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**The
Press
and
America**
An
Interpretive
History
of the
Mass Media
Sixth Edition



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Foreword

Journalism history is the story of humanity's long struggle to communicate: to discover and interpret news and to offer intelligent opinion and entertaining thoughts in the marketplace of ideas. Part of the story has as its theme the continuing efforts by men and women to break down the barriers that have been erected to prevent the flow of information and ideas, upon which public opinion is so largely dependent. Another aspect of the story is concerned with the means, or media, by which essential news, opinion, and other desired information reached the public, from the days of the handwritten "newes letter" to the printed page, radio, and television. Just as important to this story are the heroes and villains, as well as the bit actors, who made the world of communication what it is today. Finally, all of this becomes truly meaningful when the development of America's journalism is related to the progress of its people.

With this sixth edition of *The Press and America*, the order of the co-authors' names has been changed to reflect degrees of responsibility for revision undertakings. As previously, the authors pooled their thinking in planning this edition's organization and illustration, and jointly edited the entire manuscript to insure unity of agreement. But Michael Emery continued to oversee such especially crucial areas as the new technology, the broadcast media, alternative journalism, foreign correspondence, the wars, and the crises since the 1930s in domestic politics and foreign affairs, especially those in Central America and the Middle East. Edwin Emery concentrated upon the print media, film, advertising, public relations, media economic trends, media law, China and the Pacific Rim, and the extensive bibliography.

Those familiar with this book will note a number of organizational changes. Earlier chapters have been consolidated, achieving better balance of chapter length. Final chapters have been extensively rearranged to promote continuity

and readability. The examination of American life and the American media remains the heart of the book, with even more colorful accounts built into the story. The Bibliography and the Notes are still presented chapter by chapter, but are now found in the Appendix. These changes facilitated both the listing of rapidly expanding new research in the field and the shifting of extensive data listings to the Notes as reference sources.

The title, *The Press and America*, was conceived in 1949, when the newspaper industry was dominant, there was only a smattering of interest in the history of radio, and television was in its infancy. There have been many changes in media roles and communications technologies since. For reasons of tradition and continuity, our title remains the same, reflecting as always the emphasis placed upon the correlation of journalism history with political, social, economic, and cultural trends. In this interaction, the media have had their influence upon the course taken by the United States. Conversely, the conditions and influences present in each historical era have cumulatively determined the shape and character of the media. Within this framework emerges the special story of the men and women of journalism and of the institutions and traditions they created. Thus, the story ranges from newspaper editor James Franklin to television reporter Dan Rather; from newspaper publisher Mary Katherine Goddard to Katharine Graham; from opinion-molder Horace Greeley to Edward R. Murrow; from radical publicist Sam Adams to I.F. Stone; from talented writer Tom Paine to Tom Wolfe.

There is extensive examination of all the media: newspapers, press associations, magazines, book publishing, advertising, public relations, photojournalism, motion pictures, radio, television, and cable. Thus in the 1920s, the stories of radio's David Sarnoff and Amos 'n' Andy, of Hollywood's David Wark Griffith and Charlie Chaplin, of the newspapers' Adolph Ochs and the *New York Daily News*, of the *Reader's Digest* and the *New Yorker*, and of the rise of advertising agencies and public relations counsels become interrelated. With words and pictures the book surveys landmark events in communications history, probing significant issues, personalities, and media organizations, all the while tracing how major events in American history were covered by reporters, editors, and broadcasters and how other writers, advertisers, and advocates influenced American life.

The Iran-Contra scandal is backgrounded by a depth review of Middle Eastern and Central American events and their media coverage. China and the Pacific Rim have been given broadened emphasis. A hard look is given to television's performance and to its controversial social role. There is updated coverage of women journalists, minorities, alternative journalism, investigative reporting, and media law. Closing chapters review in detail the character and impact of the "new technology" for print and electronic media, the economic power of major media organizations, the internationalizing of both media impact and media technologies, and pressures from the Third World for changes in the international news flow. New illustrations have been added.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks are due to many persons who have aided in this venture during four decades. For this edition, criticisms and suggestions for change were elicited from Professors George Everett of the University of Tennessee, Peter Mayeuk of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Peter Mellini of San Francisco State. The critique by Professor Everett was particularly helpful. Of great assistance was research compiled by Professor Emeritus Robert W. Desmond of the University of California and research findings organized and edited for *Journalism History* by its founder, Professor Tom Reilly, and his successor, Professor Susan Henry, both of California State University, Northridge. Others whose research or comments were of special aid included journalism professors Fenwick Anderson, Southern Connecticut State; Félix Gutiérrez, Southern California; Nancy L. Roberts, Minnesota; David Nord, Indiana; Jeffery Smith, Iowa; and Everette E. Dennis, Gannett Center. Substantial editing aid was given by Andrea Emery, and indexing aid by Mary and Alison Emery. Our special thanks go to Steve Dalphin, journalism/mass communication editor, and Virginia McCarthy, production editor, of Prentice Hall.

The debts for aid with earlier editions can be acknowledged here only in part. A substantial acknowledgment is due Henry Ladd Smith, then at Wisconsin, co-author of the first edition, particularly for the graceful writing in the early chapters. Co-author Michael Emery began his association with the book during the third edition revision. Manuscript critics have been Professors Ralph D. Casey, Minnesota; Frederick B. Marbut, Pennsylvania State; Kenneth E. Olson and Richard A. Schwarzlose, Northwestern; William H. Taft, Missouri; Bruce H. Westley, Kentucky; Calder M. Pickett, Kansas; Sam Kuczun, Colorado; and Ted C. Smythe, California State, Fullerton. Professor Harold L. Nelson of Wisconsin has given many suggestions for text revisions, particularly in the colonial period, and gave invaluable assistance during the work on the first edition. Journalism bibliographers upon whom we have most depended are Warren C. Price, Oregon; Calder M. Pickett, Kansas; Eleanor Blum, Illinois; and Christopher H. Sterling, editor of *Communication Booknotes*.

Mention must be made of past aid by journalism professors Ralph O. Nafziger and William A. Hachten, Wisconsin; Quintus C. Wilson, Northern Illinois; Roland E. Wolseley, Syracuse; Paul Jess, Kansas; Sharon Murphy, Marquette; Warren Francke, Nebraska-Omaha; Betty Winfield, Washington State; Henry G. La Brie, III, Boston; John D. Stevens and Marian Marzolf, Michigan; William E. Ames and Richard B. Kielbowicz, Washington; Donald L. Shaw, North Carolina; Randall L. Murray, California Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo; Ralph E. Kliesch, Ohio; Joseph P. McKerns and Paul Peterson, Ohio State; Harvey Saalberg, Angelo State; Robert V. Hudson, Michigan State; and R. Smith Schuneman, Raymond B. Nixon, Edwin H. Ford, J. Edward Gerald, and Donald M. Gillmor, Minnesota.

Finally, we acknowledge our debt to the many scholars and writers whose contributions to media history are listed in the notes and bibliographies.

MICHAEL EMERY
EDWIN EMERY

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The first edition of *The Press and America* won the coveted Sigma Delta Chi national research award, the highest in the field of journalism.

Michael Emery, Ph.D., is Professor of Journalism and Department Chair at California State University, Northridge. He is coeditor of *Readings in Mass Communication*, which won a Kappa Tau Alpha special research award, and of *America's Front Page News, 1690–1970*. He has been associate editor of *Journalism History*, chair of the West Coast Journalism Historians Conference, and consultant to the Newspapers in America exhibit at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. He was a United Press International correspondent and is a freelance foreign correspondent.

Edwin Emery, Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota. He has been president of the Association for Education in Journalism and editor of its research journal, *Journalism Quarterly*. Author or editor of eleven books, Professor Emery also won the Sigma Delta Chi national award for his *History of the American Newspaper Publishers Association*, the AEJ Bleyer and Blum Awards for historical research, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He is a former United Press bureau manager and World War II war desk editor.

Introductory Bibliography

Indispensable references for students of the history of American journalism are Warren C. Price, *The Literature of Journalism: An Annotated Bibliography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959), which has 3147 entries, and Warren C. Price and Calder M. Pickett, *An Annotated Journalism Bibliography, 1958-1968* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), which has 2172 entries including some from pre-1958. Entries are particularly full in the areas of general journalism histories, specialized and individual histories, biographies, and narratives of journalists at work. Other sections cover press appraisals, press law, international communication, magazines, radio and television, public opinion and propaganda, communication theory, techniques of journalism, journalism education, periodicals of the press, bibliographies, and directories. British and Canadian journalism is well covered.

The best single volume of bibliography for mass communication, and one which updates the Price-Pickett work by two decades, is Eleanor Blum and Frances Wilhoit, *Mass Media Bibliography: Reference, Research, and Reading* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), continuing Dr. Blum's 1972 and 1980 editions of *Basic Books in the Mass Media*. Their 1200 annotations cover all fields except law. M. Gilbert Dunn and Douglas W. Cooper, "A Guide to Mass Communication Sources," *Journalism Monographs*, 74 (November 1981), describes indexes, union lists, catalogs, directories, and some major collections for print and broadcast media. Current annotated bibliography is reported in *Communication Booknotes*, edited by Christopher H. Sterling, and published monthly by the Department of Communication and Theatre, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. 20052.

Among bibliographies for specific subjects are Joseph P. McKerns, *News*

Media and Public Policy: An Annotated Bibliography (New York: Garland, 1985); Robert Armour, *Film: A Reference Guide* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), a selective list, particularly for U.S. films; Fred and Nancy Paine, *Magazines: A Bibliography for Their Analysis with Annotations* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1987); Arthur F. Wertheim, *American Popular Culture: A Historical Bibliography* (New York: ABC-Clio Information Services, 1984); and J. William Snorgrass and Gloria T. Woody, *Blacks and Media: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography, 1962-1982* (Tallahassee: Florida A&M University Press, 1985). James P. Danky was editor and Maureen E. Hady compiler of two major listings: *Native American Periodicals and Newspapers, 1829-1982: Bibliography, Publishing Record and Holdings* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), and *Women's Periodicals and Newspapers from the 18th Century to 1981* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1982). For broadcasting, see Michael Murray, "Research in Broadcasting: An Overview of Major Resource Centers," *American Journalism*, 1:2 (1984), 77.

Two new encyclopedias are a chronological history, *Mass Media* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), by Robert V. Hudson, and *The Encyclopedia of American Journalism* (New York: Facts on File, 1983), edited by Donald Paneth. Two valuable reference-research guides are *The Aspen Handbook on the Media*, edited by William L. Rivers, Wallace Thompson, and Michael J. Nyhan (New York: Praeger, 1977), and *Electronic Media: A Guide to Trends in Broadcasting and Newer Technologies, 1920-1983*, edited by Christopher H. Sterling (New York: Praeger, 1984). Two biographical dictionaries are Joseph P. McKerns, *The Biographical Dictionary of American Journalism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988), detailing some 500 newsmen in a variety of media positions; and *American Newspaper Journalists*, edited by Perry J. Ashley in five volumes of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (Chicago: Gale Research, 1983 ff.), to be followed by three volumes about magazine journalists edited by Sam G. Riley. William H. Taft offers 750 biographical profiles in *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Journalists*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987).

The earliest annual directory of U.S. periodicals was George P. Rowell & Co.'s *American Newspaper Directory* (1869), superseded by N.W. Ayer & Son's *American Newspaper Annual* (1880), later titled the *Directory of Newspapers & Periodicals*. Standard U.S. source is *Editor & Publisher International Year Book* (1921), which also includes international listings. From London, *Benn's Press Directory* (1846) has separate *United Kingdom* and *International* volumes annually. The *Willings Press Guide* (1874) is international in scope, focusing on Britain.

For listings of American newspaper files, Clarence S. Brigham's *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1947) is the guide to surviving early newsprint (updated and corrected in the April 1961 *Proceedings* of the Society and a 1962 edition; the Society published chronological tables to accompany Brigham in 1972). Winifred Gregory's *American Newspapers, 1821-1936: A Union List of Files Available in the United States and Canada* (New York: Wilson, 1936) has diminished usefulness since libraries began to discard their more recent bound volumes in favor of microfilm. The Library of Congress publishes *Newspapers on Microfilm*, updating periodically, listing microfilm holdings of libraries newspaper by newspaper.

The largest single newspaper collection for the entire period of American history is at the Library of Congress; the largest for the colonial period, at

the American Antiquarian Society. Ranking high in overall strength are the libraries of the Wisconsin State Historical Society and Harvard University; the Bancroft Library of the University of California is famous for its western collections as well. Strong in importance for their regions are the New York Historical Society, New York Public Library, Chicago Historical Society, University of Chicago, Pennsylvania Historical Society, and Boston Public Library. Noteworthy for general collections are the University of Missouri, University of Minnesota, Yale University, University of Washington, and UCLA. The two major museum exhibits are Newspapers in America, at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, and the Smithsonian's Hall of News Reporting in Washington, D.C.

Two major bibliographies for the study of American history are *A Guide to the Study of the United States of America* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1960) and the *Harvard Guide to American History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974). The former, although less voluminous, carries extensive annotations lacking in the latter.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Discussions of historical method are found in Michael Kammen, ed., *The Past before Us: Historical Writing in the United States* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980), a book of twenty essays planned by the American Historical Association; John Higham and Paul K. Conkin, *New Directions in American Intellectual History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); David W. Noble, *The End of American History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), a revisionist's denial of America's uniqueness; and Barbara Tuchman, *Practicing History* (New York: Knopf, 1981), which discusses her views on the writing of history and the role of history in society. Richard E. Beringer, *Historical Analysis* (New York: Wiley, 1978), explores nineteen approaches to historical study; James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle examine historical method in terms of debatable episodes in *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection* (New York: Knopf, 1982); and quantification techniques are discussed in Robert P. Swierenga, *Quantification in American History* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), and Roderick Floud, *An Introduction to Quantitative Method for Historians* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973). A special issue of *Reviews in American History* (Volume 10, No. 4, December 1982) is entitled "The Promise of American History: Progress and Prospects" and contains twenty essays. What history books do not say about the nation's past conventions is the theme of Frances FitzGerald, *America Revised* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

For well-balanced discussions of recent trends in American historiography—involving the progressive, consensus, and New Left schools—see Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington* (New York: Knopf, 1968), by a one-time consensus advocate; John Higham, *Writing American History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), by a critic of the newer schools; and C. Vann Woodward, ed., *The Comparative Approach in American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1968). Bibliographies in this volume identify leading exponents of these various approaches to American history.

For historiography in journalism and mass communication, the best single volume is John D. Stevens and Hazel Dicken Garcia, *Communication History* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980). Two chapters on historiography by David Paul Nord, Harold L. Nelson, and MaryAnn Yodelis Smith are found in Guido H. Stempel, III, and Bruce H. Westley, eds., *Research Methods in Mass Communication* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981). An older study is Ronald T. Farrar and John D. Stevens, eds., *Mass Media and the National Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), which discusses research subject areas. A good discussion linking newspaper history and public affairs is William H. Taft's *Newspapers as Tools for Historians* (Columbia, Mo.: Lucas Brothers, 1970).

Among journal articles, an extensive overview of journalism and mass communication historiography is found in Michael Emery, "The Writing of American Journalism History," *Journalism History*, X (Autumn-Winter 1983), 38. Others include William David Sloan, "Historians and the American Press, 1900–1945," *American Journalism*, III:3 (1986), 154; "A Conversation with Edwin Emery," *Journalism History*, VII (Spring 1980), 20; "A Conversation with James W. Carey," *Journalism History*, XII (Summer 1985), 38; and a symposium, "Seeking New Paths in Research," with essays by Garth S. Jowett, Richard A. Schwarzlose, John E. Erickson, Marion Marzolf, and David H. Weaver, in *Journalism History*, II (Summer 1975).

Notes and bibliographies for the 21 chapters will be found in an appendix, rather than at the ends of chapters as in earlier editions. In some cases, chapter notes will include supplementary reference material (names of individuals, lists of newspapers, other valuable research resource data); such inclusions will be noted in the body of the text.

Notes for the chapters begin on page 681. Annotated bibliographies listing books, monographs, and periodical articles in all fields of mass communication—as well as representative background histories—appear chapter-by-chapter beginning on page 709. The index begins on page 775.

The Press and America

The Daily Courant.

Wednesday, March 11. 1702.

From the *Hansem Courant*, Dated March 18. N. S.

Naples, Feb. 22.
On Wednesday last, our New Viceroy, the Duke of Escalona, arriv'd here with a Squadron of the Gallies of Sicily. He made his Entrance dress'd in a French habit; and to give us the greater Hopes of the King's coming hither, went to Lodge in one of the little Palaces, leaving the Royal one for his Majesty. The Marquis of Grignol is also arriv'd here with a Regiment of French.

Rome, Feb. 25. In a Military Congregation of State that was held here, it was Resolv'd to draw a Line from Alcoli to the Borders of the Ecclesiastical State, thereby to hinder the Incursions of the Transalpine Troops. Orders are sent to Civita Vecchia to fit out the Gallies, and to strengthen the Garrison of that Place. Signior Casali is made Governor of Perugia. The Marquis del Vasto, and the Prince de Calera continue still in the Imperial Embassador's Palace; where his Excellency has a Guard of 50 Men every Night in Arms. The King of Portugal has desir'd the Arch-Bishoprick of Lisbon, vacant by the Death of Cardinal Soula, for the Infante his second Son, who is about 11 Years old.

Vienna, Mar. 4. Orders are sent to the 4 Regiments of Foot, the 2 of Cuirassiers, and to that of Dragoons, which are broke up from Hungary, and are on their way to Italy, and which consist of about 24 or 15000 Men, to hasten their March thither with all Expedition. The 6 new Regiments of Hussars that are now raising, are in so great a forwardness, that they will be complete, and in a Condition to march by the middle of May. Prince Lewis of Baden has written to Court, to excuse himself from coming thither, his Presence being so very necessary, and so much desir'd on the Upper-Rhine.

Frankfort, Mar. 12. The Marquis d'Uxelles is come to Strasburg, and is to draw together a Body of some Regiments of Horse and Foot from the Garrisons of Alsace; but will not lessen those of Strasburg and Landau, which are already very weak. On the other hand, the Troops of His Imperial Majesty, and his Allies, are going to form a Body near Germersheim in the Palatinate, of which Place, as well as of the Lines at Spire, Prince Lewis of Baden is expected to take a View, in three or four days. The English and Dutch Ministers, the Count of Frise, and the Baron Vander Meer; and likewise the Imperial Envoy Count Lowenstein, are gone to Nördlingen, and it is hop'd that in a short time we shall hear from thence of some favourable Resolutions for the Security of the Empire.

Liege, Mar. 14. The French have taken the Canon de Longie, who was Secretary to the Dean de Meun, out of our Castle, where he has been for some time a Prisoner, and have deliver'd him to the Provost of Maubeuge, who has carry'd him from hence, but we do not know whither.

Paru, Mar. 17. Our Letters from Italy say, That most of our Reinforcements were Landed there; that the Imperial and Ecclesiastical Troops seem to live very peaceably with one another in the Country of Parma, and that the Duke of Vendome, as he was visiting several Ports, was within 100 Paces of falling into the Hands of the Germans. The Duke of Chartres, the Prince of Conti, and several other Princes of the Blood, are to make the Campaign in

Flanders under the Duke of Burgundy; and the Duke of Maine is to Command upon the Rhine.

From the *Amsterdam Courant*, Dated Mar. 5. A.

Rome, Feb. 25. We are taking here all possible Precautions for the Security of the Ecclesiastical State in this present Conjunction, and have desir'd to raise 3000 Men in the Cantons of Switzerland. The Pope has appointed the Duke of Berwick to be his Lieutenant-General, and he is to Command 6000 Men on the Frontiers of Naples: He has also settled upon him a Pension of 6000 Crowns a year during Life.

From the *Paris Gazette*, Dated Mar. 18. 1702.

Naples, Febr. 19. 600 French Soldiers are arriv'd here, and are expected to be follow'd by 3400 more. A Courier that came hither on the 14th. has brought Letters by which we are assur'd that the King of Spain designs to be here towards the end of March; and accordingly Orders are given to make the necessary Preparations against his Arrival. The two Troops of Horse that were Commanded to the Abruzzo are posted at Pescara with a Body of Spanish Foot, and others in the Fort of Montorio.

Paru, March. 18. We have Advice from Tonlon of the 5th instant, that the Wind having long stood favourable, 23000 Men were already sail'd for Italy, that 2500 more were Embarking, and that by the 15th it was hoped they might all get thither. The Count d'Estrees arriv'd there on the Third instant, and set all hands at work to fit out the Squadron of 9 Men of War and some Fregats, that are appointed to carry the King of Spain to Naples. His Catholick Majesty will go on Board the *Thunderer*, of 110 Guns.

We have Advice by an Express from Rome of the 18th of February, That notwithstanding the pressing Instances of the Imperial Embassadour, the Pope had Condemn'd the Marquis del Vasto to lose his Head and his Estate to be confiscated, for not appearing to Answer the Charge against him of Publickly Scandalizing Cardinal Janfon.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT will be found from the Foreign Prints, which from time to time, as Occasion offers, will be mention'd in this Paper, that the Author has taken Care to be duly furnish'd with all that comes from Abroad in any Language. And for an Assurance that he will not, under Pretence of having Private Intelligence, suppose any Additions of feign'd Circumstances to an Action, but give his Extracts fairly and impartially, at the beginning of each Article he will quote the Foreign Paper from whence 'tis taken, that the Publick, seeing from what Country a piece of News comes with the Allowance of that Government, may be better able to Judge of the Credibility and Fidelity of the Relation: Nor will he take upon him to give any Comments or Conjectures of his own, but will relate only Matter of Fact, supposing other People to have Sense enough to make Reflections for themselves.

This *Courant* (as the Title shews) will be Publish'd Daily: being design'd to give all the Material News as soon as every Post arrives and to consist of no half the Compass, so save the Publick at least half the Impertinences, of ordinary News-Papers.

LONDON. Sold by E. Mallet, next Door to the King's Arms Tavern at Fleet-Brige.

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1

The Heritage of the American Press

Give me but the liberty of the press and I will give to the minister a venal House of Peers . . . and servile House of Commons . . . I will give him all the power that place can confer upon him to purchase up submission and overawe resistance—And yet, armed with liberty of the press . . . I will attack the mighty fabric he has reared and bury it amidst the ruins of the abuses it was meant to shelter.

—Richard Brinsley Sheridan

The modern press system is the gift of no one nation. It is only the current stage in the evolution of communications efforts, spanning all continents and at least 10,000 years. A series of developments in printing and writing, beginning in the Middle East and Asia, slowly spreading to Europe and finally to America, led to today's marvelous linkage of reporting talent, computers, high-speed color presses, and satellites. Each historic breakthrough was motivated by the need to keep track of trading records, communicate to far-flung empires, spread religious ideas, or leave behind artistic records of accomplishments. The story of American journalism would not be complete without tracing a number of these notable achievements.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRINTING

The first systematic attempt to collect and distribute information was *Acta Diurna*, the hand-lettered "daily gazette" posted regularly in the Roman Forum between 59 B.C. and A.D. 222. Prepared by *actuarii*, the earliest known news writers, the reports told of both senate votes and popular events. These were in turn copied by scribes and carried throughout the empire. This enlightened program, enjoyed by Romans who learned of government decrees, legal notices, and even the latest gladiatorial results, had been preceded by many attempts to make the storage and distribution of information convenient. Around 3500 B.C. the Sumerians of the Middle East devised a system of preserving records by inscribing

signs and symbols in wet clay tablets using cylinder seals and then baking them in the sun. They also devised a cuneiform system of writing, using bones to mark signs in wet clay. Stamp seals, engraved objects used to denote ownership, had been common 1000 years earlier. Pictographs or ideographs—drawings of animals, commonly recognized objects, and humans—were popular in the Mediterranean area, China, India, what is now Mexico, and Egypt, where they became known as hieroglyphs. There is evidence that a system of movable type was devised in Asia Minor prior to 1700 B.C., the date of a flat clay disk found in Crete. The disk contained forty-five different signs that had been carved on individual pieces of type and then pressed onto the clay.

Elaborate carvings in stone and wood became common in the eastern Mediterranean around 1500 B.C., roughly the same time that the Phoenicians, successful traders and bankers for 1000 years, introduced symbols for sounds and created an alphabet. Colored fluids were used to outline the “letters” of the alphabet and to produce the pictographs. Around 500 B.C. the Egyptians used reeds found along the Nile River to make papyrus. Scribes using brushes or quills could then “write” their hieroglyphics and sheets of papyrus could be joined to make a scroll. For several hundred years, the scroll collections were housed at the centers of learning. Whereas the clay and stone tablets were heavy and difficult to store or carry any distance, the papyrus sheets and scrolls allowed information to be shared easily.

Vellum was used as another writing surface beginning about A.D. 100. The parchment, made from animal skins, was used in the Greek and Roman empires for special manuscripts or scrolls. At this same time the Chinese invented a smooth, white paper from wood pulp and fibres and also discovered a way to transfer an ideograph from stone to paper after inking the surface. These “rub-bings” were joined together to produce beautifully colored scrolls.

Wang Chieh published what is considered the world’s oldest preserved book from wood blocks in A.D. 868. Large blocks could be carved so that one sheet of paper, printed on both sides, could be folded into thirty-two pages of booksize. Feng Tao printed the Confucian classics between 932 and 953 and in about 1045 the artisan Pi Sheng was inspired to devise a set of movable clay carvings—a sort of earthenware “type”—that could be reused. This process was also used in Persia and Egypt. Wood-block printing was introduced to Europe when Marco Polo returned from China in 1295. It is difficult to establish Chinese influence, but block printing became popular in Europe during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Its most striking use came in the production of illustrated books. Meanwhile, in Asia, the innovations continued; movable type cast in copper or bronze was used in Korea in 1241.

Johann Gutenberg of Mainz and Strasbourg is credited with introducing printing from movable type in Europe. Beginning about 1450, with the help of his partner Johann Fust, Gutenberg used a mixture of lead and other metals to cast individual letters in reverse and high relief. Apparently he did not realize this was being done in China. After printing several books using an adapted wine press, he began to reproduce the Bible in 1456. However, unable to pay his loans to Fust, Gutenberg lost his shop the following year and Fust finished the printing of the Bible in 1460. William Caxton imported the first printing press into England in 1476 and by 1490 at least one printing press was operating in every major European city.