BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN JOURNALISM

Edited by **Joseph P. McKerns**

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BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN JOURNALISM

To My Parents,
Jean and Joseph McKerns
and
To My Teacher,
Edwin Emery

INTRODUCTION

This biographical dictionary brings together within the covers of one volume the richness and diversity of American journalism from 1690 to the present. It offers biographical sketches of nearly 500 persons who contributed to the development of American journalism through their work in the various media—newspapers, magazines, radio and television—and in various occupational roles—reporter, editor, publisher, war, Washington or foreign correspondent, commentator, columnist, humorist, editorial cartoonist, illustrator, photographer, documentary film or television producer, sports journalist, and wire service and press association personnel. Also, because the development of American journalism was not only affected by those working for the mainstream media of daily newspapers, national magazines, and broadcasting networks, this volume includes those who made significant contributions in the women's, ethnic, minority, and dissident media. These latter subjects are not "tokens" offered in an attempt to right ancient wrongs, but instead they are a reflection of my personal conviction that the true significance and development of American journalism cannot accurately be measured and understood by examining only the mainstream media in the nation's major cities. The texture of American journalism is as rich and diverse as the texture of its population with its many hues and colors, races, creeds, and nationalities.

The biographical sketches in this volume are organized alphabetically by the subject's last name (alphabetical lists of the subjects by categories of media and professional fields are included in the appendix). Each sketch, or entry, follows the format of such standard biographical dictionaries as the *Dictionary of American Biography*, and begins with the subject's name and dates of birth and death (or only the former if the subject is still living). This is followed by a paragraph summarizing the subject's significance in the history of American journalism. The succeeding paragraphs offer a chronological narrative of the subject's life and achievements.

The emphasis in each entry is on the important career details of the subject's life. Also included are data on the names of parents, spouses, siblings, children; dates of marriage; details of education; and important nonjournalistic activities, for example, government service. The final paragraph offers information about the subject's death, or, if the subject is still living, what his or her current activity is. Most of the subjects included who are still living have retired, and the date of retirement is noted in the entry, usually in the last paragraph.

Following each entry is a brief bibliography on the subject, which is divided into two parts. Part A lists those significant published works by the subject not incorporated into the chronological narrative. Most often these are memoirs, autobiographies, or works of an autobiographical nature. Part B lists books, articles, and other printed material about the subject, including references to the obituary published in the *New York Times*, when appropriate, and citations to other biographical dictionaries.

For a number of entries, most often those whose subject is a regional, woman, or minority journalist, biographical references are scarce. There may not have been an obituary published in the *Times*, or other accessible major newspaper, nor an entry in any of the standard biographical dictionaries. For some subjects, their appearance in this volume marks the first time they have been included in a major reference work. Among such entries are those on Howard Rock, a native Eskimo editor, and James P. Newcomb, an important regional journalist.

The name of the author of the entry follows the bibliography. More information about the authors is offered in the "About the Contributors" section at the back of this volume. Most of the contributors have a research interest in the subject of the entry, or in the subject's category of journalism. All of the contributors have a strong personal interest in the subject matter of the entries they wrote.

This work differs from other biographical dictionaries in that it includes subjects who are living, of whom some are still active in a facet of journalism. The decision to include subjects who are still living was a subjective one, but, nevertheless, a decision necessitated by the history of American journalism itself. While the history of American newspapers dates back to 1690, the other major mass media have emerged only during the past century. Mass-circulation national magazines are scarcely 100 years old; radio broadcasting scarcely 65 years old; and television roughly 40 years old.

Additionally, the historical age of the several professional fields varies greatly, for example, while newspaper editors have been around since Benjamin Harris in 1690, editorial cartoonists first appeared around the time of Thomas Nast in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. A career field making an even more recent appearance is the syndicated political columnist, such as Walter Lippmann or Joseph Kraft, whose heyday dates only to the 1930s. Because many of the most significant figures in the development of the newer media and professional fields are still living, it seemed only logical to include them. Therefore, the selection of living subjects was weighted in favor of persons involved in the development

of broadcasting and magazines, and from the newer professional fields such as political columnists and commentators.

However, the decision to include living subjects prevented the kind of closure possible when the selection of subjects is limited to those who are dead. Therefore, I decided to weight the selection of subjects who are living in favor of those who have retired, thus achieving closure to an extent. But, "retirement" is a slippery concept in a profession such as journalism. For example, a significant journalist may formally retire from his or her position, as Walter Cronkite did when he retired as anchor of the "CBS Evening News," and yet remain active in the field afterward, as Cronkite also has done with his various broadcasting projects and special assignments. Furthermore, there have been others who never formally retired, but who moved into a different realm of activity, sometimes in journalism, sometimes outside of it. Theodore H. White is an example of this. The decision to include White was made long before he died because of his great importance as a China correspondent and political journalist. White never formally retired from magazine journalism, but he did move on to other activities, most notably his *The Making of the President* series of books.

For subjects like Cronkite, the decision to include them was a relatively easy one to make given that other criteria (discussed below) were met. For subjects like White, or Nancy Dickerson, who is a successful producer of syndicated television documentaries but who is included in this volume because she was the first woman White House correspondent for a major television network, the decision was more subjective and it reflects my interpretation of the development of journalism based upon nearly two decades of study and research. Taken as a whole, this work reflects an understanding of the history of journalism and those who contributed to it in a significant way from the perspective of the mid–1980s.

Before turning to an explanation of the criteria used to select subjects for this volume, it is necessary to clarify how the term *American journalism* was interpreted in this work. Does "American" mean that only native-born citizens of the United States are included? No. Instead it means any journalist, whether native-born, naturalized, or foreign national, whose work was significant in the development of journalism in the United States. For example, some naturalized citizens, such as Joseph Pulitzer, began their journalism careers only after immigrating to the United States and are included. Others, such as W. T. Stead, were journalists in their native countries and never became citizens of the United States, but their work in this country significantly influenced American journalism and they are included because of that.

"Journalism" is interpreted to reflect the many-faceted activities of gathering, processing, and disseminating information about politics, culture, and society that are journalism in its reality, in other words, what a reader or viewer commonly expects to find in newspapers, magazines, or on broadcast news and public affairs programs. Journalism is more than just the timely reporting of current events or what is called "news"; it includes the work of columnists,

editorial cartoonists, photographers, television documentary producers, and others. Their work also feeds the pool of public knowledge about politics, culture, and society as does the work of reporters and editors.

Nevertheless, even though the way in which the term "American journalism" is interpreted here tends toward a holistic view, there still is closure. This volume does not include significant figures from the history of advertising or public relations. Each of those professions deserves full treatment in its own volume first, and then perhaps a truly holistic volume covering American mass communication would be in order.

Also, this volume does not attempt to be exhaustive of its subject. That would be impossible short of a commitment to a multi-volume series. Therefore, criteria were established at the beginning of the project to guide the selection of subjects. These criteria were adapted from the *Encyclopedia of American Biography*, edited by John A. Garraty and Jerome L. Sternstein, a work similar to this in that it is a one-volume biographical reference that includes entries on living subjects and covers a range of activities and career fields.

The criteria for selection were the following: *Significance*. Did the person influence journalism in his or her own time or later? *Achievement*. Did the person reach a level of competence in journalism that was recognized by peers and contemporaries, or later by biographers and historians? *Fame (or Notoriety)*. Was the person widely known by peers or contemporaries, or by later generations? *Typicality*. Does the person merit selection because he or she reflects some broad trend or is representative of some large group? The order of the criteria indicates their priority; is significance alone enough to merit selection? Yes, regardless of whether or not the person's significance was recognized in his or her own lifetime or later.

Most of the subjects included in the volume easily met the significance criterion, and many of them met all four criteria. Any biographical dictionary of American journalism would be incomplete without entries on Joseph Pulitzer, the elder James Gordon Bennett, Edward R. Murrow, Horace Greeley, Frederick Douglass, Henry R. Luce, Margaret Fuller, and others like them. Selection was more difficult and became more subjective as subjects met three or fewer of the criteria notwithstanding significance. Some subjects met only one of the criteria, other than significance, but were included nonetheless. For example, James Gordon Bennett, Jr., the editor who sent Stanley to find Livingston in order to sell more newspapers, is included for his notoriety primarily, and also because he controlled a very important American newspaper of the time, the *New York Herald*.

Some of the early radio correspondents are included not because they were especially significant individually, but because they are representative of an important, emerging career field in their time, and because information about them was more accessible than information about others who were not included. Surely, there will be disagreement with some of the close decisions made in this volume, but such is the nature of biographical reference works and of the dis-

course on historical significance. I respect criticism based upon informed opinion. A number of difficult choices had to be made, and the decisions made in those cases reflect my own subjective, but informed, opinion regarding historical significance.

Finally, a few points regarding the importance of the person versus the importance of the specific journalistic organization the person was affiliated with need to be made. Having held a specific position with an organization did not automatically qualify a person for selection, for example, having been the editor or publisher of a major metropolitan newspaper, or the president of one of the three major television networks. Adolph Ochs is included because his genius and leadership resurrected the *New York Times* after 1896 and made it the great newspaper that it is, and not because he was the publisher of the *Times*. Likewise, William S. Paley, who has never been a journalist, is included because his managerial leadership and determination to make CBS a leader in broadcast news is largely responsible for that network's excellent journalistic reputation through the decades, and not because he has been the chief executive officer of CBS.

Also, having received a Pulitzer Prize in print journalism or a DuPont or Peabody award in broadcasting did not automatically qualify a person for selection. Most often these prestigious awards are given to individuals in recognition of an outstanding, but specific, achievement in journalism, such as excellence in coverage of a major news event, or for an outstanding series of articles or programs on an important political or social issue. They are seldom awarded in recognition of the long-term significance of a person's contributions to journalism. However, a number of the subjects in this volume received a Pulitzer Prize, or DuPont or Peabody award, and their names are listed in the appendix at the end of this volume.

Given the above criteria and guidelines for selection, the process of selection involved surveying those works considered standard histories of American mass communication, such as the works of Frank Luther Mott, Edwin Emery, Erik Barnouw, Sidney Head, and even Isaiah Thomas (who is among the subjects included), whose *History of Printing in America* was the first major work on journalism history published in the United States. Also consulted were the works of historians and other scholars who specialize in one of the many facets of American mass communication history, such as women in journalism, the black press, the ethnic and immigrant press, and so on. A number of the contributors to this volume also offered helpful suggestions about persons to be added to the list of subjects. All such suggestions were appreciated, and a number of the names suggested were added if they met the criteria established for selection.

This volume is dedicated to three people who are very important to me, and who have had a profound influence on my life and work. It is dedicated to my parents, Jean and Joseph McKerns, who worked very hard for many years to give me the best they could, and whose love and concern for me I shall always

cherish and never forget. I suppose the same could be said of all good parents, but they are my parents and they are special.

It is also dedicated to Edwin Emery, Emeritus Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota, who was my doctoral adviser and dissertation chairman. He gave freely and unselfishly of his time and knowledge, and tolerated the sometimes annoying, sometimes naive questions that all doctoral students are prone to ask. We may disagree in our interpretations of journalism history, but he taught me to be independent and he encouraged the discourse we enjoyed at Minnesota. I shall always feel privileged to have studied with Edwin Emery whose knowledge of the history of journalism is unsurpassed.

I am indebted to each of the contributors to this volume for their hard work and patience, and for their expertise. I am especially indebted to Dwight Jensen of Syracuse University who unselfishly volunteered to write a bushel of entries very late in the project after several contributors were unable to complete their assignments.

A sincere "Thank You" is extended to Cynthia Harris, my editor at Greenwood Press, for her patience with the sometimes slow progress of my work, and for her timely advice and suggestions; and to Paul Kobasa and Mary Sive, acquisition editors at Greenwood Press, whose encouragement and suggestions were invaluable in the early stages of this project.

Finally, my heartfelt appreciation and affection goes to my wife, Annamae, and my three sons, Michael, Evan, and Douglas, for their support and understanding during the years I worked on this volume. They have had to live with it every day as I have, and are not any less happier than I am that it is finally finished.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACAB	Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography
AWW	American Women Writers
BARB	Black American Reference Book
BHB	Biographical History of Blacks
CA	Contemporary Authors
CB	Current Biography
DAB	Dictionary of American Biography
DANB	Dictionary of American Negro Biography
DLB	Dictionary of Literary Biography
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
EAB	Encyclopedia of American Biography
FAN	Famous American Negroes
NAW	Notable American Women
NCAB	National Cyclopaedia of American Biography
NYT	New York Times

b.	date of birth
d.	date of death
q.v.	also included in the dictionary

CONTENTS

— A —

ABBOT, WILLIS JOHN (b. 16 March 1863; d. 19 May 1934) was a nationally recognized newspaper journalist, author, and peace advocate. He worked for the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *New York Journal*, and *Chicago Times*, and other newspapers. His journalistic career is something of a paradox, moving successfully from William Randolph Hearst's (q.v.) "yellow" press to the idealistic and responsible *Christian Science Monitor*. In addition to his newspaper work, Abbot authored more than twenty books. He was influential as an articulate spokesperson and leader in debates about political and social issues of the day because of his intense activity to promote individual political candidates and world peace.

Abbot, the only child of Waldo and Julia (Holmes) Abbot, was born in New Haven, Connecticut. Young Abbot's mother was widowed in 1864 when his father, a collector at the port of Key West, Florida, died of yellow fever. Abbot's mother married Sabin Smith and the family moved to Chicago, Illinois. There Abbot's interest in social and political issues was sparked and nurtured as he listened to radical labor speakers and observed their activities. In 1880 he attended the first of twenty-one national political conventions in which he would participate during his lifetime.

Abbot studied literature at the University of Michigan from 1881 to 1883, but transferred to the law school where he earned a LL.B. in 1884. Moving to New Orleans for his health, Abbot accepted an offer to work as a cub reporter at the *Times-Democrat*. While there he also worked as a correspondent for the *New York World*.

In 1886 he took his second reporting job, writing for the *New York Tribune*. In 1887 he and some newspaper associates launched what he called the most expensive school of journalism in the country. Their *Kansas City Evening News*, of which Abbot was editor in chief, folded in 1889 because of fierce competition

with William R. Nelson's (q.v.) *Star*, and the collapse of Kansas City's economic boom. On 30 November 1887 Abbot married Marie Amanda Mack, daughter of a merchant, Christian Mack, of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

After the collapse of the *News*, Abbot returned to his boyhood home of Chicago to become an editorial writer for the *Chicago Evening Mail*, becoming managing editor in 1892. He refined his journalistic skills and nurtured his political interests by helping the *Mail*'s owner, Carter Henry, to be reelected mayor of Chicago.

It was during this period that Abbot developed an interest in, and admiration for, the populist movement. Endorsing "people's" candidates and causes, Abbot became preoccupied with political problems and issues of silver, taxes, and peace that would demand his attention the rest of his career.

Attracted to the rising fortunes of Hearst, Abbot went to work as editor in chief for Hearst's *New York Journal* in 1895, beginning an association that lasted for nearly two decades. He continued to be engrossed in politics and actively served as chairman of Henry George's (q.v.) campaign for reelection as mayor of New York in 1897.

The National Democratic Convention of 1896 was one of the most memorable events Abbot covered. His admiration for William Jennings Bryan motivated him to promote Jennings's election among other journalists. Abbot continued his active involvement in politics by managing the Democratic national press bureau for the presidential campaign of 1900, and again in 1908, and by writing a very effective pro-Democratic newspaper column for the Republican *Chicago Tribune*.

Marie Abbot died in 1903, leaving Abbot with a son, Waldo Mack. On 12 April 1905 Abbot married a Detroit banker's daughter, Elsie Maples, who survived him without children.

After 1890 Abbot contributed prolifically to magazines such as *Review of Reviews*, *Literary Digest*, *New Republic*, *Outlook*, *Forum*, *Munsey's*, and *Harper's Weekly*, writing about domestic and foreign public affairs, travel, and interesting people. He was editor and part owner of the Battle Creek, Michigan, *Pilgrim* monthly magazine from 1900 to 1903; chief editorial writer for Hearst's *New York American* from 1905 to 1916 with a brief respite from 1908 to 1911; special political writer for the *Chicago Tribune* in 1908; a writing editor for the *New York Sun* from 1916 to 1917; and political writer for the *Chicago American* in 1917. He also served as correspondent for *Collier's Weekly*, the *London Times*, and the *Washington Herald*. He was vigorously pro-Ally during 1914–17, and withdrew from Hearst's *Chicago American* staff when the newspaper reported that the sinking of the *Lusitania* was a legitimate military incident.

On 30 January 1921 Abbot became the third editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*. A Christian Scientist since experiencing a cure for nervous prostration and insomnia, he worked with great devotion to rebuild the *Monitor*, which had suffered from reduced circulation because of in-fighting for control between the church's board of directors and the publishing society's board. Within five years the newspaper's circulation approached 130,000. The staff was revitalized,

overseas bureaus strengthened, and the editorial policy changed to more effectively promote "ideals of decency and constructiveness."

Abbot took particular interest in working with peace advocates from both sides of the Atlantic and in promoting the *Monitor*'s peace plan, suggested in 1923 and 1924. The plan proposed a constitutional amendment subjecting property to conscription for war along with citizens. It was formally introduced into both houses of Congress and seriously explored in hearings. He also took great satisfaction in the newspaper's enthusiastic fight against repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.

In 1927 he became a member of the governing board of the *Monitor* and a contributing editor to the paper, posts he held until his death. During this period he spent much of his time traveling in Europe, writing about international relations and events for his regular column entitled "Watching the World Go By."

The many political and social groups to which he belonged were generally dedicated to tireless promotion of responsible journalism and world peace. He was one of the founders of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Abbot was honored by Greece and Romania for international service. His alma mater, the University of Michigan, conferred on him an honorary doctor of laws degree in 1927. In 1943 a Liberty ship was named in his honor.

Abbot died in Brookline, Massachusetts, of undiagnosed causes. He was cremated and his ashes were interred at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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J. DOUGLAS TARPLEY

ABBOTT, LYMAN (b. 18 December 1835; d. 22 October 1922) was a liberal theologian, author, and editor of semireligious magazines for fifty years. He was famous in his time as a popularizer of the doctrine that it is more important to have faith in oneself and in one's fellow men than faith in God.

Abbott, third and youngest son of Jacob and Harriet (Vaughan) Abbott, was born in Roxbury, Massachusetts, just west of Boston. His father, a professor and author of the Rollo series of children's books, became controversial in the 1830s for declaring that Christ was man but not God. Abbott's mother, often infirm, died in childbirth when he was seven. He spent the next several years under the care of his aunts, "a lonely, homeless, outcast boy," as he later recalled in *Reminiscences*.

Abbott received an A.B. from New York University in 1853, then passed the bar exam and joined his two brothers in a New York law firm. He also became a law reporter for the *New York Times*. On 14 October 1857 Abbott married his second cousin, Abby Frances Hamlin, and settled in Brooklyn. Influenced by