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WOMEN IN MASS COMMUNICATION

Challenging Gender Values

Edited by
Pamela J. Creedon

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To my mother, Louise;
my sister, Barb; and my brother, Jim

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Contents

2

Changing Media History Through Women's History

SUSAN HENRY

Women's participation in American journalism is as old as the field itself. We know, for example, that the first press in the American colonies (established in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1638) was owned by a woman, and that at least 17 women worked as printers in colonial America before the ratification of the Constitution in 1788. Still more women labored in print shops as compositors, binders, writers, and press workers during this period.[1]

Yet, although the work of American women journalists can be traced as far back as the field's origins, the historical study of women journalists, of women's images in the mass media, and of their presence as members of mass media audiences has a much shorter lineage. Women began to move up "from the footnotes" of journalism history texts only about a decade ago, and substantial research by journalism historians on topics related to women began less than a decade before that.[2]

In this brief time, however, such research has progressed rapidly. The new stories of at least 100 women journalists have been told, many historical studies of media consumed primarily by women have been carried out, women's media images during different periods have been studied, and the roles played by the mass media in advancing or retarding social, political, and economic developments of particular importance to women increasingly have been examined.

As a result, unlike historians studying women and journalism only a decade ago, today's researchers have a substantial body of scholarly literature on which to draw. These scholars no doubt will be influenced by the methods and subjects chosen as well as by the conclusions drawn in these earlier works. Thus this is an appropriate time to begin an evaluation of the state of this literature, to examine the effects this research has had on the

larger field of journalism history, and to suggest directions that future research might take.

NEW RESEARCH, NEW INTEGRATION

Certainly one of the most striking aspects of the historical research on women and American journalism is its quantity. The field has attracted a large number of productive, imaginative scholars. One indication of the quantity of published articles on women is found in the first 10-year index (covering 1974-1983) of *Journalism History*, the oldest journal in the field. Here "women," with 26 entries, is the third largest topic category, preceded only by the large, miscellaneous categories labeled "general" and "biographies." In addition, 12 of the 35 entries listed under "biographies" refer to studies of women ("Cumulative Index, Vols. 1-10, 1974-1983," 1983).

Similar evidence of the proliferation of this research is found in an article by Donald Shaw and Sylvia Zack (1987) analyzing the last decade of historical articles published in *Journalism Quarterly*, the main professional journal for research in mass communication, and in *Journalism History*. Citing work that has, in their opinion, contributed "new evidence and perspectives" to the field, Shaw and Zack single out 108 individual articles. Of these, 26—almost a quarter of the total—are on topics related to women. The authors make no attempt to count or categorize all articles appearing in these two journals during this time, yet the fact that they cite such a larger number about women is an indication of the amount of strong published work available.

Recent articles on women in journalism history are notable for more than just their quantity; they also are varied in the subjects covered. A substantial amount of this research is devoted to "retrieving" previously unrecognized women journalists and placing them within the historical record, but, in addition, excellent studies have been done on topics such as suffrage and birth control publications, the effects women journalists' "marginal" professional status has had on their journalism and their careers, how women and particular women's issues have been covered by both specialized and mainstream media, and methodological and conceptual issues growing out of the study of women.

In contrast, most books on women and journalism history published in the 1970s and 1980s have been biographies of individual women rather

than studies of wider trends and issues. Still, many of these in-depth studies constitute significant contributions to the literature, particularly in light of the many hundreds of biographies and autobiographies of male journalists crowding library shelves. It also should be noted that these books have taken as their subjects a range of women and types of journalism. For example, recent well-received biographies include studies of Freda Kirchwey, owner, editor, and publisher of *The Nation* (Alpern, 1987); of suffragist editor and activist Abigail Scott Duniway (Moynihan, 1983); of Dorothy Day, publisher of the radical *Catholic Worker* (Roberts, 1984); and of *Life* magazine's renowned photographer, Margaret Bourke-White (Goldberg, 1986). At the same time, recent group biographies have examined, in less depth, still more women journalists' lives.[3]

In addition to their progress in studying the individuals, publications, and issues previously unknown or unrecognized within journalism history, historians of women have begun to succeed in another important area: the integration of their research into the overall picture of American journalism history, especially as it is being taught in colleges and universities. A rough indication of their success can be found by examining the table of contents of the dominant text in the field,[4] Edwin Emery and Michael Emery's *The Press and America*. The third edition, published in 1972, and the sixth edition, published in 1988, are very different in their inclusion of material related to women. These differences are evident beginning with the first sentence of each edition's foreword—which announced in 1972, "Journalism history is the story of man's long struggle to communicate freely with his fellow man" (Emery, 1972, p. iii) and was revised in 1988 to read, "Journalism history is the story of humanity's long struggle to communicate" (Emery & Emery, 1988, p. v). They continue to the last page of each index, where the heading "women in journalism" references a total five pages in 1972 and 103 pages in 1988. These additional pages primarily reflect the legions of women's names now included in the sixth edition's voluminous lists of printers, reporters, editors, publishers, broadcasters, photographers, and advertising and public relations practitioners. A dozen and a half illustrations showing women journalists also have been added during the 16 years, while the expanded 1988 annotated bibliographies accompanying each chapter contain many new sources on women and journalism history.

REASONS FOR THE NEW RESEARCH

It is now possible, then, to identify a substantial and varied body of published work on women and journalism history, and to note a systematic integration of material about women into the key journalism history text. What accounts for this progress? The most obvious answer is that the number of scholars doing historical research on women in journalism has increased markedly.

While there is no reliable way to determine how many journalism historians have studied topics related to women during any period (and whether good work was produced that was not accepted for publication), it certainly is notable that since the early 1970s the journalism faculties of American colleges and universities have included growing numbers of the professors most likely to study women—that is, women. Just as many more women have become professional journalists in the last decade and a half, so have many more become journalism professors.

The most recent study to bring together detailed data on journalism educators found that in 1988 women made up 24% of higher-education journalism faculties, compared with only 7-8% in 1972 (see Schamber, Chapter 7, this volume). While this still shows a serious imbalance between men and women (and the imbalance is compounded by significant rank and salary differences), it more than doubles the percentage of a decade earlier. A related earlier study examined the authorship of full-length *Journalism Quarterly* articles by women, noting an increase from 7% during the 1960-71 period to more than 16% for 1979-83 (Sharp, Turk, Einsiedel, Schamber, & Hollenback, 1985, p. 3).

Certainly not all women teaching journalism are also doing research on women, and only a minority of those who are studying women also are historians. But there is little doubt that the increase in the number of female journalism professors has coincided with a marked increase in the amount of scholarly work on women in journalism history—much of it authored by women—being published. And, as more work has been published, additional researchers have been drawn to the study of women and journalism history.

Yet this small influx of women journalism historians cannot by itself explain the progress made in research on women, for few historians would risk studying women in journalism if they thought there was little chance their work would be accepted or valued by others in the field. Professors just beginning their careers—as was the case with many female scholars

researching women during the 1970s—need to be particularly sensitive to the publishing potential of their research.

Understanding their success thus also requires recognizing what I believe is another important factor: the interest in and openness to research on women shown by a number of important male journalism historians. For more than a decade, some of the field's most respected men have given particular encouragement to scholars studying women in journalism history. Their personal enthusiasm for—and public recognition of—this research has meant that those who pursue it generally have not had to fight the kinds of hard battles to establish the value of their work that, for example, many well-known American historians studying women face even today.[5]

Evidence of such support has been noted above. It includes the increasing references to women in *The Press and America*, the many articles related to women singled out in an article on important research in journalism history coauthored by Donald Shaw, *Journalism Quarterly*'s associate editor for history, and the three dozen articles on women published during *Journalism History*'s first decade, when it was edited by Tom Reilly. By calling attention to research on women in these varied ways, male journalism historians have helped to legitimate this work and to encourage its production.

Admittedly, scholars studying women in journalism history do face serious problems, such as a scarcity of both primary data and useful analytical models. But as a rule they have not had to overcome opposition to their work by established, influential male journalism historians and journal editors; indeed, the support of such people likely has provided important encouragement for these research efforts. Many things help account for their support, including the high quality of a great deal of this published work and the very capable scholars responsible for much of it. But I believe two less obvious factors also are important in explaining why major male journalism historians have encouraged research on women. These factors particularly deserve consideration because, to my mind, they bear directly on the future of historical research on women in journalism.

The first factor arises from the status of journalism history within the larger field of mass communication research. Simply put, the larger field exhibits a marked social science bias—which favors methods utilizing quantification—as well as a preference for research that examines current media issues.[6] Since most journalism history does not use social science research methods (although these methods have been applied, with very revealing results), and history, by definition, examines the past, this work

tends to have a kind of undeserved secondary status as mass communication research. Thus journalism historians seldom are included as part of university communication research centers, just as their work usually is less well funded than that of social science mass communication researchers. Similarly, *Journalism Quarterly* prints far more articles utilizing social science research methods than traditional historical methods.[7]

Yet, ironically, this situation may well have made established male journalism historians more receptive to research on women than would have been the case if history were seen as more central to mass communication research overall. These historians can recognize the benefits of encouraging all scholars who are producing good history, no matter what its subject, since this will further strengthen a field that sometimes is unfairly viewed as peripheral. Indeed, new researchers as a whole tend to be encouraged, since they can help revitalize the field, both with their numbers and with their scholarship. This same secondary status seems to have made journalism historians less rigid than journalism social scientists in defining "acceptable" research subjects. As a result, new historians may be discouraged from exploring nontraditional research areas less frequently than are their social scientist colleagues.

A second factor also helps explain the support given journalism historians studying topics related to women. It is important to note, I think, that most of this research is substantially conservative: Research on women and journalism history has seldom challenged accepted ideas about such matters as how individuals should be studied or what criteria should be used in determining the significance of different media or journalists. Thus the specific topics examined in this research—for example, women journalists or the media coverage of women at different times—are new, but the scholars carrying out this research generally have studied their subjects within the accepted, male-developed framework of journalism history. As a result, their findings can easily be integrated into the field's existing literature, further strengthening the established framework because it is applied to women as well as to men.

This is not to say these scholars purposely have avoided developing radically different ways of thinking about their subjects, or that resistance necessarily would arise if they did. It is much more likely that, in the struggle to locate and analyze data needed for research on women, assumptions about journalism history simply have not been questioned. Similarly, solving the many practical problems often involved in studying women may have left researchers with little energy to pursue some of the more interesting implications of their studies, or to take advantage of useful literature

outside of the field that might lead them to quite different subjects and analytical frameworks.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN AND JOURNALISM HISTORY

As understandable as this conservatism is, it must be overcome, and alternative approaches to the study of women in journalism history must be developed. A logical starting point for this development is with the comments of those who have thought about this field and its future. Although no full-fledged critique of the existing research has yet been published, several scholars have made important points that can be utilized in finding new approaches.

The first point has been suggested independently by two well-known journalism historians. MaryAnn Yodelis Smith (1982) advises that historical studies of women "media processors" must be better developed so that they move beyond the traditional narratives that have dominated the literature. She stresses the need to analyze the lives of women journalists rigorously, and especially to provide sociocultural context for them (pp. 149-150). Similarly, Zena Beth McGlashan (1985) warns against the "positivist trap of creating but not critiquing heroes." Rather, she explains, the work done by women journalists must be critically examined, and differences between women should be carefully noted (p. 59).

Second is the observation by communication theorist Leslie Steeves (1987) that most research on women and journalism history rests on "liberal feminist" assumptions that do not question the established mainstream American media system, instead studying—and applauding—the "notable" women who were able to succeed within that system. Steeves also notes that these studies seldom examine how such factors as class, race, and sexual preference have affected the work done by these women (p. 103).

Third is feminist communication scholar Lana Rakow's (1986) recommendation of a "recovery and reappraisal approach" to the study of contemporary popular culture produced by and for women. She explains that this approach "calls not for adding women artists to a literary or artistic canon but for a re-evaluation of the criteria that establish canons and determine the artistic and social merit of creative expressions." Although she does not apply this concept to journalism history, Rakow praises historical studies of popular culture—especially of popular novels written by women for women readers—that avoid the kind of analysis usually applied to male-oriented popular culture and instead explore, within a true female context, the reasons such works were created and the functions they performed (pp. 28-32).

Social scientist Brenda Dervin (1987), like Lana Rakow, does not specifically address the study of journalism history, but she takes Rakow's advocacy of a female point of view in research on popular culture a step further when she explains that the "essential mandate" of all feminist communication research is to "invent approaches that allow us to hear the meanings of women on their own terms, including their observations of the structures that constrain them." We must, in short, focus on "giving women voice so that we may hear their reality" (p. 12).

A final useful observation comes from journalism historian Catherine Covert (1981). In an extremely perceptive article identifying and questioning the assumptions that male journalism historians have imposed on their field, she describes the male assumption that "history is about autonomy":

> Journalism history has classically celebrated independence and individual autonomy rather than subordination and dependence. The actions of strikingly autonomous individuals have been chronicled. "Freedom" has been valued as an existential state. (p. 4)

As a result of this assumption, she says, historians have paid little attention to the influences of family, friends and professional networks on journalists' careers. Similarly, the histories of small-town newspapers and other media that do not fit the "conflict" model of journalism and government—media that were devoted more to building community than to maintaining an adversary relationship with the power structure—seldom have been carefully studied (pp. 4-5).

The observations of these six writers are both complementary and cumulative; taken together, they form a kind of general outline for future research on women and journalism history. This research, they suggest, should be analytical and critical, moving beyond description to an understanding of why things happened and what they meant at the time to the women involved in them as media creators or audiences. This process may well require challenging and revising previously accepted precepts of journalism history that are not applicable to women. And it surely will lead to the discovery of new research subjects, as well as new ways of looking at old ones.

USING FIVE CONCEPTS FROM WOMEN'S HISTORY

Valuable ideas for carrying out the recommendations made by these communication scholars can be found in a large body of work that has received little attention from most journalism historians: the literature of women's history. The observations of women's historians can be particularly useful, for, far more than journalism historians studying women, they have noted the limitations of so-called contribution history, in which "man becomes the measure of significance" by which women's lives are judged and women are added to the existing historical scholarship only if they meet the male standard—as has been the case in much of the work done on women in journalism history. Contribution history is a first step in building women's history, these scholars say, but it should be only a transitional development on the road to new ways of studying women, new criteria for choosing subjects of study, and new questions being asked.[8]

Many different techniques for moving forward have been suggested by women's historians,[9] but one approach seems especially useful in directing future research on women and journalism history, for it helps solidify the six scholars' ideas briefly described in the previous section. This approach calls for replacing male-defined research with scholarship in which, in the words of historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (1980), "the events and processes central to women's experience assume historical centrality, and women are recognized as active agents" (p. 57). Joan Wallach Scott (1983) calls this an effort to "construct women as historical subjects," and she explains that it goes "far beyond the naive search for heroic ancestors of the contemporary women's movement to a re-evaluation of established standards of historical significance" (p. 145).

Just as women's historians have perceptively analyzed the problems of contribution history, so have they produced an extensive body of analytical research that is applicable to journalism history. Yet little of this research has yet been taken advantage of by historians of women and journalism, and I believe this is one reason the work most of these historians have produced remains largely descriptive and unquestioning of traditional, male-defined standards of journalism history.

As a first step toward utilizing this research, I have identified five concepts developed by women's historians that I believe can be used to help create new kinds of research on women and journalism history. These concepts are discussed, in turn, below. I also have utilized research conducted by women's historians to describe specific topic areas deserving of study that do not fit within conventional journalism history standards of significance, and thus may lead to a redefinition of these standards. In the process, I hope to show how historical research on women and journalism can change along the lines recommended by the communication scholars cited earlier.

Women's Culture

One area in which women's historians have contributed substantial useful research is that of the study of nineteenth-century American women's culture—the separate, self-created culture apparently shared by many middle-class women in which concerns of domesticity and morality were especially important. By creating this culture, it is thought, women were able to redefine and take control of the "separate sphere" into which they had been forced by the dominant male society. Here they developed shared, female-identified values, rituals, relationships, and modes of communication that were sources of satisfaction and strength. Although historians disagree about some of the details of this culture and about the extent to which it tended to be either confining or liberating, they do generally agree that it was an important, sustaining part of the lives of many bourgeois women of the period (Berkin, 1985, pp. 209-210; Scott, 1983, pp. 148-149).[10]

Research on women's culture provides a valuable context for studying particular forms of nineteenth-century journalism that have previously received little attention. Such a study might begin with an examination of the journalism produced by the women who lived and believed most fervently in the values of this culture. One excellent example of this journalism is *The Advocate of Moral Reform*, the weekly newspaper produced by the American Female Moral Reform Society.

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (1985) describes her first attempts to understand the Society:

> [It] was so self-consciously female, so militantly antimale that it resisted all my efforts to subordinate it to a male schema. The rhetoric and programs of the American Female Moral Reform Society forced me to recognize it as a uniquely female institution, radically different from male philanthropies and reforms. (p. 20)

Her surprise is understandable, for the Society, formed in 1834, zealously attacked two problems that could barely be discussed in polite society of the time: prostitution and the sexual double standard that permitted middle-class males free sexual license. Its tactics included stationing

members in front of brothels, where they would pray and sing hymns, and legislative lobbying campaigns, but its most important and effective work took place in the pages of *The Advocate* (Smith-Rosenberg, 1985, pp. 109–118).

Through *The Advocate*, the Society was able to carry its message beyond New York City, where it was founded, throughout the East Coast. By 1838 *The Advocate* claimed 16,500 subscribers, making it one of the country's most widely read evangelical newspapers, and in rural areas—where it circulated extensively—it may well have been the only newspaper a family received. Indeed, *The Advocate* was full of letters from rural readers describing their feelings of frustration over their confined lives and their gratitude for the connections they felt with other women through involvement in this moral reform effort. These letters often detailed the sins of male seducers and adulterers, as did the paper's editorials; lists of names of accused sinners also were printed. And one solution was proposed over and over: Women must control society's moral standards and behavior, and thus male licentiousness (Smith-Rosenberg, 1985, pp. 115-122).

One other aspect of *The Advocate* is particularly interesting: By 1843, all positions on the paper were held by women. The two women hired as editors in 1836 were among the first female weekly newspaper editors in nineteenth-century America, while in 1835 a female subscription agent was hired, in 1841 a female bookkeeper replaced the male financial agent, and two years later all the typesetters were women. All of this was part of a conscious campaign by the Society to show that women could work successfully in traditionally male fields (Smith-Rosenberg, 1985, pp. 122–123).

The Advocate is waiting to be studied by a journalism historian who can analyze it within the context of women's culture of the period. In addition, research should be carried out on other media related to nineteenth-century women's culture, and especially on groups of these publications, since this would make it possible to see trends and draw broad conclusions. We know, for example, that between 1784 and 1860 close to 100 magazines dealing with women's interests were published (Degler, 1980, p. 377). Most of them have not been studied.[11] Both the advertising and editorial contents of these publications deserve analysis, since advertising aimed at women may well have been particularly powerful in reinforcing the boundaries of their separate sphere, and thus keeping women within it.[12]

We also know that during the same period the American Female Moral Reform Society was most active, another reform movement—abolition—was attracting still more middle-class women and bringing them

further outside their domestic worlds, even as it drew on the values developed within those worlds. The important—and still largely unstudied—work done by abolitionist women included much of the writing published in antislavery newspapers (Degler, 1980, p. 303; Lerner, 1979, p. 153). A full understanding of the women's culture underlying this journalism might well lead to a valuable reevaluation of it.

These three kinds of studies might combine in particularly significant ways, for they would provide examples of journalism fervently produced within the confines of women's culture to bring its ideals to a wider world, journalism produced primarily by those outside the culture who helped to solidify it, and journalism produced by women formed by the culture but applying their values to a different, although related, cause. Research in all three areas could result in new conclusions about the cultural roles journalism can play. And these in turn might lead to new criteria for determining media influence and historical significance.

Women as Community-Builders

Women's historians also have carried out valuable research on women's previously unrecognized work as community-builders. They point out that this work often began with women's recognition of immediate community needs that were first addressed in practical, informal ways, then became larger efforts to raise funds and create formal institutions—libraries, orphanages, and kindergartens, for example. Once these institutions became fully established and licensed, men usually took them over. And on an individual level, women have historically supplied continuity to their communities by maintaining and passing on to their children important family, religious, and social values (Lerner, 1979, pp. 165, 179).

Traditional historians generally have ignored this kind of work by women, although they have recorded the histories of many of these institutions once they were run by men (Lerner, 1979, p. 179). Recently, however, women's historians have begun to study these activities, and much excellent research has been done on the post-Civil War work of the "social feminists" who, building on many of the values of women's culture, became activists in such social reforms as the temperance, settlement, and child-welfare movements (Degler, 1980, pp. 326-327; Smith-Rosenberg, 1985, pp. 167-175).

Included in this literature is valuable information on Black women's institution-building and reform work. Because for decades following the Civil War many Southern communities lacked any kind of social welfare

organization—or did not permit Blacks access to those organizations that did exist—Black women were particularly active in founding and sustaining such institutions as schools, orphanages, and old people's homes. In the cities, they organized settlement houses, child-care facilities, health clinics, and community improvement campaigns (Lerner, 1979, pp. 83-93). Similar work by urban immigrant women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also has been documented by women's historians.[13]

This varied scholarship on women as community-builders can be utilized by journalism historians in understanding the extensive work done by women in the medium that has most consistently welcomed their involvement: community journalism.[14] If this journalism—which has only infrequently been researched by journalism historians—were studied with a better recognition of women's roles in it, and better analyzed within the context of the historical literature on women's community-building, a new evaluation of its place in journalism history might result. And it should be kept in mind that community journalism includes many minority newspapers, where women no doubt also played important roles.[15] Indeed, one of the country's leading Black social reformers, Ida B. Wells, also edited or worked as a reporter for a number of Southern Black community newspapers (Lerner, 1979, p. 85; Scott, 1984, p. 347).[16]

Women's Formal and Informal Connections

Studies of women's culture and women's work as community-builders in the nineteenth-century United States have resulted in much new information about the close relationships these women often had with each other. Women's historians have shown that, beginning around 1800, women increasingly bonded together in formal, single-sex clubs and associations that were particularly popular in the last 30 years of the century, when millions of women joined (Degler, 1980, pp. 315-327; Scott, 1984, pp. 279-294). Among the members of these organizations were society's "new women," who, starting in the 1870s, began to move beyond conventional female roles to enter such previously male worlds as higher education, business, medicine, and the arts. Sometimes unmarried, these women found personal female support networks especially important (Smith-Rosenberg, 1985, pp. 176-177, 247-256).[17]

Historians studying women in American journalism should look for evidence of these kinds of formal and informal relationships in their subjects' lives and use the literature from women's history to help understand the importance of these connections. Knowledge of organizational memberships might well be particularly useful in studying women journalists of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when such organizations proliferated and journalism initially was opened to women. Still, the total numbers of full-time female journalists in this period were small; according to U.S. census figures, they were 288 out of 12,308 full-time journalists in 1880 and had grown to 2,193 out of 30,098 in 1900 (Beasley & Silver, 1977, p. 38). As both distinct minorities in the profession and often "firsts" at their particular periodicals, these women must have needed the support of other women, and the connections made in the process may have influenced their work.[18]

I found that an understanding of these kinds of informal and organizational ties was key to my study of a late nineteenth-century American journalist, Helen Campbell. Campbell was a member of many organizations for professional women, including Sorosis, the first New York City women's club (which was founded by journalist Jane Cunningham Croly), and was an activist in the new home economics movement. Thus she spent much time with other women journalists and with women in business, the arts, and the professions. Divorced after 10 years of marriage, she also had an extensive friendship network composed of other women reformers, the most notable being feminist writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman. I have argued that these connections both influenced the contents of her writing—which often focused on the need for urban reforms—and helped provide her with personal support for her work as a journalist (Henry, 1984).

Strong connections to other women no doubt have been important for twentieth-century women journalists as well, so they too need to be examined. And, because the early twentieth century saw the establishment of many new professional organizations for women (Degler, 1980, p. 324), historians studying women journalists of this later period often may find that their subjects were members of women's press clubs with surviving archival records and publications that can provide useful insights about the professional networks of individual women.[19] Through such materials we may learn a great deal about how women journalists have been able to succeed in a predominantly male world.

Journalism historians who are able to collect data on these kinds of relations will find that these data also aid them in establishing valuable cultural contexts for their studies. At the same time, they may find that such information challenges the high value put on journalistic autonomy that Catherine Covert identified as underlying so much of our published journalism history. As a result, this kind of research may lead to a systematic question-

ing of that value and to new studies of the importance of supportive personal relationships for both female and male journalists.

Women's Work

Just as they have found new ways of interpreting and understanding the personal lives of women, so have women's historians redefined the very concept of work. These historians began by defining work the same way male economists—and most other historians—did: as paid labor. They soon discovered, however, that this excluded most of the work done by women in the past, including carrying out extensive household, child-care, and voluntary community tasks. Now, work is understood to include both paid and unpaid labor done both outside and inside the home (Lerner, 1979, pp. 178-179; Norton, 1986, p. 40).

Because so much of journalism history is the study of men and women at work, this redefinition has a direct bearing on the field. This is particularly the case, I believe, when the new definition is combined with other observations about the unrecognized work of women. Among these observations is one made by a historian reviewing the biographies of the 1,359 women included in the three volumes of *Notable American Women*, who was struck by the fact that numerous women had let men take credit for their work. These women, she said, seem to have made themselves "purposely invisible" (Scott, 1984, p. 156). Similarly, a noted women's psychologist has observed that married women's work often includes helping their husbands do their work. Women may take great satisfaction in this, she explains, since "women, more easily than men, can believe that any activity is more satisfying when it takes place in the context of relationships to other human beings—and even more so when it leads to the enhancement of others." Yet, because "most of this activity has not been done in direct and open pursuit of their own goals—therefore it is not activity in the male definition of it" (Miller, 1986, p. 54).

Journalism historians who understand these different concepts of work will begin to discover new examples of women's work in journalism. My own research, for example, has resulted in the identification of a cohort of American women in the 1920s and 1930s who worked with their better-known husbands to produce journalism for which they received little public credit. The list so far includes Ruth Hale, wife of famed newspaper columnist Heywood Broun; Jane Grant, wife of *New Yorker* founder Harold Ross; Katherine White, wife of *New Yorker* writer E. B. White; and Clare Boothe Luce, who developed the initial plan for Henry Luce's *Life* magazine. But to me the most interesting couple in this cohort is composed of Doris E. Fleischman and Edward L. Bernays, who together formed the firm of Edward L. Bernays, Counsel on Public Relations, and who were wholly equal partners in the business from the time of their marriage in 1922 until Doris Fleischman's death in 1980 (Henry, 1988). No doubt other cohorts of journalists' wives who did similar work in their husbands' names can be found.

I also have been studying the work done by three generations of women in one newspaper publishing family, the Otis-Chandler *Los Angeles Times* dynasty. As I chart the largely unpaid and unrecognized work of publishers' wives, sisters, and daughters over more than three-quarters of a century, I am noticing both patterns and differences that establish a wide range of women's roles (Henry, 1987). Studies of women family members in many of the country's other publishing dynasties would allow similar opportunities to compare women's work over time and under changing social, political, and economic circumstances.

Uncovering women's contributions that have been hidden behind male accomplishments does more than add another dimension to our knowledge of the work done by women in journalism. It also calls into question the tendency of journalism historians to pay little attention to journalists who worked behind the scenes or lacked official titles. Equally important, it illustrates the importance of better recognizing the collaborative effort—some of it between husbands and wives—that may well have been behind a substantial amount of our journalism. And such recognition once again challenges the underlying value of autonomy in journalism history.

Women Media Audiences

Finally, I suggest that journalism historians can learn from one additional area in which women's historians have reexamined published American history. They have questioned the ways traditional historians have characterized particular historical periods or developments, pointing out that often these characterizations apply only to the men of a society. Indeed, they have shown that the events that have socially, intellectually, economically, or politically benefited men frequently have worked in opposite ways for women. For example, the Renaissance, which opened up many new opportunities for men, resulted in new restrictions upon women (Lerner, 1979, p. 175).

In the United States, the Jacksonian period has been reevaluated in a similar way. Women's historians have found that although for white men

the 1830s and 1840s were a time of greatly expanded economic, social, and political opportunities, during that time women's positions deteriorated in many ways. They were, for example, no longer permitted to enter most of the business and professional occupations that had previously been open to them. Similarly, the "lady"—with all the restrictions on personal behavior that implied—became the feminine ideal. And in comparison with white males—large groups of whom gained voting rights during the Jacksonian period—women's political disenfranchisement seemed all the more extreme (Lerner, 1979, p. 18).

This new way of looking at one period in American history should be instructive to journalism historians, for it suggests that the labels and characterizations we have given media trends and developments also should be reexamined in light of women's experiences. The journalism of the Jacksonian era is a good place to start this reexamination, for this is the time of what is usually thought to be a seminal advancement in American journalism history: the beginning of the penny press. Emery and Emery (1988) label this inexpensive, readable, and entertaining form of journalism "the newspaper for the masses" and "the press of the common people" (pp. 115-119). Michael Schudson (1978) who has carefully studied the penny papers, explains that not only were they "spokesmen [*sic*] for egalitarian ideals in politics, economic life, and social life" (p. 60), but they "created a genre which acknowledged, and so enhanced, the importance of everyday life" (p. 26).

But were women among the "common people" to whom the penny press was meant to appeal? How egalitarian were these papers' expressed ideals related to women's concerns? Was the "everyday life" of women recognized in these papers? These are questions that have not been asked of the penny press,[20] even though it has been characterized as journalism that served the masses and in Schudson's words, "expressed and built the culture of a democratic market society" (p. 60).

Journalism historians do credit Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* with advocating educational, legal, employment, and marriage reforms for women (although Schudson does not mention any of this). But such contents seldom are interpreted as adding to the democratic base of the penny press in any key way. Thus a systematic examination of the *Tribune* and other penny papers in terms of women readers still is needed.

The literature of women's history makes it possible to identify many of women's common concerns during this time (and research on women's culture is applicable here), just as it also makes it clear that most women had sufficient literacy skills to read the penny press (Degler, 1980, p. 306).

Urban areas attracted women who were interested in access to jobs and independent lives.[21] And, since married women of the period were responsible for their families' domestic well-being, the advertisers who financed penny newspapers would have benefited from appealing to women consumers. Clearly, then, although women were excluded from many areas of Jacksonian life, there is no reason they should have been excluded as penny press readers. If they were, then our accepted characterization of this journalism is inaccurate.

A systematic historical reexamination in terms of women readers would be useful for all American journalism that has been strongly characterized in terms of the size and composition of its audience. Certainly the metropolitan daily newspapers of the 1880s and 1890s, which have been heralded as the country's first truly mass-circulation press, deserve such analysis. Significantly, historians have noted that, for the first time, large, urban Sunday papers of the period began to carry special women's pages, with articles on such topics as fashion and family life, that were thought to appeal to middle-class women (Emery & Emery, 1988, p. 231; Schudson, 1978, p. 100). It may be that such articles were far more important in increasing circulation than has been thought.

But other questions about these papers also must be asked. For example, we are told that they attracted large numbers of working-class readers, but what in their contents would have appealed to working-class women? How popular with them were the women's pages that were considered such an innovation? And what kinds of coverage did these papers give the more substantial concerns of many urban women related to such topics as health, education, religion, and employment?

Because male journalism historians have studied most journalism primarily in terms of male audiences, these kinds of questions about the extent to which media audiences included or excluded women seldom have been asked. Thus we do not know their answers, or whether or not those answers will change our characterizations of different media at different times. The point is that until attempts are made to answer key questions about women audiences, such characterizations cannot be accepted uncritically.

CONCLUSIONS

There is no guarantee that any of the five concepts discussed above, taken from women's history and applied here to journalism history, will lead

to a radical revision of that history. But it is clear that the development of these concepts by women's historians has not simply added new information to American history; it also has made it necessary to rethink previously accepted interpretations and information. Because of this, and because these concepts have such clear relevance to the history of journalism, their application is highly recommended.

There is little doubt that further research in these areas would expand our knowledge of women and journalism through the identification of new research subjects and the utilization of new analytical techniques. Indeed, one final lesson from this exercise is that the published scholarship of women's history offers journalism historians innumerable new research topics and approaches.

The solid base of the existing research on women and journalism history has placed the field in an excellent position to begin moving more rapidly out of its transitional stage. Scholars should be ready increasingly to bring to their work the kind of analysis, contextual interpretation, and questioning of assumptions that critics have said is needed. The rich literature of women's history provides a good starting point for that development, providing ideas that will sometimes challenge the field and often broaden and deepen it.

NOTES

1. Much of my early journalism research focused on colonial women printers. For published examples of this research, see Henry (1976, 1979, 1980, 1985).

2. Marion Marzolf published the first comprehensive history of women journalists and the media's treatment of women in 1977 (Marzolf, 1977). In the acknowledgments section of her book, Marzolf notes that when she began her research in 1972 she found women "mentioned mostly in the footnotes in standard journalism history texts" (p. ix). But, she explains, "I resolved to search for them and recover their lost history." An earlier book containing valuable information on women in journalism history is Ishbel Ross's *Ladies of the Press* (1936). Although Ross's work contains valuable information on some nineteenth-century women journalists, its emphasis is on her own contemporaries during the first third of the twentieth century. This makes it a valuable source for today's journalism historians studying women of this period.

3. The range of women journalists studied in recent group biographies is impressive, as indicated by the titles of three important histories: *Viewfinders: Black Women Photographers* (Moutoussamy-Ashe, 1986), *Brilliant Bylines: A Biographical Anthology of Notable Newspaperwomen in America* (Belford, 1986), and *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents* (Edwards, 1988).

4. A 1977 survey of journalism departments found that three-fourths used *The Press and America* as the text in their history courses (see Endres, 1978, p. 31).

5 For recent references to this problem by four well-known women's historians, see Joan W. Scott (1987, p. 1055), Mary Beth Norton (1986, p. 41), Carol Berkin (1985, p. 209), and Ann Firor Scott (1984, p. 366).

6. This bias is tellingly illustrated by a recent article in which the author reports a purported study of the "article productivity" of this country's journalism professors. He does this by collecting all research articles published in nine journals, then ranking schools and individual researchers according to the total number of articles produced. The nine journals include both general publications such as *Journalism Quarterly* and *Journal of Communication* and those covering narrower media topics such as *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Broadcasting*, and *Public Relations Review*. But no journal that carries a high proportion of historical research is included in the study, and as a result much of the journalism history being published in journals is excluded. In addition, no recognition of this inattention is given in the article; apparently it simply did not occur to the author that this key area of journalism research should be taken into consideration in his ranking of schools and individual scholars (see Schweitzer, 1988).

7. See "Special Supplement: Cumulative Index Volumes 51- 60 (1974-83)" (1984). The introduction to the index notes that 84 articles on "history and biography" were published in *Journalism Quarterly* between 1974 and 1983 (p. iii). By my rough estimate (attempting to count articles only once, even when they are listed in more than one topic category), approximately 1,000 articles were published in the journal during the period covered by the index. Thus less than 10% of the total were histories.

8. See, for example, Gerda Lerner (1979, p. 146) and Joan Wallach Scott (1983, p. 147). For an interesting argument advocating the continued production of contribution history, see Hilda L. Smith (1984).

9. For an excellent summary of ideas from the recent literature, see Joan W. Scott (1987). The best compilation of critical writing on women's history during the previous decade probably is a book edited by Berenice Carroll, *Liberating Women's History* (1976).

10. For a good overview of the debate among women's historians over the form, dimensions, and implications of nineteenth-century women's culture, see the combination of articles collectively titled "Politics and Culture in Women's History" in the Spring 1980 issue of *Feminist Studies*. For suggestions on how future research might best address the combined oppressive/liberating elements of separate spheres and women's culture, see Kerber (1988).

11. One historian who has made good use of some of this material is Ann Douglas; see her *The Feminization of American Culture* (1977).

12. Kerber (1988) notes that American advertising during the 1920s was used to help "redefine the housewife" and in the 1950s "to sustain that definition" (p. 28). Informed by an understanding of women's culture and separate spheres, journalism historians might well find it worthwhile to examine this advertising anew. Such an examination would be a significant addition to the field of women's history, particularly in light of Kerber's argument that more research needs to be done on women's separate sphere during the twentieth century (p. 18).

13. See, for example, Baum, Hyman, and Michel (1976, pp. 165-185).

14. Two good sources detailing women's participation in community journalism are Ross (1936, pp. 458-464) and Karolevitz (1985, pp. 125-131).

15. Some useful references to women's work in U.S. minority media are to be found in *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook*, an excellent collection edited by Sally M. Miller (1987).

16. Also see, in Penn (1891/1969), the chapter titled "Afro-American Women in Journalism" (pp. 367-427), which contains effusive profiles of 19 Black women journalists (including Ida B. Wells) working in the last half of the nineteenth century. Many of them were involved in social causes, especially temperance.

17. For a description of specific early 20th-century support and friendship networks, see Cook (1979).

18. Many educated Black women—who were "double minorities" in their professions—had an important support network in Delta Sigma Theta, a sorority founded in 1913 and now thought to be the country's largest Black women's group (see Giddings, 1988).

19. The Women's National Press Club in Washington, D.C., for example, has excellent archives that could be well utilized to chart relationships among journalists in that area of the country. For one study drawing on these materials, see Beasley (1986).

20. The other major scholar of the penny press, Dan Schiller, should be credited for commenting in a footnote: "The sex-biased character of the penny press deserves more study" (Schiller, 1981, p. 16). This is, however, the extent of of Schiller's comments on women and the penny press in his book—a not unexpected situation since even the major critiques of Schiller and Schudson's work do not note the lack of attention given to women as penny press subjects or audiences. See, for example, Eason (1984) and Nerone (1987); also, see the responses to Nerone's article by Schudson, Schiller, Donald L. Shaw, and John J. Pauly in the same issue of *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* (pp. 405-415).

21. One of the first historians to point out the advantages of urban life for women was David M. Potter in his classic 1962 essay, "American Women and American Character" (see Potter, 1973).

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