

# COVERING AMERICA

A Narrative History of a Nation's Journalism



Christopher B. Daly

## American Journalism: A Timeline

By Christopher B. Daly

[www.journalismprofessor.com](http://www.journalismprofessor.com)

Boston University

- 1704 First American newspaper published. (In Boston)
- 1729 **Benjamin Franklin** begins publishing
- 1735 Sedition trial of printer **John Peter Zenger**.
- 1776 Start of **American Revolution**. Thomas Paine writes pamphlet called "Common Sense."
- 1789-91 Adoption of **Constitution** and **First Amendment**.
- 1790-1830s **Partisan Press** and commercial press flourish.
- 1798 **Sedition Act** passed by Federalists and used against Republican editors; allowed to expire under Jefferson.
  
- 1833 Founding of first **Penny Press** paper in New York, making newspapers cheap enough for the masses.
- 1844 Invention of **telegraph**, by Samuel F.B. Morse.
- 1846 **The Associated Press** founded, in New York City.

- 1854** *New York Times* founded.
- 1861-65** Coverage of the U.S. Civil War.
- 1880s-90s** Rise of “new journalism.” Introduction of photographs into newspapers. Era of “Press Barons” **William Randolph Hearst** and **Joseph Pulitzer**.
- 1898** **Spanish-American War.**
- 1904-12** Period of investigative reporting known as “**Muckraking.**”
- 1917-18** U.S. role in **WWI** (censorship + propaganda)  
Congress passes **Sedition Act.**
- 1923** Henry Luce founds *TIME* magazine.
- 1925** Harold Ross founds *The New Yorker*.
- 1926** Radio Corp. of America creates **NBC** network.
- 1927** Congress creates commission to regulate radio.  
**CBS** network founded by **William Paley.**
- 1930s** Economic depression. Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt delivers “fireside chats.”
- 1941-45** U.S. role in **WWII.** (censorship + propaganda)
- 1948** First regular television news.
- 1954** **Edward R. Murrow** attacks **Sen. McCarthy**
- 1960** Television shows **Kennedy-Nixon debate.**
- 1960-75** U.S. involvement in **Vietnam War.**
- 1963** Television covers **Kennedy assassination.**
- 1964** *NYTimes v. Sullivan* (Supreme Court libel case)
- 1968** In Vietnam, **Tet Offensive**; **My Lai** massacre.  
**CBS** launches “**60 Minutes**” TV news magazine
- 1970** **NPR** begins.
- 1971** **Pentagon Papers** case.
- 1972-74** **Watergate** scandal.

- 1980** CNN founded by **Ted Turner**
- 1982** *USA Today* newspaper launched by **Gannett Co.**
- 1987** Broadcasting de-regulation begins.
- 1988** **Rush Limbaugh** launches conservative talk radio.
- 1991** U.S.-led war in **Persian Gulf**.  
**World Wide Web** begins to spread to public.
- 1996** **Fox News** debuts.
- 2001** On **Sept. 11**, terrorists attack U.S.
- 2003** U.S. media encourage U.S. invasion of Iraq.
- 2005** *NYTimes* reporter Judith Miller serves 85 days in jail to protect a confidential source.  
**Huffington Post** launched.
- 2007** On-line journalist **Joshua Micha Marshall**, founder of **TPM**, wins a Polk Award for journalistic excellence.