

The background of the book cover is a collage of various images. In the top left, there is a cup of dark coffee on a saucer. To its right is a close-up of a man in a suit talking on a telephone. Below the coffee cup, there is a newspaper clipping with some text visible. To the right of the man, there are several coins and a newspaper clipping that says "STREET JOUR". In the bottom left, there is a large radio tower. In the bottom right, there is a photograph of the Colosseum in Rome. The central text is overlaid on a dark rectangular background.

A HISTORY OF NEWS

MITCHELL
STEPHENS

A
HISTORY
OF NEWS

M I T C H E L L
S T E P H E N S

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The proper emotion is wonder.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

To my parents,

Lillian Sklaire Stephens and
Bernard Stephens

Although this book spends most of its time in the past, its purpose has always been to shed light on the present—on the nature, the effects and the limitations of the news we receive today.

The original edition, published by Viking and then Penguin, was the first book to view contemporary American journalism from an extended historical perspective. The book's references to issues and developments in journalism today have been updated for this edition, but that perspective remains.

I have also made four significant additions to the book—in deference to the many students who have been using it:

- Boxes have been added to all the chapters. Many, particularly early in the book, make further connections between older news systems and issues in modern American journalism; others provide opportunities to discuss additional themes, individuals or writings: from Mark Twain to public journalism.
- A new chapter on mass circulation has been added. It features expanded discussions of American journalism history and a new section on the role of women and minorities.
- A detailed chronology is now included. It is designed to summarize the history of news, to make chronological connections clearer, and to present some additional information and mention some additional events.
- And questions, one for each section of the book, have been added at the end of each chapter. Their purpose is to provoke thought—particularly on the connections between these historical discussions and journalism today.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I spent much of my time, as this book was researched and written, delighting in the work of two or three millennia of newsmongers. My first debt is to them. I hope I have made a small start toward repaying it by examining their work—appreciatively, if not always uncritically—in an expanded historical context.

I am also in the debt of those friends and colleagues, journalists and scholars, who took the time to comment—not always uncritically—on early drafts of these chapters. Arthur Engoron, Jim Hauser, Neil Offen, Bruce Weaver and Daniel Lazare read all or much of the manuscript and repeatedly forced me to clarify my thoughts and wordings. Gerald Lanson, Michael Hoyt, Joseph Frank and Joshua Mills offered valuable suggestions on parts of the manuscript. And Michael Peachin, Lawrence Weiss, Walter Guzzardi, Anna Tsing, Carl Prince, Cyrus Gordon, Mel Edelstein, Robert Darnton, Eugene Borza, Herbert Gans, David Kronick and Blanche Schleier helped improve individual chapters or sections.

I am grateful to the staff at the British Library, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the New York Public Library, Bobst Library at New York University, the Public Record Office, Lehman Library at Columbia University, and the New-York Historical Society, and to those librarians here and in Europe who helped track down information or photographs. Thanks to Joseph Spieler for guidance and support, and to Bruce Shostak for his editing. François Moureau shared information on *nouvelles à la main*. Raymond Firth was kind enough to share his photos of the chief in Uta. My students pursued many of these questions with me and tested my answers to them. I also appreciate the assistance of Stan Schwartz, Sandra Hathaway, Meiyu Song, Paula Basirico, Donna J. Klick, Joost Heinsius, Gabriel Gluck, Avital Fryman, and Roy Attanasio.

David Mindich contributed many valuable suggestions to this edition—some based upon his own important research, some based upon his wide reading.

In recent years I have had the opportunity to serve as a history consultant to the Newseum that the Freedom Forum has been building in Arlington, Va. Some of the material in this book can be found, in three-dimensions, in that museum. And this edition of the book (particularly its boxes, chronology, and illustrations) has been improved by what I have learned from working with Eric Newton, Loren Ghiglione, Peter Prichard, Jerry Friedheim, Maurice Fliess, Ralph Appelbaum, Deborah Wolff, Chris Miceli, Ann Farrington, Joel Bloom, Kathryn Scott, David Doyle, Chris Wells, Mary Ann Watson, Michael Emery, Brenda Reed, Jeffrey Schlosberg, Evelyn Reilly, Leslee Kukie, Eugenia Ryner, Nancy Stewart, Beverly Kees, Cara Sutherland, Marion Rodgers, Ev Dennis, and Charles Overby.

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Lillian Sklaire Stephens read through a draft of the previous edition and forwarded a supply of articles while I was in France. Bernard Stephens pitched in on the research and was the second person to read and edit these chapters—thoroughly, as always. My wife, Esther Davidowitz, was the first; many of my ideas were shaped in conversations with her.

A CHRONOLOGY

ca. 100,000 B.C.	ca. 40,000 B.C.	ca. 8,000 B.C.	ca. 3,500 B.C.	ca. 3100 B.C.
Language arrives with homo sapiens.	Settling of Americas. News spreads by word of mouth.	Agriculture and more stable societies. Meeting places, travel, messengers, criers, smoke signals and drums aid the flow of news.	Chinese domestication of the horse, increases speed of news.	The oldest known writing systems – tablets in Uruk in Mesopotamia and Egyptian hieroglyphics. Symbols represent words.
ca. 2500 B.C.	ca. 1500 B.C.	ca. 1400 B.C.	ca. 1200 B.C.	ca. 750 B.C.
Tablets written in cuneiform in Mesopotamia and what is now Syria contain lists of possessions, agricultural records, school texts, literary works, state treaties.	The first alphabet developed by the Canaanites.	Charges against the mayor of Nuzu in Mesopotamia recorded in cuneiform script on clay tablets.	An account of Greek battle with Troy survives in the Homeric epics, The Iliad and The Odyssey.	Greeks add vowels to the alphabet created by Canaanites. Versions of this Greek alphabet will be used throughout Europe.
490 B.C.	443 B.C.	430 B.C.	404 B.C.	351 B.C.
Athenians turn back first Persian invasion of Greece. Legend says that an Athenian messenger named Pheidippides runs from Marathon to Athens with first word of the victory – then dies of exhaustion.	Greek writer Herodotus works on his history of the wars between Greece and Persia – generally considered the first Western history.	When the Greek philosopher Socrates, according to Plato's Charmides, returns from the battle to take Potidaea (one of the initial battles of the Peloponnesian War), he goes to a gymnasium in Athens where he tells the news and obtains some news of his own.	Athens defeated in Peloponnesian War. Thucydides, great historian of this war, dies without completing his history.	In the First Philippic, the Greek orator Demosthenes notes the extent to which Athenians are preoccupied with the exchange of news by word of mouth: "Thus we all go about framing our several tales."
334 B.C.	323 B.C.	ca. 145 B.C.	59 B.C.	51 B.C.
After defeating the Persians at the Grankos River, Alexander the Great allows newly married Macedonian soldiers to return home for the winter and sends three hundred captured Persian shields to Athens. Both gestures may have been intended to spread news of his victory.	Alexander the Great dies. Within thirteen years Alexander's empire will be in pieces. The absence of a news system capable of spanning this empire may have contributed to its demise.	Civic life in the Roman Republic centers around the Forum, with its open-air meeting space, speakers' platform and government buildings. Each day Romans go to the Forum to hear the latest news.	Julius Caesar orders public posting of the acta, daily records of goings on in the Senate and elsewhere in the Roman Republic.	The efforts of Cicero – the Roman orator, philosopher and politician – provide our best look at forms of written news available to upper-class Romans, including personal letters, copies of the acta and professionally produced news packets.
44 B.C.	47	105	221	222
Julius Caesar assassinated in Rome. Cicero's letters record dramatic political struggles following this event, also well reported in the acta.	Roman acta include human-interest stories and sensationalism. The writer Pliny the Elder says the acta for the year A.D. 47 report that a phoenix is being displayed in Rome.	Paper invented in China, according to legend, by Ts'ai Lun. Takes more than 1000 years to reach Europe.	The Han dynasty creates the Chinese Empire which lasts until A.D. 221 and employs a robust system of written news.	Last year for a contemporary reference to the Roman acta.
455	618	960	986	1041
The Vandals, a Germanic tribe, sack Rome. Demise of the Roman Empire leads to trade and literacy decline in Europe. Flow of news from afar dries up.	The Chinese Empire rebuilt under the T'ang dynasty, which lasts until 906. The tipao – official newsletters – are important sources of news for elite groups within the Empire. Block printing, invented in China during this period, is used to reproduce copies of the tipao.	The Sung dynasty in China begins – features a wide variety of news organs, now read by the literati as well as by government officials. However, before the demise of their dynasty in 1279, Sung emperors begin to censor and suppress nongovernmental newssheets.	The Vikings, under the command of Leif Ericson, sight Greenland, which they will briefly settle fifteen years later. News of their discovery of "Vinland" is recorded in handwritten "sagas."	Between 1041 and 1048, a Chinese artisan, Pi Sheng, uses moveable type to print. Invention is not a big success. Chinese has too many different characters to make such a system practicable.

ca. 100,000 B.C.
to
ca. 3100 B.C.

ca. 2500 B.C.
to
750 B.C.

490 B.C.
to
351 B.C.

334 B.C.
to
51 B.C.

44 B.C.
to
222

455
to
1041

	1160	1241	ca. 1250	1275	1352
1160 to 1352	Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela begins his travels, which will take him from Spain through Italy, Greece, Constantinople, Syria, Jerusalem, Damascus, Baghdad, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, and to the frontiers of China. Benjamin writes an account of his trip in Hebrew, perhaps an early form of travel news.	Printing arrived in Korea from China by 950. In 1241, the Koreans make the first successful moveable type from metal — bronze. Soon the country faces a shortage of bronze.	Spoken news remains the dominant form of news in medieval Europe. According to a thirteenth-century French poem, news of deaths, royal decrees and the arrival of new wine are all being “cried” through Paris.	Marco Polo, of Venice, reaches court of Kubila Khan, ruler of China. Polo finds himself in jail with a writer, to whom he dictates the story of his travels.	Laurence Minot, a court poet, accompanies the English armies as they capture the French town of Guines during the Hundred Years War and produces an eyewitness account of the battle — handwritten, in verse.
	1431	1432	ca. 1450	1455	1467
1431 to 1467	Joan of Arc, who inspired and led a French resurgence in the Hundred Years War, is captured and burned at the stake. News before the printing press is so unreliable that it is difficult to be sure anyone is really dead. At least one false Joan of Arc wanders about after she is executed.	Detailed account of young Henry VI's entry into London composed and written down by the poet John Lydgate.	The letter press is first used by Johann Gutenberg.	The War of the Roses begins (lasts until 1485). Word of mouth is so important as a news medium during this war that the English guard the roads out of Calais in an attempt to keep news of their troubles from spreading.	Privileges — official permission to engage in printing — are first distributed in Berne. Bestowing and denying printers privileges becomes a major form of government control of the press, practiced with particular skill by England's Queen Elizabeth.
	1470	1471	1471	1481	1493
1470 to 1493	The oldest known news publication printed on a letter press, an Italian report on a tournament, appears — an early form of sports news.	One Londoner, John Paston, writes of the news or “flying tales” that can be obtained simply by walking in London. Those “tales,” like most spoken news, are limited, however — for almost six days after one crucial battle in the War of the Roses, Paston writes, London had “non certynges” as to its outcome.	A handwritten newsletter with detailed account of King Edward IV's victory in the battle of Tewkesbury, during the War of the Roses, is prepared, in both English and French, by one of the king's servants.	Sultan Mohammed II, who plays a major role in founding the Ottoman or Turkish empire, dies. Edward, the prince of Wales, obtains a copy of a handwritten letter, originally produced by an Italian in Constantinople, containing news of the sultan's death two years later.	Columbus returns from his journey, and news of his discoveries circulates in many printed editions of his own letter.
	1494	1502	1509	1517	1521
1494 to 1521	French king Charles VIII's invasion of Italy. Forty-one different printed newsbooks reporting on it have been found.	Ferdinand and Isabella, of Spain, require all printed works to be licensed, which means approved in advance, by government or church authorities. Another form of press control was practiced in Spain even before Columbus departed on his first voyage: burning offensive books by the Inquisition.	A printed newsbook reports on the proxy wedding of twelve-year-old Mary, daughter of the English King Henry VII, and eight-year-old Prince Charles of Austria, heir to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire. An example of published gossip or celebrity news.	Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation, posts his controversial 95 Theses. Word of these Theses spreads through Europe in a month, thanks largely to the printing press.	In Germany, the Edict of Worms, which formally declares Martin Luther an outlaw, also includes a requirement that printers submit to prior censorship.
	1529	1536	1538	1538	1541
1529 to 1541	The Ottoman empire, under Sultan Suleiman, lays siege to Vienna. Thirty-three printed works reporting on this siege have been located.	Continued development of European postal systems, with handwritten letters used with more frequency for news. A German lawyer, Christoph Scheurl, is paid by the court of Mainz for his handwritten newsletters.	A French printed newsbook includes an eyewitness report on an eruption of Mount Vesuvius.	All printed works in England must be licensed after this date. The Stationers Company — an organization of printers — helps enforce this system.	Oldest surviving example of printed news in the Americas, an eight-page newsbook, printed in Mexico City and written by a notary public named Juan Rodriguez, reports on a storm in Guatemala.
	1561	1566	1568	1571	1577
1561 to 1577	In France, flogging becomes the first-time penalty for those who circulate defamatory or seditious broadsides or pamphlets. Repeat offenders are subject to the death penalty. Press remains tightly controlled in France until the French Revolution in 1789.	Handwritten newsheets — known as gazettes or avisi — appear weekly in Venice. Probably the oldest known direct ancestors of the modern newspaper.	The House of Fugger, the top group of financiers in Europe, has agents around the world sending it handwritten letters filled with news. These are not, however, available to the public.	Pamphlet printed in England, justifying Queen Elizabeth's arrest of the duke of Norfolk. Now believed to have been secretly written by Elizabeth's chief minister, Lord Burghley.	Sighting of a comet discussed in at least 111 European books or printed pamphlets.

1588	1588	1605	1609	1609
Michael von Aitzing in Cologne begins printing a bi-annual summary of political and military events event — an ancestor of the printed newspaper.	English confrontation with and defeat of the Spanish armada is the subject of at least 23 printed news ballads in England, including 3 by Thomas Deloney.	The Bloody booke, or the Tragical and desperate end of Sir John Fites (alias) Fitz. printed in England. Newsbook with a mix of sensationalism and moralizing that is typical of this period.	Oldest surviving European printed newspapers first published weekly in German in 1609. One, probably printed in Strasbourg, is printed by Johann Carolus and entitled Relation: Aller Furmemmen. The other in Wolfenbuttel is published by Lucas Schulte and called, Aviso Relation ober Zeitung.	A newsbook mentioning, in Galileo's words, "a glass by means of which distant objects could be seen" inspires him to work on his telescope.
1613	1614	1615	1616	1618
Sir Thomas Overbury poisoned to death in his cell in the Tower of London. 15 different news ballads and newsbooks have survived about his murder or the trials and punishments that followed.	A report on "a strange and monstrous Serpent (or Dragon)" found living in a forest in Sussex is printed in England. Typifies attention given to the supernatural in newsbooks and news ballads, as well as their credibility problems.	Newsheets printed from engraved, inked tiles — called "kawaraban," which means "tile sheets" — begin to appear in Japan, filled with gossip, scandal and sensationalism.	William Shakespeare dies. No mention of Shakespeare's death in any surviving newsbook or news ballad. Printed news in England in 1616 reports, instead, on such topics as the confession and execution of a witch and the drowning of four drunks in the Thames.	Amsterdam, a center for business and trade, gets its first newspaper, the Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.
1618	1620	1621	1622	1622
Thirty Years War begins in Europe. News of these battles between Catholics and Protestants fills early printed newspapers.	First newspaper in English printed in Amsterdam by Pieter van de Keere, dated December 2, 1620, begins with the words, "The new tydings out of Italie are not yet com." The first newspaper printed in French, Courant d'Italie & d'almaigne, &c., was printed in Amsterdam earlier that year.	Oldest surviving issue of the first English newspaper actually printed in England, Corante, or weeklye newes from Italy, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, France and the Low countreys, dated September 24, 1621. Publisher listed as "N.B."	An editor — perhaps the first in the history of newspapers — begins organizing the material in England's only newspaper into a coherent narrative. Probably Thomas Gainsford.	In a printed pamphlet justifying his decision to dissolve Parliament, English King James I complains that this effort to obtain public support requires him to "descend many degrees beneath Our Selfe."
1624	1624	1624	1626	1630
A particularly sensational newsbook, The crying Murder: Contayning the cruell and most horrible Butcher of Mr. Trot, printed in England. Newsbooks and news ballads reporting on violent crimes are common in Europe in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.	Count Ernst Mansfeld, a German mercenary fighting for the Protestants in the Thirty Years War, is made into a "media star" by the early English newspapers. When he visits London in 1624, cheering crowds follow him in the streets.	One of the series of early English newspapers, The continuation of the weekly newes, contains an advertisement for a map its two publishers, Nathaniel Butter and Nicholas Bourne, have printed. May be the first English newspaper ad. Followed a month later by a similar ad for a book in two Dutch corantos.	The Continuation of Our weekly newes... in England prints a correction — a significant step toward increasing the credibility of printed news.	Nave of St. Paul's Cathedral in London becomes the place to go for people who want the latest news. One early newspaper, published in 1630, describes "the Pauls walkers" as "the greatest talkers of Newes."
1631	1634	1641	1644	1644
Nouvelles Ordinaires de Divers Endroits, the first newspaper published in France, appears. Followed a few months later by Théophraste Renaudot's Gazette de France, which lasts until the French Revolution.	The Gazette de France publishes an account of the trial of Galileo for holding that "the sun is the center of the universe." However, the writer's sympathies are with the Inquisition, not with Galileo's "absurd and false" ideas.	As the authority of the king deteriorates, newspapers begin appearing in England that report on national news. First is The Heads of Severall Proceedings In This Present Parliament. Five such weeklies are soon being printed in London.	John Milton publishes Areopagitica — a pamphlet defending press freedom during the English Civil War.	Manchus conquer China. This news does not find its way into a Dutch newspaper until 1650.
1645	1645	1645	1649	1650
Oldest surviving example of news printed in Britain's American colonies entitled: A declaration of former passaoes and proceedings betwixt the english and the narrowgansets — a government sponsored account of wars with Native Americans.	Friar Marin Mersenne, from a convent in Paris, circulates news of science through handwritten letters.	At least 8 different weekly or biweekly newspapers — "corantos" — on sale in Amsterdam.	King Charles I beheaded in England, and newly freed English newspapers report the story.	The first coffeehouse in England opened in Oxford. By the 18th century in London, there are hundreds, perhaps thousands of these centers for exchange of news. French cafés begin at about the same time, serve the same purpose, and last much longer.

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1650 to 1665	1650	1655	1663	1663	1665
	World's oldest surviving printed daily newspaper – <i>Einkommende Zeitung</i> (Incoming News) published by Timotheus Ritzsch in Leipzig.	Oliver Cromwell restores press controls in England. Only two newspapers are now being printed in English, both by Marchamont Nedham, who had switched sides twice during and after the Civil War.	Charles II is restored to the throne of England and has cleared the field for newspapers written by his partisans: Roger L'Estrange's <i>Intelligencer</i> and, in 1665, Henry Muddiman's long-lived <i>Oxford</i> , then <i>London Gazette</i> . L'Estrange also serves as censor.	Roger L'Estrange arranges for correspondents to forward news for use in his <i>Intelligencer</i> in London.	First scientific periodical, <i>Journal des savants</i> , published weekly in France. Followed later that year by, the <i>Royal Society's Philosophical Transactions</i> , published monthly in England.
1670 to 1688	1670	1679	1687	1688	1688
	The term "newes paper" is used for the first time (we know of) in a letter in England.	The Licensing Act restricting the press lapses in England, and a flurry of new newspapers arrives to take advantage of new-found freedom with expanded local news. Among them is Benjamin Harris's sensationalistic <i>Domestic Intelligence Or News</i> both from CITY and Country.	Isaac Newton's <i>Principia mathematica</i> published. Becomes the subject of a number of reviews in Europe's new scientific periodicals, one of which is said to inspire the German philosopher and mathematician Leibniz to write three papers and cause Newton himself to revise his text.	William of Orange lands in England to lead the "Glorious Revolution," bringing his own printing press with him.	Despite the spread of printing and development of newspapers, literacy remains the exception rather than the rule in Europe. According to one estimate, only 40 percent of adult males in England can read. Literacy levels, of course, are much lower for women, who are denied access to education.
ca. 1688 to 1702	ca. 1688	1690	1695	1700	1702
	<i>Nouvellistes</i> , specialists in telling the news, stand at their regular spots on the corners and in the gardens of Paris. Crowds gather around them. <i>Nouvellistes</i> will be found in Paris through the eighteenth century.	Benjamin Harris publishes America's first newspaper, <i>Publick Occurrences Both FORREIGN and DOMESTICK</i> , in Boston on September 25, 1690. The governor and council of the colony of Massachusetts close the paper down after its first issue.	The Licensing Act, which lapsed in England in 1679, ends permanently in 1695, after the "Glorious Revolution." Without the requirement that newspapers be licensed, it becomes more difficult for authorities to control their content.	Greater London now has a population of 670,000, too large for spoken news to easily traverse.	First successful daily newspaper printed in English, the <i>Daily Courant</i> .
1702 to 1712	1702	1704	1704	1711	1712
	King William III, who took the throne of England with Mary in the "Glorious Revolution," dies on March 8, 1702. This news is proclaimed in London within 8 hours. Word of the king's death doesn't reach his American subjects until May 17.	Daniel Defoe enters political fray in London with his distinguished <i>Review</i> , a journal of opinion which he publishes until 1713.	America's second newspaper – its first successful newspaper – the <i>Boston News-Letter</i> , published by town's postmaster, John Campbell.	The <i>Spectator</i> , published and written by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, first appears in London on March 1, filled with observations and wit of remarkably high quality. Published daily until December 6, 1712.	A stamp tax imposed on newspapers in England. Raises the cost of every copy of a newspaper. Clearly designed to keep news out of the hands of the lower classes.
1719 to 1729	1719	1721	1725	1729	1729
	William Brooker's <i>Boston Gazette</i> , America's third newspaper, published on December 21. Andrew Bradford's <i>American Weekly Mercury</i> in Philadelphia, first newspaper published outside of Boston, debuts the next day.	James Franklin's <i>New England Courant</i> , becomes the third newspaper available in Boston and features America's first newspaper crusade: an attack on smallpox inoculation.	New York's first newspaper, the <i>New-York Gazette</i> , published by printer William Bradford.	Benjamin Franklin, after escaping apprenticeship to his brother James, takes over the <i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i> and transforms it into the best looking, best written, liveliest and most profitable newspaper in the colonies.	Pamphlet printed by the proprietors of coffeehouses in London accuses newspaper publishers of hiring people to snoop, eavesdrop and loiter in search of an interview – it accuses them, in other words, of hiring reporters.
1732 to 1739	1732	1735	ca. 1735	1738	1739
	The first foreign-language paper in the British colonies is the German-language <i>Philadelphica Zeitung</i> , started by Benjamin Franklin. Lasts only a few issues.	A jury finds John Peter Zenger, publisher of the <i>New-York Weekly Journal</i> , innocent of seditious libel – a triumph for press freedom.	In France, salons serve to facilitate exchange of news. Madame Doublet's salon probably attracts the richest supply of news.	Elizabeth Timothy becomes the first woman to publish a newspaper in America – the <i>South Carolina Gazette</i> in Charleston – when her husband, Lewis, dies on February 4.	First successful foreign-language newspaper in Britain's colonies, the <i>Germantown Zeitung</i> , begins publication near Philadelphia.

1739	1756	ca. 1760	1765	1767
The coffeehouse vogue at its peak in England with 559 coffeehouses in London.	More than 800 authors, printers and booksellers in France are imprisoned in the Bastille between 1600 and 1756.	Early newspapers in America, like the early European newspapers, include little local news, because they cannot compete with word of mouth.	American press rises in protest against the Stamp Act, which would place a tax on each sheet of paper used to print a newspaper. The British Parliament eventually backs down and repeals the Act.	British Parliament institutes a series of taxes – the Townshend Acts – on goods imported into America, including, significantly, paper. With John Dickinson's "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania" to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies" providing the rationale, the newspapers mount a full attack on import duties.
1768	1770	1770	1773	1774
Illegal pamphlets – "libelles" – filled with wild attacks upon the monarchy and other elements of established society, appear frequently in France under the Old Regime. According to one contemporary, more than 100 persons are imprisoned for circulating such pamphlets in 1768.	Newspapers in London begin testing the prohibition against reporting on Parliament. In 1771, an effort by the House of Commons to crack down on these violations of its privacy fails. By 1774, at least 7 London newspapers are covering Parliament – though no notetaking is allowed.	"Nonimportation agreements," policed in large part through the press, force Parliament to remove all the Townshend Act taxes except that on tea.	The Boston Tea Party planned in the house of an editor of the Boston Gazette.	Britain responds to the destruction of tea in Boston Harbor with the Intolerable Acts. First Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia from September 5 to October 26, and approves a boycott of British goods and, in the event of violations, directs "the truth of the case to be published in the gazette."
1775	1776	1776	1777	1783
Revolutionary War begins with the "shot heard round the world" and the battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts on April 19. News of these two battles does not reach New York for four days. It does not appear in the pages of the Georgia Gazette in Savannah until May 31.	One of the great "opinion pieces" of all time, Thomas Paine's Common Sense is published as a pamphlet on January 9, helping turn America toward independence.	The Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia adopts the Declaration of Independence on July 4. Text is first printed in Philadelphia on July 6, but does not appear in South Carolina until August 2.	First daily newspaper in France appears on January 1; the Journal de Paris.	Reporters finally permitted to take notes in British Parliament. Shortland replaces a formidable memory as a job qualification.
1783	1786	1788	1789	1789
America's first daily newspaper (81 years after the first successful English daily, 133 years after the first printed daily newspaper, in Germany, 1,842 years after the Roman acta were first posted daily in the Forum) is Benjamin Towne's Pennsylvania Evening Post. Towne is indicted for treason a few months later.	First newspaper in America printed west of the mountains: the Pittsburgh Gazette. John Scull and Joseph Hall lug their small printing press across the Alleghenies by wagon. Securing supplies is a constant struggle: At one point they have to print their newspaper on cartridge paper borrowed from a military post.	Because of strict press controls, Paris has only four newspapers.	French Revolution begins with storming of Bastille on July 14, – inspired in part by a false report. July 17, issue of the Gazette de France in Paris ignores event. The people of France turn to unreliable word of mouth. Rumors help fan the "Great Fear" that sweeps through the countryside in the summer of 1789.	Declaration of the Rights of Man in France labels "the freedom to communicate thoughts and opinions... one of the most precious" of those rights.
1789	1790	1790	1791	1792
The first United States Congress approves the Bill of Rights. The first of these ten amendments to the new U. S. Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."	Toppling of the Old Regime leads to an explosion of journalistic activity. Readers can choose among 335 different newspapers in Paris.	Benjamin Russell of the Massachusetts Centinel and Republican Journal goes out to the docks of Boston to obtain early copies of newspapers and gather news from travelers – a step towards reporting.	James Perry, perhaps the most innovative editor in London in the late 18th century, dispatches himself to Paris to observe first-hand the French Revolution. His reports help his paper, the Morning Chronicle, achieve an "amazing circulation."	French revolutionaries begin cracking down on the country's newly free and wildly partisan press. The Paris Commune orders the editors of Royalist journals arrested.
1793	1794	1797	1798	1799
Jean-Paul Marat, publisher of one of the angriest of the newspapers that appear during the French Revolution, is assassinated.	John Bell, proprietor of the Oracle and Public Advertiser, becomes one of the first war correspondents by sending himself to Flanders, where British soldiers are battling French troops.	George Washington leaves office after two terms. Benjamin Franklin Bache's Aurora, one of the loudest of the partisan newspapers dominating American journalism, greets the occasion with a bitter attack upon Washington.	President John Adams signs Alien and Sedition Acts. The Sedition Act makes it a crime to "write, print, utter or publish" attacks against government of the United States. The Federalists use it, or the old common-law prohibition against seditious libel, to indict the leading Republican (anti-Federalist) editors in New York, New England and Philadelphia.	No Declaration of Rights in Napoleon's new constitution in France. Soon Paris will once again have only four, strictly monitored, newspapers.

1739
to
17671768
to
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1799

1800
to
1808

1800	1800	1806	1807	1808
Thomas Jefferson becomes president, in part in protest against the Sedition Act. The Republicans allow the Alien and Sedition Acts to lapse.	Thomas Jefferson persuades a Philadelphia publisher, Samuel Harrison Smith, to move to Washington, where Smith starts the <i>National Intelligencer</i> — first significant Washington newspaper, a tri-weekly established October 31.	Meriwether Lewis and William Clark return from explorations as far as the Pacific Ocean on September 23, but the news does not find its way into newspapers in Boston until November 6.	The <i>Times</i> of London assigns Henry Crabb Robinson to cover the ongoing Napoleonic Wars. Robinson goes first to Altona, Germany, then to Corunna, Spain, and stays with story until 1809.	The <i>Times</i> of London now has, in addition to Henry Crabb Robinson, at least five full-time, though sometimes seasonal, reporters. Reporting is developing much more slowly in the United States.

1808
to
1815

1808	1814	1814	1815	1815
The first Spanish-language newspaper in the United States, <i>El Misisipi</i> , printed in New Orleans	France's armies, under Napoleon, near defeat in Europe, but news to America is typically late, incomplete, and sometimes inaccurate.	Steam engine first used to print a newspaper, the <i>Times</i> of London. Before its use, the <i>Times</i> prints 250 sheets an hour; with the steam press, 1,100.	The Treaty of Ghent, ending the War of 1812 is signed in Ghent, Belgium, on December 24, 1814. The Battle of New Orleans fought between British and American troops on January 8, 1815, killing about 2000.	Aaron Smith Willington of the <i>Courier</i> in Charleston, South Carolina, rowed out to the harbor on a "news boat" to get early word of the Treaty of Ghent.

1818
to
1825

1818	1819	1820	1822	1825
The first "packet" ships, make regularly scheduled trips across the Atlantic. Set departures and set destinations significantly quicken and smooth flow of news to the United States from Europe.	A reporter for the <i>Times</i> of London produces a controversial eyewitness report on the massacre of protesters in Manchester known as "Peterloo."	Expensive "mercantile papers" printed on large "blanket sheets" come to dominate journalism in the United States, and emphasize news of interest to merchants.	Nathaniel Carter is sent to Washington by the <i>New York Statesman</i> and <i>Evening Advertiser</i> , becoming probably the first full-time Washington reporter. His first report includes, fittingly, an unidentified source.	The United States is said to have more newspapers circulating to more people than any nation on earth.

1827
to
1830

1827	1827	1828	1828	1830
First urban mass-transit system in the United States arrives, in the form of a 12 passenger coach on Broadway in New York — a sign that American cities are beginning to grow too large for spoken news to easily traverse.	First African-American newspaper in the United States, <i>Freedom's Journal</i> , appears on March 16, edited by John B. Russwurm and Samuel Cornish.	Elias Boudinot publishes the first issue of the <i>Cherokee Phoenix</i> — partly in English, partly in Cherokee — in New Echota, Georgia. First Native American newspaper. The <i>Phoenix</i> is suspended after presses are seized by the Georgia Guard in 1835.	In one of the first examples of cooperative news gathering, most of the major New York newspapers have been sharing the expense of sending "news boats" into the harbor to gain early word of news from Europe. However, the cooperation ends in 1828, and the papers begin to compete.	Thurlow Weed, a major force in Whig politics in New York State and the nation, founds the <i>Evening Journal</i> in Albany.

1830
to
1831

1830	1830	1830	1831	1831
James Gordon Bennett sent to cover murder trial in Salem, Massachusetts, for <i>New York's Courier and Enquirer</i> . The states are passing laws limiting the power of judges to hold reporters in contempt of court. The federal government passes such a law in 1831.	Godey's <i>Lady's Book</i> , the most important of the early women's magazines, debuts in Philadelphia.	Circulations of legal newspapers in England continue to be held down by the stamp tax on each copy. The <i>Times</i> of London is selling 10,000 copies a day in a city of 2 million.	French writer and politician Alexis de Tocqueville visits the United States — writes of the importance of newspapers in its political system.	William Lloyd Garrison publishes the first issue of the <i>Liberator</i> , the impassioned abolitionist weekly, in Boston. Garrison is denounced, threatened and assaulted. The Mississippi Legislature will offer a \$5,000 reward for information on anyone trying to circulate the <i>Liberator</i> .

1832
to
1835

1832	1833	1834	1835	1835
Agence Havas, the first significant private news agency, opens in Paris. Charles Havas sells translations of foreign news to the city's newspapers.	Benjamin Day launches the first successful "penny paper" in the United States, the <i>New York Sun</i> . Cheap price immediately begins to attract a large, working-class audience.	New British government negotiates with Thomas Barnes, the reform-minded editor of the <i>Times</i> , until it can win his approval of its policies.	James Gordon Bennett founds the remarkably innovative but often reviled <i>New York Herald</i> .	Benjamin Day's <i>New York Sun</i> reports the discovery of life — in the form of talking man-bats — on the moon.

1836	1836	1836	1836	1836
Penny papers in England, unstamped and therefore illegal, are amassing large circulations – and crusading for Britain's disenfranchised poor. However, in 1836 Parliament finally listens to the liberals and reduces the stamp tax to only one penny. The unstamped papers disappear.	Two successful American penny papers, the Philadelphia Public Ledger in 1836 and the Baltimore Sun the next year, started by William M. Swain, Arunah S. Abell and Azariah H. Simmons.	When the body of a prostitute, Ellen Jewett, is found in her bed in New York, James Gordon Bennett launches one of the first journalistic investigations. He conducts one of the first newspaper interviews – with the madame of the house of prostitution where Ellen Jewett worked. Circulation skyrockets.	Among the collection of new penny papers in New York are two intended particularly for women: Women, which had a very short life in 1834, and the Ladies Morning Star, which lasts just a little longer in 1836.	France's first "cheap" newspaper is Émile de Girardin's La Presse.
1837	1838	1840	1841	1842
Elijah Lovejoy, an abolitionist editor, killed by a mob in Alton, Illinois, on November 7.	First steamships – the Sirius, on April 22, and then, a few days later, the Great Western – cross Atlantic Ocean, making the trip in as little as thirteen days.	A "moral war" is launched against James Gordon Bennett's New York Herald by newspapers in New York and as far away as England. All "respectable people" are called upon to boycott the Herald. Circulation falls by one-third. But by 1850 Bennett's Herald is selling 30,000 copies a day – more than any other newspaper in the United States.	On April 10, Horace Greeley begins publication of another new penny paper, the New York Tribune. The Tribune – a Whig and then Republican paper, with solid news coverage and strong, abolitionist political views – becomes perhaps the most respected newspaper in the United States.	Showman Phineas T. Barnum manages to coax or trick newspapers into providing extensive coverage of acts like Tom Thumb – the young midget whom Barnum first exhibits in 1842.
1844	1844	1846	1846	1846
Margaret Fuller, perhaps the most distinguished of the few women who are able to establish careers in journalism in the first half of the 19th century, takes a job as a staff writer for Horace Greeley's New York Tribune.	On May 1, Samuel Morse demonstrates the power of his new telegraph by announcing to a crowd gathered at a railroad station in Washington the ticket nominated by the Whig party.	Battles of the Mexican War covered primarily by reporters for New Orleans newspapers – 9 dailies there in 1847. The New Orleans Picayune, trying to beat the competition, sends fast boats carrying composing rooms out to meet steamers from Mexico carrying news. The news was set in type on board, ready to be printed as soon the boat docks.	The first newspaper on the Pacific Coast is the Oregon Spectator. California's first newspaper, the Californian, in Monterey, appears later that year.	The London Daily News begins publication, with Charles Dickens as founding editor.
1847	1848	1848	1848	1848
The Ram's Horn, an African-American newspaper, started in New York by Willis A. Hodges, with Frederick Douglass as the nominal editor. Later that year, Douglass, a former slave, publishes the first issue of the North Star, his own widely read and respected weekly newspaper in Rochester, New York.	The New York Herald boasts printing "ten columns of highly important news received by electric telegraph" in one issue.	Most of New York's major newspapers, at times using the name "Associated Press," join to share the expense of chartering a steamer from Boston to meet ships from Europe at Halifax, Nova Scotia, and of telegraphing the news from Boston. Soon "New York Associated Press" correspondents begin selling news to out-of-town newspapers.	Women's rights convention meets in Seneca Falls, New York, from July 19 to 20, – the beginning, of the struggle for equal rights for women. Amelia Bloomer's eight-page monthly the Lily, edited with the help of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, appears the next year.	Revolutionary newspapers spring up on the Continent, including one published by Karl Marx, called the Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Its last issue will be printed in red.
1850	1851	1854	1854	1854
On April 17, reporter Jane Grey Swisshelm sits in the Senate gallery – becoming the first woman to cover Congress. Swisshelm made an arrangement with Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune to send him reports from Washington for five dollars a week.	Henry J. Raymond, with two partners, founds the New York Times as a penny paper. It quickly establishes itself as one of the most thorough, responsible and respectable newspapers in the country.	William Howard Russell establishes role of the dashing war correspondent while covering the Crimean War for Times of London. His inspirational accounts inspire the poet Tennyson to write "The Charge of the Light Brigade." His critiques of British military policy eventually lead to the government's resignation.	The days of the one-person newspaper are passing, the New York Tribune now employs fourteen reporters and ten editors.	Henry David Thoreau's critique of contemporary American society, Walden, is published. Thoreau is scornful of the obsession with "news."
1855	1857	1858	1858	1859
The British stamp tax on newspapers eliminated. London newspapers enjoy continued circulation growth. The Times sells 60,000 copies a day by 1855.	Jane Grey Swisshelm begins publishing the St. Cloud Democrat in Minnesota fighting against slavery and for women's rights. A mob wrecks her press and throws her type into the river, but Swisshelm carries on.	First transatlantic cable, built by Cyrus W. Field, completed in the summer of 1858, setting off huge celebrations. Although the cable breaks, a new one is completed by 1866.	In London, Paul Julius Reuter starts the wire service that will bear his name by distributing telegraphic news to London newspapers. In Berlin in 1855, Bernard Wolff began a similar service. Both men had worked for Agence Havas.	John Stuart Mill publishes, On Liberty, which includes a powerful argument for the freedom to express unpopular views.

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1865

1860

Pony Express begins to carry mail from Missouri to California in 1860. In 1841, news of President Harrison's death took three months and twenty days to reach Los Angeles. Overland transport could make the trip from St. Louis in 22 days by 1860. The Pony Express cuts this time in half.

1860

Civil War does more for the development of American journalism than any other event. Details of a big battle could enable a Northern newspaper to sell five times its normal circulation. Bennett's Herald sends sixty-three reporters to cover the war.

1861

First telegraph line completed to San Francisco October 24, 1861, making the much heralded Pony Express instantly obsolete.

1864

Union government briefly suspends or denies postal privileges to a number of pro-Southern newspapers in the North, including the Chicago Times, the New Orleans Picayune, the Journal of Commerce, the New York Daily News and the Day-Book.

1865

Reporters, rushing to transmit newsworthy information over often unreliable telegraph lines, get in the habit of compressing most crucial facts into paragraph-long dispatches, such as the report in the New York Tribune on the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. This is a step toward the "inverted pyramid" writing style.

1867
to
1870

1867

Paper made from wood pulp instead of rags first begins to be used. It is cheaper and makes possible future price cuts.

1868

Elizabeth Cady Stanton founds the women's rights newspaper the Revolution with Susan B. Anthony.

1868

The invention of the typewriter begins to relieve those who edit copy and set type on newspapers from the burden of deciphering handwriting.

1869

Transcontinental railroad is completed.

1870

Thanks to the telegraph and transatlantic cable, news that a republic has been proclaimed in Paris on September 4, following the defeat of Napoleon III, appears in the New York Tribune on September 6.

1870
to
1873

1870

New York Times begins an investigation that will lead to the arrest and conviction of "Boss" William Marcy Tweed, leader of the Tammany Hall organization that controls city government in New York.

1870

World's most powerful wire services—Reuters, Havas and Wolff—agree to divide up news gathering and transmission around the world. The "Ring Combination" lasts until 1934, with the Associated Press in the United States, which forms an agreement with these three other wire services in the 1890s, playing an increasingly large role.

1872

New York Tribune Editor Horace Greeley, one of the founders of the Republican Party, runs for president of the United States as a Democrat. Dies shortly after losing the election.

1872

James Gordon Bennett, Jr., assigns intrepid reporter Henry Morton Stanley to locate Dr. David Livingstone's whereabouts in Africa for the New York Herald. The famous line, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" is from Stanley's story.

1873

Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell publishes his theory of electricity and magnetism, concluding that they both travel in electromagnetic waves. Radio will be transmitted on those waves by the end of the century.

1875
to
1884

1875

Yee Lenn publishes what is probably the first Chinese language newspaper in the United States, Wah Kee in San Francisco.

1876

The telephone, a crucial tool for reporters, is invented by Alexander Graham Bell.

1878

Joseph Pulitzer buys two St. Louis dailies and combines them into the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

1883

Joseph Pulitzer purchases the New York World on May 11, and brings his "new journalism" to New York. Circulation immediately begins to climb.

1884

The German inventor Paul Nipkow uses a rotating disk with spiral perforations to produce electronic signals—a very primitive ancestor of television.

1885
to
1887

1885

Pulitzer's World mounts a classic attention-getting campaign to raise money to build a pedestal so the Statue of Liberty can be erected.

1886

Linotype, invented by Ottmar Mergenthaler, casts the first line of newspaper type at the New York Tribune.

1886

President Grover Cleveland is perhaps the first president to make use of an expert in public relations. George F. Parker, a former newsman, is hired by Cleveland and the Democratic National Committee as a "press agent."

1886

Heinrich Rudolf Hertz, the German physicist, begins a series of experiments that confirm James Clerk Maxwell's theory of electromagnetic waves and succeed in producing radio waves.

1887

Intrepid reporter Nellie Bly (Elizabeth Cochrane) feigns insanity to expose conditions in the Blackwell's Island Asylum—her first assignment for the New York World.

1887
to
1892

1887

William Randolph Hearst takes over his father's failing San Francisco Examiner and transforms it into a sensationalistic, crusading, self-promoting and progressive newspaper. By 1890, it is also a successful newspaper—making a \$350,000 to \$500,000 profit each year.

1889

In a classic example of "stunt journalism" the New York World sends Nellie Bly around the world, with the goal of completing the journey in less than 80 days. Riding ships, trains, horses and sampans, Nellie Bly makes her way triumphantly back to New York after only 72 days.

1889

Westinghouse Electric Company becomes one of the first private companies to hire a full-time press agent, trying to defend its new alternating current system against charges that it is dangerous.

1890

Journalist Jacob Riis, a reporter for the New York Sun, publishes his explorations of New York's slums in a book, How the Other Half Lives, which is designed to awaken the better off to the abominable conditions under which people are living elsewhere in their cities.

1892

A mob wrecks the press Ida B. Wells uses to publish her newspaper, the Memphis Free Speech, after she investigates the lynching of three African-American businessmen.

1892	1893	1895	1895	1896
The use of the "who, what, how, when and where" lead paragraph for news stories becomes more widespread in newspapers. Theodore Dreiser is introduced to it with his first job in journalism, at the Chicago Globe.	Lincoln Steffens covers the panic of 1893 for the New York Evening Post, then a very serious and sober newspaper—and is forced to leave out the fact that he had seen a financier weep. Later, while working as a police reporter for the Evening Post, Steffens maintains he "made a crime wave," by reporting previously ignored burglaries.	William Randolph Hearst buys the New York Journal, setting the stage for an intensely competitive period in the popular press marked by frequent recourse to sensationalism—known as "yellow journalism."	Guglielmo Marconi, experimenting in the fields of Italy, develops "wireless telegraphy"—radio. He patents his system in England in 1896.	Alfred C. Harmsworth borrows the techniques of American "new journalism" in his new Daily Mail in London, with instant success. "We've struck a gold mine," Harmsworth confides. Soon Harmsworth, now Lord Northcliffe, also owns the Times and three other London newspapers.
1896	1898	1900	1901	1902
Adolph S. Ochs purchases the New York Times, whose circulation had sunk to 9000 copies a day, and sets it on course to become the most respected and influential newspaper in the United States.	William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, in the midst of a circulation war in New York, compete with each other to sensationalize reported Spanish atrocities in Cuba and the sinking of the United States battleship Maine in Havana harbor—helping lead the country into the Spanish-American War.	The number of daily newspapers in the United States has quadrupled between 1870 and 1900—to 1,967 English-language, general-circulation dailies.	On January 1, Alfred Harmsworth transforms Joseph Pulitzer's New York World for one day into a small, breezy, well-illustrated paper—the prototype of the "tabloid."	McClure's Magazine begins printing Lincoln Steffens's investigations of political corruption, "the Shame of the Cities," and Ida M. Tarbell's investigation of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil trust, two classic examples of "muckraking."
1903	1905	1906	1908	1910
Alfred Harmsworth introduces the Daily Mirror in London, the first widely circulated modern "tabloid"—or small-sized—newspaper.	George F. Parker, together with Ivy L. Lee, form one of the nation's first independent public relations firms, with clients including the Pennsylvania Railroad and John D. Rockefeller, Jr.	On Christmas Eve, instead of dots and dashes, ship wireless operators hear Reginald A. Fessenden reading St. Luke's Gospel. Fessenden has invented a way to carry full sound on the wireless. This achievement is followed closely by Lee De Forest's upgrade of the vacuum tube, significantly improving radio reception.	The University of Missouri establishes the first separate school of journalism.	Number of U.S. daily newspapers peaks at 2,600. W.E.B. Du Bois begins the Crisis—a magazine for African Americans filled with news, opinion and literature.
1913	1914	1914	1915	1916
There are now 323 socialist newspapers in the United States with a total circulation of two million copies.	The number of daily foreign-language newspapers in the United States peaks at 160.	Edward Wylie Scripps, who organized the first modern newspaper group in the United States in 1895, owns a "chain" of 33 newspapers.	More than 2,200 English-language daily newspapers in the United States.	Frank A. Munsey, who owns the New York Press, buys the storied New York Sun and merges the two newspapers. The first of Munsey's series of "consolidations" establishes a disturbing trend in the newspaper business, one that will continue until the present day—a steady decline in the number of newspapers.
1917	1917	1919	1920	1922
One week after President Woodrow Wilson leads the United States into the First World War, he hires a press agent to organize support for the effort—George Creel, whose title is chairman of the Committee on Public Information. Creel also serves on the censorship board.	After the United States enters the First World War, Congress passes the Espionage Act. Under the Espionage Act, the U.S. government revokes the mailing privileges of many nonmainstream—particularly socialist—newspapers.	The first successful "tabloid" newspaper in the United States, the New York Illustrated Daily News, debuts on June 26 1919, soon shortening its name to the Daily News.	KDKA in Pittsburgh, the first commercial radio station, begins operations under Westinghouse executive Harry P. Davis, broadcasting results of the 1920 Harding-Cox presidential election on November 2, 1920.	Number of U.S. radio stations skyrockets to 576, as does the number of radios purchased—about 100,000 sold in 1922. The American Telephone and Telegraph Company begins to set up a primitive network of radio stations. A "toll" is charged for use of airtime on these stations—a method of financing that leads to true commercial radio.
1923	1923	1923	1923	1925
Henry R. Luce and a partner launch Time, the weekly news magazine. Newsweek follows in 1933. Luce also introduces Life, Sports Illustrated and Fortune.	American Society of Newspaper Editors is formed. Drafts the "Canons of Journalism"—a code of ethics, which is adopted by 107 newspapers.	Yiddish-language newspaper known in English as the Jewish Daily Forward is being published in eleven different American cities. It has a total circulation of 250,000.	Baltimore newspaperman, H. L. Mencken founds the American Mercury Magazine, to which he will bring his broad vocabulary, sharp humor, and often cynical observations.	Harold Ross starts the New Yorker, in which he intends to present a light, satirical perspective on the news. It does more than that, becoming—thanks to the quality and depth of its reporting, analysis, criticism and fiction—one of the most respected magazines in American history.

1892
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1926	1926	1927	1927	1927
Half of all the radio sets in use in the world are in the United States — five and a half million of them. Young inventor Philo T. Farnsworth conducts first successful experiments with electronic television.	AT&T agrees to sell its network of commercial radio stations to RCA — the Radio Corporation of America. This becomes the “red network” of the National Broadcasting Company, a newly formed RCA subsidiary. RCA’s own smaller network is dubbed the “blue network.”	The radio network that will soon be known as the Columbia Broadcasting System is founded. William S. Paley and his family buy CBS a year later.	There are now 733 radio stations in the United States and their signals are beginning to interfere with each other. Congress enacts the Radio Act, establishing a Federal Radio Commission to assign radio frequencies and grant licenses. It will be replaced by the Federal Communications Commission in 1934.	The New York Times in its coverage of the controversial execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti uses the classic inverted pyramid form for a news story.

1928
to
1937

1928	1930	1931	1933	1937
Most of what we know about the exchange of news in preliterate societies comes from anthropological reports — produced in the 19th or 20th centuries. L.H. Samuelson’s observations of the Zulu’s “human wireless telegraphy,” for example, date back to the 1870s and were published in 1928.	William S. Paley hires Ed Klauber, who was night city editor of the New York Times, to organize a news team for CBS. Klauber brings in Paul White, who worked for United Press. Meanwhile, KNBC, a radio station in Beverly Hills, sends 10 reporters out into the streets of Los Angeles — the largest news gathering effort yet for radio.	The United States Supreme Court establishes the bedrock doctrine of freedom of the press in Near vs. Minnesota, ruling that prior restraint of the press is allowed under only the most unusual of circumstances.	President Franklin Roosevelt takes office. He is the first president to make use of the new electronic media to communicate regularly with a large portion of the citizenry. His radio talks are known as “fireside chats.”	The Hindenburg — the largest rigid airship, or dirigible, ever built — crashes and explodes while trying to land in Lakehurst, New Jersey. Herb Morrison of WLS, Chicago, is making a sound recording of the Hindenburg’s landing. His dramatic account is broadcast on NBC hours later.

1940
to
1945

1940	1941	1941	1943	1945
Edward R. Murrow’s vivid radio reports from London for CBS, during the Battle of Britain, which begin “This is London...,” make the torments that city and country are experiencing particularly real to American listeners.	Television broadcasting begins in the U.S. The Federal Communications Commission permits 18 television stations to begin transmitting on July 1. Two of them are ready to go that day — the New York stations of NBC and CBS. That year CBS broadcasts two 15-minute television newscasts a day to a tiny audience in New York.	The Mutual radio network is broadcasting a football game at 2:22 p.m. EST, when the wire services flash: “White House says Japs attack Pearl Harbor.” An announcer interrupts the game. At 2:31, John Daly of CBS goes on the air with news of the attack. December 7, 1941, is a Sunday, and there are no Sunday afternoon newspapers. Pearl Harbor is a radio story.	The Federal Communications Commission forces NBC to sell one of its two networks. NBC’s “blue network” is renamed the American Broadcasting Company in 1945.	A newspaper strike in New York provides an opportunity for sociologist Bernard Berelson to study the effects of their absence: “It’s like being in jail not to have a paper,” one New Yorker tells him.

1946
to
1954

1946	1947	1949	1951	1954
A. J. Liebling begins writing his pointed, informed and witty column, “The Wayward Press,” in the New Yorker. The era of the professional press critic begins.	A commission chaired by University of Chicago President Robert M. Hutchins, and supported financially by Henry Luce, issues a report on “A Free and Responsible Press.” The Hutchins Commission, composed of a group of distinguished thinkers, suggests that the press must be more than just free; it must be responsible.	After the war, television grows rapidly, with more than 100 TV stations in the U.S. Two regular newscasts are being broadcast: CBS TV News, with Douglas Edwards, and NBC’s Camel News Caravan, with John Cameron Swayze. In France a newscast, “Le Journal Télévisé,” begins broadcasting three times a week, and by the end of the year twice a day.	Edward R. Murrow and his producer, Fred Friendly, debut their See It Now documentary series on CBS television by showing, simultaneously, a live scene from New York Harbor and a live scene from San Francisco.	Senator Joseph McCarthy’s “red” scare costs many their jobs and cows others into silence. Edward R. Murrow and producer Fred Friendly are among the only figures in broadcasting secure enough and courageous enough to take McCarthy on — on See It Now, March 9.

1952
to
1963

1952	1956	1960	1961	1963
The word “anchor” is used, probably for the first time, to describe the role of Walter Cronkite during CBS’s television coverage of 1952 presidential conventions.	The Italian liner Andrea Doria sinks off the coast of Nantucket, and Don Hewitt, the aggressive director of CBS’s evening newscast, takes anchorman Douglas Edwards and gets film of the sinking ship.	For the first time, two major candidates for president — Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy — debate each other on national television.	Gordon McLendon starts the first successful all-news radio station, XETRA. It broadcasts to Los Angeles — from Tijuana, Mexico.	The early television newscasts are only 15 minutes long. On Labor Day, CBS begins the first half-hour network newscast. Walter Cronkite, who took over the CBS Evening News in 1962, is the anchor.

1963
to
1971

1963	1964	1965	1968	1971
November 22, 1963, assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas. According to one estimate, 68 percent of the American people, learn the news within half an hour. Nonstop television coverage includes the shooting of the man accused of the assassination, Lee Harvey Oswald.	In Sullivan v. New York Times, a landmark decision, the U.S. Supreme Court rules unanimously that a public official may win a libel lawsuit only by proving that the story is false and published with “actual malice” — which is defined as “reckless disregard for the truth.”	CBS, with considerable reluctance, airs correspondent Morley Safer’s report on the “wasting” of a Vietnamese village, Cam Ne, by U.S. Marines. President Lyndon Johnson calls CBS President Frank Stanton to protest.	The Kerner Commission, appointed by President Lyndon Johnson to study the causes of the riots that have broken out in many American cities, criticizes the media for failing to communicate the problems of blacks in American society.	A copy of a secret Defense Department history of the Vietnam War is given to the New York Times. When the Times is prevented, for a time, from printing the “Pentagon Papers,” the Washington Post steps in; then the Boston Globe. Supreme Court finally rules that government’s argument for prior restraint of the press is not sufficiently strong in this case.

1973	1974	1980	1981	1982
Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein investigate a break-in at the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate apartment complex in Washington.	Barbara Walters, one of the first women to achieve stardom in television news, is hired by ABC to co-host its evening newscast — for a then unheard of salary of one million dollars.	R. E. (Ted) Turner launches his 24-hour-a-day Cable News Network — the first all-news television network.	President Ronald Reagan is shot and seriously wounded. Videotapes of the attempted assassination are shown on ABC, CBS and NBC within half an hour of the shooting. Both Dan Rather on CBS and Frank Reynolds on ABC deliver obituaries for White House Press Secretary James Brady, who is seriously wounded but alive.	USA Today, a national newspaper featuring short, breezy stories and lots of color, begins publication. Satellite transmission enables the paper to be printed simultaneously at 32 different printing locations around the United States.
1983	1986	1991	1993	1994
Reporters are blocked from covering the initial stages of the U.S. invasion of the Caribbean island of Grenada. The military does not bring along representatives of the media, and a group of journalists that manage to land on the island is prevented by U.S. military officials from reporting what is happening for two days.	When the world's worst nuclear-power accident occurs at Chernobyl in what was then the Soviet Union, people in the area are told by officials that there is nothing to fear, while news audiences in the rest of the world must make do with rumors and speculation.	The worldwide news system continues to strengthen. People in countries around the world, for example, are able to watch the bombs drop down upon Iraq — live — during the Persian Gulf War in 1991.	Cable television lines can carry telephone calls. Telephone lines can carry television signals. Computers seem capable of involving themselves in all these forms of communication over all these different lines. "Convergence" the media moguls call it, and they race to form business alliances to exploit the potential.	News audiences in the U.S. become obsessed with yet another sensational news story: the accusation that former football star O. J. Simpson has murdered his wife and her friend. Many Americans now have dozens of cable television channels to choose from. A few of those channels lose themselves in coverage of Simpson's year-long trial.
1995	1995	1996		
News organizations and technology companies race to place news on the Internet, which seems to hold the promise of making vast quantities of information almost instantly available to plugged-in computer users around the world. Time Warner's Pathfinder "home page" on the World Wide Web proves particularly popular.	Disney purchases ABC. Time Warner purchases CNN. Westinghouse purchases CBS. Huge global media corporations seem to grow larger and larger — with worldwide television networks, their own movie studios and their own news operations.	Coverage of U.S. presidential campaign appears on numerous television networks and spills over to talk shows, the World Wide Web, and even MTV.		

1973
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19821983
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