

to the country's bloodiest war.

Selections are written by some of the nineteenth century's best known writers, such as Louisa May Alcott and Samuel Clemens, as well as more obscure authors, and are taken from some of the most prominent periodicals, such as *Atlantic Monthly*, *Lippincott's*, and *Harper's Monthly*. The stories are chosen not only for their quality but also for the insights they offer into what Americans, both on the homefront and at the battlefield, were thinking and feeling during the war. The stories written after the war reflect how the major events of the war were being remembered. Most stories are illustrated with engravings from period periodicals, though they are not necessarily pictures that appeared with the stories in the original publications.

Diffley includes a one-paragraph introduction to each story that explains the historical context of the piece. These introductions will be particularly helpful for general readers who are not familiar with the period. For ex-

ample, the first story in the book, "The Cabin at Pharaoh's Ford" by Henry King (which appeared in *Overland Monthly* in December 1874), was about a Kansas minister who was lynched for his work on the Underground Railroad. The introductory commentary documents well known facts about "bleeding Kansas" that a general reader would need to fully understand and appreciate the events in the story. While Diffley's introductory comments provide necessary historical context, they perhaps also should do more to justify why particular pieces are included in the book. She should say why each is the best work to represent contemporary thought on the particular issues or ideas raised in the story.

Especially valuable are the reference materials that the author includes. Her Civil War timeline outlines the main events of the war and places each short story on the line to illustrate the societal context in which the piece was published. Further, Diffley includes a biographical sketch of each author and a glossary

of military and nineteenth-century terms that appear in the stories. While she does not provide a bibliography, the book offers a useful bibliographic essay that links different categories of the short stories to scholarly works that can be consulted for amplification of topics, such as the conflict in Kansas during the 1850s, popular response to the fall of Fort Sumter, or life in army camps.

The book is probably most useful to literary scholars interested in how Civil War-era periodical literature dealt with the issues of the day or to historians who are working in the areas of book, cultural, or intellectual histories of the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. The short stories in Diffley's book are a good survey of the short fiction spawned by the Civil War and should be useful to those looking for insights into what Americans thought about the war and its aftermath.

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**Doolittle, John. *Don McNeill and His Breakfast Club*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001. 247 pp. \$22.95.**

The best part of John Doolittle's book (and probably the most enjoyable yet frustrating to have assembled) is the CD that comes with it. That's not to knock the book, but listening to the CD is a giant, palpable step back into an era of radio that lasted far longer than most network radio. The clips from various McNeill programs over the years demonstrate the ease he had with his audience and the down-home humor that Doolittle describes in the accompanying book. Who did Jay Leno and Dave Letterman descend from? From McNeill, partly. Not directly, of course, but in the CD you hear the ancestry of chatting with the audience, handling embarrassing situations, celebrity interviewing, recurring features, and repeat guests.

The book is a fun and easy read about a man who helped invent broadcast show business. McNeill did his program on the ABC Radio network (originally NBC Blue) and Arthur Godfrey did his on CBS, but in truth dozens, if not hundreds, of these types of programs were done in markets all over the country. McNeill had a larger staff, bigger budget, and more options open to him than most of his contemporaries. The book gives the

formula for this type of program and provides an excellent look at why McNeill was able to keep his program going.

The *Breakfast Club* aired for more than thirty-five years. McNeill began the program in the depths of the Depression, hard pressed to find sponsors for an hour of humor, music, prayer, interviews, and skits. It ended in 1969. Along the way, he took his show on the road, throughout the United States but especially the Midwest, where his audience was the strongest. He even broadcast a series of programs from Europe, taking his entire cast, band, and crew with him. The rest of the time, he broadcast his program from Chicago, one of the last network-originated programs from a city that had fostered so many early radio programs.

This is not a scholarly book. It does not pile on layers of analysis or apply theories to the events in his life. It does not compare and contrast him with other performers of his day except in brief, breezy ways. It does not propose him as a force (or hindrance) of social change. Unfortunately, it also does not ask some critical questions, and in places it seems to gloss over questions that the text raises.

Most glaringly, McNeill does not come in for much criticism. His two attempts at television were panned, but the book treats those mildly. Apparently none of the cast or staff members ever lost his or her temper with McNeill (even though he seemed to go through a number of singers on his program), and no one at the network level had any complaints about him. There is no mention of any criticism over prayer time or any of the other features. Perhaps that is the result of a somewhat thin bibliography (which is hard to recognize since there really is no bibliography, just a series of chapter endnotes) that appears to be profiles in entertainment and industry magazines as well as personal interviews by the author. Without this shading, the book does not appear to have much depth.

While it fails as an insightful analysis of McNeill and his program, it is nonetheless instructive as a slice of radio history, from how radio programs were sponsored to the power of the voice alone, *sans* pictures. There is a lot to learn in the book but not a lot to take into the classroom.

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**Edge, Marc. *Pacific Press: The Unauthorized Story of Vancouver's Newspaper Monopoly*. Vancouver: New Star Books, 2001. 450 pp. \$29.**

The rich history of Canadian journalism has been inadequately recorded and analyzed. There is a dearth of comprehensive histories

and in-depth case studies, and too many histories are anecdotal memoirs by editors and have varying quality.

Marc Edge's book on the Vancouver publishing corporation, Pacific Press, attempts to fill one of those historical gaps. He offers a

profile and critique of one of the most influential news organizations in the history of Western Canadian journalism. Pacific Press began publishing the two daily newspapers in Vancouver, the *Province* and the *Sun*, in 1957. The saga of Pacific Press is a tumultuous parade of owners and editors, the arrival of chain ownership, efforts to stem a decline in circulation, the elimination of competition, and bitter union-management disputes. The stakes were high: Pacific Press needed to protect its dominance of daily publishing in a large Canadian city. Since many of the same developments happened at other newspapers, this study of Pacific Press is also a study of trends in Canadian newspapers throughout forty years.

A former *Province* reporter, Edge did

much of the research for the book while completing his doctorate in mass communication from the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University. He supplements his historical research—complete with notes, an index, and a bibliography—with considerable strong opinion and evaluation. His history is not a neutral analysis, as is obvious from its self-proclaimed status as an “unauthorized” history. He portrays Pacific Press as a monolithic corporation that was often run by inept or nasty senior managers. He sees the purchase of Pacific Press by the Southam newspaper chain and the take-over of the dailies by Conrad Black’s media empire as part of an unhealthy trend toward concentration of ownership in Canadian media. “The history of Pacific Press is a case study of the adverse

effects of removing competition from the marketplace of ideas,” he writes.

Edge’s criticisms leave the reader wondering what the managers, owners, and editors would say in reply. He writes: “It is an ‘unauthorized’ history in that Pacific Press in no way contributed to it. Not that they refused, but I didn’t really ask.” Some readers might regard this as a glaring admission of unbalanced research, or an honest statement of perspective. In any case, readers can still learn from the historical facts collected in this volume, while making up their minds about the author’s judgments. A more balanced view on the legacy of Pacific Press will have to await other histories with other perspectives.

Stephen Ward

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Godfrey, Donald G. *Philo T. Farnsworth: The Father of Television*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2001. 360 pp. \$30.

The Final Jeopardy Answer: The Father of Television. The Question: Who was Philo T. Farnsworth? While Guglielmo Marconi, Thomas Edison, George Eastman, Samuel Morse, and Alexander Graham Bell are easily identified as pioneer communication technologists, Farnsworth is rarely recognized.

Donald Godfrey has written a book about a nearly forgotten innovator that he prefaces as a biography of a man whose life was inseparable from his work. While it is not a book that will settle arguments about who was first with the technology of television, it offers an excellent chronology of electric media and where Farnsworth’s accomplishments fit into history.

Even before his teen-age years, Farnsworth knew his niche in life would be as a scientist. Without the confines of legal or corporate pressures, and with an insatiable hunger for science, he would dream and experiment with science projects relentlessly. One of his dreams was “radio-vision,” and he drew schematics of an electrical picture-processing unit in high school in 1922. The development

of this dream would consume him from then onward.

With the success of commercial radio, coupled with fierce competition between the deep-pockets research and development labs of RCA, General Electric, Bell Labs, and others to fund research and experimentation that would take broadcasting to the vision level, the invention of television was imminent. This makes Farnsworth’s achievements even more impressive.

He had a western independence and defiance of big corporate pressures. He knew his research was cutting edge, and he was going to be first to own the patents despite incredible financial pressures. At one point in his early entrepreneurial days, he was tempted to sell his ideas for \$100 (the Depression and world wars were not kind to independent tinkers seeking startup money). However, he persevered and successfully patented numerous critical processes that helped start the television industry and revolutionized communication forever. He always wanted to be an inventor and entrepreneur, but the reality of

corporate competition soured his passion for science and entrepreneurship.

Farnsworth’s story is full of personal anecdotes that changed him internally and likely altered television history. Many of the personal factors that affected his crusades are documented in this book. The book skirts around his faith and departure from what would be assumed to be the Latter-day Saints community (living in Salt Lake City and attending Brigham Young University). The effects of his struggles with his faith may have been worth a little more exploration.

Godfrey has done an excellent job of accumulating the pieces to the Farnsworth puzzle that had not been accessible before. After reading this book, one will gain a new respect for a man who was more interested in science than adoration. The reader also will develop an interest in learning more about the man who successfully followed a passion and changed the world beyond even his imagination.

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Griffen-Foley, Bridget. *The House of Packer: The Making of a Media Empire*. Sydney: Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1999. 298 pp. \$29.95.

Griffen-Foley, Bridget. *Sir Frank Packer: The Young Master*. Sydney: Australia: HarperCollins, 2000. 326 pp. \$29.95.

The United States has the Pulitzer and Hearst dynasties. Australia has Murdoch, Fairfax, and the subject of these two books, the Packer family. The latter dynasty was founded in 1919 when the patriarch, Robert Clyde Packer, and two partners established *Smith’s Weekly*. In subsequent decades, Packer-

controlled companies published the *Daily Guardian*, the *Sunday Guardian*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Sunday Telegraph*, all in Sydney, and—perhaps the publication with the most impact—the *Australian Women’s Weekly*, which was intended to be the most enlightened women’s publication of its time. It probably

was, given that the time was 1933.

*The House of Packer* is a comprehensive and penetrating look at the inner workings of a complicated set of business ventures. Interactions with politicians and labor are traced with care and detail, so that the reader gets a real feel (often lacking in media studies) of the

