sob sister tradition by writing personalized serials. Her best known appeared in the San Francisco Bulletin; it was called "An Outcast at the Christian Door." Inspired by her editor, Fremont Older, Sophie dressed as a "fallen woman" and went door to door to the city's leading Christian churches and institutions. "She was given a meal, advice, prayer, condemning looks, requests to depart --everything but a chance to make a living."¹³

In the Middle West Winona Wilcox Payne, daughter of the Cleveland Press editorial writer John Wilcox, began her newspaper career in 1905 when sob-sistering was at its height. Yet, Winona's work on the Penny Press from the very first was dazzlingly interpretive and logical; she wrote out of a deep understanding and sympathy with the Progressive Movement which was then sweeping the country and, as part of this, she heralded another movement--as yet unpopular--calling for woman suffrage.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER V

¹ Ross, Ladies, p. 61.

² Emery, op. cit., p. 418.

³ Ross, Ladies, p. 65.

⁴ Ross, Ladies, p. 87.

⁵ New York Sun, April 12, 1903, Sec. III, p. 3,
col. 1.

⁶ Ross, Ladies, p. 90.

⁷ Ross, Ladies, p. 416.

⁸ Ross, Ladies, p. 506.

⁹ James W. Markham, Bovard of the Post Dispatch
(Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954),
p. 159.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 159-160.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 159.

¹² Ross, op. cit., p. 577.

¹³ Evelyn Wells, Fremont Older (New York: D.
Appleton Century Co., Inc., 1936), p. 47.

CHAPTER VI

SUFFRAGETTES: 1910-1920

From the beginning of this survey in 1696 to about 1890, women's role in newspapering--and in most other lines of endeavor save teaching and nursing--remained fairly static. Women were a rarity in the newsroom; those whose energy, ability, ambition and enthusiasm earned them a place in the foregoing sections of this study were the exception rather than the rule in American life. However, in 1890 the situation was beginning to change.

"The Era of Women has dawned," proclaimed Arena magazine in 1891, "bearing the unmistakable prophecy of a far higher civilization than humanity has ever known before."¹

By 1910 "women's rights" had become, if not a popular cause, at least a frequent topic of discussion. As pointed out previously, newswomen had long been in the vanguard of this movement, both as organizers and sympathizers; they formed clubs and fostered new publications, dealing with everything from fashion to social reform,

but all with one underlying theme--the oneness of woman-kind.

Some of the most outstanding of these early feminists have already been dealt with in this survey: Jane Grey Swisshelm carried the women's banner into the Congressional Press Gallery, while Kate Field, Jennie June and Grace Greenwood strove to awaken their "sisters" to the latent potential within their own lives.

Mrs. Mabel Potter Daggett, who worked on the Philadelphia North American and the New York World early in her career, was one of the first newswomen to adopt the label "suffragist." As associate editor first of Hampton's Magazine, then the Delineator, Mrs. Daggett used these magazines as vehicles to present the suffrage platform whenever the opportunity arose.

The sob sisters Winifred Black, Ada Patterson, Dorothy Dix and Nixola Greeley-Smith, one and all, lent their talent and support to the cause of expanded opportunities for women. Nell Brinkley, the illustrator, and Marguerite Marshall did the same. Still, most of these ladies of the press, despite a natural prejudice on behalf of their own sex, maintained a reporter's objectivity when dealing with these subjects in print. Responding to Mrs. Oliver H. P. Belmont's "no vote, no

husband" campaign, Nixola Greeley-Smith wrote:

Possessing the established supremacy in the realm of emotion, why experiment with it at the risk of failure?...The slogan will win no votes, and possibly lose a great many husbands...a good thing for suffragettes to have, since it guarantees to them at least an audience of one.²

Ellen Scripps in the Midwest spent lavishly of the family money supporting woman suffrage, while Pinky Wayne in California and Sophie Treadwell in California lent their names to the movement.

By 1910 it might be simpler to list those news-women who did not involve themselves in suffrage than those who did. Between 1910 and 1920 the movement came of age--women were on the move seeking voting rights, better education, equal pay and greater job opportunities.

Somewhere in the midst of the tumultuous transition a young Pulitzer Prize winner was growing up. Edna Ferber, who attained the coveted award for her novel So Big in 1925, began her career, quite by accident, on her hometown newspaper in Wisconsin.

When Edna was a high school senior she and her father--as teenage girls and their fathers are wont to do--locked horns over the matter of an allowance. Both were strong-willed and their verbal battle reverberated through the neighborhood, but, as might be expected, Edna lost.

In the heat of fury she stomped downtown and into the office of the Appleton Crescent; with embarrassment rapidly draining the false courage of anger, she stammered to editor Sam Ryan that she was looking for a job. To her surprise, and her family's, Ryan had seen some of her work in the high school paper and hired her on the spot. In her autobiography, Miss Ferber recalls her Crescent days with obvious fondness:

There never had been a woman reporter in Appleton. The town, broadminded though it was, put me down as definitely cuckoo. Not crazy, but strange. Big-town newspapers, such as the Chicago Tribune and the Milwaukee Sentinel, employed women on their editorial and reportorial staffs, but usually these were what is known as special or feature writers; or they conducted question-and-answer columns or woman's pages. But at seventeen on the Appleton Crescent I found myself covering a regular news beat like any man reporter. I often was embarrassed, sometimes frightened, frequently offended and offensive, but I enjoyed it, and knowing what I know today I wouldn't swap that year and a half of small-town newspaper reporting for any four years of college education. I'm a blank when it comes to Latin, I can't bound New York State, and I count on my fingers, but in those eighteen months I learned to read what lay behind the look that veiled people's faces, I learned how to sketch in human beings with a few rapid words, I learned to see, to observe, to remember; learned, in short, the first rules of writing...³

Working at a "shaky pine table in the darkest, smallest, dustiest corner of that dark, small and dusty room which constituted the Crescent editorial department," Edna learned the rules of reporting. "We worked in a

clattering heap," she recalls, "Sam Ryan, editor and proprietor, kinged it at a roll-top which was marked off from the rest of the room by a chicken-wire fence, heaven knows why, unless it was to prevent him from hurling paste pots at us, or infuriated reporters from throwing scissors at him."⁴

Lorena Hickok attended Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin just a few years after Edna Ferber left to join the Milwaukee Journal ending her reign as the town's one and only girl reporter. Discouraged by the fact that her youth kept her from a teaching position she wanted, Lorena abandoned college and, inspired by Miss Ferber's first book Dawn O'Hara (the account of her own newspapering experiences), landed a job on the Milwaukee Sentinel. Her flair for news writing was apparent from the very first.

Lorena did not espouse women's equality, she practiced it. Frequently she was the sole woman reporter covering such major events as presidential campaigns. In 1917 she joined the Chicago Tribune and after a brief fling at the New York papers, she returned to the Minneapolis Tribune as Sunday editor. Her stories for the Tribune--including sports pieces and editorials--brought dozens of community awards and professional recognition.

After a brief term on the New York Mirror, Lorena became one of Associated Press' brightest stars.

Rheta Dorr, who eventually gained world-fame as a foreign correspondent covering the Russian Revolution was nudged into newspaper work by her feminist convictions.

As a college girl Rheta was most concerned with art and drama; her life's ambition was to play Nora in Ibsen's Doll House. However, in 1893, she married John P. Dorr, a man twenty years her senior, and settled down to have a family. But, domesticity just did not appeal to her.

She was filled with the consuming fires of discontent. She scrapped Jane Austin; read the moderns. She argued endlessly with her husband for she believed that men and women should live on absolutely equal terms...Her husband could not understand her strange interests. He thought that women should not budge from the nursery and fireside. So she left him and returned to New York in 1898 with \$500, a two-year-old child, a marriage adrift.⁵

Writing first for the New York Sun, then for the Mail and the Herald Tribune, Miss Dorr covered every assignment given her but frequently handed in unsolicited stories as well; invariably these extracurricular articles dealt with "the movement." Early in her career, the reading public associated Rheta Dorr as much with the suffrage movement as with her professional expertise--

again and again her name was linked with the feminists, including England's Mrs. Christabel Pankhurst and Alice Paul of America's Women's Party. It is said that Rheta had to be led, screaming, from the docks when immigration officials declined to include her in the quarantine they had prescribed for the newly-arrived Mrs. Pankhurst.⁶

Still, Mrs. Dorr was bewildered by the seemingly contradictory sides of the English leader's nature: She described her as a "Victorian lady who had a Pomeranian to which she loved to talk baby-talk, and she adored sitting with her feet on a hassock sewing yards of lace on dainty muslin underwear."⁷

Catherine Brody carried her suffrage convictions into the newsroom; a member of several women's press associations she constantly labored for better pay and opportunity for her sister reporters and perpetually pestered her city editor on the New York World to run additional stories about the movement. Perhaps the most successful of her efforts was her own personalized serial, "What Happens When a Girl Goes Job Hunting." Miss Brody conceived of this idea and, after finally wrangling her paper's permission to carry it out, toured twenty cities--seeking work in each associated with the town's major industry. In Detroit she worked for an automobile factory,

in Chicago she found employment in a packing plant; she stayed one week in each city, turning out a 5,000 word story on each which described job requirements and opportunities, pay levels, co-workers, working and living conditions.

Russian-born Sophie Irene Loeb was also a World reporter with feminist convictions. However, her social conscience involved her in much more besides; in 1910 Miss Loeb launched her own investigation of child welfare in New York City. Personally touring the poorer sections of the metropolis, interviewing fatherless families and orphanage directors, she wrote article after article, following up each with her own brand of lobbying.

Miss Loeb's reputation as a reformer has no equal in journalistic circles. In direct response to her activities the New York State Commission for the Relief of Widowed Mothers was set up in 1913. Housing relief, penny lunches for public school children, sanitary and fireproof laws for all city buildings were stirred into being by her agitation. Miss Loeb served as president of the State Board of Child Welfare and, because she was an authority on city traffic as well, she frequently acted as mediator in the city's transportation disputes.

Three gallant girl reporters--Ruth Byers, Anne Dunlap, Geraldine Fitch--and a young photographer named Josephine Higgins, worked side by side with male contemporaries on the New York American; they covered crime news, celebrities, politics and features, earning respect wherever they went.

During this era Mary Taft and Jane Grant accomplished the impossible, winning jobs on the New York Times under the aegis of editor Carr Van Anda. Mr. Van Anda's disapproval of women reporters was legendary--yet these two young women, both among the founders of the Lucy Stone League, passed his careful scrutiny with flying colors.

Miss Taft's and Miss Grant's success as general reporters for the Times paved the way for religious editor Rachel McDowell and a girl who served for a short time as a reviewer for the Sunday edition, Ruth Hale.

Miss Hale, whose writing style was highly polished and intellectual, began her career as a reporter and drama critic for the Philadelphia Ledger. She married columnist Heywood Broun and with his support campaigned hard for women's rights. She became a news "item" when she put up a successful fight on the passport issue and became the first woman to go abroad under her maiden name.⁸

Ruth and Heywood, and Jane Grant and her spouse, Harold Ross of the New Yorker, were frequent social companions. They also represented a branch of the famed Round Table of New York's Algonquin Hotel. Dorothy Parker was the high priestess of this group; her pithy epigrams were enshrined for posterity in Franklin P. Adam's World column, called "The Coming Tower."⁹

Among the witty remarks attributed to Dorothy by numerous news columnists were these: Upon learning that Calvin Coolidge had died, she asked, "How could they tell?" Her review of a Katherine Hepburn play noted that the leading actress "ran the whole gamut of emotions, from A to B." And, Miss Parker's most famous poem, unfortunately, is still quoted today: "Men seldom make passes, at girls who wear glasses."¹⁰

It is generally acknowledged that a great many of the quips attributed to Dorothy Parker did not originate with her, but the legend persists. She wrote novels, short stories, poems and screenplays; for a time she was a book reviewer and drama critic for the World, but she is still best known for her columns in Vanity Fair and the New Yorker.

Despite the inroads which Miss Taft and Miss Grant were making within the New York Times hierarchy of editors,

it was obvious, even to them, that the paper maintained an intrinsic prejudice toward the fair sex. Following the practice of most major metropolitan papers, the Times assigned "women's" stories to their female writers until they became front-page news at which point a man was called in. Miss Taft, who had covered the humdrum suffrage events for nearly a decade before they began to hit the front pages, was infuriated by the number of male colleagues who were suddenly assigned this beat. At her urging a number of women's groups and suffrage leaders threatened to boycott the Times on the grounds of discrimination but nothing ever came of the effort.

The newswomen on the New York Herald Tribune had better success. When Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst was detained on Ellis Island, interrupting her scheduled suffrage meetings, a man was assigned to cover the story. Eleanor B. Simmons, Emma Bugbee, Evangeline Cole, Ethel Peyser and Christine Vallean complained to publisher Ogden Reid and editor Milton Snyder that the assignment was unfair; they pointed out that they had crisscrossed the city, the state and the nation at times following people like Dr. Shaw, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt and Mrs. Belmont and were better equipped than any man to handle suffrage stories in their own front yard. On the eve of a major 1912 suffrage parade

in New York, the Tribune's editor and publisher succumbed to this persuasion, giving the girls total freedom to cover the story without male interference. In the next edition, the paper triumphantly carried nine columns chronicling the occasion--two of them on the front page.¹¹

Earlier in her career, while a reporter on the Sun, Miss Simmons had gained overnight notoriety when she interviewed authoress Rebecca West in a New York hotel room. The British novelist, apparently, was in no mood to be questioned, but she did condescend to preach to the girl reporter in a bored, impatient manner as she dressed and bathed.

Miss Simmons wrote a devastatingly satirical report of the interview which prompted Tribune columnist Heywood Broun to award her his mythical annual "\$1,000,000 prize for the best story of the year," while Alexander Woollcott called her work "artful, convincing and delicately murderous." Harper's Magazine, which ran a great deal of Miss West's work, was shocked into questioning the young woman's motives.¹²

During this decade the United States was slowly surfacing from its own internal social upheaval. Domestically the nation was concentrating its energies and enthusiasm on reform; unscrupulous bankers and businessmen

were blamed for the country's ills and those with a social conscience--most flying the banner of Progressivism--were going to set it right.

Ida Tarbell became a leading "muckraker" of the day. Braving the wrath of big business and calling into question America's sovereign money-making ethic, Ida wrote a multisectioned expose in 1904 for McClure's magazine titled: "History of the Standard Oil Company." She gave public light to the power and abuses of large, monopolistic corporations and aroused an audience which would subsequently savour the works of her contemporaries: Lincoln Steffens' "Shame of the Cities," Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle," and Frank Norris' "The Octopus,"--books which revealed corruption in urban government, the meatpacking industry and in the railroads.

Meanwhile, another lady publisher, Mary Baker Eddy, was coming under attack. Though Mrs. Eddy's writing output probably rivaled that of any contemporary reporter, her notoriety had little to do with her journalistic efforts; as a religious leader--founder of Christian Science and the Christian Science Monitor--Mrs. Eddy became a highly controversial figure. In the summer of 1906 Willa Cather turned out an unsigned fourteen-installment.

It was a study of Mary A. Morse Baker Patterson Glover Eddy--her antecedents, her childhood and schooling, her striking eccentricities, her various marriages, her fitful relationships with her natural son and her adopted son, her career as poetess and invalid, her ultimate emergence as full-blown theologian and architect of a new religion...¹³

Applying such self-righteous fervor to cleaning up their own ills, Americans also tended to view the world's problems in a highly moral light. The United States practiced political isolationism but at the same time maintained a detached interest in the muddle that others were making of the international scene. During this period more newspapers had foreign correspondents abroad than at any other time in the country's history; some of these long-distance reporters were women.

Having proved their capabilities on the domestic front, more and more women were given an opportunity to show what they could do abroad. Following in the fearless footsteps of Anna Benjamin, a group of girl reporters followed Mexican bandit chieftain Francisco "Pancho" Villa to his hide-out in northern Mexico.

"Pinky" Wayne, of the Kansas City Post, Sophie Treadwell, from California's Call-Bulletin, Jane Dixon, of the New York Telegram and a young photojournalist named Sadie Miller, working for Leslie's Weekly, quizzed the

bandit leader on his abortive attempts to gain control of his country.

Sadie Miller, who began her writing career with baseball stories signed S.K.M., rarely missed an opportunity to photograph the world's hot spots. As the United States entry into World War I became more and more imminent, Sadie headed for the war zone. She took pictures of German war machines and fortifications and was arrested as an English spy; fortunately the Germans were forced to release her before the United States had become a formal combatant and Sadie promptly turned the photos which she had secreted away over to the British government.

Another enterprising newswoman who spent some time in jail as a spy was Marguerite Harrison, of the Baltimore Sun. Marguerite traveled to France as a war correspondent in 1916 and soon after began leading the double-life of reporter and government agent. Ironically, Miss Harrison throughout her war years was never suspected of anything greater than press prejudice by the French and Germans, yet when she traveled to the Soviet Union eight months after the armistice she was promptly thrown into jail as a spy and was hardpressed to explain that she was merely looking for local color.

However, the real headliners in the war correspondence field were Peggy Hull, Sigrid Schultz, Rheta Dorr and Bessie Beatty.

Peggy Hull was "the only woman to get an accredited pass from the War Department."¹⁴ Working for a syndicate called the Newspaper Enterprise Association, Peggy covered the American Expedition to Siberia. Peggy found it highly amusing that she should be the first woman to gain the government's sanction as a war correspondent in light of the fact that it took her months to line up an editor who was willing to send her.

Peggy began her career on the Cleveland Plain Dealer and, until 1916, she was a devotee of the Nellie Bly school of journalism. Her last manufactured news item before the war was purely and simply an advertising stunt--she had herself "held up" by a masked bandit to publicize a particular bank.

This kind of ingenuity is not generally considered the stuff of which war correspondents are made, but Peggy was determined to see the war from the front lines. She toured the country in search of a newspaper which would back her, and failing to find a sponsor, boarded a ship bound for France to become a foreign freelancer. Peggy arrived with the first American troops in Paris and flooded

wire service offices with her copy. When her money ran out she returned home, tramping through fifty more editorial offices before the NEA finally assigned her Siberia.

Other women who covered Russia during the war years included Anna Louise Strong, Rayna Prohme, Clare Sheridan, Milly Bennett Mitchel and Louise Bryant. Bessie Beatty, of the San Francisco Call-Bulletin, and Rheta Dorr, representing the New York Mail, covered the Russian Revolution in 1917.

Together they visited the Battalion of Death; for nine days they slept on the rough wood planking, ate the same weak soup, and viewed the terrors of front-line warfare with these women who were commanded by a big peasant woman named Botchkereva.

Later Miss Dorr traveled to Moscow interviewing Grand Duchess Serge, sister of the Czarina, and Anna Alexandrovna Virubova, an intimate of the famed Rasputin. When she returned home, Rheta wrote a five-week series for the Mail on her experiences and later expanded upon these articles to create a book entitled Inside the Russian Revolution.

Bessie Beatty also wrote a book chronicling this

period, called The Red Heart of Russia. When she and Miss Dorr split up after their brief stay with the Battalion of Death, she crisscrossed the Russian countryside talking to the "little people" and soaking up the atmosphere of the country. She was one of the few reporters permitted to interview Catherine Breshkovskaya, a member of the royal family known as the "Little Grandmother of Russia," and she returned to Russia in 1921 to interview Lenin and Trotsky.

Sigrid Schultz reported on the war for the Chicago Tribune. When the armistice was signed she was rewarded with a promotion, becoming the head of that paper's Berlin bureau.

Before the war Alice Rohe, sister-in-law of Roy Howard, served as bureau manager for United Press. She became an expert Italy-watcher, scooping even the native press in events of major importance. She interviewed most of the country's important personages--talking several times with Mussolini himself.

On the home front, Cora Rigby became the first woman to head a Washington bureau. Miss Rigby worked first for the New York Mail, then for the Herald, before moving to the Christian Science Monitor during the war years.

Her work as the Monitor's Washington bureau chief gained her wide political and professional recognition.

Zoe Beckley traveled to Europe three times on the money she earned as a typist long before she even thought of taking up a career which could make such pleasure a legitimate business expense.

Zoe learned to use the new fangled typing machine at age four and her nimble fingers earned her living from the time she was sixteen years old. She typed everything from real estate contracts and detective's reports to manuscripts; she was typing articles part-time for the New York Press when women's page columnist Helen Rowland suggested she try writing.

At first Zoe was incredulous at the idea, then she began to examine closely the material which was flying out of her machine and decided that she could write at least as well as her various employers. The Press' Sunday editor, Richard J. Spillane, bought a few of her short pieces as fillers and from then on there was no stopping Miss Beckley. In 1919 she joined the staff of the Evening World--her assignment, Europe!

Traveling through Central Europe for ten months, Zoe covered every VIP, news event and feature that cropped up in her path. With a patience born of delight with her

surroundings, Zoe managed to capture on film and in print personalities that her competitors had given up on. It was Zoe who supplied the United States with its first glimpse of Kaiser Wilhelm since the end of the war; she studied the routine of his household, ferreted out the routes he was most likely to take and, with the help of a neighboring family was standing within three feet of his carriage when he passed by. Not content with one look, she returned twice more--getting good photos of him and a story--and, incidentally, a courtly bow from the All-Highest.

Next Zoe astonished the folks back home by striking up a friendship with Rumania's Queen Marie. It was Zoe who persuaded the Queen to write a series of articles for the Famous Features Syndicate in 1920.

Miriam Teichner, who played a big part in the New York State Woman's Suffrage Party, went to Europe first on the Ford Peace Ship. She considered this experience a disaster and in the intervening years did straight news reporting for the New York Globe before returning to the Continent in 1919 to write human interest features about the people who inhabited the ruins of post-war Europe.

Back home, newspaperwomen were just getting used to the personalized style of "sob" and "suffrage" writing

which had represented a gentle swing away from the exploitation of an earlier epoch, when the pendulum careened back to plunge the newspaper sorority once again into the dizzying depths of sensationalism. In the summer of 1919 the Daily News was born in New York ushering in an epidemic of "tabloids" which clamored with "incessant noxious appeal to whatever is base and evil in human nature"¹⁵ for mass readership.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

¹"The Era of Women" Arena, Vol. 4, August 1891, p. 382.

²Ross, Ladies, p. 92.

³Edna Ferber, A Peculiar Treasure (New York: The Literary Guild of America, Inc., 1939), p. 103.

⁴Ibid., p. 105.

⁵Ross, Ladies, p. 112.

⁶David Mitchell, The Fighting Pankhursts: A Study in Tenacity (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 324.

⁷Rheta Childe Dorr, Susan B. Anthony: The Woman Who Changed the Mind of a Nation (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1928), p. 117.

⁸Dale Kramer, Ross and the New Yorker (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1951), p. 38.

⁹Ibid., pp. 40-43.

¹⁰John Keats, You Might As Well Live: The Life and Times of Dorothy Parker (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1970) p. 10.

¹¹Catt, op. cit., p. 538.

¹²Ross, Ladies, p. 121.

¹³Lyon, op. cit., p. 299.

¹⁴Mott, American Journalism, p. 622.

¹⁵Kelly, op. cit., p. 458.

CHAPTER VII

TABLOID HEROINES: 1920-1930

Flooding New York City newsstands with monstrosities of page make-up, composite pictures and sensationalism, health cultist Bernarr Macfadden's Evening Graphic was easily the "zaniest" tabloid of them all.

Female reporters for the Graphic were used frankly for their sex appeal--their writing ability, or lack thereof, was inconsequential.

A male colleague recalls Grace Perkins, one of the first and best-known of the Graphic's feminine press corps, as "rather tall, pleasant, well-mannered, with big, luminous grey eyes..."¹

This same colleague, Lester Cohen, described Grace's activities on September 15, 1924:

On this the Graphic's first day, she was on her way cheerily--or at least so it seemed--to the subways, where she would be 'Miss Courtesy,' another of our promotions. If you gave her your seat in the subway, she would give you something redeemable for one dollar--that is, if you got to see the Contest Editor of the Graphic...

To help you identify Miss Perkins--oops, Miss Courtesy--there was a two-column picture of her in a bathing suit all down the front page. (Mr.

Macfadden believed in the Body Beautiful). And, just to help you out, we printed a diagram of her route--that is, the subways she would take.²

The above-mentioned photo almost lost the Graphic its mailing permit, for postal inspectors--a stuffy lot--felt that the picture of Miss Perkins bordered on the pornographic.

Another Graphic girl reporter, Alma Sioux Scarberry (also listed in some accounts as Alma Semberry), "a tall girl, part Indian, good looking, with black hair and big eyes, skinny but curvaceous,"³ gained celebrity status as an actress, appearing in the Music Box Revue. Nevertheless, she attributed her start in the theater to the fact that her picture was so often incorporated into the phony composite pix created by the Graphic--one of these shows Alma and Grace Perkins as the nurses in attendance, while the paper's editor and another reporter play "surgeon" and "unidentified doctor" to Rudolph Valentino.

Alma was actually listed as the Graphic's society editor "who sits in the seat of the high and mighty, wields the scepter of decision over society and decides whose name shall cross the threshold of that maker and breaker of folks socially--namely, 'The Blue Book.'"⁴

Returning victorious from the war "over there," Americans took up their old lives with a new confidence in the character of their country. With the rest of the world torn by war and senseless bickering, it had taken the United States "to make the world safe for democracy;" a buoyant optimism born of new prosperity pervaded the nation and the tabloid "learned to time its beat with the pulse of the common people."⁵

Tabloid historian Simon Bessie describes these rowdy news sheets as "a journalistic mirror of the era," reflecting "a pattern which included speakeasies, jazz, collegiate whoopee, bathing beauting, movie-star worship, big-time sports and many other gigantic exaggerations."⁶

By 1920 newswomen were no longer rare; they numbered 5,730 or 16.7 per cent of reporters and editors.⁷ News writing had become a fairly respectable profession when suddenly the tabloids plunged them once again into the sham and personal exploitation that had characterized the stunt age. It is interesting to note that many of them resurrected the practice of writing under a pseudonym as they mastered the new tabloid vernacular:

The succinct terminology of the tabs began to gain ground and get into general currency--lovenests, gin mills, torch murders, cry-baby bandits, bobbed-hair bandits, sugar daddies, on

the spot, trigger men, crooners, gang slayings, muscling in, death pacts, heart balm, wonder girl, dream babies, tiger woman, and torso murders. The blondes were always svelte; the brunettes were vivacious. Each new crime launched its own phrase.⁸

Murders, suicides and sex blanketed the front pages--only a Lindbergh flight or kidnapping, an English Channel swim, or Valentino's death could pry these staples loose.

The Hall-Mills murder trial in 1926 is an excellent example; the trial had every ingredient required by the sensational press of the day and it was played for every speck of reader interest. A survey conducted of the space given this one event revealed that the New York Times milked 528,300 words from the story while the American gave it 347,700 and the Daily News wrapped it up in a mere 223,400.⁹

The major components of the crime could be described briefly enough: Reverend Harold Hall and a member of his congregation and choir, Mrs. Eleanor Mills, were found murdered, together, beneath a tree in the rector's orchard. The minister's wife, Mrs. Frances Noel Hall, was tried for their murders in 1926. (Mrs. Hall was finally acquitted for lack of evidence and many years later it was determined that the deaths resulted from a suicide

pact.)

Piling up hundreds of column inches on this event for their respective papers were: Mazie Clemens, Jane Dixon, Julia Harpman, Julia McCarthy and Bernadine Szold.

Mazie Clemens, a devil-may-care reporter for the World, figured most prominently in the trial because she sat briefly as a witness--she had been walking her dog Freckles near the Hall home on the morning the bodies were discovered.

Jane Dixon, a United Press correspondent, capably covered a variety of assignments. Besides the Hall-Mills trial, she also chronicled the Lindbergh flight, the Lindbergh kidnapping and the Hauptmann trial for her news service. Jane even gained some notoriety outside her own profession with her exclusive interviews of Pancho Villa in northern Mexico and her singular status as the first woman to report on a prize fight (...she also made the social columns when she dated Jack Dempsey for a brief time). Additionally, Jane was often quoted as a "source close to" Mrs. Warren Harding. Miss Dixon had worked for the Hardings in Ohio, long before they reached the White House; when the First Lady was reluctant to speak to the press en masse, she often sought out her young friend to express her views.

It was Julia Harpman, of the New York Daily News, who scooped the police by finding the sole witness in the case--Mrs. Jane Gibson, the "pig woman" who accused Mrs. Hall of the murders. Julia and Bernadine Szold, also of the Daily News, covered this trial together as they did many such crime stories; once they teamed up to trap a suspect into confessing a crime they were sure he had committed. Knowing his interest in spiritualism, they created an elaborate setting in Miss Szold's apartment--including a throne and crystal ball--hoping he would confide in "Madame Astra." Julia, who had befriended the man, brought him to the apartment and waited behind a black curtain with Daily News editor Phil Payne while Bernadine, playing the title role, conjured up the spirit world for the crafty suspect. It made an interesting evening but the man kept his sins to himself and thereafter the two reporters left confession-getting to the police.

Julia, who started her career on the Memphis Commercial Appeal, covered everything from Klu Klux Klan activities to prize fights and the World Series. She made headlines herself in 1920: While flying to Atlantic City to write a feature on Luis Firpo, in training for his title

bout with Jack Dempsey, she and a friend, Murrow Krum, plunged a thousand feet into the ocean. Miraculously neither was hurt and a boat picked them up before Julia even got wet.

Of the women included in this survey almost eighty per cent either came from newspaper families or married newspapermen. One of the most interesting of these couples was Julia Harpman and Westbrook Pegler.

The famous columnist and sports writer was working for United Press when he met Julia in 1920. Pegler arrived tardily at the scene of a murder in West Seventieth Street--the police and coroner had left, so had his competitors, but a young reporter from the Daily News was still snooping the premises looking for more detail. Pegler explained his predicament and the girl, fresh from Tennessee, supplied him with his story. Julia soon learned the consequences of aiding the competition, but she was never sorry about this particular instance. Soon afterward, Miss Harpman suffered severe injuries in a taxi crack-up and during a long stay in the hospital she and Westbrook, a frequent visitor there, became good friends.

Pegler's biographer, Oliver Pilat, recalls the drama which surrounded a climatic moment in their relationship:

Making up his mind during the World Series, Westbrook sent a letter to Julie, still in the hospital with a fractured spine, preparing her in arch terms for a treasure which would fore-shadow a closer relationship. Eventually his present reached the hospital, gift-wrapped in a square box larger than would have been required for the trinket which Julie had in mind. Her fingers trembled so out of weakness and nervousness that she asked a nurse to open the package. There it was: a pledge of indescribable and eternal love from a sportswriter--a genuine, autographed Babe Ruth baseball.¹⁰

Julia and Westbrook were married on August 29, 1922 and each maintained an amused attitude toward the other's work. Julie laughed at the awe with which Pegler approached certain sports figures and he scoffed at her newest assignment, "The Inside Dope on Movie Stars," a column on Hollywood's naughty luminaries which ran in the Sunday News:

Her pieces described how William S. Hart, the 'tight-lipped, thin-hipped' stalwart of the Westerns, had been called a cream puff by Winifred Westover during their honeymoon; how a friend of Rudolph Valentino and Charlie Chaplin, the Latin and Limehouse lovers, concealed a family skeleton in her closet; and how Lew Cody, the he-vamp, was really a butterfly man. This kind of tabloid pap was probably no more vulgar and cynical than the tripe produced by many sportswriters. At least Julie did it well; she was soon offered the job on a permanent basis.¹¹

Julie refused the job and went back to straight reporting. She and "Peg" covered another big event of the 20's together--Trudy Ederle's record breaking 14-hours

and 31-minute swim of the English Channel. Later Julie gave up her own career, traveling with her husband around the world. Frequently, when Peg was sick, Julie would write his column for him--as she did when they covered the Geneva summit conference in 1952.

Julia McCarthy, who worked first for the New York Journal under the name Margery Rex, joined the New York Mirror in 1928. A list of her stories might well constitute a catalogue of tabloid topics for she covered crime, cults and celebrities throughout the gaudy era of jazz journalism.

The tabloids flourished in New York, providing more work for women writers than ever before. The Mirror boasted Lady Terrington, Ruth Phillips and Helen Hadakin and a spatter of face-less by-lines including--Fay King, Gladys Glad, Sally Martin, Elizabeth Leonard and Beatrice Fairfax. The Daily News, besides Julie Harpman and Bernadine Szold, had on its staff some of the finest reporters in the city; among these were Imogene Stanley, Irene Kuhn, Irene Thirer and Grace Robinson. But the News too had its share of anonymous signatures including Marion Stewart, Nancy Randolph, Doris Blake, Elinor Ames, Antoinette Donnelly and Gladys Huntington Bevans. Edna

Ferguson and Norma Abrams both wrote features for the Sunday News.

Dorothy Dayton is one of the few tabloid reporters--as astonishing as it may seem--whose dauntless determination to "get the story at all costs," cost her more dearly than she had expected. On March 13, 1926, the New York World ran this headline on page one: "Dorothy Dayton Clubbed by Police."

Dorothy, who was a New York Sun reporter, and C. B. Allen, of the World, were covering a strike in Passaic, New York. They taxied into a harried swarm of police, who had just dispersed a mob of 3,000 with fire hoses. The two reporters were requested, ungently, to leave the scene. Dorothy was hit on the arm, but not really hurt, and Allen had his camera smashed.

Still, it was not the first time that Dorothy's efforts on behalf of her profession had evoked public concern. She began her career on the Daily Oklahoman. Following carefully in the footsteps of Nellie Bly and Winifred Black, she spent two weeks in the State penitentiary at McAlester, Oklahoma. When she got out she wrote a series of fourteen articles describing in detail the inhumanity of that institution. Unexpectedly, she aroused

more sympathy for herself than indignation over the prison.

Miss Dayton became famous in the district. She was invited to speak at an Evangelical meeting. A minister turned to her as a martyr and said, 'This poor little girl. Her soul is seared through by the terrible experiences she has gone through.' She did not feel that her soul had been seared in the least. She had merely done a good job of reporting. But she could not quell the solicitude of the reformers.¹² They named the Dorothy Dayton chapel for her...

The girls who "reported" for the tabloids were, for the most part, as familiar to their readers as the characters in some of today's long-running television series. Like the soap opera stars, their names and accomplishments provided much of the meat for topical discussions and humor. Yet, one of these succeeded in capturing the fancy of that sentimental-and sensation-hungry audience as no one else had done before or after. Her name was Imogene Stanley, but to many, she was simply "the beautiful girl in green who danced with the Prince of Wales."¹³

John Chapman describes the incident from memory:

Any reporter who remembers Miss Stanley then sighs over her now, recalling her as the most beautiful female who ever carried a police card. She was the perfect flapper in a flapper age, slim of figure, possessed of an exquisitely chiseled face and big, deceptively mournful eyes. The most beautiful male in the world, the Prince of

Wales--now the Duke of Windsor--was making his first visit to this continent. He was not to come to the United States, which he later made his playground, but he was due for a sojourn in Montreal. This stopover included a ball, and every Montreal mother, as she dressed her daughter for the party, hoped that the royal visitor would be smitten by the daughter and carry her off to his castle like the prince in a fairy tale. Newspaper people from the United States were admitted by sufferance to this greatest event in Canadian social history.

The News assigned Imogene Stanley to do the job...¹⁴

Nevertheless, from this point on the story becomes a bit clouded. There is no doubt that the young prince was captivated by the beautiful girl wearing a brilliant green evening gown, or that he sent an equerry to ask her to dance, or that he monopolized her dances for the rest of the evening and talked with her in complete candor of his life as heir to the British throne; the confusion comes over whether Miss Stanley did or did not write the subsequent story--"How I Danced with the Prince of Wales."

As John Chapman recalls the story, Miss Stanley sent a telegram to her editor as deadline approached which said simply: "Sorry I haven't been able to file. Have been dancing with the Prince of Wales."¹⁵ This much can be confirmed. However, according to Chapman, another reporter in the News office was then impressed to write

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the stilted, almost impersonal story, which appeared under Imogene's by-line the next day. "Upon returning from her assignment," says Chapman, "Miss Stanley seemed gravely hurt. Her dance with the prince was a personal and wonderful affair, and she felt that the fake story about it was an invasion of privacy."¹⁶

That the entire affair was an emotional experience for Miss Stanley is certain. However, Ishbel Ross, who interviewed the News reporter years later, claims that Imogene herself wrote the strangely impersonal account for her own paper, while every other publication in New York and Canada chatted dreamily of "the beautiful girl in green who danced with the Prince of Wales."

According to Miss Ross, Imogene was so overcome with guilt over tricking the charming prince into talking to her (he did not know until the next morning, when she confessed to him, that she was a reporter), that she could not bring herself to expose his confidences:

She filed a story describing the evening in a detached way, not using the personal pronoun. Only the initiated newspaper reader would gather from it that Imogene herself had danced with the Prince of Wales. A picture ran beside it identifying her as the mystery woman in green.¹⁷

Another Prince-of-Wales-watcher was Alva Taylor, of the Daily News. Alva's beat was men's fashions and,

since the Prince spent most of his time introducing new clothes and new dance steps, she kept New Yorker's constantly informed of the royal heir's shirts, ties, shoes, suits and hats.

Nellie Bly made her last sensational splash in New York, after a ten-year absence, by becoming the first woman to witness an execution at Sing Sing on January 30, 1920. Nellie wrote the story of Gordon Hamby's last moments for the New York Journal thus aiding in the birth of a new journalistic era--one which paralleled very closely her own. Though Nellie did not live to see it through to its conclusion (she died on January 28, 1922), virtually no metropolitan newspaper escaped the influence of the tabloid epoch. "Even the eminently respectable New York Times reflected it...For the first Tunney-Dempsey prize-fight in 1926, the Times used the same size front-page headline with which it had announced the Armistice."¹⁸

In Los Angeles, Agnes Underwood, working first with Gertrude Price at the L.A. Record and later as city editor of the Herald-Express pioneered West Coast sensationalism along with the flamboyant Adela Rogers St. Johns. Marjorie Driscoll joined the San Francisco Chronicle in 1919, after a six-year stint as city editor on the Pasadena Star. Miss Driscoll's excellent coverage of

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President Harding's death in California brought her and her staff numerous newspaper awards; one of the girls who worked for her on this story was Geraldine Sartain. Miss Sartain spread the tabloid fever to Hawaii when she joined the staff of the Star-Bulletin in Honolulu in 1924, specializing in exposes of the islands' crime syndicates.

Mary Mahoney also specialized in gangland crime; her beat was Boston and her paper, the Globe, frequently found its star reporter in court testifying on behalf of, or against, the criminals she had coaxed out of hiding for the police. Ruth Mugglebee was performing the same sort of service for the Boston American while Mary Elizabeth Prim belied her name with hard-hitting features for the Transcript.

In Chicago, a city renowned for its criminal element, Peggy Doyle turned out gangster and gore stories for the Herald-Examiner, while Evelyn Shuler made press history in Philadelphia, going to jail briefly for posing as a lawyer. Miss Shuler's favorite feature material came from the city's racketeers; she joined the Philadelphia Ledger in 1918 and for the next ten years donned disguises and climbed fire escapes, willingly jeopardizing her own safety time and again in order "to get the goods on the hoods."

Agnes Underwood in Los Angeles was not the only woman to break the newsroom editorial barrier during this period; in Oregon, Helen Havener was made city editor of the Portland Press and Laura Vitray earned the same post with the New York Graphic. Katherine Scarborough became the first woman copy editor on the New York Sun and Helen Rogers Reid attained the unattainable by becoming a vice-president of the New York Herald Tribune.

By this decade, the newspaper business itself had grown to be such a complicated entity that those women who labored in the rarified atmosphere of the upper echelons made news by the simple fact of their positions. To be sure, Helen Rogers had married into the right family to reach the top but her capable handling of the paper's advertising brought her recognition and respect.

There are few women who occupy positions of high executive authority on large metropolitan newspapers. In other words, there are few women publishers. This is not wholly a matter of sex, however. After all, there are but a limited number of such positions in the whole industry, and it is but natural that most of these should be filled by men. Which makes all the more interesting the personality of a woman who through her own ability, her flair for journalistic leadership and management, is able to steer the course of one of the country's largest, oldest, most influential, and most highly respected newspapers.¹⁹

This preface preceded a personality profile of

Mrs. Reid written by Mona Gardner for the Saturday Evening Post.

In 1911 Helen Rogers married Ogden Reid, son of the famous Whitelaw Reid. For the first years of her marriage Helen devoted herself, outside of her home, exclusively to suffrage work. She served the New York State Woman's Suffrage party as treasurer and in the process raised \$500,000. In 1918, at her husband's suggestion, Mrs. Reid decided to contribute her money-making talents to the Tribune. By 1922 she was officially "director of advertising;" a vice-presidency went with the title but unofficially the Reids operated the Herald-Tribune on a partnership basis. Helen's flair for business and her advertising sense were evident from the moment she walked through the door; within five years she managed to triple the Tribune's ad revenue.

Astonishing as it may seem the same decade which spawned exaggerated inanity in the tabloids also saw women writers come into their own in the serious side of the political field. Cora Rigby, the Monitor's Washington bureau chief, introduced Mary F. Hornaday to the Press Gallery at the same time that Mary Osborne Carpenter took charge of the La Prensa bureau.

Ruth Finney, a Scripps-Howard star, specialized in oil, power, labor and federal budgeting news emanating from the nation's capitol. She left California in 1924 and won her Washington reportorial stripes by being better informed than the legislators on bills affecting her home state.

Winifred Mallon, the first woman to serve in the New York Times Washington bureau, was admitted to the Press Gallery in 1918. She covered both the Republican and Democratic national conventions in 1928 and followed the candidates cross country to record their reception.

Bess Furman, from Nebraska, covered national politics for Associated Press. Her special assignment--in addition to the House of Representatives--was Mrs. Herbert Hoover. When the administrations changed, Bess stayed on the job, dogging Mrs. Roosevelt's every footstep. Together she and Ruby Black, who was assigned to the New Dealer's wife by the United Press, traveled thousands of miles in the First Lady's company.

Other ladies of the press were traveling during these years. Rheta Dorr, ever on the move, was covering the Bulgarian uprisings, while Peggy Hull and Irene Kuhn traveled to the Orient for the Tribune. They split up in Manila, Miss Hull to return to the States, and Irene to

accompany her husband to Honolulu. Bert Kuhn was an editor for the Star-Bulletin while Mrs. Kuhn served as a correspondent for the International News Service--once scooping rival wire services with the first report of a tidal wave.

Offered a chance to edit the China Press, the Kuhns with their new baby girl, Rene, moved first to Kobe, then to Shanghai. During the riots of 1925 Mrs. Kuhn helped to organize the Women's Volunteer Motor Canteen Corps and became the first woman broadcaster in the Orient.

Like Helen Rogers Reid, Dorothy Thompson devoted the early part of her career to suffrage work. After she graduated from Syracuse University in 1914, she worked as an organizer in upper New York. Though the work was satisfying and admirably suited to her temperament--"Her chief function, she was told, was to attract attention to the movement by starting public arguments; and she made a notable success of it in scores of upper New York State towns."²⁰--it was not a living, so she went on to try advertising and social work before deciding that writing was her career ambition.

In 1919 with virtually no prospects and \$150 in her pocket she sailed for London, determined to reverse the traditional road to success for a foreign correspondent:

Instead of earning her reporting stripes state-side then going overseas, she was going to do just the opposite.

"It must be said, to the vast credit of Miss Thompson," points out her biographer, Charles Fisher, "that no one ever entered the exciting life with fewer introductions or more resolution than she."²¹ Her ingenuity was boundless:

Her first notion of making money during her tour occurred when she met a group of Zionists on the ship going over. They were on their way to a conference in London. Miss Thompson spent the better part of the crossing with them, and, upon arriving, called the London office of the International News Service and informed the manager that nobody he could name knew as much about Zionism as she did. What if she covered the convention for him? she suggested.

The manager agreed and so Miss Thompson entered her first assignment in a significant frame of mind: convinced that she was an authority on the subject from the inside out. She covered the session competently and afterward made an arrangement with I.N.S. to freelance at space rates.²²

In 1920 she covered the Irish hunger strike in County Cork; in 1922 she interviewed Dr. Eduard Benes--in her opinion one of her finest pieces of journalism. In 1925 Cyrus H. K. Curtis, owner of the Public Ledger, purchased the New York Post, then cabled Dorothy asking her to move from Vienna to Berlin as director of the Central European Bureau for the combined papers. Directorship of such an important foreign bureau was an important first for

American women journalists, but for Dorothy it was only the beginning.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VII

¹Lester Cohen, The World's Zaniest Newspaper (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Publishers, 1964), p. 12.

²Ibid.

³Cohen, op. cit., p. 13.

⁴Simon Michael Bessie, Jazz Journalism: The Story of the Tabloid Newspapers (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1938), p. 190.

⁵Ibid., p. 240.

⁶Bessie, op. cit., p. 24.

⁷Compiled from U. S. Census reports, 1850-1960.

⁸Ross, Ladies, p. 268.

⁹Silas Bent, Ballyhoo (New York: Horace Liveright, 1927), p. 192.

¹⁰Oliver Pilat, Pegler: Angry Man of the Press (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), p. 91.

¹¹Ibid., p. 105.

¹²Ross, Ladies, p. 226.

¹³John Chapman, Tell It To Sweeney (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1961), p. 220.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Chapman, loc. cit.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 221.

¹⁷Ross, Ladies, pp. 286-287.

¹⁸Bessie, op. cit., p. 230.

¹⁹ Saturday Evening Post, May 15, 1937.

²⁰ Charles Fisher, The Columnists (New York: Howell, Soskin Publishers, 1944), p. 34.

²¹ Ibid., p. 35.

²² Fisher, op. cit., p. 36.

CHAPTER VIII

PROFESSIONAL COMPETITORS: 1930-1960

During the next thirty years women accounted for a full quarter of the nation's newsgatherers and, as the decade of the Sixties approached, they accelerated past the one-third mark (in 1960, of the 102,859 persons employed as reporters and editors in the United States, 37.2 per cent or 38,305 were women).¹ Thus, it becomes more and more difficult to analyze their individual contributions. While in 1880 the mere presence of a woman in a newsroom earned her a spot in journalistic history, by 1930 her sisters worked routinely elbow-to-elbow with their male colleagues in foreign capitols, small town court beats, World Series games, and even in foxholes.

The newswoman herself had changed--in 1930 she had had the right to vote for a bare decade but she did not take kindly to being shunted off into a corner to turn out the women's page. For the most part she was better educated and a few years older than her novice counterpart of fifty years earlier, and she had more competition.

As the nation teetered about, trying to regain its economic, political and social balance in the 1930's, so

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too did the news media. Papers across the country began to look more seriously at the events recorded on their wood-pulp pages--tabloids were on the way out and a more thoughtful journalistic era was making its bow:

The rise of interpretative reporting was the most important development of the 1930's and 1940's...Proper backgrounding of news events, and covering of major areas of human activity by specialists, were not unknown before that time, just as uncritical and sensationalized treatment of news continued in the press after that time. But the impact of the political-social-economic revolution of the New Deal years, the rise of modern scientific technology, the shrinking of the world into one vast arena for power politics forced a new approach to the handling of news. 'Why' became important, along with the traditional 'who did what,' because the reader, more than ever, wanted and needed to know the meaning of the news. Coverage of politics, economics and business, foreign affairs, science, labor, agriculture, and social work was improved by reporter-specialists.²

In light of this changing attitude toward news in general, the newswoman was no longer regarded as an important "ingredient" in news coverage. Her presence at a news event was inconsequential; her value--like any other reporter's--rested with her ability to grasp and marshall salient facts, to report to her readers with the critical eye of a trained observer, and, on occasion, to add the insight which comes with "specialization." By the 1930's and 1940's it seems clear that sex prejudice in the newsroom--while not erased--was fading into the background:

Competence had become the key criteria.

In the 1930's Dorothy Thompson's career reached a level which began to bring to her the title "principle lady mental welterweight of our current civilization."³ By 1940, Dorothy's thrice-weekly column, "On the Record," was purchased by 125 national papers and read by something like 8,405,399 subscribers.⁴

Dorothy figuratively covered the globe; her columns were almost always cosmic in nature--anything that moved on the international scene was her beat. Her passionate concern over the ways of the world brought her scathing criticism and hyperbolic admiration from statesmen and colleagues alike, yet few, if any, attributed her abilities or shortcomings to her sex.

Charles Fisher suggests the scope of Miss Thompson's mental prowess:

Miss Thompson deals with the tumult of the age from her house in East 48th Street, New York, where she has maintained offices since she broke with the New York Herald Tribune over her support of Roosevelt against Wendell Wilkie. From her workroom on the second floor she has probably contrived to cover as much ground, in a geographical and philosophical sense, as anyone else in her profession.

There is one recent essay which is remembered gratefully by connoisseurs as an unquestionable new record for the course. In some 800 or 900 words Miss Thompson dealt authoritatively with

Anglo-American influence in Europe; the proper manner for post-war reconstruction; the U. S. attitude toward Vichy; the Czechoslovakian treaty with Russia; the Munich Conference of 1938; General Smuts; King Peter of Yugoslavia; Federalism; Democracy; present U. S. Foreign Policy; French, Italian and German reaction to Allied Nations plans; the geography of Czechoslovakia; and the private political desires of the Serb, Croat, and Slovene Factions in Yugoslavia.⁵

Dorothy was given to making prejudgments about both nations and people; she had the utmost confidence in her own assessment of the world situation and of the human character. Her batting average as a seeress is impressive, but she is probably best remembered by many readers for one colossal miscalculation, made when she interviewed Hitler in 1932:

When I finally walked into Adolf Hitler's salon in the Kaiserhoff Hotel I was convinced that I was meeting the future dictator of Germany. In something less than fifty seconds I was quite sure I was not. It took me just about that time to measure the startling insignificance of this man who has set the world agog.

He is inconsequent and voluble, ill-poised, insecure--the very prototype of the Little Man... and yet he is not without a certain charm.⁶

During this same era political writing launched another woman, Clare Booth Luce. Clare came from a rich family and married a rich man, George Brokaw. However, as the decade of the 20's came to a close and with it her twenty-ninth birthday, she thrust the pseudo-sophisticated

world of Long Island behind her. She divorced Mr. Brokaw and wrangled a job on Vogue magazine--actually she took advantage of publisher Conde Nast's absence; she marched into the office, sat down at an empty desk and explained to the startled office manager that her salary requirements could be worked out upon the publisher's return from Europe. Her work was sufficiently good that the ruse worked and Nast, surprised but impressed by her tenacity, hired her at \$35 a week and soon promoted her to his Vanity Fair staff.

Clare's specialty was satire and her caricatures of national and international political figures nicely suited the sophisticated audience of Vanity Fair. However, Clare took her work seriously and soon tired of the role of observer; she determined to become a participant in the political arena. In 1932 she shared Mrs. Woodrow Wilson's box at the Democratic Convention; she backed Wendell Wilkie in 1940 and, by 1944, she gave the keynote speech at the Republican National Convention. Frequently at odds with such political sages as Dorothy Thompson, Clare was nevertheless elected to Congress and appointed to numerous ambassadorial missions. Her political essays have since graced most of the nation's major publications--including, of course, those of her second husband

Time-Life magnate, Henry Luce.

A far different writing style was developed by Doris Fleeson, political columnist for the New York Daily News. Already a veteran reporter in August 1933 when she and her husband, John O'Donnel, introduced a joint Washington column called "Capital Stuff," Doris soon went on to join the United Features syndicate. In 1954 she became the first woman to win the Raymond Clapper award for meritorious reporting.

Lest the road seem too smooth for the ladies of the press in the political arena, it should be pointed out that many still encountered editors who doubted a woman's ability to deal with subjects more taxing than bread baking and fashion. In 1934 Marguerite Young left Scripps-Howard World Telegram in a huff:

The few satisfying stories I could write were at the expense of writing uncounted reams of woman-story piffle which shamed me as a journalist as well as rendered me a tool in the Scripps-Howard process of deadening its vaunted labor readers to important events affecting them by drowning them daily in sentimental pap.⁷

Carrying on the tradition of fine political coverage from Washington for the Christian Science Monitor, begun in 1918 by Cora Rigby, was Josephine Ripley.

In the education field, Ruth Dunbar, of the

Chicago Sun-Times, and Wilma Morrison, of the Portland Oregonian, stand out as excellent examples of the new trend toward reporter specialization.

Another traditionally male dominion, economics, first tipped its hat to a woman in the late 1930's. The woman, Sylvia Porter, has become a legend in financial circles:

In 1959, when she wrote about the first 5 per cent government note issue in current history, there was a land-office rush to buy. ('I want some of those securities Sylvia Porter wrote about.') And some months later, when she suggested that her readers write to their brokers, or to the New York Stock Exchange, for assorted pamphlets on investing, many thousands did just that.⁸

Sylvia's economic acumen developed early. She was just seventeen when the "great crash" came, yet she knew well its implications:

On October 6, 1929, my young widowed mother had just about every penny of her nest egg in the stock market. Her cash investment was comparatively modest but her stake in the market was quite impressive. For Mother was in Wall Street on a 10 per cent margin, meaning that behind every \$10,000 of stock she 'owned,' she had only \$1,000 of her own money. With that sort of borrowing power, she was able to load up with...(stocks)

By October 29, 1929, Mother's nest egg was a bitter memory and we were flat broke. As stock prices plunged under the avalanche of selling, she simply couldn't raise the cash demanded to keep the margin up to 10 per cent. Along with

millions of other speculators, she was sold out...⁹

Miss Porter's writing style suggests some of the reason for her success. Her accounts of complicated financial tangles were consistently interesting and, more important, understandable. Scorning such phrases as "economic parity," "price-earnings ratio," and "discretionary income," which she called "bafflegab," she writes only in terms which the average reader could be expected to understand.

Sylvia's career began on July 8, 1932 when, at nineteen, she got a job with a Fifth Avenue investment-counseling firm. From then on her rise in the financial world was inevitable:

From time to time, as a particular facet of the field posed an interesting problem, she wrote it up and submitted it for publication to the select journals distributed around Wall Street, and to the financial sections of the New York newspapers. She prudently signed them "S. F. Porter." Her shrewd comments and analyses began to appear regularly and were read with respect and interest in the financial strongholds of the business world.¹⁰

Soon Sylvia began to find more satisfaction in this facet of finances than in any other. She began with a regular column in the American Banker but was soon invited to join the New York Post. In 1940, S. F. Porter was named

Financial Editor of the Post but in 1942 the paper's editor decided to take advantage of the fact that his 27-year-old expert was a girl. On July 15, 1942 Sylvia's column also carried her picture--"a half-column photograph of the attractive young brunette."¹¹

The first response was startling; from a long-time correspondent who had been addressing queries and comments to 'Dear Mr. Porter,' under the impression that the columnist was an old man with a white beard, came a new salutation: "Darling!"¹²

Sylvia did not balk at the flurry of public recognition which followed, nor was she cowed by the denunciation of a dozen "Silver Senators," who blustered in self-righteous indignation over a series of articles she wrote in 1940 under the title "Uncle Sam's Silver Scandal." To date, Miss Porter (also known as Mrs. G. Sumner Collins) has written five books on finance, all aimed at the layman, and edits a weekly newsletter called Reporting on Governments.

Not all of the new breed of woman reporters concerned themselves with such weighty subjects. During this period, too, Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons were honing in on Hollywood, and a 22-year-old girl named Jeane Hofmann became "the nation's only woman writer-cartoonist of big-time sports."¹³

Jeane, a native of Los Angeles, began following baseball while convalescing from a childhood illness. The long hours in bed didn't seem half so bad while she listened to radio broadcasts describing the game "play by play." In 1937:

...she tossed up further education at Stanford University to take a part-time job on the Hollywood Citizen-News. For three months she covered the local spring training camps and the Pacific Coast League and gained distinction as the only woman ever to wangle her way into the press box at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles. She followed football, basketball and hockey...¹⁴

When Jeane finally talked her way into a job with the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin in 1940, her first assignment was a fashion show! According to Jeane, she "messed it all up" but convinced her editor that she knew more about baseball than hemlines. He gave her a chance in the sports department and "soon she was drawing a daily four-column cartoon. Last year she began writing a two-column illustrated sports feature, digging up material in the Shibe Park press box, the dugout and even the dressing room with equal aplomb."¹⁵

A great number of the women who accounted for the growing ranks of journalists across the country were holding down important spots on rural publications. In 1935,

while Mrs. Helen Reid received the American Women's Association award for distinguished work in journalism, Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Mahnkey came to New York to collect a magazine prize as the best country newspaper correspondent in America.

Writing a gossip column for the Taney County Republican in Forsythe, Missouri, Mrs. Mahnkey had written for forty-four years with one underlying philosophy:

If any stranger came in or anybody moved or a baby was born or somebody got married or died, then that was news. And when kinsfolk come from a long way off I'd mention all their names and brighten up the columns or make someone laugh or please some child or some old person. If any exciting crime or anything not exactly right happened in Oasis, I just let it go and didn't write it up, because those sort of things happen in any place.¹⁶

While most country editors and reporters shared Mrs. Mahnkey's belief in local coverage, few shared her news sense. Hazel Brannon, of Mississippi, was one who did not shy away from controversy.

Hazel bought the Lexington Advertiser in 1943; a graduate of the University of Alabama with two years reporting experience, she had her own ideas about what a country newspaper should be.

In the beginning the townsfolk could not see much difference between Miss Hazel's writing and that of her

predecessors. Most of the paper's pages were filled with homey chatter and classified ads like this one: "For sale: Wild winter peas, double cleaned."

Before too long, however, the paper's editorials titled "Through Hazel's Eyes," began to deal with two very touchy subjects--gambling and bootlegging, both of which were illegal in Holmes County:

Today we have one joint after another lining the highways going in and out of every town in the county. Slot machines are seen in practically all of them, drunkenness, cursing, fighting goes on. The places are full of lawlessness and corruption, and not fit, even safe, for sober people.

There are plenty of people in Holmes County who enjoy a drink, but, like the writer, feel that such places should not remain a challenge to everything decent.¹⁷

Apparently she was right, for 200 citizens signed her petition urging circuit Judge S. F. Davis to call a grand jury investigation of "organized crime" in Holmes County. That Hazel's campaign was not unopposed can be surmised from one of her columns:

I should like to warn those persons responsible for rumors that you better watch your step. You who are trying to impugn my motives don't amount to anything, anyway. I'm no lily-white reformer, but the people of Holmes County don't want organized crime here.¹⁸

Following the grand jury hearings Holmes County Sheriff Murtagh was promptly castigated and sent to round

up every bootlegger and slot machine in sight. The sheriff did not take kindly to the upbraiding, and some said he was sore at losing some "protection money" as well, but he lost no time in getting back at Miss Hazel.

Miss Brannon was arrested by a deputy in the foyer of the courthouse. The charge--questioning a witness who was still within the court's jurisdiction. Hazel pleaded innocence on the grounds of ignorance but the judge fined her \$50 and fifteen days, suspending sentence for two years. When Hazel decided to appeal the case at the state level, Mississippi News editor Frederick Sullens commented, "Our guess is that our Supreme Court, when Miss Brannon's appeal comes up for hearing, is going to slap the ears of that circuit judge right down under his toenails."¹⁹ He was right!

Another country lass, Caro Brown, faced opposition unafraid. Caro worked as a reporter for the Alice (Texas) Daily Echo when state and federal agents began moving in on the small county, determined to rid it once and for all of the tyrannous one-man political rule imposed by "George B. Parr, a tough south Texan who was known as the Duke of Duval County."²⁰

Parr ruled the county and a good portion of the

state, with his political machine and private army; he and his family had dominated the area for forty years and "more than one reporter failed to get information about Duval County," according to Tom E. Fite, managing editor of the Echo, "and one died trying."

When state and federal agencies finally went into Duval County to open the records, reporters still were not free of the threat of harm if they wrote and printed the story. But Mrs. Brown wrote her stories, and they were published, under perhaps as difficult conditions as such a story ever was.²¹

Uncovering the details of Parr's legendary wrongdoing took hours of painstaking investigation; Caro attended meetings and court hearings and pored over public records. On January 19, 1954 she thrust herself between a ranger and one of Parr's sons as they struggled for possession of the ranger's pistol:

As I watched I could tell that the talk between the sheriff (Parr) and Ranger Bridge was becoming heated and I shushed the man who was talking to me. 'Something's fixing to happen,' I warned.

And it did...Parr's left ear received an open tear when it was twisted by the Ranger captain, who also hit Parr with his fish before sticking his gun in his ribs.

At this point I stepped into the middle, begging, 'Cap, please don't, please don't'...²²

For this courageous piece of work Caro Brown received the Pulitzer Prize for local reporting in 1955 and

a letter of appreciation from John Ben Shepperd, Attorney General of Texas:

You...have the gratitude of the people of Duval County and the State of Texas and the admiration of your profession. But your greatest compensation, I am sure, is the satisfaction of having helped bring forty years of corruption and terrorism to an end. Duval County is no longer the 'Land of Murder and Mayhem.'²³

In the 1930's J. Edgar Hoover and his G-men, hot on the trail of "Baby Face" Nelson, "Machine Gun" Kelly, and John Dillinger, were gaining heroic stature in headlines across the nation. Thus, an important beat on any metropolitan paper remained the criminal elements of society.

Many tabloid alumni found themselves among the top "crime specialists" in the journalistic world. Nellie Kenyon of the Chattanooga (Tennessee) News won a \$1,000 prize for her story of the detective work which led to the capture of a bank bandit. Adding thrill and flavor to the account was the fact that Miss Kenyon herself did the detective work; following a \$6,617 robbery in 1931, Nellie, following up a random remark made by a nurse, uncovered a trail of clues which eventually led to the capture of the bandit. Though her local fame rests on this one incident, Miss Kenyon proved her investigative skill time and again.

When the New York World died in 1931 after a forty eight year-run, one of its best front-page reporters was Elenore Kellogg. Elenore was a general reporter but her coverage of big-city crime brought her a front-page by-line in one edition after another. When the World folded she bid a reluctant farewell to the fraternal group under the "Golden Dome" and joined Associated Press. Her career was ended abruptly when she died, following an operation in 1935.

Kathleen McLaughlin's years on the Chicago Tribune were filled with the doings of gangsterdom. When "Big Tim" Murphy was released from prison, Kathleen was sent to accompany him back from Leavenworth. Frequently it fell to her to tell the mobster's "molls" that they were widows after a major shootout, Miss McLaughlin would be first on the spot at the victims' homes, ready to report on any "retaliation plans" which might be in the offing. This beat was fraught with danger; Kathleen expected every assignment to be her last, so it was with great relief that she accepted a New York Times offer: "Previously frowning on features," reported Newsweek magazine in 1941 "the Times started a daily food column and two months ago named Kathleen McLaughlin, one of its crack reporters, as

the Times' first woman's editor to coordinate news and features of feminine interest."²⁴

Dorothy Ann Harrison, of the Philadelphia Ledger and later the Philadelphia Record, also went in heavily for news from the underworld. Though her name never appeared on a story, Miss Harrison was well known both by the police and by the gangsters who peopled her columns. She performed invaluable services for both sides, saving the "framed" man on the one hand and providing authority with a critical tip on the other. While a federal agent once warned her city editor that she would probably be killed, Pius Lanzetti, "one of the most notorious gangsters once sent word by the grapevine route: 'If ever you meet Miss Harrison, treat her like one of the boys.'"²⁵

Before her columnist days, Dorothy Kilgallen also made a name for herself on the crime beat. Following in her father's footsteps, Dorothy--without her parent's permission--got a part-time job on the New York Journal. The first time "Kil" Kilgallen saw his daughter at work is described by Ishbel Ross:

When the ferry boat Observation was blown to smithereens in the East River with a boiler explosion on the morning of September 9, 1932, Dorothy was counting up the long row of dead lying in a shed on the wharf when she bumped into another reporter who proved to be her father. He had

started at one end of the row, she at the other, and they met in the middle. The men had been tossed into the air, blown on rooftops or into the water. Seventy-two were killed; sixty-three were injured.²⁶

Dorothy rated a few column inches herself in 1933 when a bored jury--listening to testimony in the Jessie Costello trial--sent flowers to her hotel room every day to show their appreciation for her decorative presence in the courtroom.

Dorothy was just one of a small army of reporters who covered Bruno Hauptmann's trial in 1935. Hauptmann, accused of kidnapping the Lindbergh baby, was the subject of thousands of newspaper stories all over the country. Probably no other event brought more newswomen together on one story--among them was Ester Hamilton, who covered the event for the Youngstown (Ohio) Telegram. Ester, another reporter-detective credited with solving several local crimes, was voted best newspaperwoman of the year by the Ohio Newspaperwomen's Association in 1935 for her coverage of the trial.

Another press representative who detailed the Hauptmann story was Dixie Tighe. Dixie, working for International News Service (I.N.S.), and Evelyn Shuler, of the Philadelphia Ledger, were the only women who wrote the

lead stories on the trial for their respective employers. However, Dixie's real specialty was of another sort; her real flair was in the foreign correspondence field.

WAR CORRESPONDENTS

While Dixie covered the Cuban Revolution for I. N. S., Betty Kirk chronicled the Mexican front for a number of U. S. publications including the Christian Science Monitor, Life magazine, and the Washington Post. Miss Kirk visited Mexico for the first time in 1938 and remained to give it the thoughtful "interpretive coverage" she thought it deserved. Her success may be judged by the comment of Josephine Daniels, U. S. Ambassador to Mexico (1933-1941):

Betty Kirk asked no privileges or favors because she was a woman. She was a working journalist, proud of her profession and keen to furnish her papers not only the important occurrences but what prompted the actions of public men and the influences which moved the people. Her news stories had a flavor all their own. Her statements were based upon her own investigations and interviews with those in a position to know. Soon her insight, sound judgment, fairness of reporting, and sense of responsibility for what she wrote won for her the confidence and esteem of Mexicans and Americans alike. She wrote not only what she saw and heard but what she thought after going to the bottom of things. Not always did her papers print what she wrote, but they generally found later that she was sizing up the situation exactly as

it was, and not as she or her paper or individuals wished it to be. It followed naturally that, as time went on, she won the regard of the public men to whom she went for the news and side-lights on public policies. They trusted her and gave her statements off the record as well as on the record which informed her writing.²⁷

Agnes Smedley was busy deluging American papers with her view of the Orient, particularly of the upheaval in China, when Anne O'Hare McCormick first traveled with her husband to Europe in 1921. Emboldened by a few of her pieces which appeared in the New York Times Magazine, Ann wrote managing editor Carr Van Anda, asking if she could send him some dispatches from abroad.

Mr. Van Anda replied: 'Try it!' With that quasi permission she sent in many that captured the mind of Carr Van Anda and she was hired.²⁸

So captivated was Times publisher Arthur Sulzberg that he offered her a position on the Times editorial board, the first woman to be so honored:

"You are to be the 'freedom editor,' he said.

"It will be your job to stand up and shout whenever freedom is interfered with in any part of the world!"²⁹

In her editorial column entitled "Abroad," Mrs. McCormick strove always to carry out her charter. In 193 she won the Pulitzer Prize for correspondence for her account of Pope Pius XI's struggle to end Italian

aggression in Ethiopia.

In 1935 she had interviewed for the first time the man who was responsible for that aggression, Mussolini.

Her report:

Of all the public characters I have interviewed, Mussolini is the only one who seems interested not only in what he says himself but in what you have to say; he appears to weigh your suggestions, solicits your opinions.³⁰

Anne found El Duce friendly and more than willing to discuss his plans. Those plans appalled her: "Nothing better or more stable can be established by more war," she wrote soon after, "but in the long view it is equally certain that there must be war--not all the sanctions of the world can stop it--until there is a league not only to enforce but to create peace..."³¹

Just as she predicted, the war came. One of its first victims within the ranks of western correspondents was Leah Burdette, of PM. Leah was an Italian, married to an American newsman. She was thrown out of Bucharest in 1941 for anti-fascist sympathies and in 1942 met her death at the hands of bandits in Iran.

Inez Robb, writing for I.N.S., was one of the first American women to cover World War II for U. S. readers.

Inez, who started as a cub reporter on the Evening (Boise,

Idaho) Capital News, was a dare-devil from the very beginning. Tired of covering ladies' tea parties, Inez snapped up a joking offer made by a barn-storming pilot: "Would the little girl like to go up?" he asked as he lounged in the News city room.

...although I was hurt that he could not see that I was a young lady, I grabbed my coat and hat and was out the door before he could change his mind.

We drove out to the fair grounds in a beat-up jalopy, and I was full of anxiety, all right. I was wearing a bright scarlet coat, and I was scared stiff that Mama and Papa and my aunts and uncles, all at the fair that day, would spot me before I could get into the air and out of their protective clutches.

To make a long story short, we made it. I was strapped into an open-cockpit plane and we roared into the wild blue yonder. The pilot was paid to thrill the crowd with stunts such as loops and fall-leaf dives, I think they were called, and heaven knows what.

You know what? I thought it was wonderful! That's youth for you. I wasn't scared or sick or even nervous. And when it was all over, I thanked the young man, scooted back to the News and wrote an account of my adventure. The story had a dreamy lead, even if I do say so over thirty years later--I wrote that the only way a lady could stand on her head with dignity and decorum was in a stunting plane.

Well, sir, the editor slapped a by-line on the story and the rest is history...³²

Inez and Ruth Cowan, of Associated Press, had plenty of opportunity to be "scared...and sick...and

nervous" when they accompanied the first Women's Auxiliary Army Corps group to go overseas, reporting from the North African front in 1943.

By June 1944 almost two dozen women had done a tour of duty in the war zone, perhaps the best known was Peggy Hull, the first gal to wangle a pass from the War Department. This war, Peggy had no trouble getting editors to send her to the action zone; she covered the Pacific theater in 1944 for the American Newspaper Alliance and the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Time-Life photographer Margaret Bourke-White became the first woman correspondent to accompany a bombing mission when she covered the Tunisian campaign in January 1943.

"Maggie" had desperately wanted to accompany a bombing mission since the moment she hit the war zone. She had photographed everything on the ground--from front line action to secret installations and she was anxious to be airborne. Ironically the Air Force top brass was unbudgeable in its refusal until Maggie and five of her cameras went down with a troop convoy ship. Maggie miraculously survived the experience, though her cameras did not, and the first person to greet her upon release from

the hospital was General James Doolittle:

'Maggie, do you still want to go on a bombing mission?'

'Oh, you know I do,' I gasped. 'I had given up asking, because I didn't want to make a nuisance of myself all the time.'

'Well, you've been torpedoed. You might as well go through everything,' said General Jimmy.³³

As in 1918, it took a war to broaden still further women's opportunities in news work. Historian Frank Luther Mott remarks:

During the wartime manpower shortage, women, came to occupy many positions from which they had formerly been excluded. Controversy over the value of women on the copy desk, in administrative news jobs, or on foreign assignments was common; but the girls actually got such jobs, and in many cases they held them after the war was over. By January 1945, there were 135 women in the House and Senate press galleries. Many women made reputations as war correspondents. Dudley Ann Harmon, who saw service in the UP's London and Paris bureaus during the war, became head of its Geneva bureau in 1948. Helen Kirkpatrick was chief of the Paris bureau of the Chicago Daily News 1944-46.³⁴

Marguerite "Maggie" Higgins earned her master's degree in Journalism from Columbia University in 1942 and the day after graduation was informed by the New York Herald Tribune that her work as "campus correspondent" had earned her a spot on their staff.

Maggie was overjoyed except for one thing--she had another job in mind, she wanted to be a war correspondent.

What? The editors laughed at the idea of a twenty-two year old girl covering the war. They continued to refuse her the assignment until she had so ably proved herself locally that they could refuse no longer. Maggie reached Berlin just as the war ended and was one of the first reporters to reach the concentration camp at Dachau.

If Maggie missed her chance during World War II, her opportunity came later at the other end of the world in a tiny country called Korea. Despite Army regulations and General Douglas MacArthur's personal prejudice against women at the front, Maggie covered almost every campaign in the Korean conflict.

Soon after the hostilities had begun, Maggie flew in to Soeul with the first American troops, then participated in their hasty departure from the area as the South Korean army retreated around them. She returned to Suwon in an unarmed ammunition plane:

Our pilot was Lieutenant Donald Marsh. He was a veteran of the fighting for Guam and knew what we might run into. As we approached the deep, rocky inlets of brilliant blue water that are Pusan Bay, Marsh warned us, 'In a few minutes we reach hot weather. Put on your chutes and grab a helmet.' And then, after glancing over his shoulder in the direction of the big 155-millimeter shells we were carrying, he added flatly, 'Though I don't know what in Christ good a chute will do if we do get hit.'

I felt the rush of fear that was to become so familiar in the next weeks. It seemed to turn into a trapped ball of breath that was pressing against my heart. I could see by the faces of the crew that I was definitely not worrying alone. The radio operator took his place beneath the glass-dome turret of the C-54. In a few moments somebody saw an unidentified plane, but it didn't see us. And that was all.

But the ominous atmosphere continued even after we had bumped and scraped to a stop on the Suwon airfield. We had had to brake hard to avoid the wrecked, bullet-splattered planes at the end of the runway.

As I climbed out of the plane, fervently promising myself never to ride on another ammunition ship, I was greeted by a dour army colonel. He was the nervous, officious type that the Army seems to have a talent for producing.

'You'll have to go back, young lady,' the colonel said. 'You can't stay here. There may be trouble.'

Somewhat wearily, I brought out my stock answer to this solicitude. 'I wouldn't be here if there were no trouble. Trouble is news, and the gathering of news is my job.'

The colonel's too familiar attitude was discouraging. I had hoped that my performance under fire in the exit from Seoul would have ended further arguments that 'the front is no place for a woman.' But it was to be many weeks before I was accepted on an equal basis with men.³⁵

But accepted she was. Her story, written September 18, 1950, chronicling the U. S. Marine landing at Inchon earned her the 1951 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting.

PUBLISHERS

While the number of women in the specialty fields increased, so too did the ranks of the women in the higher reaches of the newspaper business.

In 1930 Mrs. Eleanore "Cissy" Medill Patterson pestered William R. Hearst into giving her a chance to "edit" his Washington Herald. She had first tried to buy it from him, but, failing that, kept at him until he agreed to give her temporary control of the publication.

"Cissy" was forty-six when she entered the Washington newspaper scene as editor and temporary publisher of the Herald. She had virtually no newspaper experience but she was well known, chiefly for the legendary quality which shrouded her glamorous past.

A New England heiress, Cissy had married a Russian nobleman, Count Joseph Gizycka in 1904. It soon became apparent that the Count had married Cissy for her money and the story of mistreatment at his hands, as well as the couple's fight over custody of their daughter--made the social columns regularly. Beatings, kidnapping, flight and escape--all these adventurous ingredients added a romantic aura to Cissy's already flamboyant personality. She dressed extravagantly--spending her wealth on clothes,

exotic homes and hunting expeditions--and fearlessly tackled the most awesome of Washington's personages.

On her first visit to the Herald office:

Cissy was wearing a big straw hat and she looked fierce. The Herald city room had been warned she might come, but the staffers were not prepared for the sight of her in the flesh, glowering at them. A few stood up and grabbed for their coats, but most of them just stared. 'I suppose you think this is just a stunt!' she declared in a low withering voice. The typewriters all stopped and nobody breathed. Then she said, 'Well even if you do, let's all try to put it over.'³⁶

The sum of Cissy's newspaper knowledge came from her casual conversations with brother Joe. Joseph Medill, whose New York Daily News had achieved the largest newspaper circulation in the country (1.3 million daily),³⁷ tried to dissuade his sister from acquiring the Herald. Cissy remained steadfast in her determination. "If she was going to fly at all, it was going to be by the seat of her pants. She did know a few tricks--some she had picked up from her family and some she had figured out for herself--and these she meant to exploit for all they were worth,"³⁸ says her grandniece Alice A. Hoge.

Though Cissy's sacrilegious survey of Washington notables--including her long-time friend Alice Roosevelt--attracted a great deal of attention, her news sense was

unfortunately not of the same caliber as her courage:

Some observers who have worked close to Mrs. Patterson say that she has a weakness for accepting as truth the things that are told to her by important or semi-important persons, whether the revelations are made in the ghostly silences of Dower House (Cissy's Washington home) or elsewhere. She will, they say, instantly surmise that she has stumbled upon a tremendous story, and will order all troops into action with a spare-no-expense gesture, when a little quiet preliminary inquiry, involving no more than two or three telephone calls, could disclose that she had been misled by the expansiveness of her informant, or that she had, somehow, got the wrong idea.

However, this defect, if it exists, is surely not one on which Mrs. Patterson has a monopoly. Publishers, many of whom in their hearts fancy themselves as great reporters--just as, in Mrs. Patterson's diagnosis, most politicians are disappointed actors--are carried away when they think they have stumbled upon a big story.³⁹

Another dramatic personality fell heir to a publishing domain when Frederick G. Bonfils died on February 2, 1933, leaving the famed Denver Post in the hands of his daughter, Helen Bonfils.

Helen had led an extraordinarily sheltered life while her father was alive. When he died, she dutifully watched the paper closely but left its management in the hands of Anne O'Neill, her father's secretary, and editor William C. Shepherd. Helen had other more pressing matters to attend to; for years her father had frustrated her ambition to become an actress. Now, she threw herself into

this project, taking lessons and acting in little theater groups. She played bit parts in Denver's Civic Theater in 1934 and 1935, and in 1936 married actor-director George Somnes, an event which prompted her solitary interference with the Post's editorial policy. In keeping with her father's long-standing wish to keep the family name above such common notoriety, Helen asked editor Shepherd to limit the Post's coverage of her wedding to a single paragraph on the society page.

About this same time, a rival paper, the Rocky Mountain News, was employing a girl reporter named Mary Coyle (later Mary Coyle Chase), who, in 1944, was awarded a Pulitzer for her play "Harvey," the story of Elwood P. Dowd, a drinking man with a tall white rabbit as a constant companion.

In 1937 Eleanor McClatchy succeeded her father as publisher of the Bee newspaper chain in California, and, in 1939, Dorothy Schiff entered the publishing scene by buying the New York Post. The granddaughter of Jacob Schiff, noted banker and philanthropist, Dorothy has weathered newspaper mergers, strikes and plunging ad revenue, intent upon keeping the Post New York's one remaining afternoon daily. When she began in 1939, she worked closely with editor Ted O. Thackery to make the Post the

kind of a paper she thought it should be. Her credo is
"independent, liberal thought and ideas in the Press."⁴⁰

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VIII

¹ Compiled from U. S. Census reports, 1850-1960.

² Emery, op. cit., p. 633.

³ Fisher, op. cit., p. 16.

⁴ According to the Advertising Research Foundation Inc., 1944 Report on Newspapers.

⁵ Fisher, p. 26.

⁶ Cosmopolitan Magazine, March 1932, p. 43.

⁷ Ross, Ladies, pp. 352-353.

⁸ Mildred and Milton Lewis, Famous Modern Newspaper Writers (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1963), p. 94.

⁹ Lewis, op. cit., p. 97.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 101.

¹¹ Lewis, op. cit., p. 105.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Lady Sportswriter, Newsweek, March 9, 1942, p. 55.

¹⁴ Newsweek, op. cit.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ross, Ladies, p. 463.

¹⁷ Walter Howey (ed) Fighting Editors (Washington Square, Philadelphia: David McKay Co., 1946), p. 82.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 85.

²⁰John Hohenberg (ed.) The Pulitzer Prize Story (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 33.

²¹Ibid.

²²Hohenberg, op. cit., p. 34.

²³Ibid., p. 36.

²⁴"The Times Makes Changes," Newsweek, December 1, 1941, p. 66.

²⁵Ross, Ladies, p. 518.

²⁶Ibid., p. 243.

²⁷Betty Kirk, Covering the Mexican Front: The Battle of Europe versus America (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942), p. xii.

²⁸Marion T. Sheehan, The World at Home: Selections from the Writings of Anne O'Hare McCormick (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. x.

²⁹Ibid., p. xi.

³⁰Ibid., p. 63.

³¹Hohenberg, p. 296.

³²Inez Robb, Don't Just Stand There (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1962), p. 4.

³³Margaret Bourke-White, Portrait of Myself (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), p. 217.

³⁴Mott, History of American Journalism, p. 786.

³⁵Marguerite Higgins, War in Korea: The Report of a Woman Combat Correspondent (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1951) pp. 38-39.

³⁶Alice Albright Hoge, Cissy Patterson (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 91.

Ibid., p. 89.

Ibid., p. 94.

Stanley Walker, "Cissy is a Newspaper Lady,"
Saturday Evening Post, May 6, 1939, p. 16.

Ross, Sons of Adam, p. 243.

CHAPTER IX

BEYOND EQUALITY: 1960-1972

As the decade of the Sixties dawned in America, a full 37.2 per cent of the country's journalists were women. Working around the clock, on every type of assignment, and in all parts of the world, 38,305 American women were interviewing tomorrow's headliners, attending "important events," writing feverishly or calling frantically to beat a deadline, editing copy and laying out pages. Yet, despite this impressive abundance of activity, it is almost as difficult to identify those who have achieved "professional and/or public recognition" in this era as it was in 1696.

The newswoman of the Sixties--the reporter on the beat, the society editor, copy editor or columnist--is perhaps more visible today through sheer weight of numbers. She has come a long way, achieving equality of sorts (...though many doubt that they are paid on a par with their male colleagues), yet she is gnawed by the same frustration which plagued her nineteenth-century predecessors: Equality with men has never really been the goal,

equality of opportunity--that illusive key to personal potential--is the real target.

In darker moments, unchallenged by a few successive days of drudgery, the newswoman wonders to herself if her sex is held against her. Frequently she has good cause to suspect misplaced gallantry when she sees a juicy tip routed to a man by an editor who fears that "a woman couldn't handle it." Yet the 250 women whose names appear in the foregoing sections of this survey share more than a common profession, each of them--in her own way--created her own opportunities. And so it is with those mentioned here, whose careers encompass every facet of the news world, from publishing and magazine editing to pioneering new styles of reporting from Main Street to Vietnam.

PUBLISHERS

Equality of opportunity seems almost absurd when mentioned in the same breath with such names as Katherine Graham, Enid Haupt, or Dorothy Schiff.

Mrs. Graham stands at the helm of the Washington Post Company; this august position makes her publisher of the Washington Post and Newsweek magazine, and owner of numerous television and radio stations, not to mention a wire service.

Though she assumed this responsibility only after the death of her husband, former Post publisher Philip Graham, Mrs. Graham handles the position with poise and good judgment. She sits in on editorial conferences at the Post and Newsweek but "rarely or never" interferes with her editors' policies.¹

Enid Haupt, nuturing a new generation of reading audience, has put her magazine Seventeen in the black while many of its competitors have folded. Mary King Patterson, until her retirement in 1969, was considered the ruling hand at the New York Daily News after her husband Joseph's death. Her daughter, Alicia and her husband Harry Guggenheim, have taken up where Mrs. Patterson left off making Newsday a smashing success.

Dorothy Schiff has kept the New York Post alive and fairly healthy, while Minneapolis' Star-Tribune has flourished under the leadership of Joyce A. Swan.

Oveta Culp Hobby is probably one of the few women publishers who really understands the workings of her newspaper from top to bottom. The owner of the Houston Post, Mrs. Hobby is a veteran of several smaller newspapers.

MAGAZINES

In the 1960's a great battle was waged in the

world. Long-time competitors, McCall's and the Ladies Home Journal, battled it out for circulation, their assorted representatives resorting to every conceivable trick to wrest new subscribership. Though some say the victory is still undecided, others have conceded the prize to McCall's under the able leadership of its first lady editor Shana Alexander.

Nonetheless, even as these octagenarian giants fought to secure the readership of the "average American woman and her family," other female journalists were drawing new pictures of what the American woman looks like.

If nothing else, the Sixties brought to the slick publication field a new awareness of "specialized audiences." The "American woman" has been minutely analyzed and subdivided so that today most of the major mags are competing for some very select groups of female species--ones they can describe and deliver to their advertisers. Helen Gurly Brown's Cosmopolitan was one of the first to identify a potentially profitable stratum and to make good its delivery to the advertiser.

When Miss Brown took control of Cosmo in 1965, she set her sights on the single working girl, aged eighteen to thirty-four, and reshuffled the old "fiction, fashion and sex" formula of mass women's magazines to emphasize

the latter. A recent ad for the magazine capsulizes the Cosmo reader's ideal self-image:

A girl can do almost anything she really wants to, don't you agree? She can tan instead of burn, look sexy but also look like a lady, have a job that PAYS because she's smart, and still stay fascinating to men. I've done all these things, and thank goodness there's one magazine that seems to understand me--the girl who wants everything out of life. I guess you could say I'm that Cosmopolitan Girl.²

In reality Miss Brown and her crew make capital of the fact that most of their readers "are not knockouts... are unsure of themselves...are searching for a man."³ The fantastic success of Miss Brown's book, Sex and the Single Girl, proved the appeal of a "sophisticated, older sister" approach to the modern girl's problems: Thus, Cosmo has been carefully designed to imitate this style and with good results. Just three years after Miss Brown assumed the editorial chair, Cosmo's circulation increased sixteen per cent (to 900,000) and its ad revenue more than doubled (\$3,600,000).

In November 1971, soon after the release of her latest book entitled The Cosmo Girl's Guide to Etiquette, Miss Brown received an award from the University of Southern California's School of Journalism and its Alumni Association "for her contributions to journalism as women obviously wanted it...for her success as an editor..and

for her ability to save a magazine which had what looked like terminal illness."⁴

What's the secret of Cosmo's success? "It's not sexiness," says Miss Brown. "Though we are sexy. It's not emotionalism, though we are emotional. It's that everything we do is taken apart forty-two times and put back together again. There are 745 man hours invested in each article we print."⁵

More important, perhaps, is that each article also reflects the editor's point of view; Cosmo is frequently described as an on-going interpretation of Helen Gurly Brown's philosophy of life. Miss Brown herself is candid in her appraisal of her own talent: "I have a tiny gift of making things not boring. I know what to leave out and what to put in."⁶

To keep readers of the new Etiquette book "unbored," Miss Brown and co-editor Gael Greene (former reporter for the New York Post) put in such chapters as "How to Pay for a Man" and "The Etiquette of Not Getting Pregnant." Miss Brown also made journalistic history of a sort when she ran the first male nude centerfold in a mass women's magazine in April 1972.

The 1970's, like the 1870's, has spawned a proliferation of women's magazines riding the crest of still

another women's movement. Once again these publications are providing fertile ground for a new crop of newswomen to develop their talents and, incidentally, a forum with which to capture the national spotlight.

The New Woman, Progressive Woman and Everywoman are a few of the most successful of these magazines at the national level, but the emergence of MS. is probably the most closely associated with the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1970's.

MS. publisher Elizabeth Forsling Harris described its birth: "The movement deserved a channel. We put a toe into the pond and found it to be deep and very broad."⁷ Just how deep was dramatically demonstrated when the first issue was published late in January 1972: The total press run of 300,000 copies was sold out the same day it hit the newsstands and quick-witted speculators, who bought MS. in bunches at \$1.50 each the first day, were selling them across the nation thereafter at upwards of \$15.00 per copy.

This sight-unseen-success however, is due in large part to the reputation of its editor Gloria Steinem. When Gloria visited Los Angeles just prior to the MS. debut, the Los Angeles Times summarized her 1971 triumphs:

...spoke at the Harvard Law Review dinner,
wrote Time's essay on the Women's Liberation

Movement, made the covers of Newsday and McCalls, hosted the David Frost television show, got a standing ovation at the National Press Club in Washington and earned rousing accolades from farmers' wives in Kansas on her grassroots trip this way.⁸

Gloria, a Smith College graduate who spent two years (1956-58) in India studying at the University of Delhi and the University of Calcutta, started her career smack dab in the middle of the American "Establishment." Gloria took a job as an officer of the Independent Research Service (a Central Intelligence Agency).

The Service paid her plane fare to the Soviet-sponsored Helsinki Youth Festival where she directed three foreign-language newspapers, organized a press service for foreign journalists, and combated the Soviet influence. She augmented her press activity, veterans of the festival say, by somehow always showing up in her most persuasive form whenever it was rumored that any Communist delegate was about to defect.⁹

In 1969 Gloria again went "undercover," but this time there were no government secrets involved and very little cover: Gloria infiltrated New York's Playboy Club for Show Magazine, "using the name Marie Ochs, Gloria had answered a classified ad, survived two Bunny interviews, attended Bunny lectures and read her Bunny Bible, had been fitted for false Bunny eyelashes and then spent three weeks having her tail tweaked."¹⁰

Gloria followed up "The Bunny Tale" with "The Beach Book" and wrote for various publications including Esquire, Life, Harper's, Vogue, Glamour, New York Times, McCall's, Ladies Home Journal and Look before signing on as a staff writer for NBC's television show "That Was The Week That Was." At the same time she was turning out scripts, she was also writing a weekly column for New York Magazine entitled "The City Politic."

Gloria's New York roommate, painter Barbara Nessim, recalls:

It was always work, work, work. Gloria wrote and rewrote. Writing didn't come easy to her. We were as different as night and day. I was always man-addicted. I always talked about getting married. Gloria never did. Oh she dated a lot, men were always falling in love with her. But I think Gloria loved humanity more than human beings. She was always more interested in world love than human love.¹¹

The list of men "who were always falling in love with her" include some of the most influential figures in the country. Among those who openly admit their infatuation are: Ted Sorensen, Mike Nichols, Tom Guinzburg, Herb Sargent and John Kenneth Galbraith who attributes her rise to "brains, comic perception and extremely good looks."¹²

Esquire writer Leonard Levitt opines: "Her ambitious classmates at Smith married men who looked like they

would make it; those girls were bred with a special instinct for success. Gloria married not men but movements and is just as ambitious for them."¹³

When Miss Steinem's grandmother died in 1940, the Toledo Blade called her "a remarkable Toledo woman who helped to shape the feminist movement in this country."¹⁴ Pauline Steinem, a contemporary of Victoria Woodhull, and president of the Ohio Women's Suffrage Association from 1908 to 1911, would undoubtedly approve her granddaughter's preeminence in the movement of the '70s.

Los Angeles Times women's editor Jean Sharley Taylor summed up Gloria's appeal in this way:

Lean, blue-jeaned, gold-ringed, cool, in the manner of young women. Feminine, good-humored, at ease with men and 37, in league with middle-year women. Tolerant, human, and understanding of the problems of older women. Somebody who can be relied on to step up to the line and make 899 consecutive jump shots on behalf of women. Somebody who can dump-shot such reputedly chauvinistic types as Henry Kissinger. But a woman who doesn't wear gym shoes or a number on her back. Instead, an intellectual who can speak of things of the heart and mind that most women can't articulate.¹⁵

Miss Steinem is just as eloquent when speaking as she is on paper. A male reporter queried "What do you see within 50 years? Is it possible that women will dominate if the present liberation momentum continues?"

"I think not," said Gloria. "Change should be

organic. By prescriptioning it, we limit our minds.

Women don't want to imitate the male role which is neither compassionate nor flexible." But she defiantly defends the movement from the label of a passing fad: "The women's movement isn't a Hula Hoop; it isn't going to be over."¹⁶

ACTIVIST REPORTING

Miss Steinem's personalized approach to journalism, while reminiscent of Victoria Woodhull and in the best tradition of Nellie Bly, is construed by many as an example of another modern-day reporting trend in which women are playing a large part.

Dr. J. K. Hvistendahl, associate professor of journalism at Iowa State University, spotlighted this new trend in 1970--dubbing it the "fourth revolution of American journalism." In Dr. Hvistendahl's view, America's press has undergone these major changes: 1) the freeing of the American press from the threat of control by government, 2) the growth of the objective press, 3) interpretive reporting "in which the reporter reported the facts objectively, but attempted to explain them or interpret them in a way that would make them meaningful to the reader and listener," and 4) activist reporting.

The journalistic activist, says Dr. Hvistendahl:

...believes he has a right (indeed an obligation) to become personally and emotionally involved in the events of the day. He believes he should proclaim his beliefs if he wishes, and that it is not only permissible but desirable for him to cover the news from the viewpoint of his own intellectual commitment. He looks at traditional reporting as being sterile, and he considers reporters who refuse to commit themselves to a point of view as being cynical or hypocritical. The activist believes that attempting to describe events of a complicated world objectively seldom results in the truth for anybody--the source, the reporter, or the reader or listener.¹⁷

In 1968 Chicago journalists covering the Democratic National Convention in that city, feeling that "the local papers had suppressed stories about the city's police force in an effort to protect Mayor Richard J. Daley,"¹⁸ introduced their own Chicago Journalism Review (circ. 6,000) to criticize such tactics. Since then reporters in Detroit, Minneapolis, New York, San Francisco and elsewhere have threatened to launch similar reviews of their city's press.

In 1969 the clash between objectivity and activism was vividly illustrated by a father-and-daughter debate: Sydney Gruson, assistant to the publisher at the New York Times stated: "Maybe I'm old-fashioned, but I feel very strongly about the purity of news columns. Pure objectivity might not exist, but you have to strive for it

anyway."¹⁹ His daughter, twenty-one year old Raleigh, N. C. News and Observer reporter Kerry Gruson disagreed: "Objectivity is a myth. There comes a point when you have to take a stand. After that you try to be fair."²⁰

New York Post reporter Bryna Taubman and a colleague were fired when they asked that their by-lines be taken off two stories they did not believe in. Miss Taubman had been assigned to write on Mrs. Gil Hodges, wife of the New York Mets manager; she did the story but argued that "women shouldn't be in the news solely because of their marriage to famous men."²¹

Miss Taubman also made a case for activist reporting as she pointed out the difficulties of objectivity under some circumstances:

I can't be objective today. When I go to a demonstration I'm as likely to get hit over the head as the demonstrator.

Anyone who has been to college in the last 10 years and covers a civil rights demonstration is personally involved. The older generation of reporters were just fooling themselves and the public. I'm aware of my prejudices, so I'll bend over backwards to make sure my story is fair."²²

Sitting in the middle of this controversy is the television journalist. Can a reporter standing "at the scene" before a camera remain objective? A growing number of television newswomen face this dilemma.

BROADCASTING

In 1960, with three times as many radio and television stations as newspapers in the United States, television reporting became an increasingly important field in American journalism.

Women have played a small part in this broadcasting phenomenon since the beginning. When crackling crystal sets first introduced headphones into the American home, Nellie Revell--a former Chicago Times and Chronicle reporter and circus publicist--filled the air waves with news of the entertainment world. Later, as the radio became more sophisticated, Mary Margaret McBride--who once hunted crowned heads in Europe for the New York Mail--attracted a sizeable listening audience with her "Martha Deane Reports to Women" in the early 1930's.

Nevertheless, as with the print media, women reporters have had to re-demonstrate their newsgathering abilities over and over and still the door to broadcast journalism is only partially ajar to the "fair sex."

In 1965 it was considered news when it was announced that Liz Trotta and Marya McLaughlin had joined the NBC and CBS local outlets in New York City, even though

Pauline Frederick was assigned the United Nations beat by NBC as early as 1953.

In 1969 and 1970 a dramatic upsurge in the number of women correspondents in network and local stations could be noted; though in actual figures they accounted for less than two dozen broadcast reporters across the nation these women began to enjoy even greater public and professional recognition than their sisters in print: Betsy Barnette in St. Louis, Gail Christian in Los Angeles, Linda Coble in Honolulu, Pia Lindstrom in New York, Gloria Rojas in Newark and Aline Saarinen in France.

Still, for the most part it has been an uphill struggle for all of them to achieve greater standing than the syrupy "Weather Girl" or "women's news specialist."

"Some males have an ingrained belief," says Michele Clark, of WBBM in Chicago, "that there are certain things a woman cannot do or understand."²³ Connie Chung, of Washington's WTTG, agrees and adds: "I hate fashion stories. Give me a tear-gas, rock-throwing riot any time."²⁴

Proving to station news directors that they have not made a mistake in hiring a woman has often meant double work for the woman, at least at first. Pia Lindstrom (Ingrid Bergman's daughter) recalls her first

New York broadcast job:

It was really sink or swim and I really worked hard. I stayed late often and I watched everybody else. I spent all of my time with the film editors in the back, not only watching my pieces but everybody else's to see how it was done.²⁵

Richard Salant, president of CBS News, concedes that the woman's role is a difficult one:

It's our fault--management's--that the networks do not employ more women and that they are frequently assigned to only certain types of stories once they are hired. But women have to fight back. They have to make their presence felt. They must not let our editors or producers segregate them from the general flow of news. They must ~~clamor~~ for general assignments.²⁶

Lucille Rich, of New York City's WCBS-TV, took Mr. Salant's advice; Despite her boss' reluctance to assign her, Lucille insisted on covering the story of a motorcycle gang which was terrorizing a New York suburb. News director Ed Joyce recalls: "I was afraid Lucille might get manhandled by those apes but she was adamant. She came back--intact--with a topnotch story. Now she gets whatever comes up, no questions asked."²⁷

A few outstanding young women have moved beyond the realm of correspondence work in news broadcasting, among them: Donna Yarborough, a film-camera operator for Dallas' KERA-TV; Christine Huneke, a documentary producer

for Time-Life, and Raysa Bonow, producer of WBZ-TV's (Boston) public affairs program "For Women Today."

However, some newswomen see their future role in broadcast journalism diluted by tokenism. Christine Lund, a San Francisco reporter, complains: "Everybody's got a woman. It's like having a dog."²⁸

"This allegation is strengthened by the widespread practice of hiring women reporters who also happen to be members of racial minorities," says Newsweek magazine.

At the three network flagship stations in New York, for example, seven women broadcast news. Five are black, one is Puerto Rican and one (Pia Lindstrom) is white. Three of Cleveland's five reporters are black and so is one of Detroit's two women broadcasters. Not surprisingly, news directors insist that they have no quotas either for minorities or females, but many of the women themselves disagree. One of Boston's two black women reporters claims that her sex and race 'absolutely' won her a job.²⁹

Nancy Dickerson, perhaps the best known female broadcaster in America and one of the highest paid (when she left NBC to join CBS in 1970, Variety estimated her annual income at \$80,000), adds her voice to the charge: "Every station in America feels it must have one black and one white woman. With a black woman they take care of their tokenism in one fell swoop."³⁰

"House chicks" aside, even those women who have made it to the top, like Marlene Saunders, ABC's top-ranked newswoman who achieved a major breakthrough when she "anchored" the ABC Weekend News in the Spring of 1971, are still dubious about a woman's chances of making it to the Huntley-Brinkley-Chronkite level. "They will always come up with some theory about why it cannot work," says Marlene, "I'm not holding my breath."³¹

One such theory was voiced recently by Reuven Frank, president of NBC News: "I have the strong feeling that audiences are less prepared to accept news from a woman's voice than from a man's."³²

Meanwhile, a chorus of female voices have been reporting on United States' interests abroad.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

"I am probably the world's only working girl with a Russian policeman guarding my front door and Tass teletypes near my bedroom," reminisced Aline Mosby, UPI correspondent to Moscow since February 19, 1959.

Some days it isn't quite so poignant to be an American woman working in Moscow. Some days it's frustrating. The day customs confiscated our TV film and my visa for Leningrad was issued so late that I missed the train... But I remember many happy moments. Watching

grandmothers bringing white Easter cakes, decorated with fat red paper roses, to be blessed by priests in the timeless churches. Or being spellbound by the dreamlike poetry of the fragile ballerina Galina Ulanova dancing Giselle. There have been thrilling times, as when Yuri Gagarin soared into space as mankind's first cosmonaut. And frightening days, such as the afternoon a rock whizzed past my head in an anti-American demonstration.³³

Covering China from behind the Great Wall in February 1972 as part of the elite "Peking 87" were Barbara Walters, hostess of NBC's "Today" Show, Fay Wells, for Storer, and Helen Thomas, representing UPI.

Miss Thomas, a veteran White House correspondent, called President Richard M. Nixon's China trip the most exciting story she has ever covered:

Everything was news, and it was a joy to have my editors ask via trans-Pacific satellite: 'What's Pat wearing?' 'What's the menu?'; and 'What does your hotel room look like?' This was the first time they ever cared.³⁴

It was apparently a case of imposed "activist reporting":

I don't believe any of the reporters on board have ever been as subjective in all of their years of newspapering. And it was permissible, with editors asking for more and more. Everywhere you turned there was a story, starting with a description of your hotel room...While reporters were not getting hard news, their personal daily diaries were making headlines in our local papers--how they felt, what they saw, what they ate were all grist for the mill.³⁵

"It might not have been the week that changed the world," Miss Thomas concluded, "but I believe it was a great leap forward in the right direction."³⁶

Supplying news to Americans abroad has been the job of Lillian O'Connell, editor of UPI's Ocean Press since 1951. Mrs. O'Connell provides the ships of the United States Lines, Holland-American Lines, Moore-McCormack Lines and American Export Lines with UPI filed spot news for newspapers published aboard ship during the voyage. She also supplies sea-going editors with features relating to the countries on the vessel's itinerary and other items of interest to passengers.

Mrs. O'Connell, a graduate of the University of Missouri's School of Journalism, relates that a favorite story about a well-known newspaper editor crossing the Atlantic.

Seeing passengers still searching their copies of the ship's newspaper late in the afternoon for something they may have missed in the morning, the editor remarked that he wished his newspaper at home was read with such thoroughness and intensity.³⁷

"I've always suspected this story was dreamed up by Ocean Press' advertising-sales staff," admitted Mrs. O'Connell. "However apocryphal it may be, it does have a basis in truth."³⁸

Maggie Higgins, who covered the liberation of Buchenwald and the capture of Hitler's Berchtesgaden retreat at the end of World War II, became the Herald-Tribune's Berlin bureau chief at age twenty-six. She then defied General Douglas MacArthur by covering Korea from the front lines and was one of the first correspondents to report on the "non-war" in South Vietnam in 1962. Globe-trotting for Newsday, Maggie wrote columns supporting the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem during the early years of U.S. involvement in the Asian country.

Another woman who was there from the first was Beverly Deepe, a freelancer who decided to make her base of operations Saigon until another world hot spot developed. Beverly quickly developed high-level contacts among the Vietnamese which eventually won her an exclusive scoop: When Premier Nguyen Khanh tried to reestablish his political standing in 1962 by taking a militant anti-American stand, he gave the story to Miss Deepe.

Beverly, who was twenty-six when she began covering the war, notes:

The biggest challenge as a woman correspondent is that most of the American troops expect me to be a living symbol of the wives and sweethearts they left at home. They expect me to be typically American, despite cold water instead of cold cream, fatigues instead of frocks.

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Always it's more important to wear lipstick than a pistol.³⁹

In 1965 Elizabeth Pond, of the Christian Science Monitor, and Kate Webb, a correspondent for UPI, covered the fighting; they were followed shortly thereafter by Betsy Halstead, also of UPI, and Michele Ray, a French freelancer.

Betsy Halstead was just twenty-four when she joined the fracas but her performance has been impressive. A Temple University graduate and wife of UPI-photographer Dirck Halstead, Betsy was the first American correspondent to photograph a B-52 raid and to interview Danang's mayor after Premier Ky had falsely accused him of leaving the city. "I've learned to keep quiet and not to argue," she says. "You can always sweet talk someone into doing something for you."⁴⁰

Michele Ray, a French five-foot ten-inch former fashion model, has covered the war from both sides toward her own end. She is making a 16mm movie and when she wants information, "I first go to the Americans and if they do not tell me then I go to the Vietnamese--they always tell me something." So far Michele, Elizabeth Pond and Kate Webb own the distinction of being the only female correspondents captured and released by the Viet Cong.

In 1965-66, as the war heated up, almost a dozen women did two-to-three month reporting tours in Vietnam; three remained for a longer look.

Denby Fawcett, a Columbia University alumna, was principally a women's feature writer when she was lured into war correspondence by the fact that her boyfriend was assigned to Vietnam by the Honolulu Advertiser. Denby somehow convinced the Advertiser to send her as well and when the boyfriend returned home, Denby remained. She has become an able reporter-photographer, covering the political side of the war as well as the front-line action. She is rarely scared but the twenty-five year old ex-surfer recalls the time when "the sound of a not-too-near mortar shell prompted four Marines to fling themselves over her 'protectively.'" ⁴¹

Denby smiles: "They're always doing cute things like that in the field." ⁴²

Esther Clark, covers Vietnam for the Phoenix Gazette:

She has jetted through the sound barrier, been the first woman reporter to spend a day at sea aboard a submarine and received an Air Force award for outstanding service by a civilian, set up headquarters in Danang because "I felt I had to try explaining to the people at home what is going on." ⁴³

Another veteran reporter who determined to "tell it like it is" in Vietnam was Georgette "Dickey" Chapelle, reporting for the National Observer. Dickey also became the first American correspondent to die in this war.

Like Maggie Higgins, Dickey began her war reporting career in World War II. With her Navy-photographer husband, Anthony, she covered Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Wherever warfare erupted thereafter, Dickey was not far behind: Korea, Cuba, Quemoy, India, Algeria, Lebanon, Laos, Vietnam and the Dominican Republic--all were probed by her pen and camera.

When she tried to smuggle penicillin to Hungarian Freedom Fighters, Dickey was clapped into prison for six weeks of solitary confinement. "Thank God I'm an American," she said when the U. S. consul finally freed her.

She told the story of her battlefield reporting in an autobiography entitled "What's A Woman Doing Here?", published just a year before her death. W. E. Garrett, a National Geographic editor, was a friend and associate; together he and Dickey covered Cuba, Vietnam, northeast India and Ladakh. Mr. Garrett gives a moving account of her death in an article titled: "What was a woman doing there?"

A rainbow decorated the western sky that early morn of November 4 (1965)--the second day of Operation Black Ferret. Action began at 0745 when American Marines moved toward a cane field surrounding a village held by the Viet Cong near Chu Lai, South Vietnam.

A foot brushed a concealed nylon fishing line, a booby trap roared, and shrapnel shredded the damp foliage, felling six Marines and a lady from Milwaukee, Georgette Louise "Dickey" Chapelle. She died moments later, half a world from home...

Personal integrity forced Dickey to write only stories she had 'eyeballed'--to use her term. Official government handouts, complained Dickey, 'have all the authenticity of patent medicine ads.'

Never did Dickey tolerate favors in the field because of her sex. She hid her figure in loose khakis and bandoliers of cameras and film cans. Her long blond hair, rolled into a bun, nestled in a floppy Australian bush hat...

In the field her only jewelry was the military insignia presented to her by fighting units. She fell wearing the globe and anchor of the Marine Corps Commandant, General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., who took the insignia from his own uniform and gave it to Dickey before she departed for Vietnam last fall.

Of her many honors, I suppose Dickey most treasured the Overseas Press Club's award for 'reporting requiring exceptional courage and enterprise.'⁴⁴

Catherine Leroy, representing the Associated Press, was the second member of her sex to win the Overseas Press Club award for reporting in Vietnam. Miss Leroy was presented with the citation in 1967.

Margaret A. Kilgore, assigned by UPI for a two-year stint in Vietnam in 1970, remarked on her return:

The correspondent assigned to this war must be a political reporter, an expert on tactics, more familiar than many soldiers with a vast assortment of weaponry, a linguist, diplomat, administrator, daredevil, and one of the most suspicious, cautious people on earth. Often, he is reporter, writer, photographer and broadcaster combined.⁴⁵

Miss Kilgore was admirably suited for this role.

A seven-year veteran of UPI's Washington bureau, Margaret started her news career on the Wooster (Ohio) Daily Record, soon after graduation from Syracuse University. She joined UPI in 1957 in Columbus, Ohio before moving to the Newark, New Jersey bureau and finally became manager of the Trenton bureau.

Thus prepared, the past president of the Women's National Press Club left Washington to cover the war:

When I first went to Vietnam, I was determined to be treated like any other 'guy,' no favoritism because I was a woman. I kept riding troop transports and when the pilots would graciously come back into the cabin and offer to let me ride up in the cockpit, ostensibly so that I could see better, I refused. I just wanted to be like all the other troops. Finally, a nice colonel clued me that I better accept the offer because I was delaying the use of the open hose latrine system in the tail of the plane--and 115 men were pretty damned uncomfortable.⁴⁶

In January 1971 Margaret accompanied a group of correspondents invited to watch America prisoners being

the list. Somewhere between Saigon and Karachi in October 1965, Maggie picked up a tropical parasite carrying a rare debilitating disease known as leishmaniasis. Newsweek magazine gave the details on January 17, 1966:

Back in the United States in November, Miss Higgins entered Walter Reed Army Medical Center with a raging fever. But she was perversely determined not to quit. Against her doctor's advice, she flew to New York to promote her latest book, Our Vietnam Nightmare; and when she returned she continued to write and later, to dictate, her thrice-weekly column 'On The Spot' from her hospital bed. Purged finally of the parasite but too weakened to be helped by her⁴⁹ doctors, Maggie Higgins died last week at 45.

Disease and death were not the only scars caused by this war; another latter-day Vietnam correspondent, Gloria Emerson of the New York Times, returned home embittered by the experience. She wrote from South Vietnam:

Before I came here in February 1970--when I thought, wrongly, that the fight was over and that the war had become only a political one--an editor, took me out to dinner in Paris. Wiser and kinder than most, Harrison Salisbury asked me an odd question.

'What will a year in Vietnam do to you?' he said.

'Maybe it will make me a better person,' I said, holding to the priggish belief that suffering makes us more human.

It does not. I am now a rougher, meaner, sharper woman than I might have become.

Something has coarsened within me, and I do not think there is a cure. A deep, angry,

suspicion and scorn are what I feel for

the White House
 the Pentagon
 the Army
 the Diplomats
 the experts on Vietnam. 50

WASHINGTON PRESS CORPS

Perhaps less bitter than Miss Emerson, but no less "suspicious" of government officials are the women who cover Washington, D. C. on a daily basis.

Sally Quinn, reporter for the "Style" section of the Washington Post, "was a one-time librarian and go-go girl, a political science-theater major at Smith College, a translator, an actress, and a revolutionary,"⁵¹ before Post editor Ben Bradlee talked her into being a "party reporter." Sally recalls her initiation to the job:

I thought that being a party reporter meant that you wrote about food and flowers and what people wore, sort of a Doris Day thing where everybody loves a party reporter. But I soon found out that what starts out as an innocent floral arrangement at an embassy party can soon lead to an international incident. One of the reasons for this is that Washington social reporting is very different from that in other cities. In Washington, people are working all the time. They work at night, only in different costumes. They go home from work and put on a black tie and go out to a dinner party or reception. If they're political or administration, they're not there because they want to have a good time. They're there because of whom they

might see and what contacts they might make. The advantage I have is that they'll tell me things over a martini at midnight they would never say over a microphone at noon.⁵²

Judith Martin, another Washington Post staffer, could not agree more. Judy has been responsible for at least a dozen "scoops" which have greatly strained her relations with two First Families.

A Wellesley graduate, Judy wrote a much-quoted story about George Wallace being a victim of White House "discrimination" in 1967. While President Johnson fed the nation's governors, Mrs. Johnson prepared a special luncheon and tree-planting ceremony for the governors' wives. Mr. Wallace, husband of Alabama's Lurleen Wallace, was invited to neither event and Judy was quick to scent a story in the omission. She visited Wallace at his hotel room where he was dining alone and quoted his reaction verbatim: "I'm against discrimination," he declared, "it's against the law!"⁵³

The Johnson's were furious and embarrassed, but not nearly so upset as when Judy and Clare Crawford, of the Washington Daily News, gave public light to a father-daughter late-night talk between the President and Luci. Judy recalls the incident in this way:

Johnson went around telling this story--as you know, he is a blabbermouth--about the night

when he sent Navy and Air Force planes to bomb Hanoi, and Luci came in and he told her, 'Your Daddy might have started World War III.' It was the first time we knew he was aware of what the escalation possibilities might be and of what he was doing. He went on to tell of the restless night he had waiting to hear if the American planes returned.⁵⁴

Clare picked up the story at this point:

Luci told her father to come with her to see her 'Little Monk' friends, so in the middle of the night Johnson and Luci went to St. Dominic's Church to pray and the monks came out to talk to them. The next day all the fighters came back and Luci said, 'See, my Little Monks carried you through.' Judy and I used the story. Well, so did Pravda. Liz (Carpenter) called me in and she was waving the Pravda story and calling me un-American and saying that I might have started World War III.⁵⁵

Both reporters discovered later that a number of male reporters had learned of it earlier but had declined to use it.

There were all these people who said they knew the story but didn't use it because it might make the President look like a fool. Well, I think it is up to the President not to make himself look like a fool, and if all that stands between the President and looking like a fool is me, then things are in a pretty sad way, right?⁵⁶

Less spectacular but equally annoying to White House occupants was a stunt contrived by Judy and Myra MacPherson, also of the Washington Post. When the press was barred from the Nixon-Eisenhower wedding reception,

Judy and Myra masqueraded as college girls in order to crash the event at the Plaza Hotel in New York. Their paper published their "thank you note" to Julie Eisenhower which described their elaborate avoidance of Secret Service men, their flirtation with two boys from Amherst who gave them their admission cards so the girls could get back in after leaving to call "mother" (their editor) and "then publicly apologized to Julie for upsetting her when they asked her where she was going on her wedding trip. 'We got the distinct impression, from the long look you then gave us,' wrote the party-crashing reporters, 'that it was time to leave; your mother's press secretary thought so too.'"⁵⁷

Judy further endeared herself to the Nixon's when she wrote of Tricia: "A 24-year-old woman dressed like an ice cream cone can give even neatness and cleanliness a bad name."⁵⁸ This barb got her barred from attending Tricia's White House wedding in June 1971. "The First Family," explained Mrs. Nixon's staff director, Connie Stuart, "does not feel comfortable with Judy Martin."⁵⁹

Clare Crawford's thrice-weekly society column in the Daily News and her show on WRC-NBC give her license to cover all of Washington, but the University of Maryland

graduate claims that she will never make it really big:

"I'm not ruthless enough to be great. I don't have the talent for the jugular. I know how to do it, but I don't have the guts. My first inclination is to protect people."⁶⁰

Clare has done some commendable reporting nonetheless: Her description of the inadequate facilities and care which face unwed mothers in Washington, brought about significant changes in the District of Columbia's maternity clinics and earned Clare an award for meritorious investigative reporting. She has also brought the weight of her column to bear on the narcotics problem and the ease with which firearms may be purchased in the United States.

Myra MacPherson began her career as a copy girl on the Detroit Free Press then graduated to the Detroit Times. Her ambition, however, led her East and she worked for the New York Times and Washington Star before finding a permanent berth with the Washington Post. Like so many newswomen, Myra married a fellow professional and firmly believes that if her husband were not "in the business" the marriage would not have lasted. The day after their wedding, Myra and her groom--Morrie Siegel, a sports writer and newscaster--motored to Williamsburg, Virginia.

Upon arrival, Myra learned that she had been cleared to cover a special Beatle's concert and, naturally, she went. She filed her story at 3:30 a.m.

In the old tried-and-true tradition, I took off my shoes and unlocked the door, to find Morrie was sitting there, slumped in a chair. He looked up and said, 'Damn it, this isn't the way it's supposed to be. I'm the one who should be coming in late.'⁶¹

Nan Roberston, of the New York Times, makes a specialty of covering the nation's First Lady. It was Nan who settled the question of who spent the most on clothes during the 1960 presidential race--Jackie Kennedy or Pat Nixon--when Jackie avowed that she couldn't spend as much on clothes as Pat Nixon did "unless I wore sable underwear."⁶²

"The male reporters were simply furious when I followed Jackie into the ladies' room and they had to stand outside," recalls Nan. "But not as furious as Jack Kennedy was when he read the story. One of his aides said he hit his forehead and cried, 'Good Christ!' That was the last interview they let Jackie do until after the election."⁶³

One of Nan's most grueling experiences as a White House reporter came when "Lady Bird" Johnson decided to tour the South during the 1964 campaign. A four-day train ride was mapped out, covering eight states and forty-seven

stops:

The train was 19 cars long with the press car in the middle, which meant that at each of the stops reporters had to jump off the train, run down the cinder track, get down Lady Bird's remarks, interview people in the crowd, note down a few signs, and sprint back to the central part of the train and the press car to start typing.⁶⁴

"It was physically the most grueling of all campaign trips," said Nan, "and if you could survive it and turn out good copy, you could survive anything."⁶⁵

Helen Thomas, UPI's White House correspondent, is more concerned with the man in the executive mansion than she is with his family. In November 1971 President Nixon's press secretary Ron Ziegler addressed Sigma Delta Chi's national convention in Washington, D. C. In Part, he chided the Washington "regulars" for their perpetual prodding for more frequent presidential press conferences:

I believe the press conference is one way to communicate. It is a very effective way but not the only way to communicate, and I think President Nixon over the past three years has used a variety of ways--through direct television speeches, through radio addresses, of course through the daily briefings we have in the White House, and also by means of the press conference ...⁶⁶

Miss Thomas' response to Mr. Ziegler's address is revealing of the zeal and dedication with which she handles her responsibilities:

Ron Ziegler's implication that a press conference is one way for the President to communicate indicates that there may be some other way that will do the same thing. That's not true. A President must be held accountable. We don't care how many times he goes on radio or television and makes his own spiel. That's wonderful. He can go directly to the American people every day, but it's not the same thing as questioning a President, his motives, why he's doing certain things. There's a tremendous gap. A President is not accountable any other way. Walter Lippmann said that a press conference, no matter how imperfect, is a vital necessity to a democracy.⁶⁷

Equally important of course, are the men and women who hold him "accountable," asking the questions which probe beneath the "spiel" to discover what the public has a right to know.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IX

¹M. Mayer, "Lady as Publisher," Harpers, December, 1968, p. 91.

²"Big Sister," Time, February 9, 1968, p. 60.

³Ibid.

⁴Jody Jacobs, "Now Etiquette for the New Woman," Los Angeles Times, November 14, 1971, Sec. IV, p. 1.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 5.

⁷Jean Sharley Taylor, "Women's Own Superstar: Ms. Steinem Talks...People Listen," Los Angeles Times, January 31, 1972, Sec. III, p. 1.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Leonard Levitt, "SHE," Esquire, October 1971, p. 210.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 200.

¹¹Levitt, op.cit., p. 210.

¹²Ibid., p. 202.

¹³Ibid., p. 215.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 208.

¹⁵Taylor, loc. cit.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Dr. J. K. Hvistendahl, "The Reporter as Activist: A Fourth Revolution in Journalism," Quill, February 1970, pp. 8-9.

¹⁸Stanford Sesser, "Journalists: Objectivity and Activism," Quill, December 1969, p. 6.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Sesser. op. cit., p. 6.

²²Ibid., p. 7.

²³"New Breed," Newsweek, August 30, 1971, p. 62.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Eleanor Prescott, "New Woman Investigates Opportunities for Women in Television," New Woman, October 1971, p. 81.

²⁶Ponchita Pierce, "To Help End Discrimination, Women Must 'Fight Back'," Matrix, Winter 1969-70, p. 3.

²⁷"New Breed," p. 62.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Prescott, op. cit., p. 80.

³¹"New Breed," p. 62.

³²Ibid.

³³Aline Mosby, The View from No. 13 People's Street (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 7.

³⁴Lenora Williamson, "UPI reporters give appraisal of President's trip to China," Editor and Publisher, April 29, 1972, p. 13.

³⁵"The China Trip and How It Was Covered," Quill, April 1972, p. 10.

³⁶Williamson, p. 13.

³⁷ Robert McIntyre, "Voyagers Net News," Editor and Publisher, January 5, 1963, p. 34.

³⁸ McIntyre, op. cit., p. 34.

³⁹ "Femininity at the Front," Time, October 28, 1966, p. 73.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Time, loc. cit.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ W. E. Garrett, "What Was a Woman Doing There?" National Geographic Magazine, February 1966, pp. 270-271.

⁴⁵ Margaret Kilgore, "The Female War Correspondent," Quill, May 1972, p. 10.

⁴⁶ Kilgore, op. cit., p. 12.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Kilgore, op. cit., p. 12.

⁴⁹ "Maggie," Newsweek, January 17, 1966, p. 83.

⁵⁰ Gloria Emerson, "Hey Lady, What Are You Doing Here?" McCalls, August 1971, p. 61.

⁵¹ "Covering Washington in General," Quill, January 1972, p. 11.

⁵² Quill, op. cit., p. 11.

⁵³ Winzola McLendon and Scottie Smith, Don't Quote Me: Washington Newswomen and the Power Society (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1954), p. 105.

⁵⁴ McLendon, op. cit., p. 102.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ McLendon, op. cit., p. 172.

⁵⁸ "Wave Makers," Time, May 24, 1971, p. 45.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 45.

⁶⁰ McLendon, op. cit., p. 103.

⁶¹ McLendon, op. cit., p. 173.

⁶² Ibid., p. 68.

⁶³ McLendon, op. cit., p. 16.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 77.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ "Covering the White House in Particular," Quill,
January 1972, p. 13.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

If nothing else, it can be hoped that this survey has proved beyond doubt that women have played a far larger role in the history of American journalism than might be popularly supposed. Those to whom Nellie Bly and Superman-sidekick Lois Lane typify the girl reporter, might well be surprised at the variety and quality of news reporting done by women whose careers, for the most part, have been relegated to the footnotes in journalism textbooks.

Over 300 ladies have been included in this study--a small harvest when tilled from two-and-a-half centuries of news work--yet each of these women earned public and/or professional recognition, each adding in her own way to the journalism of today.

Virtually no journalistic era in the United States --be it one of Dr. Hvistendahl's "four major revolutions" or the shorter trend periods used to divide the foregoing sections--was free from the contributions of at least a handful of women. From the hardy widow printers of the

nineteenth century colonies, the American newswoman began to emerge as a distinct entity in the 1880's and 1890's. Leading a parade of women away from "hearth and home," they ventured into newsrooms when most of their sisters dared go no further than the schoolroom.

By 1900 new female by-lines--pseudonyms of course--began popping up on front pages in various parts of the United States. A succession of sensational journalistic fads--stunts, sob stories and tabloids--lent a hand, pulling more and more women up the journalistic ladder.

As in many other industries, the two world wars wrenched men away from their city-room desks and into foreign lands, creating increased opportunities for women to prove their newswriting abilities. During World War I, a number of American papers grudgingly allowed a few women to occupy copy editing posts, by World War II, the Korean conflict and Vietnam, women were capably covering the battlefield.

During the last twenty years the news field has broadened to offer both men and women increasing opportunities to "specialize" in their reporting, and broadcast journalism has opened up new dimensions in newsgathering

techniques. A few women have earned a place for themselves in the specialty field with their astute political, financial and education coverage, but today's newswoman still finds it tough going to get a crack at the top-ranked television news spots.

Interestingly enough, historical trends frequently recur, offering women of vastly different centuries remarkably similar challenges:

While it is difficult to imagine Helen Thomas seating herself on President Nixon's clothes while he swims in the Potomac, it is easy to suppose that she might ask him some of the same questions posed by Anne Royall when she cornered President John Quincy Adams in this predicament. Though separated in time by more than 140 years, these women show similar concern over the activities of the United States Chief Executive.

It was partially Victoria Woodhull's strong feminist streak which prompted her to become the publisher of Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly in 1872; a century later another lady journalist, Gloria Steinem, was similarly moved to provide an outlet for the Women's Liberation Movement in her magazine, MS.

Jane Grey Swisshelm and Gail Hamilton, early veterans of the Congressional Press Gallery, viewed the

nation's elected representatives with the same critical eye turned on them today by Doris Fleeson, Nan Robertson and Judy Martin.

Bryna Taubman, of the New York Post, echoes the style of Winifred "Annie Laurie" Black and Elizabeth "Nellie Bly" Cochrane when she talks of "activist reporting."

Margaret Bourke-White, Maggie Higgins and Dickey Chapelle following fearlessly in the footsteps of war reporter Anna Benjamin.

Much of the American newswoman's past has been devoted to gaining the acceptance already accorded her male counterparts. The going has been rough in this area, but many signs point to the final disintegration of the sex barrier: One of the most significant was the National Press Club's 1971 decision to admit women to its ranks. Susanna McBee, Washington editor for McCall's, reported the momentous event:

The National Press Club has always been the leading forum in town: Political figures and foreign heads of states frequently give major addresses there.

Not so long ago, a woman reporter could sit only in the balcony while the speaker delivered his address in the club's ballroom below. Since all the phones were downstairs, the men were able to get there first with the story. Questions to

the speaker could come only from the floor, not from the balcony.

The Women's National Press Club waged frequent protests and bit by bit the National Press Club granted concessions: Women could sit downstairs in the ballroom but couldn't eat with the men. Like that.

Last fall, we women decided to show the National Press Club what 'class' really is. In our best long-suffering manner, we voted overwhelmingly to accept qualified male journalists into our club and to change our club's name.

Three days later, the National Press Club, acknowledging the twentieth century, dropped its barrier. We heard that many in the National Press Club sanctum took the decision very hard.

Nevertheless, the female press corps soon received form letters from National Press Club president Vernon Louviere, inviting us and our escorts to a gala soiree, honoring the '24 new lady members'...

A few weeks later my application was approved, and I received a 'Welcome to the National Press Club!' letter from Louviere. Doggedly, pathetically, and inevitably, Louviere had begun the letter 'Dear Mr. McBee.'¹

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER X

¹ Susanna McBee, "Open Sesame," McCall's,
July 1971, p. 45.

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