This article provides an overview of the sweeping events of 1848 on both sides of the Atlantic from the perspective of Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune. It analyzes editorial content about the year’s election published concurrently with reports about the revolutionary movements in the German states that were influenced by Rhineland editor Karl Marx, suggesting Greeley’s vision for the Whig Party understood the United States as intrinsically linked to international events. The article features newspaper columns, campaign-related literature, and the writings of Whig leaders who, during the short presidency of General Zachary Taylor, helped develop a free-soil platform that resonated in particular with German immigrants, the “Forty-eighters,” later forming the foundation of the Republican Party. Its findings are significant for media historians because they detail Greeley’s efforts to attract a valuable immigrant demographic to his audience, and to present issues popularized in his newspaper in context with the ideas of European revolutionaries, including Marx, who later contributed to the Tribune as a correspondent.

An overdue reinterpretation of General Zachary Taylor’s campaign for the presidency casts it as anything but—as it has been typically portrayed—a lackluster affair. Taylor, who died after only one year in office, was indeed a precursor of the Whig Party’s demise. However, the campaigns for both candidates, particularly the Whig one, were strikingly innovative, particularly inasmuch as they addressed decidedly international issues, actively courting the vote of European immigrants.¹

Re-examining editorials from the New York Tribune reveals Horace Greeley, the newspaper’s Whiggish editor, was among the foremost to engage in a thoughtful campaign, reach...
In the late nineteenth century—a time when there was no government agency to act as an overseer on the actions and power of the New York Stock Exchange—the press took on this role instead. This article examines New York’s five largest daily newspapers for their coverage of the week in 1889 when the NYSE cut off all ticker service from its floor, forcing brokers and members to employ messenger boys to transmit prices. It was the most public and dramatic maneuver in the NYSE’s two-decades-long fight to gain complete control over who could receive its valuable information and how. Of 51 news stories and 11 editorials, only two gave sympathetic treatment to the NYSE’s stance, and both appeared on the first day. After that, not a single news story nor editorial backed the NYSE’s move as a wise one, and many of the news stories were chock full of critical editorial comments.

Introduction

In 1889, the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) was the country’s pre-eminent market for stock trading. Annual volume had topped 100 million shares, and the self-made millionaires who were members—many from poor backgrounds with little formal education—were now revered by the aristocrats who’d formerly disdained stock trading as little more than gambling.1

But the ticker, which provided a continuous printout of the latest stock prices to those who subscribed, was an increasing threat to the NYSE’s power. When the ticker was introduced in 1869, the exchange initially welcomed the new technology as a way to increase business. But two decades later this new technology was being used by the so-called “bucket shops.” These small offices
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Grabbing a Place on the Totem Pole: How Newspaperman H. Allen Smith Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Book Business

By Sara Baker Netzley

Newspaperman H. Allen Smith delighted Americans in 1941 with his book Low Man on a Totem Pole, which was stuffed with bawdy, folksy observations of a cross-section of humanity, from celebrities to strip-tease artists to everyday oddballs. This article offers a glimpse of American humor between the world wars as it tracks Smith’s evolution, both professionally and personally, from a newspaper reporter to a successful humorist and book author. It uses letters, newspapers clippings, and other written documents contained in Morris Library’s Special Collections at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, as well as excerpts from Low Man, Smith’s first successful book. This article also explores how Smith’s relationship with H. L. Mencken, a luminary in the writing field and a long-time Smith idol, changed during this time period. Finally, it examines where Smith’s writing fits in light of larger trends in between-war humor and how his work influenced modern humorists familiar to readers today.

In 1941, H. Allen Smith published a humor book called Low Man on a Totem Pole.¹ It brought the former newspaperman his first taste of genuine success in the publishing world, selling tens of thousands of copies at $2 each and making him a household name. More than 20 years later, a friend of Smith’s wrote him a letter on the book jacket of a Low Man reprint, telling Smith that she’d just picked up the book at a second-hand bookstore for $1.40 plus tax. As she was completing the transaction, she asked the bookstore employee why the book was still priced so close to its original purchase price after two decades.
In books, trade publications and newspaper articles, journalists often report that former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew described journalists as “nattering nabobs of negativism.” That journalistic maxim is wrong. Agnew used the phrase in the heat of the 1970 mid-term congressional campaign to refer to politicians critical of Nixon administration policies. Nothing in his speech referred to the press. Although the initial coverage of Agnew’s distinctive phrase was accurate, within a year journalists began to usurp the aphorism and conflate it with Agnew’s celebrated November 1969 speeches criticizing the news media. This article traces the origin of the nabob myth while recounting perhaps the two most remarkable media speeches given by a high-ranking official. Although journalists have perpetuated other myths, the misappropriation of Agnew’s alliterative phrase is distinctive because it reveals a primal journalistic need to recast criticism as a blame-the-messenger screed.

One of journalism’s maxims is that Vice President Spiro T. Agnew’s line about “nattering nabobs of negativism” exemplifies attacks against the press. “One of the most often heard criticisms of the news media is that its purveyors, in the words of the late Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, are too often ‘nattering nabobs of negativism,’” a Sacramento Bee columnist wrote in a typical piece. In a 40-year anniversary issue published in 2001, Columbia Journalism Review credited Agnew, his speeches and his alliterative remark with inventing a Republican strategy of press-bashing. Editor & Publisher asserted that complaints about newsroom bias date to Agnew’s phrase while American Journalism Review proclaimed that Agnew’s characterization of the press as “nattering nabobs” honed a blame-the-media

The Myth of Spiro Agnew’s “Nattering Nabobs of Negativism”

By Norman P. Lewis
The Burden of Being First:
Carol Sutton and the Courier-Journal

By Kimberly Wilmot Voss

Carol Sutton was a groundbreaking women’s page editor at the Louisville Courier-Journal in the 1960s. She went on to become the first female managing editor of a major metropolitan daily newspaper. It led to her being named one of Time magazine’s women of the year in 1976. After less than two years as the managing editor, she was removed from the position but remained at the newspaper. She then worked on minority recruitment projects.

The early 1970s were an ideal time for women in journalism. After years of being largely confined to women’s sections, lawsuits, new legislation, and the increased consciousness spread by the women’s liberation movement leaders led to women being promoted into new positions. Prior to the late 1960s and early 1970s, being women journalists typically meant women’s page journalists, other than sob sisters, stunt girls, wartime work, and Eleanor Roosevelt’s women-only press conferences.¹ They were typically excluded from hard news coverage, and promotions into management positions were rare. Yet, changes were on the horizon.² One of the most visible women journalists of this era was Carol Sutton, who in 1974 was named managing editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal. It was a “first” nationwide for a major metropolitan newspaper, and her accomplishment was lauded as a breakthrough for women. It led to national recognitions, including being one of twelve “women of the year” on the cover of Time magazine in 1976.

Sutton was an ideal candidate for a “first.” She had graduated from the University of Missouri, a school known for enrolling women in its journalism program, and she had several years of experience in covering hard news before becoming the women’s page editor. In the decade when she

Kimberly Wilmot Voss
is an assistant professor of journalism in the Nicholson School of Communication, P.O. Box 161344, Orlando, FL 32816-1344. (618) 541-4949. voss.kimberly@gmail.com