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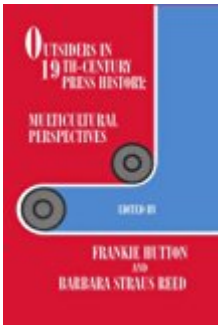
Frankie Hutton, Barbara Straus Reed, eds. *Outsiders in 19th-Century Press History: Multicultural Perspectives.* Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1995. 251 pp. $19.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-87972-688-1; $37.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-87972-687-4.



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The Press of/for

As editors Frankie Hutton and Barbara Straus Reed write in their introduction to *Outsiders in 19th-Century Press History: Multicultural Perspectives*, American outsider groups were frequently ignored and misrepresented in the mainstream press. Examining the publications of various marginalized groups provides modern readers with a more complicated sense of the outsider experience in nineteenth-century America by allowing long-silenced groups to speak for themselves.

Positing that the press is "and always has been an essential window through which to view various aspects of American history," the editors have worked to create a collection that hopes to be "part of a long-overdue continuum on multicultural aspects of American press history" (p. 1). Chapters in this volume offer examinations of black presses, Jewish journalism, Spanish-language newspapers in California, Chinese American newspapers, Native American publications, woman's rights presses, Mormons and the press and peace advocacy presses. This collection is a significant step toward reclaiming marginalized voices and giving outsider presses and newspapers the attention they deserve.

Recurrent in this book are examinations of how various outsider groups negotiated the chasms between the ideals and realities of American life. William E. Huntzicker quotes a rare published first-person account of Chung Sun, a nineteenth-century Chinese man in the United States. Hoping America would be a land of justice for all, Chung Sun apologizes for "expressing a painful disappointment" and describes the United States as "a jumble of confusion and a labyrinth of contradictions" (p. 72). In examining the chasms and contradictions within American culture, outsider presses were negotiating the margins and, ultimately, their place in American society.

Several of the chapters offer historical narratives of the various presses and as such are important first steps for further work in the area. However, the most useful chapters in this collection move beyond basic narratives and place the presses and their complex rhetorics within a larger social, cultural, and political context. Particularly effective in connecting press histories with a complicated social context are Frankie Hutton's chapter on black presses, William E. Huntzicker's two chapters on Chinese Americans, and John M. Coward's chapter on press accounts of Little Bighorn. Catherine C. Mitchell's chapter not only contextualizes the woman's rights press, but also examines current critical strategies for mass communications historians. In "Historiography on the Woman's Rights Press," Mitchell proposes new critical approaches that would offer a more complex understanding of "the place of the woman's rights press and its significance for all Americans" (p. 166).

Outsiders in 19th-Century Press History: Multicultural Perspectives is important reading for anyone interested in nineteenth-century publications. This collection not only moves journalism and mass communication history toward a more multicultural perspective, but it also opens avenues for further important and exciting work. Many

contributors claim their chapters are "just a start" and suggest areas that need further work and investigation. *Outsiders in 19th-Century Press History* is an excellent collection and provides a solid stepping-stone to recovering lost voices and gaining a more complicated sense of press history and American culture in the nineteenth century.

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