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THE NEWS CONTROL EXPLANATION OF NEWS MAKING:
THE CASE OF WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST,
1920-1940,

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, PH.D., 1979

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THE NEWS CONTROL EXPLANATION OF NEWS MAKING: THE

CASE OF WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST, 1920-1940

by

William Quayle Parmenter

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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(Chairperson of Supervisory Committee)

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Doctoral Dissertation

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Date July 31, 1979

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction: Scope of Dissertation	1
Chapter I: Intellectual Framework	9
Chapter II: Historical Context	31
Chapter III: San Francisco Market: Part One	67
Chapter IV: San Francisco Market: Conclusion	102
Chapter V: Mid-Atlantic Region	128
Chapter VI: <u>New York American</u> : Window on the National Scene .	156
Chapter VII: National Scene	190
Chapter VIII: Conclusion	218
Bibliography	248
Vita	

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INTRODUCTION

SCOPE OF DISSERTATION

Owner news control of newspaper news is the focus of interest of this dissertation. It has long been a point of inquiry, even contention, among communications scholars as to how news is made. Related to the news making question is the interest of this paper: to what degree do owners of newspapers influence news making on their newspapers? By probing owner news control by means of a study of documentary evidence created by executives in a newspaper chain, this paper aims to shed light on the subject.

Concern with owner control of newspaper news emerged early in the literature of communication. In the 1910s and 1920s Will Irwin, Upton Sinclair, and Willard Bleyer assessed roles of owners, the corrosive influence of wealth, and the lineage of influential publishers. In the 1930s a number of scathing popular indictments of major publishers flowed from the pens of Ferdinand Lundberg, George Seldes and Harold L. Ickes.

The broader question of news control and news making was scrutinized in the first careful academic studies in the 1940s and 1950s. Kurt Lewin, Charles E. Swanson and Warren Breed studied how gatekeeping, hiring policy and social control affect news. In the 1960s and 1970s the number of approaches and researchers continued to expand. Rodney Stark, Lewis Donohew, David Bowers,

Edward Epstein, and Leon Sigal contributed newsroom studies, surveys of publisher influence, content, analyses, and opinion- and attitude-measurement approaches.

News in this study is treated more broadly than just as reported events. In studying owner control of news, the literature suggests several problems. One, cited by Daniel Garvey (1971) in his dissertation on television newsroom policy-making, was that communication researchers have difficulty gaining access to top management. A second, pointed up by the 1930s indictments of major publishers, was that the authors often did not penetrate beyond surface exercises of power. These books did not approach explicating the operating pattern of control. A third problem was raised by Warren Breed's dissertation (1952) on social control in the newspaper newsroom. He did not trace publisher control into the newspaper and demonstrate that policy substantially affected content.

Although not assuming to provide final solutions to these problems, this paper does address them. It deals with the news control question at the ownership and top management level. It analyzes a large body of written directives, attempting to shed light on the dynamics and operating pattern of news control. Finally, the question of establishing that news control can be traced to its effects on content is discussed in chapter VIII. A content analysis of newspapers is not undertaken.

A rich vein of manuscript correspondence between William Randolph Hearst and several of his executives, roughly

between the years 1920 and 1940, was located that bears on the news control question. Four manuscript collections that relate to city, regional and national perspectives were selected for examination.

The primary research question under scrutiny is the one of Hearst news control. The context of its exploration is largely that of analysis of institutional process. The primary question may be explored with a number of related questions aimed at illuminating Hearst news control:

What is meant by control? Did Hearst control the news on his newspapers? How was that control exercised? Was control diffused by sharing it with other corporate executives? What evidence can be adduced to show control? Can control be extended from the directives to newspaper content? Are there aspects of control that are real but do not show up in content?

The secondary research question is the one of explicating Hearst news. The context of this inquiry is largely historical. The related questions illuminating this interest include:

From what historical antecedents did Hearst news derive? What was Hearst news? In what sense was the Hearst news formula different from those from which it was derived? What were the ingredients of the Hearst news formula? What were the Hearst news biases, slants and peculiarities? What social valuation should be placed on Hearst news? What technological developments did Hearst have to cope with that those he borrowed from did not?

For purposes of explication a unity research focus--the examination of Hearst news control--has been somewhat artificially divided into two questions. The major interest, as stated, is in owner news control. But there are varieties of news. So at some

point attention must be given to Hearst news. Thus the secondary research question.

The evidence examined comes from manuscript collections of four of Hearst's high executives. These collections were found at Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley. The most significant collection is that of Edmond D. Coblentz, which contained about 2,000 items to and from Hearst. The ratio of letters is four from Hearst to one from Coblentz. During his 50-year-career with Hearst, Coblentz was managing editor and publisher of the New York American, flagship of the Hearst fleet, 1927-1937, and supervising editor of all Hearst papers, 1937-1940. Coblentz was the conduit for many Hearst editorial policies and ideas. The Coblentz file was used to probe Hearst news control from the national level as seen from New York.

Second in importance is the manuscript file of John F. Neylan, which contained more than 2,000 communications to and from Hearst. Between 1919 and 1926 Neylan was publisher of the San Francisco Call, and regional director of West Coast newspapers. In the 1930s he grew in stature to rank directly under Hearst, the Chief's only "no man." The very limited manuscript collection of Fremont Older, editor of the San Francisco Call from 1919 to 1935, will be used with that of Neylan. Older was regarded by his admiring biographer as the greatest editor in the West. Together the Neylan and Older materials were used to probe Hearst news control at the level of the San Francisco market.

The John R. Hastings manuscript collection contained about 500 communications to and from Hearst, and over 100 with other Hearst executives. Hastings supervised and advised editors of Hearst newspapers in Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and Atlanta between 1926 to 1931. In 1929 Boston was added to his supervisory responsibilities. In 1926 he was made a member of the Hearst executive council. The Hastings file, mainly consisting of reports prepared by Hastings, was used to analyze the regional level concerned with his area of responsibility.

Communications from more than a dozen Hearst executives were in the manuscript collections. Included was Arthur Brisbane, who gave major assistance in the early days, making Hearst's papers the popular medium he wanted them to be. Brisbane was a trusted advisor, publisher, and spectacularly successful "Today" columnist, during his long Hearst tenure from 1897 to 1936. There was correspondence with the general managers over Hearst media operations (having overall supervision over newspaper, magazine and radio operations): Frank Knox, 1928-1931, (he ran for vice-president of the United States in 1936 as a Republican); Thomas J. White, 1931-1934; and Harry M. Bitner, 1934-1938. Letters were found from Joseph Willicombe, Hearst's chief secretary and liaison man. Correspondence was there from officials in charge of the newspaper division, magazine division, King Features and wire services, and from regional directors of

various newspapers. The manuscript materials consisted of telegrams, letters, reports, and some newspaper clippings and magazine articles sent to and from Hearst, and other officials.

The question may occur, why study Hearst news control? It would seem that Hearst being during his day the largest chain publisher in the world, with an enormous organization of 31,000 employees in 1935, would make an excellent case study. His organization, of extraordinary size, connected with major national financial, economic, social and political institutions. With multiple levels of organization, and a large management superstructure, Hearst's organization had vertical and horizontal communication flows. Hearst's media empire was at its apex during the 1920s and 1930s. A case can be made that no matter how unusual Hearst was in terms of his personal idiosyncracies, his media organization was responsive to the same kinds of internal and external economic, political, social, management and labor pressures as other media organizations. The large amount of manuscript materials generated by Hearst's organization provide a rich source of material bearing on the news control question.

In order to provide a synopsis of the dissertation that follows, an outline of it is presented here. As has been stated, the approach is to provide three case histories dealing with progressively larger markets: city, regional and national. Some flexibility was required in handling the data, as it did not neatly fit into these market designations. For instance, the Neylan and

Coblentz materials contained city, regional and national material. The Hastings collection had both regional and national materials. The Older collection, however, was confined to the city market.

Chapter I includes: sketch of the institutional news-making process, presented as a news-making map, in which publisher control of news occurs. Construction of an intellectual framework which identifies four explanations of news making: gatekeeping, coorientation, specification of a small number of shaping factors, and news control.

Chapter II includes: inquiry into the origins of Hearst news. Hearst in the popular news fare lineage of James Gordon Bennett, Charles H. Dana, and Joseph Pulitzer. Biographical sketch of Hearst. The context of Hearst's media operations in the 1920s and 1930s.

Chapter III includes: city level, San Francisco market. National Hearst newspaper context in the 1920s; local newspaper context in San Francisco market in the 1920s. Idea of a "Hearst appearance" to his newspapers developed. Relationship of Fremont Older and John Neylan to Hearst discussed. Hearst news control in the areas of news coverage; and, news handling and display.

Chapter IV includes: San Francisco market continued. Discussion of Hearst news control continued in the area of: business, administrative area. Discussion of the reorganization of the San Francisco Call that occurred over a number of years.

Chapter V includes: regional level, mid-Atlantic region. John Hasting's relationship to Hearst, and his role as "emergency editor." Relations among other top executives. Discussion of the Washington Times in the Washington, D.C. market, and the Baltimore News in the Baltimore market.

Chapter VI includes: national level, viewed through the New York American. Edmond Coblenz's relationship to Hearst. Market context and declining fortunes of the American. The tabloid influence as the fourth major contributor in the origins of Hearst news. Hearst news control over the American discussed.

Chapter VII includes: financial tribulations of the Hearst organization and its impact on Hearst news control in the late 1930s. Coblenz relationship with Hearst continued. Hearst news control over his newspapers in general. Hearst's role as didactic newspaper maker and teacher.

Chapter VIII includes: findings of the dissertation summarized. Adequacy of findings and concepts assessed. Comparison of the findings to the four explanations of news making, and the news-making map of chapter 1. The meaning, implications, and general conclusion of the research, and implications for further research.

CHAPTER I

INTELLECTUAL FRAMEWORK

Hearst news control as a concept may be viewed as having three facets: news, control, and Hearst. In order to adequately explicate Hearst news control, each of these facets will be explored. The most basic level the concept operates on is the level of news. That is, how is news produced? In the next few paragraphs a sketch, in the form of a composite map, will be drawn, which provides an overview of the institutional news-making process. The map, however, does not fully constitute an explanation of news-making in the sense of attempting to identify, rank and weight the most important factors.

Various genres of literature do attempt to explain the news-making process. This paper has identified four discrete genres of explanations. The literature of each will be reviewed and assessed. Then the dissertation will identify itself with the explanation that it thinks is the most persuasive: the one of news control. Having considered news, and news control, that will conclude chapter I.

Chapter II will be devoted to the Hearst- and the Hearst-news facets of the Hearst-news-control concept. It will take up the question of Hearst news as a historical subject deriving from the contributions to news for the masses

(i.e. popular news) by James Gordon Bennett and son, Charles A. Dana, and Joseph Pulitzer. Then it will briefly sketch the biography of Hearst, who is historically and personally linked to Hearst news. Finally, the origins of Hearst news will be examined.

The composite map of the institutional process of news-making draws on a variety of literature, and lumps different approaches of analysis together in a synthetic view:

In respect to the general societal structure are a number of inputs that work to shape news including information sources, advertisers (ads), banks (credit), universities (pre-training employees, in a fashion "adapted to industrial need"),¹ availability of physical supplies, and the legal framework. Between the newspaper and its sources is the zone of inter-organizational relationships. It includes official machinery for placing events and data by putting names and scores on them (Lippmann), bargaining games (Sigal), technology, and social structure (Roshco), press agents (Lippmann), and police, political and other routines (Tuchman).² In this zone, the wire services and New York newspapers operate to produce standardization (Breed), and so does the need to produce identifiably national news (Epstein).³

Within the newspaper opens up the domain of intra-organizational relationships, which include the shapers of bargaining games, budget, and forces (Sigal, and Epstein),⁴

elements to produce social control in the newsroom (Breed, and Garvey),⁵ reporters and editors who act as gatekeepers (Rosten, and White),⁶ value conflicts, and attempts by publishers to control news content (Stark, and Bowers),⁷ and personalities and interpersonal relationships that affect institutional health (Talese, and Argyris).⁸ Other factors include the ritual of objectivity (Tuchman), the newsman's role, (Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman), and the intellectual categories of news (Tuchman).⁹

The finished product is distributed to its audience, composed of the general public, and the specialized audience of banks, advertisers and sources who have a vested interest in the news. Audience factors shaping news include the need to be entertaining, the need to maintain a large audience and whether the audience is increasing or decreasing (Bordewich).¹⁰ Demographic factors shaping news require newspapers to appeal to various audience segments. In recent years, this has resulted in the production of life-style, leisure, recreation, teen, and other, mainly consumption-oriented sections.

From this discussion it may be generalized that news is a social feedback, in the sense that newspapers provide a cognitive map of the social scene to their audience. Viewing the audience (society) as the starting point, we thus see a flow of information from the newspaper back to their audience. Another flow of feedback comes from the audience, reacting to the paper's contents, to the newspaper. This provides a return arc of feedback, placing the

newspaper in a circular flow of information, connecting directly or indirectly with the leading institutions of society.

This map of news-making plots news as a product of an interplay of actions, routines, forces, stages, factors, pressures and feedback. News is viewed as the culminating product of these processes which operate both within the newspaper plant, outside the plant, and between people, groups and institutions. What is needed to highlight the personal factor in the map is to project it into historical time. That connects the map with the leading editors and reporters who have made personal contributions to news and news handling.

Several different approaches have been taken by researchers analyzing the institutional process of news making. Four genres of literature will be discussed here: Gatekeeping, Coorientation, Specification of a Small Number of Shaping Factors, and News Control. Each approach, by adopting certain premises which guide research and data collection, does not provide comprehensive understanding. Despite their limitations the approaches vie for readers' favor as the most plausible of explanations.

Gatekeeping: Kurt Lewin formulated the theoretical basis for such studies on the basis of analogies to water in a dam moving through a sluice gate, or groceries in a store moving through a check-stand. The concept was that of a guardian regulating amounts of an undifferentiated substance as it moved through a channel past a cutoff gate. As adapted for newsroom studies, the

concept became one of controlling flows of news, say wire copy, by a wire editor, the "gatekeeper."¹¹ As gatekeeper research expanded through the 1950s and 1960s the concept of the gatekeeper developed into one who can not only select or reject news items, but edit, color and change them.¹²

The literature on gatekeeping is abundant. The studies focus generally on the role or behaviors of one actor in the newsroom, or news process. Discussed here are mechanical, reporter and editor studies.

Scott Cutlip's classificatory study of news channel technology found that the effect of introducing a teletypesetter was that Wisconsin and Indiana newspapers used more wire (AP) news and less local copy.¹³ In his pioneering study of Washington correspondents, Leo Rosten demonstrated that they possessed stratagems for eluding publisher control.¹⁴ A classificatory study by David Grey suggested the importance of role interaction among Supreme Court reporters, as a means of keeping abreast of the competition, and of obtaining the approved slant to their stories.¹⁵

In a reporter role study, Walter Gieber found that negative editorial policy (i.e., lack of direction, passivity, lack of rewards, heavy work loads, lack of space and too much caution) constrained reporters to lose interest in gathering more than routine information in civil rights stories.¹⁶ David White's seminal study of a wire editor found that although the editor made

most of his choices according to objective policy, perhaps as many as ten percent of them were motivated by or tinged with subjective opinion.¹⁷

The major contribution of gatekeeper studies has been to provide useful information on the boundaries and latitudes of the roles of reporters and editors. The studies focus on designated key individuals, editors and reporters, and observe their behavior. Gatekeeping studies are more concerned with news handling, refining, fashioning and shaping than with how news is made. As part of the news-making process, gatekeepers generally are revealed to be instructed employees, who exercise personal discretion, not on the major substance of the news, but on the margins of the news product, or of news categories. The narrow focus of the studies, leaving out other important factors, which other more comprehensive explanations include, make gatekeeping inadequate as an explanation of news making.

Coorientation: As formulated by Steven Chaffee and Jack McLeod, the coorientation concept attempts to measure the communication interactions between pairs of individuals in an attempt to assess the degree of communication between them. The concept accepts that each individual knows what he thinks, and has some estimate of what the other person thinks. By comparing cognitions with cognitions or with opinions, three measurements of communication are fashioned: agreement, accuracy and congruency.¹⁸

Popovich's cororientation study (1978) was made in response to a need articulated by Ben Bagdikian for a newsroom study that would assess social perceptions and role interactions between owners, publishers, editors, and reporters. This would help to overcome the limitation of monadic studies, such as the gatekeeping ones, that focus on just one person.

What Popovich actually tested were editor and publisher preferences on environment stories at 12 Indiana newspapers. He found that reporters and editors thought they agreed, but actually did not. Reporters acted independently of editors. Editors and publishers thought they disagreed, but actually did agree. Editors were found to be the real role players in the newsroom. They overestimated their knowledge of reporters, and underestimated their knowledge of publishers. There was a consensus between editors and publishers. Reporters were not part of the decision-making process.¹⁹

The cororientation approach of looking at role interactions between reporters, editors and publishers is a promising research advance over the monadic (single role) gatekeeper studies. Both genres of research keep the focus in the newsroom. Mainly they are focused on news-handling, and interactive news-handling perceptions. Neither attempts to be a comprehensive explanation of news-making, and it would be unfair to judge it as such.

Small Number of Shaping Factors: This explanation of news-making is plausible, attractive both because of its

explanatory power, and its intent of being comprehensive. The concept is one of selecting from all the possible factors that account for news-making (many of which are listed in the cognitive map of news-making on pages 10 through 12) a few of the most powerful factors. This small set of factors is presented as largely accounting for the news-making process.

Sigal in Reporters and Officials (1973), and Epstein in News from Nowhere (1973), presented explanations of news-making based on a small number of shaping factors. Epstein wrote about television news, and Sigal about print. Taken individually their long textual discussions of news, and their brief explanations of the news-making process are persuasive. Sigal's explanation of the news-making process occurs in the first few pages of his book, while Epstein's explanation appears in the last few pages of his work.

Their theses are similar. Sigal's is that organizational processes and bureaucratic politics account for much of news content. Epstein's is that television news is largely--but not entirely--performed and shaped by organizational considerations.²⁰

Where Sigal and Epstein respectively look to develop their lists of shaping factors are so different as to affect materially the list of shaping factors they present as accounting for news. They illustrate the truism that what you see depends on where you look. Sigal is interested in the press-government relationship, how the institution of the press relates to the institution of

government. Epstein's interest is in the internal process of newsmaking of a television network, and its relations with its affiliate stations.

Under the heading of organizational process, Sigal lists these news-shaping factors: choices, decisions, corporate consensus factors, audience, news sources, journalists' creed, journalists' conventions, and reporter as organization man. Under the rubric of bureaucratic politics, he mentions four bargaining games that relate to dyadic relations between newsmen, and sources.²¹

By comparison, Epstein mentions under the label of organizational requisites these news-shaping factors: the budget, need to maintain a large audience, the affiliate requirement to produce identifiably national news, and outside standards of fairness imposed by the Federal Communications Commission. Two other miscellaneous shaping factors, which do not fit in the above category, Epstein mentions as: personal opinions of newsmen, and reports appearing in other media.²²

It is of interest that neither constructs a coherent body of explanation. Each has a series of major factors, with something else added on that helps explain news making. But it is not clear how that something else connects to the major part of the explanation. The two studies poorly corroborate each other. Discrepant labels add to the difficulty of comparing their shaping factors. The two factors that they both agree shape news are the audience, and the idea of ethics.²³

Neither Sigal's nor Epstein's explanations indicated that news was responsive to news control from top management. This may have had something to do with their respective observational vantage points. Epstein, who made more attempts to interrelate his shaping factors, and perhaps tilted toward budgetary constraints as his leading one, viewed the newsroom, middle management, editorial conferences, and obtained memoranda and records. Sigal's observations were limited to the newsroom and middle management. Difference in observational vantage points probably also accounted for part of the difficulty of the studies not corroborating each other.

The selection of a small number of shaping factors contributes to understanding as an explanation by identifying and weighting the most important factors, and by being easy to grasp. The fact that Sigal's and Epstein's selection of news-making factors are mostly inconsistent presents a challenge for further research. In order to expect to substantiate the findings of either the Epstein or Sigal study, researchers will have to replicate it much more closely in intent and focus of study than either Sigal or Epstein replicate each other.

News Control: The news control concept accepts that many factors shape news (as shown in the composite map of the news-making process) but stresses news control as the central factor around which the other factors are organized. A key structural element is that the newspaper is organized as a graded

hierarchy with information flows converging on the publisher. (The word publisher here means the high command of the newspaper, a role that is usually occupied by the publisher, but may be occupied by the owner.) From the publisher directives flow downward through successive stages of the hierarchy: the editors, department managers, editors, subeditors, bureaus, reporters and workers.

The publisher in theory has the power to make rules, policy and decisions, the power to implement decisions, information that affords him oversight of operations, and the power to interpret rules. If any publisher had all these powers, in relation to his corporation, he would be vested with chief executive, congressional, supreme court and police-type vestments of authority. In practice, no owner of a metropolitan newspaper in the United States ever had all these powers in undiluted form.

The very news-making process, in which news control is embedded checks publisher's news control in a number of ways: credit has to be obtained from banks, advertisers and audiences have to be maintained and pleased, unions have to be negotiated with, and laws have to be obeyed. Professional associations intrude with their codes of ethics, key subordinates use various devices to carve out their own niches, orders are ignored, diluted or misunderstood, and political views clash with policies.

The publisher, however, has a number of instruments at hand with which he can strive to maintain news control. They include oral and written directives, holding periodic conferences, issuing

policy guidance, authority over news policy and editorial policy, and supervising through loyal managerial agents. He can hire, fire, blacklist, promote, assign jobs, increase and decrease salaries, give praise, offer awards, and have dissidents relegated to the obituary mill. The publisher has control over regular edition schedules, authority over publication of special sections, budget power, and control over extraordinary and ordinary expenditures. Subtler forms of news control, not necessarily related to publisher control include Warren Breed's factor of socialization to group norms, and C. Wright Mills factor mentioned in White Collar (1951) of managerial internalization of owner's values.

The news control literature, for the purpose of discussion, is divided into two groups: popular literature and careful academic studies. The popular literature mostly consists of indictments of the press. Irrefutable cases and research, and brutal honesty are mixed with excesses of opinion and unwarranted inferences. Although there is much that is valuable in the popular literature, from the scholar's point of view, perhaps its greatest weakness is its neglect of documenting news control in a systematic manner.

Sinclair's Brass Check (1920) attacked the established press for distorting news about the muckrakers, socialists, divorced authors, Russia and the cause of labor. He criticized the press for not representing the broad public interest, but rather the private interests of "vested wealth." As a maligned utopian

socialist and muckraker, Sinclair was able to document his book with many personal examples of how he was burlesqued by major papers.²⁴

The 1930s, with its polarized political climate, witnessed a number of polemical attacks on the established press that was opposed to the Roosevelt social and economic reconstruction. Ferdinand Lundberg's well-researched Imperial Hearst (1936) slashed into Hearst, accusing him of continuously deceiving the American people, of disseminating falsified facts about foreign countries, and of anti-progressive stances on various legislative issues.²⁵

George Seldes's Lords of the Press (1938) critiqued more than a score of wealthy and powerful publishers. He accused Hearst of being "the number one public enemy" in regard to news control, of distortion and of being anti-libertarian.²⁶ Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes's America's House of Lords (1939) reviewed economic concentration in the newspaper industry. He scored the Chicago Tribune for backing "the wealthy forces of reaction," and for being "anti-social." It was typical, he said, that profit-oriented publishers of the moneyed class produced newspapers with unsocial attitudes.²⁷

In his biography of Joseph Pulitzer, W. A. Swanberg states that "no one was indispensable but the boss"--Pulitzer. He kept his editors and business managers subordinate by summarily demoting them, by giving them overlapping authority, and by setting up a system of office espionage reporting to himself. Pulitzer's

passion for control extended from unmortgaged ownership of his World building to, somewhat feudally, his employees.²⁸

Swanberg's books on Hearst and Henry R. Luce, of Time Inc., rely on overstatement, rather than a judicious weighing of evidence, to indict their subjects. Describing Luce as a master propagandist, Swanberg refers to the "Luce program of brainwashing."²⁹ Swanberg glibly characterizes Hearst as the one who had the ideas, called the tune, and ran the show.³⁰

The second strain of news control literature consists of studies published in scholarly journals or as dissertations. Each of the studies looked at different areas, but each found evidence of owner or publisher control over news.

One of the first of these studies was performed by Charles Swanson in 1949. On the basis of studying one Midwestern daily, he found clear evidence of a hiring policy to create a homogeneous staff. But he did not focus strongly on the question of owner control, and he concluded that owner control over news was "relative."³¹

Breed's 1955 pioneering study was based on the two-part theory that: first, policy is set by the publisher, and second, it is "usually followed by the staff." He describes policy as "the more or less consistent orientation shown by a paper . . . concerning selected issues and events." His finding is that the staff largely, though not always, does conform to policy through a process of being socialized to group norms.³²

In 1971 Garvey produced a combined quantitative and impressionistic study that tested Breed's two-part theory. He reported that his findings in general upheld Breed's theory: "the staff does absorb policy and converts that policy into content."³³ Of the three television stations he studied, one station upheld the theory well, but at the other two the results were not always consistent.

An important finding for this dissertation emerging from these two studies, was that top management made it difficult for researchers to find out if it controls news, by avoiding compliance with researchers. Breed was able to interview only four publishers at the 18 newspapers he visited when he wrote his dissertation.³⁴ Garvey was only able to get three of the 24 television stations he queried to participate in his study. He noted several stations agreed to cooperate "if the station manager did not have to take part." Garvey thought that station managers did not want any evidence disclosed of management manipulation of news because it might jeopardize their attempt to renew the station license with the FCC.³⁵

Apparently from the vantage of eye-witness participant in a tension-ridden metropolitan newsroom, Stark (1962) presented an analysis of social roles and values in conflict. His study of the San Francisco Chronicle depicted the values of professional newsmen ("pros") struggling against the policy dictates of management. Although the "pros" were able to successfully evade policy, Stark

conceded that they sought solace in alcohol, in simulating that their real work was free-lancing, and that all of them eventually quit. He stated that management could and did enforce policy by firings, putting reporters on the obituary mill, giving them distasteful assignments and blacklisting former employees.³⁶

Donohew found that publisher's influence was the biggest force in the news channel, in a state study of 17 afternoon Kentucky papers, utilizing content analysis, and attitude and opinion measurement. He found a .73 correlation between the newspapers coverage of Medicare (the issue he selected to study), and the publisher's attitude toward it. This was significant at the .01 level.³⁷

A final study pointing to publisher influence was conducted by Bowers in a nationwide survey of afternoon daily newspapers, in which 44 percent, or 613 newspapers, returned the questionnaires sent to them. Bowers reported that publishers were active in directing local news at 11 percent of the papers, a figure that might be overly modest in view of the 56 percent nonresponse rate to the questionnaire. The other areas the publishers were reported to be most active in influencing news were: matters possibly affecting revenues, areas involving the publisher or his concerns, and in the area of news display and content.³⁸

The evidence of the Swanson, Breed, Garvey, Stark, Donohew and Bowers studies indicates some owner or publisher control over news. Breed's and Garvey's studies both support the hypothesis that the

owner or publisher sets policy and that it is usually followed by staff. Garvey found control showing up in news content. But the Stark and Swanson studies make clear that owner control has to contend with countervailing forces flowing from the newsroom. Bowers brings out that owner control is selective as to type of news. Garvey and Bowers point out that owner control varies among media units. The variability of ownership control as a phenomenon, and the specific instances of where it was found, provide caveats for researchers into the news control topic, as well as pointers of where to look for examples of control.

As an explanation of the news-making process the news control explanation is compelling on the grounds that it is simple and coherent. The concept of owner control inherently puts the owner in contact with a wide range of institutional news-making factors that operate both within and outside the newspaper plant. Among them are banks, advertising, the legal system, (all outside), bargaining games, budgets, and interpersonal considerations (all inside). News control is buttressed by an impressive array of popular and scholarly literature, which agrees on the central concept of news control, although it differs on the degree on control.

This paper's alignment with the news control explanation is warranted from two points of view. One, there is a vacuum of knowledge about what actually occurs at the topmost level of management. Second, Hearst lends himself to a news control explanation.

Whether Hearst exercised news control is a subject about which the secondary literature is not entirely consistent. Most authors do, however, accuse him in a generalized manner of news control, distortion or propaganda. Seldes and Lundberg accuse Hearst of news control, but Seldes put Hearst into the context of being the worst offender of a whole class of reactionary, moneyed owners. The 1935 Fortune article on Hearst said he was the editor-in-chief of all his newspapers, and that there was "no true delegation of power down the editorial line."³⁹

At the time of Hearst's death, A. J. Liebling wrote that 'The Chief' wielded an iron hand over all his employees, treating them with utter cynicism, if not contempt.⁴⁰ At times Swanberg suggests strong Hearstian ownership control by referring to his papers being used for years as "unblushing personal publicity organs for Hearst," and referring to overpaid executives "groveling." But these suggestions are undercut by statements that some of Hearst's executives wielded enormous influence.⁴¹ Harry M. Bitner, five years general manager of Hearst newspapers, wrote that Hearst gave his editors leeway in local and state policies, but "handled personally all editorials on national and international policy."⁴²

By way of concluding, this chapter has constructed an analytic framework for the purpose of probing Hearst news control. A generalized news-making map was developed, which provided an overview of the news-making process. Then four news-making explanations

were examined, with the paper aligning itself with the news control explanation. In chapter II the historical context of Hearst news control will be explored.

NOTES

¹John Kenneth Galbraith's discussion of the pervasiveness of industry's values is thought provoking, The New Industrial State (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1968), p. 405.

²Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual," American Journal of Sociology 77 (1971):660-70. Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York: Macmillan, 1922); Leon Sigal, Reporters and Officials (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1973); Bernard Roshco, Newsmaking (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

³Warren Breed, "Newspaper 'Opinion Leaders' and Processes of Standardization," Journalism Quarterly 32 (1955):277-84; Edward J. Epstein, News From Nowhere (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

⁴Sigal; Epstein, op cit.

⁵Warren Breed, "Social Control in the Newsroom," Social Forces 33 (1955:326-335; Daniel E. Garvey, Jr., "Social Control in the Television Newsroom," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford, 1971, 434 pages.

⁶Leo Rosten, The Washington Correspondents (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1937); David M. White, "The 'Gatekeeper,'" Journalism Quarterly, 27 (1950):383-90.

⁷Rodney W. Stark, "Policy and the Pros," Berkeley Journal of Sociology, vol. 7 (1962): pp. 11-31; David R. Bowers, "A Report on Activity by Publishers in Directing Newsroom Decisions," Journalism Quarterly 44:1 (Spring, 1967) pp. 43-52.

⁸Gay Talese, Kingdom and the Power (New York: World, 1969), 555 pages; Chris Argyris, Behind the Front Page (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974), 305 pages.

⁹Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman, "The Professional Values of American Newsmen," Public Opinion Quarterly 36 (1972-73):522-40; Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual," op. cit.; Tuchman, "Making News by Doing Work: Routinizing the Unexpected," American Journal of Sociology 79:110-30.

¹⁰Fergus M. Bordewich, "Supermarketing the News," Columbia Journalism Review, Sept.-Oct., 1977.

¹¹Lewin, Kurt, "Channels of Group Life," Human Relations, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1947):145-6.

¹²John T. McNelly, "Intermediary Communicators in the International Flow of News," Journalism Quarterly 36 (1959):26.

¹³Scott M. Cutlip, "Content Flow of AP News from Trunk to TTS to Reader," Journalism Quarterly 31 (1954):446.

¹⁴Rosten, op. cit.

¹⁵David L. Grey, "Decision-Making by a Reporter Under Deadline Pressure," Journalism Quarterly 43 (1966):427.

¹⁶Walter Gieber, "How the 'Gatekeepers' View Local Civil Liberties News," Journalism Quarterly 37 (1960):205.

¹⁷White, op. cit., see table two, p. 386.

¹⁸Steven Chaffee and Jack McLeod, "Sensitization in Panel Design: A Coorientational Experiment," Journalism Quarterly 45:662, 661-9. (An earlier version of Chaffee and McLeod's coorientation model, based on T. M. Newcomb's ABX paradigm, incorporated Richard Carter's stipulation of salience and pertinence in attitude change.)

¹⁹Mark Popovich, "Coorientation in the Newsroom: An Analysis of the News Preferences of Reporters, Editors, and Publishers," presented to the Association of Education in Journalism Annual Convention, Seattle, Washington, Aug., 1978, pp. 28-30.

²⁰Sigal, op. cit., p. 5; Epstein, op. cit., p. 258.

²¹Sigal, *ibid.*, pp. 2-5.

²²Epstein, *ibid.*, pp. 259-65.

²³The idea that Sigal and Epstein agree in the area of ethics being a news shaping factor comes from equating Sigal's factor of journalists' creed, with Epstein's factor of outside standards of fairness imposed by the FCC.

²⁴Upton Sinclair, The Brass Check (Pasadena: by the author, 1920), p. 125, and *passim*.

²⁵Ferdinand Lundberg, Imperial Hearst (New York: Equinox Cooperative Press, 1936), pp. 381, 245, 166 and 196.

²⁶George Seldes, Lords of the Press (New York: Julian Messner, Inc. 1938), pp. 228, 236.

²⁷Harold L. Ickes, America's House of Lords (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1939), pp. 55 and viii of the preface.

²⁸W. A. Swanberg, Pulitzer (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1967), pp. 152, 165, 168, 169.

²⁹W. A. Swanberg, Luce and His Empire (New York: Dell, 1972), pp. 537-42.

³⁰W. A. Swanberg, Citizen Hearst (New York: Scribner's, 1971), p. 85.

³¹Charles E. Swanson, "Midcity Daily," Journalism Quarterly 26 (1949): pp. 22, 28.

³²Breed, op. cit., pp. 326-7, 334-5.

³³Garvey, op. cit., p. 395.

³⁴Warren Breed, "The Newspaper, News and Society," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1952; pp. 68, 427.

³⁵Garvey, op. cit., pp. 5, 15.

³⁶Stark, op. cit., pp. 27-9.

³⁷Lewis Donohew, "Newspaper Gatekeepers and Forces in the News Channel," Public Opinion Quarterly 31 (1967):67; Garvey, op. cit., p. 29, states that this correlation is significant at the .99 level, but he most probably means at the .01 level.

³⁸Bowers, op. cit., 43-52.

³⁹"Hearst," Fortune 12 (Oct., 1935):146.

⁴⁰A. J. Liebling, "The Man Who Changed the Rules," New Yorker 27 (Sept. 8, 1951):64.

⁴¹Swanberg, op. cit., pp. 416-18.

⁴²Harry M. Bitner, "Hearst was Last of Great Individualists," Editor and Publisher 84 (Aug. 18, 1951):13.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Another intellectual perspective in which to view Hearst news control is history. Indeed, as a subject imprisoned by time and place, an examination of Hearst news control that omitted the historical dimension would be negligent. Under scrutiny here will be the historical origins of Hearst news. The origins of his news will be discussed from the points of view of what could be learned from secondary sources, manuscript materials, and Hearst's early days in newspapering.

Since Hearst's personality and works underlie the question of news control, his biography will be reviewed in terms of: his early years, education, politics, avocations, and a survey of his media organization. Finally Hearst journalism is projected against mainstream publishing of the 1920s and 1930s. Hearst is placed as the leading chain publisher within the mainstream of American daily newspaper publishing.

In a historical sense, the origins of Hearst news can be found in that lineage of newspaper owners including James Gordon Bennett and son, Charles A. Dana and Joseph Pulitzer. Each contributed something vital to the art of making newspapers for the masses. Briefly, the Bennetts contributed to news

enterprise, Dana to news handling and the news concept, and Pulitzer to sensational news play and aggressive public service.

Until Bennett started the New York Herald in 1835, journalism was personal and paid small attention to the affairs of life. The papers of the early 1800s, as exemplified by the New York city circulation leaders of the New York Evening Post, the Mercantile Advertiser and Daily Gazette were spokesman for political parties or the better commercial interests. They were narrow-focused, conservative, dull and priced beyond the means of the average workingmen. It was not until the advent of the popular "penny press" of the 1830s that newspapers began to appeal to the working class, including semi-literate immigrants and callous-hand laborers. Bennett was a leader in broadening the news fare of penny papers to attain a popular appeal.¹

According to E. L. Godkin, Bennett demonstrated ". . . wonderful enterprise in collecting news from all parts of the world. . . ." The Bennetts expanded the number of departments of news in newspapers, seized advantage of technological developments, and enlarged the net of newsgathering. The elder Bennett started the first accounts of society news, had excellent shipping news, innovated coverage of annual meetings of religious societies, was a leader in woodcut illustrations, added to sports coverage, and titillated readership with salacious crime coverage. He was the first to establish a bureau of correspondents in

Washington, D.C., and to provide a column of reliable Wall Street news.²

The Bennetts rapidly seized on the advantages to news gathering of steamships, express mail, the telegraph, pony express, chartered trains, the trans-Atlantic cable and Marconi's wireless. Bennett, Jr. encouraged Lee J. De Forest in his efforts at radio development. The Herald demonstrated outstanding news enterprise during the Mexican and Civil Wars. The Bennett's desire to be first with big news from all parts of the world led to the financing of numerous expeditions, including ones to the pole, and Stanley's search for Dr. Livingstone in Africa. Although the paper's news enterprise was so outstanding as to make it world circulation and revenue leader, its editorial page was not strong.³

After working for Horace Greeley's New York Tribune from 1847 to 1862, part of that time as managing editor, Charles A. Dana and his associates bought the New York Sun in 1868. Dana was then 49 and the Sun had a circulation of between 50,000 and 60,000. Under Dana's direction the Sun's circulation gradually rose to 120,000 by 1875. Dana's news formula was to get all the news, condense it into the smallest readable space, and add flavorful literary matter, all within the compass of four pages daily. The appeal of the Sun was to intelligence, humorous spirit, and human interest of man, rather than to crude emotions. The paper rarely

used illustrations and its headlines were to the last degree conservative.⁴

Dana pioneered in moving away from the English writing style in the London Times as a model. With the advent of the Atlantic cable of 1866 briefer more telegraphic reports were indicated. Dana made the Sun a model of brief, bright, condensed, pithy and brilliant news writing. The Sun's encouragement of the submission of fiction gave it a more intimate association with literature than any other American newspaper. Dana's emphasis on human-interest entertainment in the news had a lasting effect on journalism. Less noteworthy was the paper's erratic editorial page, which cost it circulation.⁵

Joseph Pulitzer's purchase of the New York World in 1883 marked a new epoch in American journalism. Within two years of taking over the struggling paper with a circulation of 15,700 Pulitzer had boosted it to 150,000, putting the World in the forefront of national journalism. By 1886 circulation reached 250,000, largest ever in America, and a silver commemorative medal was struck. Pulitzer revived the aggressive editorial page leadership of Horace Greeley, the sensational treatment of news common to the first penny papers, and he added crusades in behalf of the public, which was new in American journalism. The World was first to add colored "comics," and a colored supplement to its Sunday edition.⁶

Pulitzer's news formula required news that was original, distinctive and thrilling. He wanted a big feature, public service, or crusade story each day. The paper was to appeal to all classes, but particularly to semi-literate immigrants. He demanded intelligent terseness, and above all, accuracy. Pulitzer carried forward the techniques of journalistic illustration, sensationalism and aggressive news gathering. Streamer headlines and lead sentence story construction did not appear until the 1890s. The Spanish-American War was the occasion of unprecedented pyrotechnics in typography and illustration. To the extent that other papers imitated the more gruesome aspects of Pulitzer's sensationalism, he exercised an unhealthy influence on journalism.⁷

The placement of Hearst in the lineage of popular editors stretching back to the penny press owes to the popular character of Hearst news. Hearst enjoined his editors, "Don't high-hat the public."⁸ When Hearst started producing popular news in 1887, his product reflected the state of the art at that time, which was largely a product of the innovations and contributions of Bennett, Dana, and Pulitzer.

Men who became immediately influential in the Hearst organization had worked for Bennett, Dana and Pulitzer. Sam Chamberlain, who helped make a success of the San Francisco Examiner when he took over as managing editor in 1888, had been editor of Bennett's Paris Herald, and had also worked for

Pulitzer. Solomon S. Carvalho and Arthur Brisbane, who helped make Hearst's New York Journal take off, had performed in key roles for Dana and Pulitzer. Carvalho had been a star reporter for Dana, and business manager and publisher for Pulitzer. Brisbane rose to managing editor of the Sun, was chief editorial writer for Pulitzer, and editor of his Sunday World. Ballard Smith, who had been lured away from the New York Herald to be managing editor of the World, trained Hearst when he worked on the World in 1886, but declined to take over the news department of the San Francisco Examiner for Hearst in 1887.⁹

Placing Hearst in the lineage of popular editors also owes to remarks Hearst made over the years in regard to news values. After 25 years in the business Hearst made a comment reminiscent of Bennett's insistence on thorough news coverage:

Print all the news. Get all the news into your office and see that it gets into the paper. Condense it if necessary. Frequently it is better when intelligently condensed--BUT GET IT IN.¹⁰

Between 1924 and 1936 Hearst offered his editors a number of directives that cite Dana, or are reminiscent of Dana's news values. During this period Hearst was concerned about the inroads that tabloids were making into the circulations of his standard-size dailies. As advertising shrank due to the impact of the economic depression of 1929, Hearst wanted his papers condensed so as to save newsprint.

It is my opinion that the majority of your readers read all the headlines in a paper to get a digest of the news, and that these readers then pick out the

comparatively few articles in which they are especially interested and read these few articles through.

Hence the importance of making your headlines informative summaries of the news. Remember Charles A. Dana's statement that the headlines of a newspaper should answer the question--

"What is the news?"¹¹

In a letter full of news handling instructions to Edmond Coblentz, who from 1927 to 1937 was managing editor and publisher at Hearst's New York American, was this passage:

And have a condensed newspaper. Furthermore, throughout the other pages of the paper CONDENSE, CONDENSE, CONDENSE. Try to make a paper like the old New York Sun, which told all the news in a very few pages very briefly and very brightly.

Try to have everything entertainingly written and try to have the headlines as clever and as entertaining as possible as well as adequately informative.¹²

In another letter to Coblentz, that shows Hearst's concern with the growing circulation of the tabloids, he wrote:

Please try my plan of short paper and see how it works. The old Sun under Dana never had any jumps or turns from first page. Dana thought anything could be told in a column and told it, and his Sun is still remembered as a triumph of journalism. . . .

Please look at the tabloids and try to interpret their success. Certainly the Mirror is no better in many ways than the American but it has twice your circulation and is growing tremendously.

The size may have something to do with it but naturally not much.

The briefness and brightness are responsible for the progress of these papers.

The small page compels briefness, but there is no reason why the standard paper should not be equally brief and equally bright if their editors will only realize that this is what the public wants.¹³

Again in 1936 Hearst instructed Coblentz with the Dana brief-and-bright idea:

Make a brief and bright paper and keep it ever briefer and brighter.

. . . People have not time for long stories. Take the trouble to be brief.¹⁴

The debt owed by Hearst to Pulitzer for the origins of his news is heavier than to any other source. In early 1885, the last year Hearst was at Harvard, he wrote his father an enthusiastic letter in regard to his interest in his father's newspaper, the San Francisco Examiner, and his desire to try his hand at journalism. Mentioning that he has been engaged in journalistic investigation, the only paper Hearst cites as being worthy of emulation is Pulitzer's World:

. . . it would be well to make the paper (San Francisco Examiner) as far as possible original, to clip only when absolutely necessary and to imitate only some such leading journal as the New York World which is undoubtedly the best paper of that class to which the Examiner belongs--that class which appeals to the people and which depends for its success upon enterprise, energy and a certain startling originality and not upon the wisdom of its political opinions or the lofty style of its editorials: And to accomplish this we must have--as the World has--active, intelligent and energetic young men.¹⁵

When Hearst was upbraiding John Neylan, publisher of the San Francisco Call in 1925, on the paper's shortcomings, in an effort to improve the paper, he again referred to Pulitzer:

Mr. Pulitzer used to say that the World never grew so fast as when it was beaten every day on the news. Of course he did not mean BECAUSE it was beaten every day on the news, but because it had a quality of interest and readability which was even more important than the spot news in making circulation.¹⁶

When the focus is shifted from a long-range historical perspective that examines linkages between significant contributors to popular news, to a close-up focus on Hearst's early days in journalism additional facts emerge as to the origins of Hearst news. The facts emerging from a close-up focus on Hearst's early days in newspapers do not contradict those of the long-range focus. Rather they supplement them by adding detail, color and knowledge that washes out in a more summary treatment.

In a biographical sense the origins of Hearst news can be traced to Hearst's attendance at Harvard between 1882 and 1885. Hearst did not learn journalism from books and classrooms, as Harvard did not have a journalism program, but rather from people and experience. During his sophomore year of 1883-1884 Hearst's friend, Eugene Lent, the business manager of the college humor magazine, the Lampoon, asked him to help him out.¹⁷

Hearst took over the job as business manager and put the magazine on a sound financial footing for the first time in years, by organizing a vigorous advertising campaign of local merchants, and by soliciting alumni for donations. With his interest in journalism whetted by this experience, Hearst began examining his father's San Francisco Examiner (which he thought badly edited), and the Boston and New York dailies. Hearst obtained a letter of introduction to Colonel Charles Taylor, owner of the Boston Globe, and visited the Globe repeatedly to study it from city room to press room.¹⁸

Of the New York papers, Hearst studied the declining but witty Sun, Bennett's news-enterprising Herald, the conservative Tribune, Godkin's scholarly and authoritative Evening Post, and above all the sensational, crusading World. Hearst remarked to his college friends that Pulitzer was running the best paper in the country: "I have been studying his methods and I think I have caught on to what he is trying to do." By early 1885 Hearst had formed a plan of taking over his father's San Francisco Examiner, and stated to his father his interest in journalism as a profession: "I am convinced that I could run a newspaper successfully."¹⁹

After being expelled from Harvard as an incorrigible prankster at Christmas 1885, Hearst went to New York and got a job on the World so as to study and catalogue its methods at first hand. Hearst did not meet the ailing Joseph Pulitzer, but he conceived a high admiration for Ballard Smith, a senior editor. Hearst noted Smith's tactic of flooding big stories with a horde of reporters, and the World's attempt to come up with a big feature, sensation or crusade story every day. The World's drive for public donations to pay for a foundation for the Statue of Liberty impressed Hearst with the press's power for public service.²⁰

About the time George Hearst was to become United States Senator, he reluctantly consented to let his son William take over the San Francisco Examiner. In mid-February, 1887, the

23-year-old William arrived in San Francisco with his bound volumes of the New York World, and his ambition to be the "Pulitzer of the West." He arrived in San Francisco without Ballard Smith, who refused to become editor of the Examiner, advising Hearst:

". . . You understand the work pretty well. Be your own editor."

The Examiner William took over in March, 1887, had been acquired by his father for a bad debt in 1880 for the purpose of advancing his political ambitions within the Democratic party. At a loss of about \$300,000 over seven years the paper's circulation had increased from about 8,000 to almost 24,000. The paper had frankly been the leading Democratic Party political organ under George Hearst's editors. When William took over he took steps to broaden its political appeal.²¹

An essential element in the origins of Hearst's San Francisco news was the expenditure of large amounts of money. After one year, he had succeeded in raising the circulation to 40,000 after losing \$300,000. At the end of a second year, circulation was around 55,000 with a total loss of \$750,000. After these huge expenditures, the paper was then paying.²²

The money was spent on new presses. There was lavish expenditures to build up the best staff west of the Rockies. More national and international items from the New York Herald news service were used to give a more cosmopolitan note to the Examiner. Money was spent to enlarge the paper from four to eight pages, on news stunts and features, to hire special trains, to

advertise the paper, and on promotion gimmicks. One time Hearst rented a tug to rescue stranded mariners, another time a reporter was dispatched to interview outlaws in their mountain cave hideaway, and others were sent on a foray to capture a live grizzly bear.²³

A staff of recruited stars, including columnist Ambrose Bierce, sob-sister Winifred Black and cartoonist Homer Davenport, turned out "the latest and most original sensations." Sam Chamberlain, lured from New York, was credited with the success of the Examiner in an equal degree to Hearst. His Paris experience taught him what it took to amaze, stupefy and startle the public. Arthur McEwen, enticed from a San Francisco paper, laid down the editorial policy as seeking a reader reaction of: gee whiz!, Holy Moses!, and gosh almighty! Allen Kelly, brought out from Dana's New York Sun to be city editor, had to be transferred over to features, as he could not tolerate Hearst's slanting of the news. In all, over a dozen public interest crusades were started in the first year. Of real importance were the drive to defeat a mischievous new city charter, the fight for lower water rates, and continuation of the struggle against the predatory power of the Southern Pacific railroad.²⁴

When Hearst bought the New York Journal for \$180,000 in 1895, and invaded Pulitzer's territory, many of the same elements were present in his news formula. He spent lavish amounts of money; an estimated \$10 million was spent before the Journal was put on a

paying basis. He followed the policy of hiring established stars. In this case that meant pirating the key men of Pulitzer's New York World. They included Solomon Carvalho, publisher, Arthur Brisbane, editorial writer and sensationalizing editor; Morrill Goddard, sensationalizer of the Sunday World; Richard Farrelly, city editor; Dick Outcault, a cartoonist who contributed to the creation of "yellow journalism"; Rudolph Block, a brilliant art director; and other lesser luminaries. Important editorial personnel were recruited from other major New York papers where possible.²⁵

On the Journal Hearst followed the pattern of initiating crusades and campaigns in the public interest. He presented news in a sensational manner and carried out a variety of promotion campaigns to advertise the Journal. Except for out-Pulitzerizing Pulitzer in the areas of shrieking typography and less-than responsible news handling, there was little evidence of originality in the origins of Hearst's New York news. Where Pulitzer was somewhat prudish about sex in print, Hearst was less restrained. Moreover Hearst introduced the Sunday circus treatment into everyday news: showing few compunctions about using news fakes, distorted information, and making maudlin pleas for unwarranted causes.²⁶

Breaking into the New York market proved difficult for Hearst as it was much more sophisticated than the San Francisco of the day. At first the Journal staff had to resort to pilfering news from the

World. Accordingly when the first edition of the World reached the Journal newsroom, a grateful copy desk was supposed to have sent up the refrain: "Sound the cymbals, beat the drum! The World is here, the news has come!" But the expenditure of millions of dollars, the acquisition of an Associated Press franchise, support for William Jennings Bryan's presidential candidacy in 1896, a great deal of enterprise and energy, and the Spanish American War all contributed to Hearst's becoming firmly established in New York. By 1898 the Journal had a larger circulation than the World. That marked the conclusion of the origins of Hearst news, and the formative stage of Hearst in journalism.²⁷

Underlying the whole question of Hearst news control are the personality and works of Hearst. Briefly, Hearst was a big figure, riven by character flaws, who cast a deep shadow across the journalistic landscape. His controversy-racked 64-year career in journalism spanned from the Gilded Age (1887) to the Cold War (1951). Hearst used inherited millions and driving energy to build the largest chain of newspapers in America. In this respect, he was a harbinger of the well-entrenched trend of chain ownership journalism that exists today. Hearst was a divisive political force for 40 years, amassed the largest private art collection ever assembled, and lived self-indulgently in a castle.

Hearst's biographers offer a mixed collection of judgments of him, reflecting variable critical capacities and intellectual perceptions. Cora Older and John Winkler, writing in a laudatory

or deferential mode, treat Hearst as a big, colorful, and mixed figure. John Tebbel and W. A. Swanberg are more penetrating and critical, exposing Hearst's abilities, aberrations and quirks. Ferdinand Lundberg, and Oliver Carlson and Ernest Bates, writing when opposition to Hearst was high, offer scathing criticism, regarding Hearst as a menace to progressive American democracy.

Starting Hearst's biographical sketch at the beginning, he was born in San Francisco on April 29, 1863. San Francisco, California's commercial capital, was still raw and in a developing stage. His father, George, was a shrewd and wealthy miner, who owned the principal interests in some of the richest mines of the West: Comstock, Homestake and Anaconda. He became a United States Senator. His mother, Phoebe Apperson, was a woman of great strength of character, genuinely interested in the arts, and had a refining influence on her son.²⁸

Hearst's character seemed to be flawed from the outset. He was an unruly youngster, who had to attend a number of different San Francisco grammar schools. He attended the prestigious St. Paul's School in New Hampshire, but was expelled for his juvenile delinquencies. With tutors helping him to complete his academic preparation, Hearst entered Harvard University.

During his Cambridge days, Hearst was a desultory student, a dandy in appearance, and a leader of other rich men's sons from the West. He spent money freely, drank beer, kept a pet alligator,

and was a campus comic and college cut up. Aside from vaudeville performances in Boston, Hearst's major interests at Harvard were the theater and journalism. He was in the Hasty Puttling Club, in college theater presentations, and he developed a love of minstrel shows. As business manager of the college humor magazine, Lampoon, he demonstrated his first interest in journalism.²⁹

Hearst's irreverence for academia finally resulted in his expulsion from Harvard in 1885 when he had junior standing, and was arrears in course credits. University authorities failed to appreciate the humor of one of his practical jokes. It seemed that he purchased chamber pots, pasted pictures of leading faculty members in the bottom of them, and mailed them to the faculty members as Christmas presents.³⁰

It was a misfortune for the nation that Hearst the collegian thought it was more important to be a smart aleck than to take his courses seriously. At Harvard he was exposed to the most brilliant faculty in the country. Had Hearst's genius been stimulated by the world of higher learning, he might have developed a subtler and more thorough grasp of the ambiguities and complexities of America's role in the world. As it was, his mature editorials of the 1920s and 1930s espoused a crude nationalism that reveal little understanding of the intricate political, economic and cultural ties of America to Europe.

After William's expulsion from Harvard, over which his mother cried bitterly, his father took him in hand to Mexico and tried to

interest him in something practical, such as developing one of his great ranching or mining properties. But William's heart was set on journalism. "I didn't want to go into any business that would take a long, dull preparation," he observed years later. William returned to New York, working for several months in 1886 on the New York World, then took over the San Francisco Examiner in March, 1887.³¹

For once William took something seriously, and he struggled manfully with the Examiner. During his first year William wrote his mother that he was keeping man-killing hours, often from 7:00 A.M. to up to 2:00 A.M. At such a pace he feared he would be dead within three or four years.³² At one point Senator Hearst became disgusted with the Examiner's steady financial hemorrhaging, and refused to advance the paper more money. In order to keep going young Hearst had to resort to the trick of having a Democratic party official, Michael F. Tarpey, solicit the senator for political campaign funds, and then have Tarpey give the Examiner \$50,000 for "political advertising."³³

Leaving his "Monarch of the Dailies" behind, Hearst moved on to the country's leading journalistic market with his purchase of the New York Journal in 1895. There he expanded on Pulitzer's sensationalizing news method, as Pulitzer had extended the popularizing news method of James Gordon Bennett. Hitting fever pitch in a no-holds barred circulation struggle with Pulitzer, Hearst practiced an amoral, febrile, sensational, gee-whiz, bizarre-stunts,

semi-hysterical, and low-brow journalism. Historians have fastened upon it the label "yellow journalism," to denote its qualities of artificial stimulation and deceptive content.³⁴

In his early years at Harvard, San Francisco and New York, Hearst styled himself a Democrat. His jubilant celebration of Grover Cleveland's election in 1884 resulted in a suspension from Harvard. He spent an estimated \$500,000 to bring the national Democratic political convention to San Francisco in 1888. He supported William Jennings Bryan in 1896, and virulently fought William McKinley. In 1899, the Journal's editorial platform called for public ownership of utilities, graduated income tax, direct election of United States Senators, and nationalization of coal mines, railroads and telegraph lines.³⁵

It is noteworthy that Hearst's attempt to snare the 1888 Democratic political convention for San Francisco gave a big boost to the San Francisco Examiner. His support of Bryan in 1896 was open to question on financial grounds. When Pulitzer refused to endorse Bryan, Hearst scored big circulation gains by doing so. As his mother owned both gold and silver mines, Hearst stood eventually to profit had Bryan's inflationary monetary policies been instituted. Aside from his professions of the working class faith, Hearst's private behavior was that of the conventional rich man. He dressed in fine clothes, ate at expensive restaurants, dated dance hall girls, and lived in a mansion, which he stocked with art treasures.

Taking advantage of the Cuban insurrection, Hearst saw an opportunity to make a national figure of himself. His Journal outscreamed the other New York and Chicago papers, combining with a chorus of jingo Congressmen and naval theorists, to lead a nation anxious to flex its strength on the international scene into war with a reluctant Spain. Hearst emerged from the popular Spanish-American War a national hero.

With the assassination of President McKinley in 1901 the Hearstian star plummeted. His conservative enemies reminded the public of Hearst's savage anti-McKinley editorials. Hearst was hanged in effigy and his newspapers boycotted. But the public memory was short, and in 1903 he was elected by a huge margin to the first of two terms to the House of Representatives as a Democrat. He attended Congress rarely, but he did introduce a spate of reform bills, none of which was enacted into law.

Surprisingly for a man whose father had been discussed as a vice-Presidential possibility, and who had a consuming lust for public recognition, this was as high as Hearst rose in elective office. All his millions, and the vast publishing chain he built, which he used unblushingly on occasion as a personal propaganda organ, could elevate him no higher than Congressman.

Hearst's character flaws militated against political success. Party managers regarded him as brash, unreliable, too willful, ostentatious, and suspect because of his wealth. Having been expelled from university, and an open consorter of dance hall

girls, he had strayed from the respectable mold. With his high-pitched voice, Hearst was not a natural vote-getter. In his early years he was a poor tactician. At strategically wrong turns, he antagonized powers, who could and did, thwart his ambitions--Tammany Hall, leadership of the Democratic Party, Theodore Roosevelt, and Al Smith.³⁶

Yet with his growing chain of newspapers, and his money, Democratic leaders could not afford to exclude Hearst from party councils. To abet his ambition to put William Jennings Bryan in the White House in 1900, Hearst launched the Chicago American in July, 1900. In 1903 came the Los Angeles Examiner, and in 1904 he started a paper in Boston.³⁷

Hearst's craving for public office led him through a series of numbing defeats. He lost the Democratic Party Presidential nomination in 1904, was cheated out of the New York mayorship by vote fraud in 1905, and was nosed out of the New York governorship in 1906. He was decisively beaten for the New York mayorship in 1909, and Al Smith's enmity prevented him from being selected the Democratic Party's United States Senator candidate from New York in 1922. One can only speculate that had Hearst's drive for recognition and public influence been satisfied through politics, he might not have driven on to amass such a large media chain. As it was, his drive for public influence had to be content with channeling itself through political opinions, which he freely gave vent to in his media.³⁸

Hearst restlessly developed and expanded his media properties, acquiring or starting papers in Atlanta, Washington, D.C., Milwaukee, Detroit and Seattle. Along the way he also purchased seven magazines, including Good Housekeeping in 1911, his biggest money earner among magazines. In 1913 he went into the movies, producing melodramas, newsreels, and eventually forming a business association with Louis B. Mayer of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios. Thus in 1922, Hearst had reached one of the highwater marks of his publishing career, owning 20 newspapers, International News Service, Universal (News) Service, King Features Syndicates, the American Weekly, a string of magazines, expensive real estate in New York, valuable mines, ranches and palatial houses.³⁹ Although information about Hearst's finances is somewhat sketchy, it is believed at this time that Hearst's properties were netting him an income in the millions per year.

Using the \$8.5 million he inherited from his mother when she died in 1919, and the income from and borrowing power of his enterprises, Hearst continued rapidly expanding his journalistic holdings during the 1920s. From 1922 to 1924, he bought 10 newspapers, merged one of the new papers with an old one, started the New York Daily Mirror tabloid, and started the English edition of Good Housekeeping. Between 1925 and 1933 he bought four newspapers, merged two of the new papers with two old ones, acquired eight magazines, merged one new magazine with an old one, and started the English edition of Harper's Bazaar. The year 1933 ended his

journalistic expansion, thereafter the story was one of decline and consolidation.⁴⁰

The publisher also lavished money on himself in the grand manner of a robber baron. He piled up real estate holdings in the United States and Mexico. Not content with the purchase of a real castle, St. Donat's in Wales, he built a palace of his own, San Simeon in California. Along the way a mansion was purchased for his wife on Long Island, a Bavarian chalet complex, near Mount Shasta, California, a beach house for his mistress, Marion Davies, in Santa Monica, and a mansion in Beverly Hills.⁴¹

Feeding his great avocation of art collecting, Hearst spent \$35 million during the 1920s, acquiring enormous quantities of art objects. Some major pieces were incorporated into San Simeon, or used for decorative purposes at his various residences. Much of it was stored in warehouses. Hearst's only contact with much of his collection was through poring through the photo albums he had prepared of his acquisitions. During his life, it was estimated that he collected about \$50 million worth of art.⁴²

Hearst's castle building and acquisition of a vast art collection amount to monumental self-indulgence. The enormous expenditures entailed put a severe strain on his media operations. In spite of competent financial counsel from John Neylan, his lawyer, Hearst continually drained operating revenues from his newspapers and magazines. In time this behavior precipitated the agonizing financial crisis of the 1930s, from which the Hearst

organization never fully recovered. It also seems evident that making his media properties operate to serve his personal idiosyncracies worked to lower the tone of Hearst journalism. To get the cash he needed for his self-indulgences, he served up lowest-common-denominator journalism, characterized by raucous display and vacuous entertainment.

By 1924, Hearst's total expenditures were greater than his income. The first attempt to put Hearst's financial house in order was made in 1927, when \$10 million worth of bonds were sold to the public. Again, in 1930, a \$50 million bond offering was made to the public. In 1935, in a maneuver that was challenged in a stockholders' suit, one Hearst corporation sold another Hearst corporation newspapers in three cities in which \$6 million of the sale amounted to intangible items.⁴³

Despite financial strains in his empire, Hearst's holdings came through the depression up to 1935 relatively unscathed. In that year Fortune magazine estimated his total holdings, which were then at a peak. In 1935 Hearst had 28 newspapers, 13 magazines, eight radio stations, two motion picture companies, a features syndicate, 31,000 employees, \$56 million in real estate, and valuable mining properties in South Dakota, Peru and Mexico.⁴⁴ His newspapers reached circulations of 5.5 million daily and 7 million Sunday. His magazines reached 4.5 million circulation.⁴⁵

The 90 Hearst corporations in 1935 were organized into two Hearst-owned, giant corporations, each partly holding, partly

operating. These two legal fictions were the American Newspapers, Inc. (organized in 1934 to replace the Star Holding Corporation), which included almost all Hearst enterprises, and the smaller Hearst Corporation, comprising the most profitable newspapers, the magazines, the King Features Syndicate, and the Hearst estate. As these were paper organizations, attention should be focused on the operating management structure.⁴⁶

The managerial high command concerned with publishing included Tom White, general manager, with supervisory responsibilities for newspaper, magazine and radio properties; Harry Bitner, in charge of newspapers; Dick Berlin, in charge of magazines; and Joseph Connolly, in charge of King Features Syndicate and its wire service. Although there was only one publisher-in-chief whose name was Hearst, he funneled many of his ideas and policies through Edmond Coblentz, editor of the New York American. Clarence Lindner, editor of the San Francisco Examiner, played a similar role for the West Coast. Arthur Brisbane, whose influence on Hearst's early success was very considerable, had a reduced administrative role in 1935 as editor of the New York Mirror, and "Today" columnist. Hearst maintained active liaison with his publishers via wire messages, a board of regional directors (which replaced the executive council, and executive committee in 1929), and periodic editorial conferences.⁴⁷

The 72-year-old Hearst, at his 1935 peak, was a tall, overweight man with sloping shoulders, an equine face and graying hair. His blue eyes could by turns twinkle, concentrate intently, or withdraw when he thought deeply. When Hearst was not avidly supervising his publications, or intently scanning art catalogs, which was most of the time, he relaxed by playing tennis, and croquet. Nearly every evening at San Simeon Hearst watched Hollywood movies.⁴⁸

By the 1920s and 1930s, Hearst the youthful Progressive had vanished, and the latent conservative, even reactionary, emerged. This assessment is based partly on the political candidates he supported in those years, and partly on the political stands Hearst took. Hearst supported the Republicans from 1920 to 1928. He favored Harding in 1920, largely because he was opposed to the League of Nations. Hearst was a welcome visitor at the White House during both the administrations of Harding and Coolidge.⁴⁹

Hearst's favorite presidential prospect for 1928 was Andrew Mellon, reputedly the second richest man in the United States, and secretary of treasury in the Harding, Coolidge and Hoover administrations. Mellon's program of reducing taxes for the rich was so successful that during the Coolidge administration a millionaire had to pay \$400,000 less in federal taxes than he formerly did.⁵⁰ Mellon's program was very popular with Hearst, who favored abolishing the progressive income tax he once favored, and substituting in its stead a regressive sales tax.

But Hoover was the man of the hour in 1928. so Hearst reluctantly supported the "great engineer." From 1930 through the end of his term, Hearst bitterly attacked Hoover, for not adopting the Hearst plan for the economic revival of America. In 1932, he swung his support from Jack Garner of Texas to Franklin Roosevelt, helping Roosevelt obtain the Democratic nomination. But after a honeymoon with the New Deal, Hearst began bitterly opposing what he called the "Raw Deal's" NRA, unemployment relief payments, farm subsidies and other social welfare programs. In 1936 Hearst strenuously supported the Republican Presidential nominee, Alf Landon.⁵¹

During the 1930s, when America's social environment was polarized, Hearst's right-wing political positions became glaringly evident. In 1934 he opposed Upton Sinclair's EPIC campaign for governor of California, fought the general strike in San Francisco, and flirted with the German Nazi leadership. He opposed the Wagner Act, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and the American Newspaper Guild (ANG). Hearst fought against the Works Projects Administration, and the 1935 Revenue Act (which jumped the federal tax on Hearst's income from 59 percent to 75 percent). In editorials, he claimed the Social Security Act was, "a pay cut for you," and scored the Wheeler-Rayburn anti-holding company bill as "PURE VENOM." He antagonized liberals with his anti-"Raw Deal" tirades, with attacks on "Communists" in higher education, and with assaults on the World Court.⁵²

In 1937 the financial burden under which the Hearst enterprises had been laboring for some time proved to be too much. A financial crisis ensued, during which time Hearst had to step aside temporarily, while others came in and cleaned up the mess. Several newspapers were suspended, seven radio stations sold, New York real estate liquidated, much of his beloved art collection was sold to the public through Gimbel's department store, Hearst's salary was cut from \$500,000 to \$100,000 a year, and 165,000 acres of San Simeon were sold.⁵³

In spite of these cost-cutting measures, the major Hearst holding company passed three quarterly dividends, raising the specter that it would pass into the hands of its stockholders. Somehow the Hearst interests raised enough money to prevent that. Hearst's corporate interests struggled along until World War II. The war helped by cutting the size of newspapers and boosting circulation and revenues. In 1942 the Hearst papers made total net profits of \$3.5 million. But by the time Hearst died in 1951, his properties had entered a new phase of declining profits, though their circulation was higher than it had ever been.⁵⁴

Hearst died at age 88, after four years of very diminished activity due to senescence. Looking over the long span of his life reveals a man who made a drive for public influence through the channels of politics and the media. His riven character limited and tarnished his achievements in both areas. In politics he found scant public acceptance. His media operation, though on a

gigantic scale, operated with the low attitude of catering to the commonest public taste. It was noisy, escapist and materialistic. Hearst's vision for America during the 1920s and 1930s was frayed by money-making, class-consciousness, and narrow nationalism. His journalism fell far short of fulfilling normative roles of serving the public welfare and abetting political democracy.

If this seems a strong judgment, one should note that Hearst journalism of the 1920s and 1930s fit into the mainstream of American publishing of the same period. William Allen White characterized that mainstream as follows: at the turn of the century the machine age arrived in journalism, advertising became one of the big influences in America, and ". . . the trade which had become a profession turned into a business and there it is today." The tendency to link newspapers into business chains had proceeded in 1923 to the extent that 34 chains owned 158 newspapers, accounting for 31 percent of the daily circulation.⁵⁵

That the public service ideal was subject to subordination by "sordid money making," was a source of lament to Oswald Garrison Villard. Writing in the 1920s, he identified standard bearers of this low attitude as Frank Munsey, Cyrus Curtis and Hearst. Villard believed that the commercialized press had become so dominant by 1926 as to affect the nation's capacity to maintain a healthy democracy.⁵⁶

The great depression of the 1930s accentuated social polarization, with both the political right and left moving into

more extreme social and economic positions.⁵⁷ In that climate the dominant character of the mainstream daily press became more evident. Lines of evidence suggesting the nature of the press in the 1930s include--positions taken by the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA), how daily newspapers voted in presidential elections, and the orientation of the largest chain newspaper publishers.

In the mid-1930s the ANPA, the publisher's lobby, took a number of social stands. It opposed the Social Security Act of 1933, the Wagner Labor Relations Act of 1935; the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, prescribing minimum wages and maximum hours; and child labor legislation. These laws aimed at improving the social welfare of the mass of citizens. The ANPA also opposed establishment of the Securities Exchange Commission, aimed at controlling stock market abuses; and fought the Wheeler-Lea bill, which allowed unfair and misleading advertising to be regulated. The ANPA opposed as well the American Newspaper Guild, claiming for a time that it threatened the freedom of the press.⁵⁸

Accurate surveys of daily newspaper editorial page support of Presidential candidates in Editor and Publisher only go back to 1940; before that the findings are approximate. In 1932, 55 percent of the dailies supported Hoover, and 38 percent supported Roosevelt. In 1936, it was 60 percent for Landon, and 34 percent for Roosevelt; and in 1940 the figures were 64 percent for Willkie and 23 percent for Roosevelt. The average support in these years

was that for every three dailies that supported the Republican Presidential candidate, only two favored the Democrat.⁵⁹ Roosevelt won these three elections by an average margin of nearly three votes to two.⁶⁰ These figures suggest how far to the political right the daily newspapers were compared to the voting population.

Newspaper chains had advanced by 1935 to the point that 63 chains owned 328 newspapers, accounting for 42 percent of the daily circulation. Just the largest seven chains controlled 79 dailies, among them the largest in metropolitan centers, amounting to 30 percent of all daily circulation. The largest seven chains in their order of size, and the amount of daily circulation they controlled were as follows: W. R. Hearst, 13.6 percent; Patterson-McCormick, 6.4 percent; Scripps-Howard, 5.1 percent; Paul Block, 1.6 percent; A. S. Ochs, 1.3 percent; Frank Gannett, 1.2 percent; and Frank Knox, 1.2 percent.⁶¹

It is of interest that the Hearst chain's position was so dominant that it had twice as large a daily circulation percentage as the second largest chain. Also Hearst had ties to two of the other chain owners. Before Paul Block went into publishing, his agency handled Hearst's advertising. Later, Block and Hearst jointly owned newspapers in Pittsburgh, and Block was on the board of directors of Hearst's Los Angeles Herald-Express. Frank Knox was general manager of Hearst publications from 1928 through

1930; in 1926 he was credited with pulling Hearst's Boston American and Boston Advertiser out of financial deficits.⁶²

Except for Joseph Medill Patterson, who had a liberal domestic editorial stance and was well regarded by the ANG, the other top seven chain publishers generally shared the following social views. Their papers were anti-Communist, anti-labor, anti-ANG, and anti-social welfare features of the New Deal. They fought Roosevelt's tax on undistributed profits and capital gains. Their editorials accused FDR of being surrounded by socialists and of introducing "pink" legislation. They branded the Mexican president Cardenas, and the Republican forces in the Spanish Civil War as "Red," and habitually put Russia in a false and distorted light. And they fought United States Senate investigations that embarrassed big business.⁶³

Of these publishers, Hearst and McCormick were the worst offenders against the broad public interest. But Roy Howard, Frank Gannett, and Paul Block were close behind. And Adolph Ochs and Frank Knox did their share of labor-baiting, Red-baiting, and arguing the case of big business.⁶⁴

These remarks suggest that the proper context in which to view Hearst in the 1920s and 1930s is as the leading chain newspaper owner within the mainstream of American daily newspaper publishing. The mainstream was characterized by politically conservative publishers, who had strong social class biases. The mainstream publishers had big-business oriented social and economic views.

In many specific instances they opposed the progress of the public's social welfare. Their exclusive and narrow attitudes worked against the development of political democracy.

By way of summary, this chapter has traced the historical origins of Hearst news through the influences of Bennett, Dana, and Pulitzer. (Chapter VI will discuss the tabloid influence on Hearst news.) From Hearst's earliest days in San Francisco and New York, use of big money, recruited stars, news stunts, crusades and news slanting were found to be elements of his approach to news. A sketch of Hearst's biography and media organization was undertaken by way of filling in the backdrop to Hearst's news control in the 1920s and 1930s. Finally Hearst was viewed against the broader context of mainstream publishing of the 1920s and 1930s and found to fit within it as the period's leading chain publisher.

NOTES

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²Don C. Seitz, The James Gordon Bennetts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1928), pp. 15, 351, 371-2; Williard G. Bleyer, Main Currents in the History of American Journalism (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927), pp. 193-4, 196-8, 200 and 210.

³Seitz, op. cit., 60-2, 222, 340, 355 and 371-2; Bleyer, op. cit., 198, 201 and 205-6.

⁴Frank M. O'Brien, The Story of the Sun (New York: Doran, 1918), pp. 300, 414-5; Bleyer, op. cit., 293.

⁵O'Brien, op. cit., 402, 416-7, and 419; Bleyer, op. cit., p. 296.

⁶George Juergens, Joseph Pulitzer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 334-5; Bleyer, op. cit., 322, 325-6, 339.

⁷Don C. Seitz, Joseph Pulitzer (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1924), pp. 416-7; Juergens, op. cit., pp. 94-5, 49; Bleyer, op. cit., pp. 341-3, 351-2.

⁸William Randolph Hearst to Edmond D. Coblentz, Feb. 1, 1936, Coblentz Papers, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

⁹Ferdinand Lundberg, Imperial Hearst (New York: Equinox Cooperative, 1936), p. 26; Charles J. Rosebault, When Dana Was the Sun (New York: McBride, 1931), p. 290; John Tebbel, The Life and Good Times of William Randolph Hearst (New York: Dutton, 1952), pp. 107, 118-24, 296-7; John K. Winkler, William Randolph Hearst (New York: Hastings House, 1955), pp. 38-40; and Oliver Carlson, Brisbane (New York: Stackpole Sons, 1937), pp. 95-6.

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¹¹Hearst to Editors and Publishers of All Hearst Newspapers, Jan. 29, 1924, John Francis Neylan Papers, Bancroft Library.

¹²Hearst to Coblentz, Dec. 4, 1929, op. cit.

- ¹³Hearst to Coblentz, Feb. 26, 1931, *ibid.*
- ¹⁴Hearst to Coblentz, Jan. 21, 1936, *ibid.*
- ¹⁵Hearst to George Hearst, facsimile, 1885, *ibid.*
- ¹⁶WRH to John Francis Neylan (Neylan Collection, *op. cit.*), Jan. 16, 1925.
- ¹⁷W. A. Swanberg, Citizen Hearst (New York: Scribner's, 1961), p. 31.
- ¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 32.
- ¹⁹Hearst to George Hearst, facsimile, 1885, Coblentz Collection, *op. cit.* Oliver Carlson and Ernest Bates, Hearst: Lord of San Simeon (New York: Viking, 1936), pp. 44-5.
- ²⁰Swanberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 39, 43; Seitz, Joseph Pulitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
- ²¹Swanberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-4, 48; Lundberg, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Carlson and Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 48; Winkler, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
- ²²Swanberg, *ibid.*, p. 62; Lundberg, *ibid.*, p. 33.
- ²³Swanberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-9, 51, 65-6, 68.
- ²⁴*ibid.*, pp. 56, 60, 62-5; Tebbel, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-1, 104.
- ²⁵Tebbel, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-24; Lundberg, *op. cit.*, p. 54; Bleyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-6.
- ²⁶Lundberg, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Bleyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-6; Carlson and Bates, *op. cit.*, pp. 83, 85, 90.
- ²⁷Carlson and Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 76; Gerald L. Bartness, Hearst in Milwaukee (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Ph.D. Thesis, 1968), pp. 23-4.
- ²⁸"Career of Hearst Marked by Power, Increased Wealth, Crusading and Controversy," New York Times, Aug. 15, 1951, p. 20.
- ²⁹Tebbel, *op. cit.*, p. 329.
- ³⁰*ibid.*, p. 330-1; Swanberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.
- ³¹*ibid.*, p. 91; Swanberg, *op. cit.*, p. 40; Carlson and Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

³²Edmond D. Coblentz, William Randolph Hearst (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), pp. 35.

³³*Ibid.*, pp. 34-5.

³⁴Edwin Emery, The Press and America (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1972), p. 350-1; Carlson and Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

³⁵Emery, *ibid.*, p. 388-9; Swanberg, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

³⁶Tebbel, *op. cit.*, p. 202; W. A. Swanberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 248, 253.

³⁷"Forty Years Ago Today The Examiner was Established," San Francisco Examiner, Oct. 4, 1920, p. 5.

³⁸Tebbel, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-66.

³⁹Burton Crane, "Hearst Built Corporate Empires in Newspapers, Magazines and Radio," New York Times, Aug. 15, 1951, p. 21.

⁴⁰Tebbel, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-153; Swanberg, *op. cit.*, p. 382.

⁴¹"Hearst Built Corporate Empires in Newspapers, Magazines, Radio and Real Estate," New York Times, *op. cit.*

⁴²Tebbel, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

⁴³"Hearst Built Corporate Empires in Newspapers, Magazines, Radio and Real Estate," New York Times, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴*Ibid.*; "Hearst," Fortune 12 (Oct., 1935):46, also, the whole article, pp. 42-55, and 123-162.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 46, 123.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 134-5; Col. Frank Knox to John R. Hastings, (John R. Hastings Papers, Bancroft Library), Jan. 10, 1929.

⁴⁸Tebbel, *op. cit.*, p. 63; "Career of Hearst Marked . . .," New York Times, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹Tebbel, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-66.

⁵⁰John D. Hicks, Republican Ascendancy (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), pp. 26, 106, 215; Tebbel, *op. cit.*

⁵¹Tebbel, op. cit., pp. 214-66.

⁵²Edwin Emery, "William R. Hearst," Journalism Quarterly, 28 (Fall, 1951):434-35; George Seldes, Lords of the Press (New York: Messner, 1938), pp. 228-33; Swanberg, op. cit., pp. 526-31; Rodney P. Carlisle, "William Randolph Hearst," Journalism Quarterly, 50 (1973):132.

⁵³"Hearst Built Corporate Empires . . .," New York Times, op. cit.

⁵⁴Ibid.; Emery, "William R. Hearst," Journalism Quarterly, op. cit., p. 433. Profit or loss statement, titled "Hearst Newspapers," Edmond D. Coblenz manuscript collection, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

⁵⁵George Seldes, Lords of the Press (New York: Messner, 1938), p. 276; William Weinfeld, "The Growth of Daily Newspaper Chains in the U.S., 1923, 1926-35," Journalism Quarterly, 13 (1936):377.

⁵⁶Oswald Garrison Villard, Some Newspapers and Newspapermen, (New York: Knopf, 1923), preface and chapters on Munsey, Curtis and Hearst.

⁵⁷David A. Shannon, Between the Wars: America, 1919-1941 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), pp. 160-67.

⁵⁸Emery, The Press and America, op. cit., pp. 682-3, 687.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 697.

⁶⁰Arthur Link, American Epoch (New York: Knopf, 1959), pp. 380, 412, 485. Roosevelt got a total of 77 million votes in the three elections compared to 56 million for his opponents, nearly a three to two ratio.

⁶¹Weinfeld, op. cit., p. 378.

⁶²Seldes, op. cit., pp. 67-70, 183; Ferdinand Lundberg, Imperial Hearst (New York: Equinox Cooperative Press, 1936), p. 330; National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Vol. 37, p. 13.

⁶³Ibid., these generalizations are based on Seldes's chapters for each of the top seven chain publishers.

⁶⁴Ibid.

CHAPTER III

SAN FRANCISCO MARKET: PART ONE

The next five chapters describe and analyze the four manuscript collections that constitute the empirical portion of this paper. In these chapters, the question of Hearst news and Hearst news control will be explored at three different levels. The first level is the local one, using the San Francisco Call in the San Francisco market as a case history. Second will be the regional level of the mid-Atlantic region, using primarily Hearst papers in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. markets. Third will be the national level, using the New York American as a case history, as it was the paper that was the funnel through which Hearst poured his editorial ideas that went out to all his morning papers.¹

The time dimension of the San Francisco Call discussion will be approximately 1919 to 1926. During this period, Hearst owned four papers in the San Francisco Bay area market, the San Francisco Examiner, the Call, the Oakland Post-Enquirer and the Oakland Times. The information available about the three other papers in the John F. Neylan manuscript collection at Berkeley's Bancroft Library was not so extensive as what was available about the Call. Only the data bearing on the Call is described and analyzed in chapters III and IV. Yet the manuscript material on the Examiner and the

Post-Enquirer was read, and it was complete enough to determine that Hearst's pattern of news control on these two papers was consistent with that of the Call.

In order to analyze control of "Hearst news" some thought about what that meant was required. A review of primary and secondary sources led to the formulation of the following concepts, which are here stated in skeleton form, and further developed in the text. These concepts are stated here to guide the reader's comprehension. The general idea of Hearst news is that Hearst used a news formula borrowed from Joseph Pulitzer based on using entertainment as bait to attract a mass audience to his public policy ideas. On this same level of generality, Hearst's news goal was to achieve a balance of profits and public policy influence. That he balanced these objectives is shown by his willingness to carry newspapers that chronically lost money so as to achieve a wider network of influence.

A concept of Hearst news, based on empirical generalization from primary and secondary sources, has been formulated for the purpose of analysis. It has three divisions, a number of parts and subparts. Since the analysis in chapters III and IV use the Hearst news concept as an analytic framework, and chapters V, VI and VII are implicitly guided by it, the concept is presented here:

Hearst news has been categorized into three divisions: coverage, news handling and display, and the administrative, business area. Coverage has two main parts: public policy (subdivided into

editorial platform, editorial policies, news guided by editorials, crusades, and legislative influence and initiatives); and entertainment (including syndicated columnists, film news, features, comics, serials, crime, scandal, ordinary news, disaster, sports, women's fare, and sob sister material).

The second major division was news handling and display, which included these parts: story handling, typography, makeup, photos and story selection. The third main division of administrative, business area included these main parts: accounting figures, revenue producing areas (subdivided into: circulation, advertising, and profits), and corporate names and relations.

Briefly, the interrelations of these divisions are as follows: coverage performed the dual function of attracting a mass audience with entertainment so as to draw a large audience for Hearst's public policy views. News handling and display served the coverage area by presenting the most impactingly reader-grabbing, circulation-getting appearance. The administrative, business area was a flexible framework which worked under Hearst's direction to maintain and expand Hearst's news operations.

In respect to chapters III and IV, after laying a groundwork of context, chapter III deals with Hearst news control in two of the three divisions of Hearst news. Chapter III gives national Hearst newspaper context in the 1920s, and local newspaper context for the San Francisco Call in the San Francisco market in the 1920s. The idea of a "Hearst newspaper" with a characteristic content and

appearance is developed. Since Hearst exerted what news control he did through his executives, the biographies, roles and relationships of Fremont Older and John Neylan to William R. Hearst are discussed. Then comes a discussion of Hearst news control in two of the three divisions of Hearst news: coverage, and news handling and display.

Chapter IV continues the discussion of Hearst news control in the third division of Hearst news: the business, administrative area. Then there is a rather lengthy discussion of the reorganization that occurred on the Call over a number of years. The idea of chapters III and IV is that together they discuss Hearst news control (a topic), and reorganization of the Call over the years (a time dimension), providing a rather comprehensive analysis of the Hearst news control question as regards the Call.

In both chapters the Call is viewed as a case history operating within the network of Hearst national policy. Hearst made national policy and implemented it through his executives. Evidence for this view is supported by Hearst's editorial and news directives received by the Call, the preponderance of which have a national character. National editorial and news directives are correlated with local directives so as to suggest the overall framework in which Hearst newspapers had to operate.

In regard to Hearst's newspaper chain in the first half of the 1920s, the context within which the Call operated, Hearst owned in July, 1924, some 24 newspapers published in 14 American cities. He favored owning papers in the largest advertising markets, and the

most politically influential cities. Of the nine largest advertising markets, the only one he did not publish in was Philadelphia. The cities Hearst published in during 1924, with their ranking as an advertising market in parentheses, included: New York (one), Los Angeles (two), Chicago (four), Boston (five), San Francisco (six), Detroit (seven), Baltimore (eight), Washington, D.C. (nine), Milwaukee (fifteen), and Seattle (twenty): and Atlanta, Fort Worth, Rochester and Syracuse (all unranked).²

In a bombastic editorial, Arthur Brisbane bragged in September, 1922 that Hearst newspapers were read every day by 20 million Americans, the greatest 'mental marketplace' of the age. (Actual daily circulation of Hearst's newspapers in 1923, according to a Journalism Quarterly article, was 3.4 million.) Brisbane pointed out the Hearst's New York Evening Journal had by far the largest circulation of any newspaper in the United States, and more than double the circulation of its nearest rival among the evening newspapers in New York city. Hearst's Chicago American had the largest circulation of any evening newspaper in Chicago.¹³ Other large circulation and influential Hearst papers included the San Francisco Examiner, Los Angeles Examiner, Los Angeles Herald, Baltimore News and Washington (D.C.) Times.

When it came to advertising dominance Hearst's papers were curiously lagging in January, 1923. The only advertising market in the country that Hearst's papers dominated was San Francisco, where Hearst papers ranked first (the Examiner) and third (the Call).

In other large advertising markets, Hearst's papers ranked as follows in advertising: New York (fourth and sixth), Los Angeles (second and third), Chicago (third and fourth), Boston (sixth), Detroit (third), Baltimore (third and fourth), Washington, D.C. (third and fourth), Milwaukee (third), and Seattle (third).⁴

These figures provide a glimpse into the national context of Hearst news control. In general terms, a newspaper that was well respected in the community and also had the largest circulation in its market, would also be the advertising leader. As the bulk of a paper's profits came from advertising, the battle for market position in crowded markets was fierce. When labor problems, newsprint shortages, tabloid newspaper circulation gains, and competition from electronic media contributed to newspaper suspensions, it was the papers that lagged behind in advertising revenues that were squeezed out by attrition. In Hearst's case the figures suggest a reason for his continual exhortations to gain circulation and advertising. He was trying to catch up. Likewise one can infer from the figures one of the reasons why the Hearst chain diminished as newspaper markets about the country contracted. Generally, without having achieved advertising dominance the Hearst papers were squeezed out by the newspapers in stronger market positions.

By way of introducing the San Francisco Call and its market context, a few words concerning its history are in order. The Call was one of the oldest papers on the Pacific Coast, founded in 1856 as the Morning Call, one year after the Bulletin, which covered the

evening field. The papers were under one management for a time as the Call-Bulletin, but that connection was severed in 1895. From 1895 to 1913 the paper was known as the San Francisco Call. In 1913 it merged to become the Call and Post. In 1929 it merged again, with the by-this-time financially decrepit Bulletin, to bring the two papers under the same management for the second time, as the Call-Bulletin. Herbert Fleishhacker, who bought the Bulletin from a group of businessmen about a year before, sold the paper to Hearst for approximately one million dollars.⁵

Neylan reported to Hearst May 19, 1919 that he completed the purchase of the Call, representing himself as the owner. It was disclosed in 1922 that Neylan received three percent, and Older two percent, of the Call's net profits. On June 1 of the same year Neylan sent a communication announcing the sale of the Call to Hearst. Hearst purchased 6,348 shares and Neylan retained only 100. Actually Hearst purchased the paper through Neylan, who acted as his dummy in 1919, and the 1922 "sale" to Hearst only amounted to a stock transfer. Hearst often purchased newspapers through dummies, including Arthur Brisbane, Guy Barham, M. L. Annenberg, A. J. Kobler and Alexander P. Moore, in such cities as Washington, D.C., Milwaukee, Detroit, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Seattle, New York and elsewhere. According to Moses Koenigsberg, a Hearst executive, Hearst's principal reasons for operating behind dummies were two. One was to hoodwink

advertisers, who out of aversion or prejudice would resist buying in a Hearst paper. Another was to appease advertisers who would be reluctant to purchase advertising in a second Hearst paper in one city, on grounds of wasteful duplication.⁶

Hearst's ownership of the Call was not immediately apparent to San Franciscans. In May, 1919 James Rolph Jr., mayor of San Francisco, sent a warm missive to Neylan, congratulating him on purchasing the paper from F. W. Kellogg. Neylan was the president and publisher of the paper. The other management personnel in late 1920 included Fremont Older as editor, E. J. Gough as managing editor and Jacob L. Adler as business manager. In spring, 1922, ownership of the Call was formally transferred to Hearst. A list of important employees on the Call made in September, 1925 listed these additional and changed management people: P. J. Tehaney, acting business manager; advertising manager, W. R. Penney; circulation manager, John E. Grey; and chief accountant, W. A. Moore.⁷

In January, 1926, Neylan was relieved of his responsibilities as publisher of the Call, while retaining presidency of the Call Publishing Company, and the chairmanship of its board of directors. Charles S. Young was promoted to take over the detail responsibility of the position of the Call's publisher. In late 1926 Hearst stated that the board of directors of the Call should be the publisher, Young; the president, Neylan; the editor, Older;

a Mr. Keeler and a secretary. Hearst said he thought he should not be on the board of directors because of his policy of trying to differentiate papers he owned in the same market.⁸

In a general way the Call of the early 1920s conformed to the trappings of a "Hearst newspaper" in content and appearance. The Gerold Bartness dissertation gave a good portrait of a typical Hearst paper, the Wisconsin News. When Arthur Brisbane bought the Wisconsin News for Hearst in October, 1918, a Hearst appearance was plastered onto the paper in a dramatic facelift. In terms of format the sharply altered News bristled with large headlines, bold typography, front page bulletins and boxes, banner headlines on inside pages, lavish use of illustration and action pictures, and a shouting typeface editorial page. In content the formula was something for everyone: a full page of comics, a local sports cartoon, crusades in behalf of the "little guy," the plugging of crime news, sob sister fare, Hearst's national crusades, and a flood of entertainment, features and syndicated material. The paper was sensational, violating public standards of good taste, particularly in its raucous and exploitative use of crime news.⁹

The October 13, 1920 San Francisco Call, selected at random, revealed a paper that roughly matched the Wisconsin News in content and appearance. Typography was black and bold with three banner headlines on the front page, another banner headline on page three, boxes, and an attempt to display the news and pictures

dramatically. The content could be termed something for everyone: with crime and disaster overplayed, serialized romances, a prominent movie page with reviews, syndicate material, a sports page with a large cartoon, and a full page of comics. The editorial page with its local editorials and contributors was not boldly Hearstian, although the newspaper's masthead with its spread eagle and a shield of stars and stripes, was.¹⁰

During the 1919-1926 period that Neylan was actively associated with the Call, there were eight papers published in the San Francisco-Oakland area. In San Francisco there was the Examiner and the Call, both owned by Hearst, and the News, owned by Scripps-Howard, the Chronicle, owned by M. H. de Young, and the Bulletin, owned by R. A. Crothers and the Pickering family. In Oakland there was the Post-Enquirer and the Times, both owned by Hearst, and the Tribune, owned by Joseph R. Knowland. There were two Bay-area publishers who were national powers: Hearst with four newspapers, and Roy Howard, of the Scripps-Howard chain, with one. The Examiner and the Call respectively were the dominant morning and evening papers in San Francisco. The Tribune was the dominant paper in Oakland.¹¹

The characteristics of the five San Francisco papers in March, 1920 were: the Examiner, market leader and the most impressive, dignified and authoritative of the city's dailies, selling for five cents, with 152,000 circulation; second was the Chronicle, with a scattershot front page appearance, a morning

paper selling for five cents, with 94,000 circulation. Third was the Call, the evening leader, noisy with three banner headlines and an inside front page, selling for three cents, with 92,000 circulation; fourth was the Bulletin, the Call's evening competitor, in format and screaming appearance similar to the Call, selling for three cents, with a circulation of 80,000. Fifth was the tabloid News, an evening paper, which contained good syndicate material and was tightly edited, selling for two cents, with a circulation of 51,000.¹²

As Hearst exercised the degree of news control that he did through his executives, it is of concern in relation to this paper's news control thesis to give a little biographical data about Neylan and Older, and to describe their roles and relationships with Hearst. Neylan was born in New York City in 1885, and was graduated from Seton College in New Jersey in 1903. He became acquainted with Older when he obtained a job on the San Francisco Bulletin as a political reporter. His coverage of the Hiram W. Johnson gubernatorial campaign of 1906 brought him to Johnson's notice. Johnson appointed Neylan chairman of the State Board of Control, a position in which he distinguished himself by drawing up the state's first budget, and cleaning up graft in the letting of state contracts. In his spare time in Sacramento Neylan studied law and passed the state bar examination in 1916.¹³

Following his purchase of the Call in 1918, Neylan took general charge of Hearst matters on the West Coast in September, 1923. He still retained his position as publisher of the Call. In January, 1926, Neylan was made Hearst's general counsel for all his enterprises, and president of the Call. Although Neylan was supposed to shift out of a newspaper policy role in September, 1926, he still retained some involvement in Hearst's administrative affairs. It was not until November, 1927 that he shifted solely into a legal and financial role. Beside working for Hearst he maintained a lucrative corporate legal practice.¹⁴

During his tenure on the Call, Neylan's role of principal interest to this dissertation was that of publisher of the paper. Neylan was a man of large capabilities, so much so that he was credited with being a genius. His abilities inevitably involved him in a wide range of Hearstian affairs. He was involved in supervising the affairs of other Hearst West Coast newspapers, including obtaining a simplified accounting system, being concerned with the Oakland Post-Enquirer's and the San Francisco Examiner's management decisions, and in distinguishing the market focuses of the Los Angeles Examiner and the Los Angeles Herald.¹⁵

Neylan was involved in a broad range of administrative and personnel affairs, including being deputized by Hearst to lead the fight against the ruling oligarchy of the Associated Press in 1926. He got involved in salary increases and contract negotiations and resignations of editors, comptrollers, star writers and others.

Another Neylan role was to voluntarily furnish Hearst with intelligence reports: on rival newspapers, on the refinancing of a newsprint company, and the impending sale of an overvalued street railway utility.¹⁶

Yet another Neylan role was that of political coordinator: as director of the Hearst political line for West Coast papers. In this capacity he furnished analysis of political trends and intelligence reports on the 1922 and 1924 elections, and tried to develop a unified political line on Hearst's West Coast papers. Finally, Neylan operated as an idea man: sounding out Hearst on the idea of group life insurance, warning of a possible depression in California, engaging in newsprint negotiations with the Crown-Willamette paper company and urging Hearst to file on Alaska timber stands.¹⁷

In the late 1920s and the 1930s, Neylan did what he could in a legal-financial role to help Hearst enterprises meet the challenge of the Great Depression, and President Roosevelt's tax increases of 1935. He did this by putting Hearst's financial affairs in order, and getting the corporation into as strong a cash position as possible. Neylan's lawyer-client relationship with Hearst ended in 1937, during Hearst's financial debacle, when Hearst chose to listen to other advisors. But he and Hearst remained on good terms. In addition to his other activities, Neylan was a regent of the University of California for 27 years.¹⁸

Neylan's relationship with Hearst was personal. One time he was entrusted with checking up on Hearst's sick son. The emotional tone of their relationship oscillated between amicability and occasional controversial confrontations. Hearst invested considerable trust in Neylan, on occasion giving him broad authority. For instance, in the area of West Coast politics, where Neylan had more expertise than Hearst, Hearst told Neylan to "exercise his own judgment . . ." in absence of instructions. Neylan cautiously replied that he would exercise his "own judgment only when it was necessary."¹⁹

Neylan's customary tone in writing on newspaper matters to Hearst, an area where Hearst had more expertise, was courteous, deferential and that of willing to subordinate his opinion to Hearst's. Typical Neylan phrasings included: ". . . I suggest if you think well of this idea . . .," and ". . . I am sending this information for what it is worth." When Neylan wanted Hearst to have a local serial on work with delinquent boys run nationally, he buttressed his request by referencing Older, "Older has become . . . wildly enthusiastic." Neylan concluded his letter in deferential terms, "If you could render us this service I would be deeply grateful."²⁰

Neylan's attitude in responding to business instructions, for example to conserve white paper, was that of being anxious to show he was complying: ". . . we have been particularly careful to conserve every pound of white paper." Even when Neylan wanted his

office's \$45,000 per year retainer increased he did not ask directly, but just reviewed the situation and stated, "I wish you would give the matter some thought." When it was a legal question, for instance concerning storing of newsprint, Neylan could give direct, straightforward advice: "My suggestion is that if they attempt to go to you, you should turn them down flat and advise them unequivocally that you will not be dragged into these matters."²¹

The range of Neylan's roles gave a number of facets to his relationship with Hearst. The above quotations touch on the following sides: personal, political, newspaper, business and legal. Neylan's authority and directness with Hearst was greatest in the legal and political areas, because his expertise was greatest there. In the newspaper and business areas he was cautiously and obediently deferential. One gains a strong sense of Hearst news control, but of Hearst being open to Neylan's competent suggestions and legal advice.

Fremont Older was one of the great crusading editors of the West. Born in Wisconsin in 1856, Older began his career in journalism at the age of 13 as a printer's devil. At the age of 16 he went West, working on various Nevada and California newspapers, until landing the editorship of the San Francisco Bulletin in 1894. During his 24 years with the Bulletin he built it up into a leading paper, and fought against corruption, graft and political oppression. He fought the Southern Pacific Railway's

political domination of the state of California. He exposed the political corruption of San Francisco Mayor Eugene E. Schmitz and political boss, Abe Ruef, in 1906. His last great fight was to free Tom Mooney, a labor leader who was convicted of the bombing of the 1916 Preparedness Day parade in San Francisco on fabricated evidence. Advised by the owners of the Bulletin to drop the Mooney case, as it was bad for business, Older reluctantly resigned, to become editor of Hearst's San Francisco Call.²²

Older was reluctant to accept the Hearst offer to come to the Call, and bring the Mooney case with him as Hearst had invited. He was afraid he would lose his standing with labor, and that people would lament, "Older has sold out to Hearst." Nevertheless, he did go, and edited the Call from 1918 until he died in 1935. During those years he campaigned to free Mooney, against capital punishment, for prison reform and for a more sympathetic understanding of the social disease of prostitution. Under his tutelage a number of star feature writers were developed, who went on to write romantic serials for the Hearst syndicates.²³

Older's role during his years of employ with Hearst was that of editor, columnist, editorial writer, book author and book collaborator. In 1922 Older received two percent of the net profits of the Call, \$335 per week, and was in "full charge of the editorial end of the paper, subject only to "Neylan's direction. As Older had trained Neylan when he was a young reporter, this

direction seemed largely to amount to passing on Hearst directives. In 1930, at Hearst's urging, Older began writing a regular column expressing his thoughts and beliefs. His autobiography, My Own Story (1926), was written in hasty journalese, but showed him to be a man of broad social understanding and sympathy. Older's collaboration with his wife on a biography of George Hearst, William R.'s father, and his wife's biography of William R. Hearst, both brought Older into greater contact with his employer.²⁴

For the first year after Older came aboard the Call in mid-1918 he appeared to be out of step with Hearst news policies in the areas of labor, use of Hearst syndicate material and the question of supporting the League of Nations. It took some time for Hearst to bring Older into line, but he did so tactfully and gently. In respect to Older's commitment to freeing convicted labor leader Tom Mooney, Hearst warned him not to make the Call a class- or a faction-oriented paper, but rather strive to serve "all the people." Older responded that he would strive to avoid making the paper into a class organ.²⁵

Later Older opined that the Call should not fall into a rut and depend on Hearst syndicate features, but should instead develop local talent. This view presented a problem for Hearst, which took time to work out. Hearst wanted Older both to use extensively Hearst syndicate features, because they were cheap and

effective circulation getters, and to develop the local reporting talent. Over a period of time the Call did begin using substantially more syndicate material. Older continued developing feature and serial writing talent, including Elinore Meherin and Elsie Robinson.

Six months after he came aboard the Call, in a statement of editorial principles, Older declared himself in favor of Woodrow Wilson internationalism and some kind of international peace organization. He published favorable publicity toward Wilson and the League of Nation. As an ardent nationalist Hearst emphatically opposed Wilson, and was credited with being the chief publicist of the anti-League of Nations position. Accordingly he complained sharply to Neylan about the pro-League of Nation and pro-Wilson material appearing in the Call. Neylan responded that it would definitely not happen again, because he was in complete sympathy with Hearst's attitude, and that he had got Older to agree with him.²⁶

The foregoing suggests that Older's relationship with Hearst during his first year on the Call was unsettled. Their social philosophies were at variance on the questions of labor, America's international role, and the extent to which to promote prison reform. Yet it is clear that Hearst esteemed Older. He commented soon after hiring him that he heard from him too little, and valued his journalistic opinion. Personally Older was grateful to Hearst for keeping him in his employ until he was

75 years old, and showed his gratitude by rigorously researching the biography on George Hearst, William R.'s father.²⁷

Older candidly admitted, however, that Hearst had "a bunch of faults." His diminished expectations showed through when he commented that "the Call does not pretend to be anything beyond an interesting newspaper." Older and Neylan's professional relationship was consultative, with Neylan passing on to Hearst Older's suggestions. Neylan frankly admired Older, considering him to have had "a big influence" on his life, and thinking that Older's friendship had been a "rare experience."²⁸

In moving on to a discussion of Hearst news control over the Call, it may be recalled that the concept of Hearst news posited three divisions: coverage, news handling and display, and the administrative, business area. In this chapter the two divisions of coverage, and news handling and display will be examined. Coverage will be discussed in terms of two salient Hearst areas of interest: public policy and entertainment. The first area of discussion will be Hearst's interest in the public policy area. Hearst exerted his interest in public policy through newspaper crusades, editorials, news selection and slanting, and by trying to influence legislative bodies directly. Of particular interest in the present discussion are the areas of crusades and editorials.

Hearst's biographers John Tebbel and Cora Older both point out the centrality of crusading to Hearst news. Tebbel wrote:

. . . if there was a dominant note in the way Hearst ran his newspapers, it was the crusade. From the beginning that was his forte. . . .

As Cora Older pointed out, some of the Hearst crusades were major themes on which he campaigned for nearly his whole 64-year newspaper career. The long-term, or otherwise especially significant crusades, that Cora Older mentioned included: Hearst's fight to stay out of World War I, to stay out of the League of Nations, anti-crime, anti-narcotics, against the Power Trust (especially water and electricity), for Prohibition, for popular government, for a national sales tax, and for the veterans of World War I federal bonus payment.²⁹

The attitude Hearst adopted toward crusades was that his own crusading editorials should be printed. But if any of his individual newspapers wanted to start a crusade, the idea should be sent to him for approval. During Neylan's years on the Call Hearst engaged in quite a few crusades, many of them being the same ones mentioned by Cora Older. The one of greatest frequency of mention was the anti-dope crusade, followed in frequency by good roads (including gas tax and license tax for good roads), public ownership of water power, and improving the quality of public education. Other crusades that appeared in Hearst's memoranda: Prohibition, a potential phone rate overcharge exposé, good grammar, support for widows of slain policemen, and promotion of an anti-alien law. Hearst's crusading against illegal

narcotics will be discussed here, as it reveals his news practices and shows how extensive his concern was. It will stand as a symbol for his other crusades.³⁰

In his interest to combat dope Hearst was unstinting in his efforts. On one occasion he told his managing editors to keep a lookout for human interest stories on narcotics users. Getting into the spirit of things, Neylan wrote that if the United States Attorney General would send out some investigators he could supply them with evidence. Another time Hearst demanded that his managing editors enlist the support of civic organizations, ministers, chambers of commerce, and notable citizens to join in an illegal narcotics suppression campaign. Again, Hearst sent a memorandum to Older requesting a "savage" editorial to use in all evening papers excoriating federal departments for protecting dope rings. Then Hearst got Older to contact California United States Senator Hiram Johnson, a legislative ally, and requested him to push through the Porter Bill, an anti-illegal narcotics measure, stating he would be "very grateful" for compliance.³¹

Older's gratitude was made tangible with the promise that if Johnson made one of his ringing Senate speeches in favor of the Porter Bill, it would be printed in every Hearst paper in America to kick off a nationwide crusade. Such a promise would have been heady stuff to Johnson, who entertained Presidential ambitions in the 1920s. Later Older thanked Johnson for his telegram stating that the Porter Bill had been passed, and mentioned that the

telegram had been built into a news story. Hearst's interest in dope showed how in his public policy initiatives he "created news" which reached into the community and influenced legislatures.³²

Hearst control over editorial policy on the Call was explicit and exacting. He issued a no-nonsense instruction that all evening papers were to carry editorials and semi-news articles "EXACTLY AS THEY APPEAR IN THE (New York) EVENING JOURNAL"--on the editorial page, and in the same part of the editorial page. Another time he told editors to de-emphasize editorial attacks, as they alienated sectors of the community. He asked all his editors to submit for his approval any contemplated editorial attack.³³

Often his instructions were expressions of a specific viewpoint. He told all publishers that Brisbane would write two or three editorials per month on subjects appearing in Hearst's magazines. He requested the publishers to make sure they used these Brisbane pieces, as a way of promoting the magazines. Another time he instructed his publishers not to have any editorial or semi-editorial expressions appear regarding Prohibition unless he approved it in advance. Then there were mundane editorial requests to the Call, such as a query for an editorial on hoof and mouth disease, and an instruction to run Herbert Kaufman's editorial on page one.³⁴

The most interesting feature of Hearst control of editorials was the degree to which the editorials, news columns and community initiatives were integrated into purposeful Hearstian opinion

advocacy. One of Hearst's strongest statements along this line concerned the United States Congressional budget system. Hearst demanded his editorial view be pushed in editorials, news articles, the financial page, by marshalling support from the business community, and he wanted a progress report from the publisher.³⁵

Another time he wrote of defeating a California gubernatorial candidate with the judicious use of editorials and by "using our news columns cleverly." Rabidly opposed to the federal income tax as the greatest "Bolshevist" racket in the United States, Hearst put his faith in a federal sales tax, for which he campaigned. Besides writing editorials on the sales tax, Hearst promoted it by sending Congressmen to Canada to study their sales tax, by having petitions circulated in shops and distributing pamphlets on the subject. His dope crusades were equally integrated efforts, involving editorials, news articles, speeches in Congress, requests for Congressional investigations, and attempts to get bills passed.³⁶

Avoidance of letting editorial advocacy spill over into the news columns is a journalistic canon, historically all too often observed in the breach, particularly during hotly contested political campaigns. But Hearst's use of the news columns to promote his opinions was more reminiscent of the nineteenth century "opinion" journalism, rather than twentieth century "objective" journalism. It may be recalled that Hearst started his journalistic career in the 1880s by observing newspapers in Boston

and New York, and working as a cub on Pulitzer's World. In the "mauve decade" of the 1890s, before the advent of journalism schools, editorial unions, and professional journalism societies, owners had fewer restraints on their freedom to manufacture news, and to broadcast their opinions wholesale through the paper. Hearst came to prominence as a "yellow" sensationalizer, and shrieking-headline promoter of the Spanish-American War. When public taste changed he toned down his news fare, but that did not stop him in the 1920s and 1930s from advocating his opinions throughout his papers. That he did so, and even engaged in pamphleteering and petitioning, casts a pall of Hearstian subjectivism over his public policy journalism.

Like his mentor Joseph Pulitzer, whom he tried to out-Pulitzer in San Francisco and New York, Hearst used a formula of attracting readers with the bait of entertainment, hoping they would somehow be persuaded to switch to the editorials. Pulitzer dilated on the formula in terms of sublime philosophy being useless if no one read it: "You must go for your million circulation, and, . . . turn the minds and votes, of your readers one way or the other at critical moments." In opposition to this view was that of E. L. Godkin, scholarly editor of the Nation, who was said to prefer to influence a few enlightened minds than a million numbskulls.³⁷

The power of Pulitzer's idea was further developed by Hearst, whose papers in 1923 had a daily circulation of 3.4 million "numbskulls," and some influential politicians, too. The importance Hearst placed on entertainment in netting this readership, almost three times as large as his closest rival, is suggested by the number of feature, syndicate and news services he developed. By 1928 they included King Features Syndicate, Newspaper Feature Service, Premier Syndicate, International Feature Service, Universal Service and International News Service. Hearst charged their expenses to his newspapers subscribing to them, and he had so many syndicates so they would stimulate one another.³⁸

The entertainment fare used in Hearst newspapers was both locally and nationally originated. Among the locally originated material, which except for news handling and typographical display instructions, often fell below Hearst's purview, was news of crime, scandal, disaster, sports, women's fare and sob sister material. Some of this same material also was syndicated. Entertainment fare that was regularly syndicated included material from columnists (some of whom like Arthur Brisbane and Walter Winchell were stars of supernova magnitude), film news, features, comics and serials.³⁹

Hearst's basic strategy toward entertainment was to have his papers be stronger in features than any rival papers. He urged Neylan to use the best of the Hearst features, and the best of other

syndicate features, cautioning that to let a rival paper become as strong in features would be a "fatal mistake." He told Neylan it was a "wise move" to get the best features from other syndicates to prevent competitors from being more formidable. His attitude toward his own syndicates was that they were run "primarily for the benefit of the Hearst papers." Hearst did not allow his syndicates to sell to rival papers, but did market vigorously to noncompetitive papers. His general policy was tempered by the provisos that he wanted to emphasize building up his own syndicates where possible, and that he did not want features purchased from other syndicates unless approved by Hearst or Bradford Merrill, a New York executive. On occasion, when Hearst was in one of his economizing phases he asked Neylan to cut out dispensable features from other syndicates.⁴⁰

Keeping a close eye on the Call's entertainment fare, Hearst issued detailed instructions on what to use, not to use, commented on film news, asked for subjective coverage and discussed the contracts of feature writers. He told Neylan to get the Mutt and Jeff feature for the Pacific Coast, but to avoid the name of Hearst, or he would "not get it." Hearst gave instructions to use the "Bert Moses," and the "Once Over" feature, and to print the "McGurk" drawing using the full eight columns of the page. On other occasions he told Neylan to soft pedal the Queen Marie, of Romania, story, and to stop those interminable prison serials in the Call, which had a way of "dragging on forever."⁴¹

Hearst said he wanted plenty of film news printed, but said to soft pedal several of the stars who had been overplayed. In the subjective vein, he said he wanted "lots of publicity," and "plenty of photographs," for the Duncan sisters, who were "friends of Mrs. Hearst and mine." He also asked for a good review of the show "Tip Top," because Hearst wanted "to be nice" to the producer. At different times he got involved in the contract renewals or performance of various of his feature writing stars, such as Elsie Robinson, and Elinor Meherin.⁴²

The attention Hearst placed on entertainment fare makes that category emerge as the essential element of his news strategy of attracting readers. There is no evidence to indicate that Neylan was not compliant in following Hearst's entertainment fare instructions. He did on occasion bring an entertainment-type story idea to Hearst's attention on his own initiative, for instance a series on Japanese aviation. In that case Hearst approved the use of it.⁴³

Rounding out this portion of the discussion of Hearst's news control of the Call, the area of news handling and display will now be examined. The question of news control in reference to the business, administrative area of the Call comes under consideration in chapter IV.

In directing news handling Hearst gave general instructions, some specific advice and a few subjective demands for handling coverage. For one whose name was associated by journalism

historian Willard Bleyer with innovations in headlines, typography and story display, it was surprising to see only one Hearst directive along that line. In it he instructed his publishers how to handle long stories. Hearst said they should be divided up into as many parts as possible and each run under a separate headline. Further, he instructed that the headlines should tell all the facts of importance clearly and comprehensively. He concluded by asking that the papers be well written and as entertainingly written as possible.⁴⁴

In the 1924 Presidential campaign, when Hearst was not particularly enamored of any of the candidates, he uncharacteristically issued instructions for his papers "to be CONSPICUOUSLY fair." To that he added the papers should "be so fair that we attract attention by our fairness, and cause comment on our fairness." At other times he issued general instructions on how and when to use color on the front page of the newspapers, how to run ad matter that looked like editorial material, and instructed the phrase "national defense" be substituted for "preparation for war," and the word "war."⁴⁵

Hearst's news handling instructions could be exacting. In connection with the Max Reinhardt divorce case he told all his papers to "be eminently fair." Later he ordered a potentially libelous story of Luther Burbank dropped as he was "a wonderful man." Another time he came up with the idea of a stunt of having newsboys distribute papers during the fourth quarter of football

games that contained stories of the first half's play. He thought this would be a good way of demonstrating the advance of journalism.⁴⁶

The subjective side of Hearst news crept into the picture when he requested that layouts and comment from Hearst's New York papers on Mrs. William R. Hearst's milk fund benefit be picked up and used. Hearst wanted to make a nationwide splash out of the event. Finally, Hearst instructed Neylan to avoid printing "anything unpleasant" about a rival San Francisco publisher, because he, in his turn, had avoided printing "a lot of vicious stuff" that other papers had carried about Hearst. In his reply Neylan wrote that the rival publisher had been "petted and pampered," but said nothing about how the San Francisco news reading public would be served by such tacit mutual deference pacts between publishers.⁴⁷

To conclude, this chapter has provided context for an examination of news control on the San Francisco Call. The Call was found to conform in appearance to a "Hearst newspaper," a phenomenon carefully defined in the Bartness dissertation, and alluded to in Swanberg's book. Conformance in appearance gives credence to the idea that Hearst papers were shaped by policy directives emanating from a central command. The news control question was examined in terms of Neylan's and Older's roles and relationships with Hearst. Correspondence was examined between these top management personnel, which revealed in the main, both Older and Neylan were loyal managerial agents. Older occupied a niche of

his own, due to his journalistic expertise. Although Older's social philosophy differed with Hearst's, that did not deter him from being compliant with Hearst's directives.

The news control question was examined in relation to the Call. It was found that Hearst exercised general and specific news control over the paper in the areas of coverage (including public policy and entertainment), and news handling and display. (The discussion of Hearst news control in relation to the business, administrative area of the Call appears in chapter IV.) Based on the exposition of the origin of Hearst news in chapter II, it was posited that Hearst news followed a Pulitzerian formula of offering entertainment as bait, in hopes of attracting readers to Hearst's public policy positions. Hearst's attempts to influence public policy were found not to be limited to the editorial page, but to lap over into the news columns, and extend to politicking the public. It was brought out that Hearstian subjectivism played a role in the character of Hearst news in the areas of public policy, entertainment, and news handling and display.

NOTES

¹"Hearst," Fortune 12 (Oct., 1935):146.

²Burton Crane, "Hearst Built Corporate Empires in Newspapers, Magazines and Radio," New York Times, Aug. 15, 1951, p. 21; Brisbane Editorial on Hearst Newspaper Chain (Neylan Papers, Bancroft Library), Sept. 24, 1922; for names of newspapers owned by Hearst in 1924, H. O. Davis to Hearst, *ibid.*, July 18, 1924; for rankings of the newspaper advertising markets, "Total Newspaper Advertising of the Principal Cities of the United States for January, 1923-1922, prepared by the statistical department of the New York Evening Post, for January 1923, *ibid.*

³Brisbane editorial, *ibid.*; William Weinfeld, "The Growth of Daily Newspaper Chains in the U.S., 1923, 1926-35," Journalism Quarterly 13 (1936):377.

⁴For advertising rankings in the top markets, New York Evening Post, *op. cit.*

⁵San Francisco Chronicle, Aug. 29, 1929; newspaper card catalog file, newspaper reading room, Doe Library, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, California.

⁶John F. Neylan to William R. Hearst, May 19, 1919, Neylan Papers, Bancroft Library; Neylan to Geoffrey Konta, June 19, 1922, and June 1, 1922; *ibid.* Moses Koenigsberg, King News (Philadelphia: F. A. Stokes Co., 1941), pp. 349-50. Although Hearst's dummies were listed as the sole owners of the newspaper's stock, he retained the power to recover complete possession at will. This was done through the device of maintaining an option to purchase, whose terms made it actually nothing more than a management services contract for the dummy owners.

⁷"City Fortunate to Have Neylan Publisher--Rolph," San Francisco Call and Post, May, 1919, Neylan Papers, *op. cit.*; San Francisco Call, Oct. 5, 1920, p. 1 of section 2; Neylan to Hearst, Sept. 12, 1925, Neylan Papers, *op. cit.*; Neylan to Geoffrey Konta, June 1, 1922, *ibid.*

⁸Neylan to Hearst, Jan. 16, 1926, and Dec. 10, 1926, *ibid.*

⁹Gerold L. Bartness, "Hearst in Milwaukee" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1968), pp. 2-3, 106-7, 109, 180, chapter 7, 9, 10, 11, and 481-3. Bartness's inductive generalizations sprinkled throughout his thesis give credence to using the Wisconsin News as a criterion variable of a "Hearst newspaper." For instance: the Wisconsin News was a "typically sensational Hearst newspaper," p. 164; the sob sister was an indispensable part of every Hearst operation, and the Wisconsin News was no exception, p. 180; and, like Hearst papers everywhere the Wisconsin News was boldly into politics . . . , p. 212.

Swanberg also describes trappings typical of Hearst papers: "All of his newspapers had a sameness about them--the splashy headlines, the sensational pictures, the inevitable typographical errors," Citizen Hearst (New York: Scribner's, 1961), p. 457.

¹⁰San Francisco Call, Wed., Oct. 13, 1920, examination of the whole 26-page paper.

¹¹John A. Gothberg, "The Local influence of J. R. Knowland's Oakland Tribune," Journalism Quarterly 45 (1968):487.

¹²San Francisco Call, average circulation figures filed with the U.S. Post Office and reprinted in the newspaper, Oct. 5, 1920, section two, p. 1.

¹³Finding key to the John F. Neylan papers, Neylan Papers, op. cit., undated.

¹⁴Neylan to Hearst, May 19, 1919, *ibid.*; Hearst to Neylan, Sept. 4, 1923, *ibid.*; Hearst Publications, Inc., announcement, Jan. 16, 1926, *ibid.*; Neylan to Hearst, Sept. 21, 1926, and Nov. 22, 1927, *ibid.*

¹⁵Neylan to Hearst, April 28, 1923, and Oct. 11, 1923, *ibid.*; Hearst to Neylan, Aug. 29, 1923, Oct. 8, 1923, and Jan. 6, 1924, *ibid.* Moses Koenigsberg, King News (Philadelphia: Stokes, 1941), p. 465.

¹⁶Koenigsberg, *ibid.*; Neylan to Hearst, Sept. 20, 1923. Jan. 5, 1924, and March 4, 1926, *ibid.*; Hearst to Neylan, March 18, 1926 and Feb. 2, 1924, *ibid.*; H. O. Davis to Hearst. July 18, 1924, *ibid.*; Joseph A. Moore to Neylan, June 6, 1924, *ibid.*

¹⁷ Neylan to Hearst, Aug. 30, 1922, Sept. 21, 1922, Jan. 24, 1924, Jan. 9, 1924, April 26, 1924, Jan. 25, 1926 and Feb. 2, 1926, *ibid.*; Hearst to Neylan, Sept. 20, 1922, Oct. 28, 1922, and Nov. 3, 1922, *ibid.* In two instances Hearst seemed to put profit considerations above attaining a unified political line. On Oct. 28, 1922 he wrote Neylan that he thought the Los Angeles Herald should adhere to its traditional nonpolitical stance. On Nov. 3, 1922, he wrote Neylan that the San Francisco Call and the San Francisco Examiner should be distinguished in reference to their political stances on various state propositions.

¹⁸ "Hearst," Fortune, Vol 12 (Oct., 1935), pp. 134-5; Finding key to the John F. Neylan papers, *op. cit.* Neylan to Hearst, March 8, 1944, *ibid.*; Neylan said he resigned when he was on verge of nervous collapse, because it was obvious to him that the Joseph P. Kennedy refinancing schemes were ruining Hearst, but Hearst would not listen to him.

¹⁹ Hearst to Neylan, Feb. 24, 1924; Sept. 20, 1922, *ibid.*; Neylan to Hearst, Sept. 21, 1922, *ibid.*

²⁰ Neylan to Hearst, Aug. 29, 1923, May 8, 1944, May 18, 1927, and Oct. 29, 1919, *ibid.*

²¹ Neylan to Hearst, Jan. 5, 1920, Sept. 3, 1927, Sept. 13, 1923, *ibid.*

²² Finding key to the Fremont Older papers, undated, Fremont Older Papers, Bancroft Library; Ferdinand Lundberg, Imperial Hearst (New York: Equinox Cooperative Press, 1936), p. 47.

²³ W. A. Swanberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 402-3; Fremont Older to Jack (?), June 30, 1918, Older Papers, *op. cit.*, ; Fremont Older to The Editor, Feb. 12, 1919, *ibid.*

²⁴ Neylan to Geoffrey Konta, July 3, 1922, Neylan Papers, *op. cit.*; Hearst to Older, April 26, 1930, Older Papers, *op. cit.*; Older to Hearst, May 19, 1930 and Oct. 30, 1930, *ibid.*; National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Vol. C, "Fremont Older," p. 183.

²⁵ Perhaps the reasons Hearst exercised news control over Older gently were because within five months after Older's departure from the Bulletin its circulation dropped 15,000, and because he respected Older's ability and character. Older to Hearst, Dec. 19, 1918, and Jan. 7, 1919, Older Papers; *op. cit.*, Hearst to Older, Jan. 2, 1919, *ibid.*

²⁶Mrs. Fremont Older, William Randolph Hearst, American (New York: Appleton-Century, 1936), p. 415; John Tebbel, The Life and Good Times of William Randolph Hearst (New York: Dutton, 1952), p. 167; Older to "To the Editor Addressed," Feb. 12, 1919, Older Papers, *ibid.*; Hearst to Neylan, and Neylan to Hearst, June 16, 1919, and June 25, 1919, Neylan Papers, *op. cit.*

²⁷Hearst to Older, Dec. 14, 1918, Older Papers, *op. cit.*; Older to Hearst, April 24, 1930, *ibid.*; Older to Rose W. Lane, June 30, 1931, *ibid.*

²⁸Older to R. L. Burgess, Aug. 29, 1932, *ibid.*; Older to Erskine S. Wood, May 1, 1929, *ibid.*; Neylan to Older, June 8, 1923, Neylan Papers, *op. cit.*; Neylan to Marshall Maslin, March 7, 1935, *ibid.*

²⁹Tebbel, *op. cit.*, p. 157; Mrs. Fremont Older, *op. cit.*, pp. 368, 380, 415, 446, 466, 482, 515-26.

³⁰Hearst to Editors of All Hearst Papers, Dec. 13, 1919, Neylan Papers, *op. cit.*

³¹Hearst to Editors of All Hearst Newspapers, Neylan Papers, May 16, 1922; Neylan to Hearst, *ibid.*, July 13, 1922; Hearst to The Managing Editors of All Hearst Newspapers, *ibid.*, Jan. 14, 1923; Hearst to Older, Older Papers, *op. cit.*, March 5, 1925; Older to Hiram Johnson, *ibid.*, Dec. 28, 1928.

³²*ibid.*; Older to Johnson, Jan. 7, 1929, *ibid.*

³³Hearst to Managing Editors of All Hearst Evening Papers, Neylan Papers, Nov. 17, 1922, *op. cit.*; Joseph Willicombe to Editors of All Hearst Papers, March 17, 1920, *ibid.*

³⁴Hearst to The Publishers of All Hearst Newspapers, Oct. 23, 1922, and March 6, 1922, *ibid.*; Hearst to Neylan, April 28, 1924, *ibid.*; Willicombe to Neylan, Nov. 7, 1923, *ibid.*

³⁵Hearst to Publisher San Francisco Call, Oct. 23, 1923, *ibid.*

³⁶William R. Hearst, Selections (San Francisco: Published privately, 1948), pp. 512, 518, 483; Untitled copy of a Hearst memorandum, Neylan Papers, Sept. 21, 1922, *op. cit.*; Hearst to All Publishers, Feb. 21, 1922, and May 16, 1922, *ibid.*; Older to Hearst, Older Papers, Feb. 4, 1929, *op. cit.*; Older to Hiram Johnson, Jan. 7, 1929, *ibid.*

- ³⁷W. A. Swanberg, Pulitzer (New York: Scribner's, 1967), p. 209.
- ³⁸Weinfeld, op. cit., p. 377; Koenigsberg, op. cit., pp. 434-5, 439, 480.
- ³⁹Bartness, op. cit.
- ⁴⁰Hearst to Neylan, Dec. 17, 1924; Jan. 5, 1925; Sept. 2, 1925; March 5, 1922; March 18, 1926; Neylan Papers, op. cit.; Hearst to Managing Editor Call-Post, Dec. 4, 1919, *ibid.* In 1926, Merrill was general manager of Hearst newspapers. Swanberg, op. cit., p. 455.
- ⁴¹Hearst to Neylan, June 19, 1919, Feb. 22, 1926, *ibid.*; Willicombe to the Managing Editors of All Hearst Newspapers, Oct. 30, 1922, Nov. 2, 1922, *ibid.*; Hearst to Publishers of All Hearst Newspapers, Jan. 7, 1926, *ibid.*
- ⁴²Hearst to Neylan, *ibid.*, Feb. 12, 1923; March 20, 1923; June 12, 1924; Jan. 31, 1925; Hearst to Editors of Hearst Publications, *ibid.*, Feb. 2, 1923.
- ⁴³Neylan to Herst, July 3, 1925, *ibid.*
- ⁴⁴Hearst to Editors and Publishers of All Hearst Newspapers, Jan. 29, 1924, *ibid.*; Willard Bleyer, Main Currents in the History of American Journalism (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927), pp. 387-8.
- ⁴⁵Hearst to All Hearst Papers, or, to All Publishers of Hearst Newspapers, July 10, 1924, Feb. 21, 1922, March 6, 1922, and Nov. 28, 1925, *ibid.*
- ⁴⁶Hearst to Neylan, Jan. 12, 1924, *ibid.*; Hearst to The Managing Editors of All Hearst Newspapers, Oct. 11, 1923; and Nov. 7, 1922, *ibid.*
- ⁴⁷Hearst to Neylan, March 24, 1923, Nov. 21, 1924, *ibid.*; Neylan to Hearst, Nov. 25, 1924, *ibid.*

CHAPTER IV

SAN FRANCISCO MARKET: CONCLUSION

Chapter III provided national and local market context for an examination of news control as the leading factor in shaping news on the San Francisco Call. It explored news control in relation to Fremont Older's and John Neylan's roles and relationships to Hearst. Finally, news control was examined in relation to news coverage, and news handling and display.

This chapter continues the exploration of Hearst news control in relation to the business, administrative area of the Call. (As pointed out in chapter III, Hearst news is posited as being composed of three divisions: coverage, news handling and display, and the administrative, business area.) The examination of the business, administrative area will be divided into two parts: the activity of monitoring accounting figures, and the dialogue over the Call's revenue producing areas (circulation, advertising and profits). Finally, this chapter devotes considerable space to the Hearst news control aspect of the extensive reorganization of the Call that occurred during Neylan's tenure as publisher.

The areas of discussion in chapter IV are construed as fitting into the concept of news control as being the leading factor accounting for Hearst news. By monitoring accounting figures with regular reports, the growth, activity, decline and

content of the Call could be monitored, compared with other newspapers, and matched against corporate goals. The dialogue between Hearst and Neylan that ensued over the Call's revenue producing areas (circulation, advertising and profit figures) were in the vein of appeals and justifications in regard to the Call's progress. Finally, the extensive reorganization of the Call was an explicit attempt by Hearst to have the Call stop being different from and less successful than other Hearst evening papers. Hearst justified the reorganization on grounds that the Call should be more successful, conform to "certain accepted standards" of editing, and "get into step" with the other Hearst evening papers.¹

As in chapter III, the Call is viewed as a case history within a network of Hearst national policy. To make that view explicit, national directives that can be correlated with the local topics are introduced to suggest the outlines of the overall framework within which Hearst papers had to operate. First the national level directives will be discussed, and then the Call directives will be evaluated.

In this chapter, the great preponderance of Hearst management directives deal with the Call's particular situation, and only a few are national directives to all publishers. This seems to be because the topics under discussion, relating largely to the Call's progress as a newspaper, are particularly related to the Call itself, and not to areas of broad national policy. It would be thus unreasonable to expect the framework of national policy in

which the Call operated to emerge as clearly in this chapter, as it did in chapter III.

Turning to a discussion of the third division of Hearst news, the business, administrative area, the aspect of monitoring of accounting figures will be discussed. The Call had to submit a variety of weekly, monthly and national reports to Hearst. Various lines of manuscript evidence indicate that Hearst's general policy was to require regular reports from all his newspapers. For one thing the Call had to pay \$390 each month, which covered its portion of expenses that were incurred by the general management exercised over all Hearst papers.²

In addition, other memoranda suggested the national framework of monitoring accounting figures. On one occasion Hearst asked that all of his newspapers have the head of each department make a brief weekly report of the activity in their department and have the publisher forward those reports to Hearst. The rationale was that Hearst wanted to know what was being done by whom. Neylan promptly wrote his compliance with this request.³

Another time Hearst asked all newspaper publishers to comply with the requests of W. E. Miller, head of the general management's department of comparative statistics, for details on the newspapers production and operation costs. Ideas on cost reporting systems were solicited. The comparative statistics were to be used by general management in supervising the papers.⁴

Another facet of central control emerged in a Hearst directive to all his newspaper publishers when he instructed them to conduct their business with one another on a cash basis. When individual papers had a shortfall in income, so that they could not meet their weekly debts, the papers were directed to request money from general management's central fund to pay their obligation, and also write a statement showing what was being done to increase their income. Hearst also asked each publisher to prepare a one-page monthly report detailing what his paper's financial obligations were, and to send the reports directly to him.⁵

In addition to the requests the Call had to fulfill listed above, required of all publishers, it had to report on financial information weekly, monthly and yearly. Neylan had to attend conferences with Hearst on the paper's progress. In addition, Older had to make weekly internal reports to the publisher on news and picture play.

Cover letters for accounting reports in 1920 and 1921 sent by Neylan's secretary to Hearst list a variety of reports. Among them for the Call Publishing Company were a summary of the profit and loss account, weekly and monthly operating statements, and monthly explanations for extraordinary items. There were monthly statements of assets and liabilities, a monthly analysis of surplus account; and weekly, monthly and yearly statements of earnings and expenses.⁶

Neylan was also responsible for sending to Hearst financial reports on the Call Building, which housed the Call newspaper, and which rented out office space. These reports included monthly and yearly summaries of profit and loss account, statements of earnings and expenses and statements of assets and liabilities.⁷

Hearst made clear the purpose of all these reports in a memorandum to Neylan, in which he said the figures "compel comparison. That is what they are for." Noting the comparisons were not wholly favorable to the Call, Hearst rhetorically queried whether the Call should not try to be as successful as the other Hearst evening papers. Hearst then commented that bringing facts to Neylan's attention was not "knocking" the Call, but an effort to contribute toward the paper's greater success.⁸

In the early 1920s Neylan was occasionally summoned to San Simeon or to New York for conferences with Hearst. In one case Hearst asked Neylan to come to the "ranch," as he called San Simeon, armed with figures so he could discuss how much of the Call's increased profit was due to the decreased cost of newsprint, how much to increased circulation income, and how much to increased advertising, compared to the previous year. Such a detailed request indicates on Hearst's part close control of his newspapers and a good grasp of newspapering.⁹

In regard to newspapering, it may be mentioned as an aside that it is conventionally accepted that a newspapers two sources of income are circulation and advertising. That income minus

fixed and variable costs, and taxes, equals profit. The major variable expense is the cost of newsprint. In regard to developing a newspaper property it is conventionally accepted that quality news (whether entertainment fare or hard news) builds circulation. It is probable Hearst leaned toward entertainment news both because he saw it as bait attractive to the mass public, and because it was relatively cheap when syndicated. Circulation numbers and demographics sell the advertising. Advertising brings in the profit (as circulation revenue often is mostly taken up by distribution costs). In developing a newspaper property, the starting point generally is to improve the news, which costs money. With a huge fortune at his disposal Hearst could be a strong competitor, as he proved himself to be, buying up editorial and managerial talent, and buying up the best of what news he thought appealed to the public.

The weekly internal reports editor Older furnished to the Call's publisher enabled him to monitor the paper's content, editorial firsts, big news, serials and picture play. The dates on the single-spaced, typewritten, one- or two-page reports spanned 1929 to 1935, when the respective publishers of the paper were Charles S. Young, and Robert P. Holliday. The fact the practice was continued through the terms of two publishers suggests the practice could have been in operation during Neylan's tenure. As Older was

not a person who saved business papers, only eight of the reports were found.¹⁰

These reports reveal that heaviest news play went to the "murder thrill" of the week, especially if it involved the socially prominent, torture killings, or "love triangles." Wrecks, fires, intrigues and "love nests" were not far behind. A breath-taking trans-oceanic flight by aviatrix Amelia Earhart, dramatic kidnap trial photos, and early promotion of football features were cited as circulation getters. Reader-grabbing pictures were pointed out, by Older, as well as the pulling power of melodramatic serials.¹¹

Older's preoccupation with circulation was revealed in this line: "A sharp gain in circulation was reported in the day's sale." Other times he listed all the stories that "served to help daily sales." Beating the competition was so important that on big stories relays of chartered airplanes and fast cars were organized to rush photos and text back to the Call.¹²

Monitoring these accounting figures, departmental and editorial reports show a strong Hearst interest in the Call. Older's reports suggest the editor's concept of Hearstian success to cohere around dramatic, human-interest news that boosted circulation and sales. The information that follows between Hearst and Neylan over the Call's revenue producing areas of circulation, advertising and profit figures reveal another aspect of Hearst's concern.

Hearst's concern over circulation, advertising and profits on the Call was a general concern extending to all his newspapers. The general framework of that concern was revealed in a memorandum noting the appointment of E. M. Swasey coordinator and chief solicitor of foreign advertising for all newspapers. Hearst pointed out in that memorandum that he felt it was desirable that supervision of all his newspapers be coordinated in these departments: news service, mechanical, circulation methods, promotion, and advertising methods.¹³

In respect to getting more circulation for all his papers, Hearst told his editors and publishers that the way to do it was through advertising. That they should advertise the important and creditable things that make for character and standing that the competitors did not have. And they should advertise in other papers, on posters and on cars. Regarding advertising rates, Hearst told his publishers it was better to keep them high, and to work hard at soliciting, promoting and persuading advertisers the papers were a good medium, so they would be willing to pay the price. This was the formula Albert Kobler used in making a towering success of promoting advertising sales in the Sunday American Weekly. Hearst opined that low ad rates merely confirmed potential advertisers suspicions that the medium was a poor one.¹⁴

The context for Neylan's and Hearst's dialogue about the Call's circulation growth was its position among the San Francisco evening papers. Its main rival was the standard-size Bulletin, which Older had built into a leading paper before moving over to the Call, and the tabloid-size News, owned by Scripps. Soundings taken at three different periods show the Call moving into a commanding circulation lead over the other two San Francisco evening papers.

Between the end of March and the end of September 1920, the Call's circulation increased from 92,000 to 98,000, while the Bulletin increased about 500, remaining in rough figures, 80,000, and the News increased from 51,000 to 52,000. By May, 1926, the Call was clearly the dominant evening paper, chiefly due to the Bulletin's decline, which was so marked that even the tabloid News passed it. The figures then were: Call, 101,000; News, 68,000; and Bulletin, 64,000. At this time the Bulletin was a financially decrepit property, but a merger with the Call was not arranged until 1929.¹⁵

Behind these rather sterile figures of the Call's improving market situation was an active dialogue between Neylan and Hearst. Neylan was in the posture of reporting on advertising, circulation and profit figures, defending them when they were criticized, and bragging when they were definitely in the Call's favor. He also reported to Hearst about market conditions, the attitude of advertisers and local intelligence in regard to the activity of

and morale on the Bulletin. Hearst probed Neylan's figures, made unfavorable comparisons between the Call and the Los Angeles Herald, which Neylan said were unfair, because the market situations were different. Hearst criticized one of Neylan's department managers, Neylan thought unfairly, although he agreed to replace him. Although the paper was growing, Hearst was never quite satisfied, always watching, and applying continual pressure.¹⁶

Hearst put pressure on Neylan for profits when he wrote in mid-1920 telling him that the Call should earn a profit of between \$300,000 and \$500,000 per year. Neylan responded that it was adding insult to injury for a Hearst lieutenant to have come out to the Call and induced Neylan to put in an advertising rate increase, and then complain to Hearst when advertising revenue temporarily fell off as a result of the rate hike.¹⁷ A week or so later Neylan wrote that he would put into effect every economy to enable the Call to meet its financial obligations to Hearst.¹⁸

Hurting the Call's profits was the fact that when the Call's advertising rate hike went through the Bulletin induced San Francisco's five largest department store advertisers to partially boycott the Call. The Bulletin agreed with these advertisers not to raise its ad rates if they would give the Bulletin 25 percent more advertising than the Call. It was not until nine months later in April, 1921 that Neylan could report to Hearst that all the department stores except for the Emporium were giving the Call equal advertising to the Bulletin. At this

time Neylan reported that the Call's circulation had spurred to 103,000, while the Bulletin was at 81,000.¹⁹

In 1923 Neylan defended the Call's profit level saying it earned \$135,000 in 1921, and \$254,000 in 1922, and that it would have earned an additional \$71,000 if it had not had to pay that much out for Cosmopolitan News Service, a new Saturday magazine and a comic section. He marshalled these figures in defense of his business manager, Jacob L. Adler, whom Hearst wanted to discharge. Neylan argued that Adler was "a very valuable man" for the Call, but he would be a good soldier and follow orders if that was Hearst's final wish.²⁰

Dissatisfied with the Call's profit level, Hearst pointed out that it made only \$45,000 by April 15, 1923, compared to \$87,000 for the same period the year before. Then to drive in the needle he said the Los Angeles Herald made \$439,000 for the same period in 1923, and the Call "really ought to make more than one-tenth" what the Herald did. Then Hearst complained that though the Call was a strong paper, its business organization just did "not score."²¹

Despite Hearst's needling the Call did make substantial progress. Four days after Hearst's complaint about the business organization, Neylan sent a memorandum showing that advertising lineage through most of April, 1923 was 2.8 million, compared to 2.2 million lines for the same period the year before. Neylan

pointed out that local advertising accounted for almost 60 percent of the total increased lineage.²²

A few months later Neylan made a list of proposals to Hearst that he said would let the Call's profitability shine through and reveal its healthy business growth. The proposals were in harmony with Hearst's temporary theme of "present profit" being "more important than ultimate development," as Neylan put it. Neylan's aim was to pare away some of the burden of expense that the Call was carrying.²³

Neylan's first idea was to save \$100,000 per year by getting rid of the Saturday magazine. Hearst rejected that, and later Neylan came to believe in the importance of the magazine, as an antidote to the increased features that the Bulletin was putting in its Saturday paper. Other suggestions, all of which Hearst approved, included: postponing the development of classified, cutting back from two pages of comics to one, reducing the "murderous charge" made for Cosmopolitan News Service, and for the Call to be reimbursed for the interest that it paid out for the benefit of other Hearst corporations.²⁴

During 1924-1925 the Call engaged in a struggle with the Bulletin that saw the Call move by August, 1925 to a circulation of 98,000, compared to the Bulletin's 67,000. Announcing that the Call had beaten back the Bulletin's attempt to turn itself into a viable newspaper, Neylan asked Hearst's permission to put through

an advertising rate hike. Hearst approved a rate hike from \$2.24 an inch to \$2.52, and told Neylan to go ahead with it.²⁵

The pattern was for Hearst to monitor closely the Call's progress and market position in the areas of advertising, circulation and profits. He pressured Neylan for profit growth to the point of being willing to pause temporarily in building up the paper. Hearst's interest and control over Call management decisions extended to approving advertising rate hikes, and requiring the discharge of Adler, the business manager. As will be shown in the ensuing discussion on the Call's reorganization, Hearst's control of the paper extended to reorganizing every phase of its operation.²⁶

Generally it was Hearst's policy to reorganize the papers he purchased so that they conformed to his view of what a newspaper should be like. For his first several years of ownership of the San Francisco Examiner there was constant reorganization and enlargement of the staff. He took the "sex-and-sensation sheet" of the New York Journal and so transformed it by typographical changes, hiring a staff of stars, crusading in the public interest and capturing attention with stunts that in within one year its circulation passed that of the New York World. Likewise when Arthur Brisbane bought the Wisconsin News in 1918 it was given the Hearst transformation by changing its typography, headlines and editorial page, by changing the editorial fare to plug crime news, and sob-sister fare, by adding feature and syndicate material and

by crusading in the public interest. In many respects the appearance and content the Hearst papers were remarkably consistent.²⁷

Hearst's reorganization of the Call was continual. He was not satisfied to get the paper in front of its competitors, but restlessly drove on, continually making changes and demands on the paper. For the first several years of Neylan's tenure a number of changes were made in the paper, until by May, 1923 it was in first place among the evening San Francisco papers. Then in January, 1925 Hearst demanded a major reorganization of the Call's news, editorial page and business departments. Hearst then said the Call was "exceedingly good" in March, 1925, and was an "excellent paper" in June, 1925. But it was evident that he was not satisfied. He kept sending memoranda to Neylan demanding further changes, including a better movie department, editorial page changes, and better pictorial effects. When Neylan, who was no longer publisher, sent Hearst a memorandum in July, 1926 stating that the Call was then a sound property, one could easily surmise that its effect would have produced perhaps a pause, followed by a fresh series of Hearstian demands.²⁸

A general purpose behind the reorganization of the Call and Hearst's other papers was to set performance standards that translated into large profits. He sent a telegram to Neylan that he wanted to convene a conference of West Coast publishers so they could discuss how the West Coast papers could earn an aggregate of

one million dollars more in 1927 than in 1926. Each paper was to increase its profitability by a target figure; the Call's quota was to be \$100,000 more than the year before. Neylan affirmatively responded and suggested that each publisher be rated on how he did in the following areas: circulation, advertising lineage, elimination of expenses, editorial excellence and profit increases, and that the winning publishers be given substantial bonuses.²⁹

On the subject of profits Hearst waxed poetically and passionately. His favorite comparison was the Chicago Tribune. On one occasion he told Neylan that despite the Tribune's great age and firm foundation it put forth a tremendous amount of energy into improving its editorial, business, advertising and circulation department, never resting content on the \$6 million to \$8 million it earned per year. Another time, he said he wanted to take a leaf out of the Tribune's book, and have his successful papers first get on top, then "push the fight to the finish." He wanted his paper's to "be crushingly ahead . . . overwhelmingly ahead" of their competitors. Hearst's idea was to have his newspapers "lead the leaders." Later on Hearst said that he wanted to follow the policy of the Tribune of so completely monopolizing the advertising as to make the existence of competitors precarious.³⁰

Turning to a closer examination of the Hearst-motivated reorganization of the Call that occurred during Neylan's tenure as publisher, it should be kept in mind that a golden thread linking the paper's continual changes and reshufflings was Hearst's

restless desire to drive on for monopoly profits. At first Neylan seemed to have a rather free hand with the paper. Six weeks after purchasing the Call for Hearst, Neylan wrote his boss to say that he was proceeding judiciously to size up the Call's organization and its ramifications.³¹

Almost four years elapsed from the time Neylan took possession of the Call in May, 1919 until March, 1923 and Hearst made only a handful of requests for changes and reorganization. In April, 1921, Hearst informed Neylan through an intermediary to start a want ad campaign. The following month Hearst asked Neylan to cut back on giving away free papers, and to try to establish a new low on white paper wastage.³²

In May, 1922 Hearst complained that the Saturday edition of the Call was not "very good." He directed Neylan to start using the New York Journal's Saturday magazine and comic section, and to completely separate from the Call its subsidiary property, the Oakland Post-Enquirer newspaper. Neylan complied. Then in January, 1923 Hearst unfavorably compared the Call's profit level to the Los Angeles Herald. Declaring that the Call got the circulation, but not the business, Hearst demanded that Jacob Adler, the business manager be discharged. Neylan resisted this demand for a time before complying. Eventually a Hearst choice, a Mr. Goddard, took over Adler's job.³³

For six weeks in the spring of 1923 a flurry of exchanges took place between Neylan and Hearst that produced more changes in the Call, and brought out how far the paper had come since Neylan took over as publisher. It started with Neylan requesting, and Hearst approving, a street-price cut in the Call from five cents to three cents, to match a similar cut by the Bulletin. In approving the cut, Hearst told Neylan to keep the home delivery price above the Bulletin's, money that could be used to improve the paper. At the same time Hearst demanded that the Call increase its amount of comics, sports and magazine features. He believed by making the Call a more formidable competitor, the Bulletin's price cut would work entirely to the Call's advantage. To press this point on Neylan, Hearst sent another telegram urging that it was not the price of the paper that was the key to its circulation but its quality--especially the Saturday magazine, daily features and comics.³⁴

Next Hearst demanded a reorganization of the Call's business department. Neylan's response showed how much had already been done to improve the paper. The improvements included: carrying Cosmopolitan news service, carrying the Saturday magazine section, putting in an extra page of comics and an extra magazine page daily, and embarking on a campaign for increased classified advertising. All of these held down the Call's profits Neylan said, but had helped the paper to move indisputably into first

place in the evening market as of April, 1923. The next day Hearst sent a telegram stating the Call's showing was encouraging.³⁵

With the Call in first place the intensity of Hearst's demands become heavier and more pointed. In May, 1923 he issued the first detailed critique of the Call, demanding the magazine be increased to 12 pages, the news columns be made briefer, more syndicated evening magazine features be carried, two full pages of comics be used, and syndicated material be used on the editorial page. Hearst's view was that greater use of syndicated features and less use of original material would make the Call securely dominant.³⁶

When not all these instructions were followed Hearst commented that the Call was out of step with the other evening papers and demanded that Neylan use syndicate material on the Call's editorial page. Neylan responded by enumerating the local features that would be dropped, and stating at the editor, Fremont Older's, behest only one local editorial page feature was being retained. Hearst acquiesced to that for the time being.³⁷

Hearst commented in 1924 that it was very pleasant that the Call was "doing so well." Then he complained that the paper's news was not nearly as well handled as the Los Angeles Herald. This complaint was only prelude to two demands for major reorganization that could not be refused, which Hearst issued in January, 1925.³⁸

The first of these stated that the Call was a misfit paper among the Hearst evening papers, and that he wanted it edited "in accordance with certain accepted standards." Specifically he wanted changes made in the news, editorial page and business ends of the paper. Hearst complained that the news stories should be briefer, better written, have more personality and be edited more authoritatively; he suggested putting in a Mr. Gleason as a new managing editor as a remedy. He complained that the editorial page was stereotyped, and should be brighter and breezier with more syndicated features used. In order to improve the paper's finances, Hearst recommended a new business manager.³⁹

Two weeks later Hearst again demanded reorganization, stating the Call was not a well edited paper, that it was dry and lacked the quality of essential readability. Neylan promptly responded that every suggestion made by Hearst would "be carried out without delay." Within a week Neylan had put in Hearst's choice, Gleason, as the new managing editor, made a number of changes on the editorial page, insisted Hearst's policy be followed to department heads, and begun mapping out a campaign for more circulation and classified advertising. Neylan said that all departments were starting from a new basis with the idea of driving ahead. To all these changes, Hearst noted two months later: "the Call has become an exceedingly good paper."⁴⁰

Another Hearstian encomium that the Call was "an excellent paper these days," was accompanied by a criticism of its photos.

Hearst wanted portraits downplayed, and interesting, action pictures used that tied into the news, and had good captions. Neylan responded the next day that he would try to improve the photos.⁴¹

A few months later Hearst was back to demanding another change in the management, and reorganization of the advertising department. He also wanted the paper to differentiate itself as much as possible from the San Francisco Examiner, and to cultivate a pleasant, inoffensive character. This prompted a defensive reply from Neylan, who was reluctant to see the new advertising manager discharged as he thought he was doing a good job. But Hearst was not easily satisfied; he demanded facts and figures, and threw out a million dollars a year as a profit goal for the Call.⁴²

In January, 1926 Neylan moved up to be president of the Call and Hearst's general counsel. Charles S. Young was promoted from publisher of Hearst's Oakland Post-Enquirer to publisher of the Call. The slight evidence that is available on the reorganization of the Call after this date indicates Young was subjected to the same unrelenting pressure that Neylan had been.⁴³

Within a matter of a few months Hearst demanded that the Call improve its movie department by hiring a writer with a definite following, and change its editorial page format to resemble the Los Angeles Herald. He also wanted the Call further differentiated from the San Francisco Examiner. Hearst had further instructions on the use of the Saturday magazine, and on pictorial effects on

pages two and three. Finally, he requested the use of the Fay King feature on the editorial page, and objected to several that were in use.⁴⁴

This was the end of the material on reorganization. Though Neylan reported the Call was in sound shape, and the new publisher Young should be able to operate it without difficulty, one could expect that would hardly stop Hearst from actively intervening in the management of his paper. Throughout his tenure as publisher Neylan's relationship with Hearst had been subordinate. At times Neylan successfully temporized, but he could not evade Hearst's pervasive and very active control.⁴⁵

With his continual demands for reorganization Hearst showed that he was the one true editor-in-chief of the Call, that there was very little delegation of authority to Neylan. As nominal publisher Neylan had to accept Hearst appointees as managing editor and business manager. His news features were handed to him whether he liked them or not, and his national editorials reached him ready for the composing room. Hearst exercised news control over virtually every aspect and level of the Call. In chapter III this was found to include Hearst's domination of his relationships with Neylan and Older, and to the news coverage, and news display and handling areas. In chapter IV news control was found to be extended over the business, administrative area (examined in terms of monitoring the accounting figures, and the revenue producing areas of advertising, circulation and profits), and the

time dimension of Hearst's continual demands for reorganization on the Call.⁴⁶

The situation on the Call, as a case history within a national pattern of Hearst news control, was consistent with Hearst's other newspapers, as well. On this subject, the October, 1935 Fortune magazine article said, "the power emanates from Hearst." Hearst's system of management was described by Fortune as a short-circuit bypassing his top executive so as to contact his publishers directly. The limited role of the top management executives was exemplified by Joseph V. Connolly, in charge of Hearst's feature writers and columnists, who was described as not even able to "choose a new comic without an okay from the Chief." Neylan, likewise, described Hearst as "the directing force" of his entire institution.⁴⁷

NOTES

¹Hearst to Neylan, Jan. 3, 1925. Neylan Papers, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

²General Management Assessment correspondence, Jan. 31, 1922, and Feb. 11, 1922, *ibid.*

³Hearst to All Hearst Papers, Nov. 28, 1925, *ibid.*; Neylan to Hearst, Dec. 8, 1925, *ibid.*

⁴Hearst to All Publishers of Hearst Papers, March 7, 1921, *ibid.*

⁵Hearst to All Publishers of Hearst Newspapers, Feb. 2, 1923, *ibid.*

⁶Neylan to Hearst, Jan. 16, 1920, and Aug. 11, 1921, *ibid.* Only the cover sheets of the reports were in the Neylan manuscript collection: the actual reports, including the figures, were not there.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Hearst to Neylan, March 20, 1923, *ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*, May 3, 1922.

¹⁰Fremont Older to Charles S. Young, and to Robert P. Holliday eight reports ranging in date from Sept. 18, 1929 to Jan. 15, 1935; Older Papers, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

¹¹Older to Young, and to Holliday, Aug. 15, 1933, Aug. 29, 1933, Sept. 21, 1933, July 31, 1934, Jan. 15, 1935, and Sept. 5, 1933, *ibid.*

¹²Older to Holliday, Aug. 29, 1933, Sept. 5, 1933, and Jan. 15, 1935, *ibid.*

¹³Hearst to All Publishers of Hearst Newspapers, July 26, 1922, Neylan Papers, *op. cit.*

¹⁴Hearst to Editors and Publishers of All Hearst Newspapers, Jan. 29, 1924, *ibid.*; Hearst to J. A. Dickson, Dec. 22, 1920, *ibid.*; W. A. Swanberg, Citizen Hearst (New York: Scribner's, 1961), p. 368.

¹⁵ Ibid.; Neylan reported to Hearst on Sept. 21, 1926 that the days of fighting the Bulletin were over, and it had been whipped into submission, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Swanberg, *op. cit.*, on pressure from Hearst, pp. 606, 503-8.

¹⁷ Joseph A. Moore to Hearst, July 19, 1920; Neylan Papers, *op. cit.*; Neylan to Hearst, July 29, 1920, *ibid.*

¹⁸ Neylan to Hearst, Aug. 2, 1920, *ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, July 29, 1920, and April 9, 1921.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Feb. 12, 1923.

²¹ Hearst to Neylan, April 24, 1923, *ibid.*

²² Neylan to Hearst, April 28, 1923, *ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, Oct. 1, 1923.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; *ibid.*, Aug. 22, 1924.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Aug. 5, 1925; Hearst to Neylan, Aug. 13, 1925, *ibid.*

²⁶ Market position report example, Neylan to Hearst, May 2, 1924, *ibid.*

²⁷ Oliver Carlson and E. S. Bates, Hearst, Lord of San Simeon (New York: Viking, 1936), pp. 49-50; John Tebbel, The Life and Good Times of William Randolph Hearst (New York: Dutton, 1952), pp. 90, 112, 115; Garold L. Bartness, Hearst in Milwaukee (Minn.: Univ. of Minn., Ph.D. thesis, 1968), pp. 17-22, 109, 185, 394, and 397. Brisbane only owned the Wisconsin News a year before turning it over to Hearst. It seems likely that he was acting as a front man for Hearst when he purchased the paper.

²⁸ Neylan to Hearst, and Hearst to Neylan, May 16, 1923; March 6, 1925; Jan. 3, 1925, Jan. 16, 1925, June 25, 1925; Feb. 16, 1926; March 14, 1926; May 24, 1926 and July 21, 1926, *op. cit.*

²⁹ Hearst to Neylan, and Neylan to Hearst, Feb. 13, 1927, and Feb. 14, 1927, *ibid.*

³⁰ Hearst to Neylan, May 9, 1924, *ibid.*; Hearst to Edmond Coblentz, Jan. 2, 1926, *ibid.*; Hearst to Neylan, March 27, 1927, *ibid.*

³¹ Neylan to Hearst, May 19, 1919; July 2, 1919, *ibid.*

³² Hearst to William Bogart, business manager of the San Francisco Examiner, April 27, 1921; *ibid.* Hearst to Neylan, May 21, 1921, *ibid.*

³³ Hearst to Neylan, May 9, 1922, Jan. 22, 1923, *ibid.* Neylan to Hearst, June 8, 1925, *ibid.*

³⁴ Neylan to George Thompson (who received Hearst's mail), and Hearst to Neylan, March 20, 1923 (three different telegrams), and April 2, 1923, *ibid.*

³⁵ Neylan to Hearst, and Hearst to Neylan, April 24, 1923, May 16, 1923, and May 17, 1923, *ibid.*

³⁶ Hearst to Neylan, May 27, 1923, *ibid.*

³⁷ Hearst to Neylan, and Neylan to Hearst, May 27, 1923, Sept. 6, 1923, Sept. 25, 1923, and Sept. 30, 1923, *ibid.*

³⁸ Hearst to Neylan, May 3, 1924, Aug. 4, 1924, Jan. 3, 1925, and Jan. 16, 1925, *ibid.*

³⁹ *ibid.*, Jan. 3, 1925.

⁴⁰ Hearst to Neylan, and Neylan to Hearst, Jan. 16, 1925, Jan. 19, 1925, Jan. 22, 1925, and March 6, 1925, *ibid.*

⁴¹ Hearst to Neylan, and Neylan to Hearst, June 25, 1925, and June 26, 1925, *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*, Dec. 3, 1925, and Dec. 8, 1925, and Jan. 1, 1926. The advertising manager as of Dec. 8, 1925 was a Mr. Tehaney. Mr. Goddard only lasted a few months on the job.

⁴³ *ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1926, and Jan. 27, 1926. There were only a few remaining items concerning the reorganization of the Call in the Neylan manuscript collection; this discussion draws from those papers. There is no Charles S. Young manuscript file at the Bancroft Library, although there are a few letters and miscellany of his scattered in other collections.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, Feb. 16, 1926, Feb. 28, 1926, May 24, 1926, and June 3, 1926.

⁴⁵Neylan to Hearst, Sept. 21, 1926, *ibid.*

⁴⁶"Hearst," Fortune, Vol. 12 (Oct., 1935), pp. 139, 146.

⁴⁷*ibid.*; Neylan to Hearst, Dec. 22, 1933, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER V

MID-ATLANTIC REGION

Chapters III and IV examined Hearst news control from the perspective of a single market, that of San Francisco. News control was explored in terms of Hearst's relationship with two top executives on the San Francisco Call. Then the Hearst news control question was scrutinized in relation to Hearst news, and finally in terms of the reorganization that occurred on the Call over a period of years.

Chapter V continues in the same vein, moving the discussion to a regional level, the mid-Atlantic region, including primarily Washington, D.C. and Baltimore. News control will be explored in terms of Hearst's relationship with a top executive, the "emergency editor" John R. Hastings. Since Hastings moved among the top circle of Hearst management, a glimpse is afforded into these top management relations. The Hearst news control question is examined primarily in terms of Hastings's efforts to boost Hearst's Washington Times past the Washington Star, and Hearst's Baltimore News past the Baltimore Sun.

The vehicle for the analysis of this chapter is the John R. Hastings manuscript collection. The material in it ranged in date from 1925 through 1949, but the years with the most important material were limited to 1926 through 1935. The range of

newspapers it brought into focus included Hearst papers in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. (most emphasis), Albany and Rochester (secondary emphasis), and Boston and Atlanta (least emphasis). There were directives and management memoranda in the collection from a number of Hearst executives including: Frank Knox, Thomas White and H. M. Bitner, all general managers of Hearst's media enterprises between 1928 and 1938; Arthur Brisbane, "Today" columnist, circulation getter, and trusted editor in New York, Washington, D.C. and Milwaukee, and Joseph Willicombe, Hearst's longtime chief secretary.¹

Hastings was an editor's editor, who like many other Hearst executives did not go to college, but got a thorough education in newspapering, starting at an early age. His newspaper career started in Los Angeles on the Express in the 1880s, and progressed to San Francisco where he worked on the Chronicle, and on Hearst's Examiner. In 1902 he went to New York, where he worked on several papers before being made assistant city editor of the New York Times. Thereafter he went to Hearst for good, becoming city editor of the New York Journal in 1907, and soon thereafter its managing editor.²

From time to time he was sent forth as supervising editor of Hearst papers on the East Coast. He organized and controlled the New York Mirror in 1924, Hearst's tabloid challenge to Captain Patterson's lively new picture paper, the Daily News. On

his supervising editor sojourns Hastings visited the Atlanta Georgian, the Syracuse Telegram, the Omaha Bee-News, the Detroit Times, the Wisconsin News, and the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph. Hastings became a member of Hearst's general management in 1926. He spent the year 1925-1926 in Baltimore, working to drive the Baltimore News ahead in circulation.³

Hastings role and stature in the Hearst organization were considerable. When Hearst appointed him a member of the executive council in April, 1926, he told Hastings to consider himself a part of general management--not a fifth wheel, but one of "the four wheels of the coach (and) one of the cornerstones of the enterprise." He asked Hastings to devote his attention to Baltimore and Washington, because they constituted "the biggest problem" Hearst had.⁴

In October, 1926, Hearst defined Hastings role as "emergency editor." The idea had come up of putting Hastings in editorial charge of the New York American, one of Hearst's most important morning papers. But Hearst vetoed it. Hearst said it was more important to have Hastings as emergency editor than it was to have him be permanent editor of one publication. In this role Hastings worked for brief periods spurring circulation and cutting costs on papers in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Boston and Albany. At the time of the memorandum, Hastings was lending invaluable assistance in making the Baltimore News into a profitable property and into the Baltimore circulation leader.⁵

Hastings had an injury to his spine around 1928, which confined him to a wheelchair, and required delicate spinal surgery to remove an old blood clot. His courage in meeting this ordeal was praised by his Hearst associates. He resumed his former duties, operating at a somewhat slower pace, out of an office at 959 Eighth Avenue, New York. The year 1935-1936 he spent in Washington, D.C. as editor of the Washington Times. His hobby was painting. Hastings died in 1942.⁶

Arthur Brisbane on occasions voiced his high opinion of Hastings as an editor and cost cutter. Once he wrote that he was glad to learn that Hastings was "getting action in the matter of expenses." At this time, September, 1926, Brisbane hoped that Hastings would be able to help with achieving necessary economies on the New York American and the New York Mirror. Seven years later Brisbane said he was convinced that Hastings could easily "save Mr. Hearst a million dollars a year" on payrolls, expense accounts, waste of telegraph tolls and white paper, without injuring, but rather helping his properties. Another time, Brisbane commented that Hastings was one of the three top editors in the Hearst organization.⁷

Hastings could render a candid opposing opinion to Hearst when it was solicited. In 1935 Hearst wanted to put a Mr. Hinman in as managing editor of the Washington Times. In Hastings' deferentially phrased reply was the opinion that it would be "an extremely risky experiment" to put Hinman in that job, since he had "never filled an

executive position on a newspaper." Hastings ventured that Hinman would be a particularly good selection for the job, once he had proper training. At this point Hastings recalled his track record of having trained three men who were presently Hearst managing editors, and a half dozen others who held important executive positions--all of whom were rotated through various key posts before Hastings recommended them to take over newspapers.⁸

Hearst expressed a high opinion of Hastings work in Baltimore and Washington in a 1928 encomium. In regard to Hastings work in building circulation on the Baltimore News, Hearst said, "I am very delighted with our Baltimore News circulation." At the same time Hearst said about the Washington Times, the "Washington situation extremely encouraging. . . ." And Hearst concluded: ". . . whole situation in both cities extremely gratifying; please accept my thanks and express my sincere appreciation to staff."⁹

The above missive suggests a warm relationship between Hearst and Hastings, as did Hearst's hyperbolic effusiveness when Hastings gave him a book near the end of his career. Hearst wrote:

I am the proud possessor of the most beautiful book that was ever made. . .

I feel that I shall have to live about fifty years longer in order to deserve so generous a memento; and this I shall earnestly endeavor to do. Your splendid gift will help me to do it.¹⁰

The numerous reports and telegrams Hearst and Hastings fired back and forth revealed further nuances to their relationship.

For his part, Hearst critiqued papers, issued flat instructions, and showed intense concern and close supervision of his newspapers. On one occasion Hearst issued a three-page critique of his Boston paper, covering nearly everything, and at the end setting a high circulation goal. Another time he issued flat instructions on how to use a comic strip. Then he sent a two-page letter of instruction going into detail on the changes he wanted made to his morning papers in Baltimore and Washington. This included: adding a page or two to each paper, more society, good movie news and gossip, adding a popular radio critic and improving sports.¹¹

Hastings showed an interest in making sure Hearst understood that he was complying with orders, as he opened one telegram with the words, "Following your instructions. . . ." He furnished Hearst with memoranda on trends and provided inside information, that local newspaper managers may well have regarded as espionage reports. One three-page report on newspapers in Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Rochester and Albany provided trend information on circulation, management, money support, and editorial department changes. One of Hastings "spy" reports concerned the weakness of the managing editor of the Baltimore American, a Mr. Deland, who took off for New York to visit his sick mother during a big, breaking story, leaving an inexperienced substitute to somehow fill in. Hastings reported that discipline was lax on the paper, that Mr. Deland was a disorganizing force, and recommended that he be transferred.¹²

Another Hastings "spy" memorandum gave strong evidence that Hearst's instructions were not being followed at the Atlanta Georgian. He complained the paper was not a Hearst paper in the sense of publishing bright, brief stories of a popular character. But at the insistence of a Colonel Randolph, whom Hastings characterized as a layman ". . . utterly ignorant of editing a newspaper . . ." the paper was running long, dull transcripts of resolutions and legislative material. Although he garbled his syntax in his heat to get a telegram off to Hearst, Hasting's irritation at the situation comes through clearly:

This method of handling news directly opposed to your instructions to me and against my own strong feeling that main trouble Atlanta is failure to publish genuine Hearst evening paper and persistent in printing compromise in form with opposition always adopting their stupid features instead of their good ones.

So as not to contribute to the confusion of the young managing editor, who would otherwise have to be subjected to two sets of conflicting instructions, Hastings offered to withdraw from the situation.¹³

To conclude this portion on the Hastings-Hearst news control relationship, there was very little overt control exercised over Hastings in the Hearst memoranda. Most probably this was because as a very competent "editor's editor" Hastings had long before internalized the elements of what constituted a Hearst newspaper. His criticisms of the Atlanta Georgian point this out when he wrote there was a failure ". . . to publish genuine Hearst evening

paper. . . ." It is understood both that Hastings knew how to produce a genuine Hearst newspaper, and that he was anxious to follow instructions. The confidence Hearst placed in Hastings abilities and his competence to make good on a difficult piece of work was attested by his praise of him. The character of the Hastings-Hearst relationship was thus of two minds in tune with one another and sharing the same goals.¹⁴

That the Atlanta Georgian was not conforming to the Hearst newspaper model, and that Mr. Deland took off for New York, shows not everyone in the Hearst organization accepted Hearst values. It is of interest, however, that these problems surface in the light of attempts at corrective action being taken. It was Hastings job to travel about to Hearst newspapers, diagnose trouble areas and correct them, and as well boost circulation and cut costs.

In regard to the question of management relations at the top level at which Hastings moved, a word about the general management structure is first in order. The information available on the general management structure is sketchy, but it does disclose that Hearst's top person for managing his media enterprises was his general manager. During the time of our interest in Hastings, the general managers were Frank Knox, 1928 to end of 1930; Thomas J. White, 1931 to 1935; and Harry Bitner, 1934 to 1938. Hearst gave orders to the general manager. The general manager coordinated after 1929 on problems with a Board of Regional Directors, all experienced and successful Hearst publishers.

On naming the board in January, 1929, only five of the six positions were filled. The members included: Dr. Frank F. Barham, Los Angeles Herald; George Hearst, San Francisco Examiner; Herman Black, Chicago Evening American; Roger M. Andrews, Detroit Times; and A. B. Chivers, New York Evening Journal. Chiver's zone of responsibility included New York, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, the area where Hastings was most active. The board was supposed to meet frequently with the general manager to discuss problems, promote progress of Hearst newspapers, and discuss policy. One such meeting was the San Antonio Convention, where Hearst outlined the basis on which he wanted his newspapers run.¹⁵

Information on management relations at the top show Hastings interacting with Frank Knox, Arthur Brisbane, H. M. Bitner; E. D. Coblentz, from 1927 to 1937 respectively managing editor and publisher of the New York American; and Joseph Willicombe. There is also information on these individuals interacting with Hearst. The key to exercising authority among these individuals was to invoke the name of Hearst.¹⁶

Ritualistic obeisance in the first sentence or shortly thereafter of a memorandum to the formula, "The Chief says," put the seal of legitimacy and authority on whatever utterance followed. For instance Knox began a memorandum to all publishers on Hearst papers being over-featured with the words, "Mr. Hearst has very strongly expressed the opinion. . . ." Brisbane, Coblentz

and Willicombe followed the pattern with variable finesse. Brisbane chose to invoke Hearst in one missive by mentioning he would be attending his birthday party. Coblentz opened a letter with: "The Chief had me on the 'phone. . . ." Willicombe frankly regarded himself as a conduit through which Hearst's orders flowed. After verbatim transcriptions of Hearst's views, Willicombe would close with a friendly personal remark: "It was mighty fine to see you. . . ." ¹⁷

All of these people related to Hearst in a deferential manner, mostly in the pattern of feeding him information, or offering suggestions. That Hearst valued their ideas was evidenced by a reference to Brisbane's suggestion that Hastings find out what was ailing the Boston Advertiser, which Hearst urged him to do. In his relations to Knox and Bitner, Hastings subordinated himself, sending them factual reports, and deferentially asking about charging his travel expenses. Knox was polite and cordial in his letters of response to Hastings. He even showed gratitude for the intelligence Hastings furnished him: "I cannot tell you how much relief I felt over your description of the situation." ¹⁸

When Brisbane related to Hastings on his own initiative, as he sometimes did, he took a friendly approach. Once he told Hastings that he would have the Baltimore News sent to him, so that he could make occasional comments or suggestions; but he told Hastings that he did not "want to be a back-seat driver," and Hastings should disregard anything he said if it conflicted with Hearst's

instructions. Another time, when he had to talk over business affairs with Hastings, he offered to meet him someplace that was convenient for him, as Brisbane's office was way downtown. And Brisbane passed on his suggestions to Hastings that he had made to Hearst, so that Hastings would be in the know.¹⁹

To conclude, the mutual relations among the few of Hearst's top executive reviewed here were, on paper, cordial. So dictate the conventions of business correspondence. With missives passing through the hands of secretaries, and words being committed to the relative permanency of paper, one must at least be polite. But the informal friendliness of the letters, and various effusions of generous feelings, suggest their relations actually were cordial. The salient note in their relations was deference to Hearst, who often was referred to as "the Chief," an appellation that both denoted and connoted the dominating influence he wielded over his executives.

The situation Hearst faced in the late 1920s in using Hastings to build up his papers in Washington, D.C., and Baltimore was far different than the one he had confronted before the turn of the century. In his early days, Hearst was a young man of enormous zest, ambition and wealth, out to make his mark on the World. When he invaded New York in 1895, taking on Joseph Pulitzer, he used his fortune to buy up the best talent, secure news and sponsor innovations. He poured all his money and vitality into one market.

In 1928, however, Hearst was a paunchy 65-year-old executive, juggling a multitude of demands. He had 27 newspapers, a string of magazines, radio properties, movie productions, real estate investments, mines, ranches, an estranged wife and five sons, a sexy, young blonde mistress, thousands of employees, and the construction of his castle at San Simeon to worry about. Scarred and barnacled by embittering years in the political arena, he was turning conservative, but still fought hard for his public policy interests. At this time, when many men are cutting back and slowing down, Hearst was restlessly developing and expanding his media conglomerate. But there was no way that parochial markets, important though Baltimore and Washington, D.C. were, could occupy his undivided attention.²⁰

When attention is focused on the Baltimore newspaper market between 1926 and 1936, it is seen that the market narrowed from a field of four newspapers to two. In 1926 there were three standard-size papers: the morning, evening and Sunday Sun, founded in 1837, owned by A. S. Abell Company; two Hearst papers, the morning American, founded in 1773; and the evening News, founded in 1872. And there was one tabloid newspaper, the upstart Scripps-Howard evening Post, founded in 1922.²¹

By 1936 the two survivors were the Sun, and Hearst's evening News, which also started publishing on Sunday. These two strongly entrenched papers had fought each other hard for market supremacy, throwing into the fray their considerable resources. In 1936 the

standings were: the Hearst News had come from second place into leadership in evening and Sunday circulation. The Sun, maintained its leadership in morning circulation, where it was uncontested, since the suspension of Hearst's American. The Sun's evening and Sunday editions declined from first into second place. Circulation data suggested that the Sun had the advantages of long being solidly established and in continuity of effort, whereas Hearst had the advantage in executive expertise and resources.²²

The statistical data from which these generalizations are drawn disclose the following facts and trends for the individual papers between 1926 and 1936. The evening News's circulation increased from 104,000 to 201,000. Most of the increase occurred after 1934, when it spurted due to taking over circulation from the Scripps-Howard Post, which merged with the News when it suspended. After Hearst's morning American suspended in March, 1928 its Sunday edition continued until 1934. The Sunday American, which was being published by the News in 1936, increased its circulation from 135,000 to 230,000.²³

The morning Sun's circulation increased from 125,000 to 140,000; the evening Sun's from 120,000 to 138,000 and the Sunday Sun from 188,000 to 193,000. Its combined circulation was the greatest in the market. The Sun's greatest increase in circulation occurred after the 1928 demise of the American, which left the morning field wide open to the Sun. Hearst's anemic morning American went from 50,000 to 56,000 before suspending. The

Scripps-Howard tabloid Post went from 87,000 to 107,000 in 1928, before declining to 75,000 in 1934, when it suspended.²⁴

Hearst's News waged a hard fight to pass the evening Sun paper in the 1927 through 1930 period. As of 1927 the News trailed the Sun 119,000 to 116,000. In 1928 the News forged ahead attaining a circulation of 130,000 compared to 127,000 for the Sun. From then on the News was in command, increasing the lead in 1930 to 151,000, compared to 144,000 for the Sun.²⁵

The situation in 1928, with the demise of Hearst's morning American became fluid, as the Sun began a sharply effective circulation canvass, selling its morning-evening-Sunday combination. With no Hearst morning paper to oppose the Sun, its solicitation made rapid headway. Hastings said the "leadership of the News is gravely threatened by the evening Sun." Hastings pleaded with Hearst to release him from the current policy of financial retrenchments, that consisted of cutting back on editorial, promotion, mechanical and circulation expenses, so that the News could effectively fight back.²⁶

Hastings memoranda often mentioned how hard the News had to fight to stay ahead of the evening Sun. Once he wrote:

. . . everything is being done to force the paper ahead. The News still has a very hard fight to pull out ahead of the Sun and recover its lost ground. In my opinion, the News should be kept under forced draught for some time.

In another 1928 missive he said to maintain a big lead, the News "must fight consistently." And that the News could lead the field

in Baltimore, "but it will be a bitter fight." In 1930 he urged that the quantity and quality of news be sustained if the News was to "retain leadership."²⁷

To try to overtake and pass the Sun in 1927-1928, Hastings backed a number of moves. The News's editorial department was authorized to produce the best possible paper, and the circulation department was encouraged to canvass vigorously and distribute more effectively. He pushed for keeping a high allotment for news space, so the News would appear full in contrast to the Sun. He agitated, too, for a large enough budget so the editor would have the resources to turn out a "smashing good paper." The production of a late "red-head" sports edition was also identified with Hastings. At the same time, Hastings reported the Sun had adopted many Hearst techniques so as to better compete, such as heavy headlines on page one, no ads on page two and three, and a late sports edition.²⁸

Hearst showed his pleasure in Hastings work when he wired congratulations: "you are doing wonderfully in Baltimore. . . ." But attaining market supremacy was expensive. Hastings acknowledged "outrageous loss" in Baltimore in 1930, but said it would be foolish nevertheless to cut the editorial budget. In the mid-1930s Arthur Brisbane observed that Hearst had spent a total of ten million dollars in Baltimore. How that could have happened he said was beyond his comprehension, but at least the News could be made to pay a good return.²⁹

The Washington, D.C., newspaper market between 1926 and 1936, had five papers, two standard-size morning papers, two standard-size evening papers, and one evening tabloid. The papers were the Star, an evening-except-Sunday independent, edited by T. W. Noyes, founded in 1852, and the market leader throughout the period. The two Hearst papers were the Times, evening-except-Sunday, founded in 1894, and edited successively by John J. Fitzpatrick, Arthur Brisbane and Hastings; and, the Herald, a morning paper founded in 1894, edited successively by Michael W. Flynn and Eleanor Patterson. The Post, an ailing independent morning paper, founded in 1877, changed ownership in 1934, and had five different editors during the period. The final paper was the evening Scripps-Howard tabloid News, an independent founded in 1921, edited successively by John M. Gleissner, and Lowell Mellett.³⁰

During this time the evening Star maintained its position as market leader, advancing its daily circulation from 98,000 to 122,000. Its Sunday circulation increased from 105,000 to 129,000, staying in second place. Hearst's evening Times moved from fourth place to second, sharply advancing its circulation from 57,000 to 114,000, closing to within 8,000 of the Star in 1936. The Hearst morning Herald moved up from fifth place to third, strongly improving its circulation from 53,000 to 101,000. Its Sunday circulation moved from 121,000 to 195,000, the resounding market leader.³¹

The morning Post, weakest of the standard dailies, dropped from second place to fourth, showing a roller coaster circulation pattern, starting with 63,000, increasing, declining, then increasing to 87,000. It was purchased in 1934 when at a 62,000-circulation low by Eugene Meyer. The tabloid evening News dropped from fourth to fifth place, moving from 54,000, fluctuating around 67,000, then advancing to 73,000. Unlike the Scripps-Howard tabloid in Baltimore that suspended, the News stayed in the market and gained circulation.³²

The overall market picture by 1936 showed the Hearst papers having stroven mightily to gain overall ascendancy, were leading in morning and Sunday circulation, and trailing slightly in the afternoon. The Times' and Herald's combined daily circulation had increased from 110,000 to 215,000, compared to the Star's in 1936 circulation of 122,000. Likewise on Sunday, Hearst's Herald dominated the field with 195,000 compared with the Star's 129,000. Yet in head-to-head competition, struggled though it had, Hearst's Times had not been able to pass the Star, leaving the Star ahead in the afternoon market.³³

At first Hastings was rather optimistic about the Times's prospects for passing the Star. The Times gained some 20,000 circulation in 1928 due to improving its distribution system, and Hastings commented complacently that the Star as a competitor just was "not the Baltimore Sun." Three months later Hastings was predicting that with the Times's increased news space and editorial

personnel, and circulation campaign, the Star would be passed in six months.³⁴

By 1930 the mood had changed. Hearst exhorted Hastings to "pass the Star." Hastings responded that the Star had all-round superior resources to the Times, and requested six more editorial personnel, and five more delivery trucks for the circulation department. Later on, Hastings said "if" the Times was to pass the Star, it needed more bright, interesting material with more of a Washington flavor.³⁵

The gruelingly competitive flavor of the Times-Star circulation struggle was evident in a 1935 memorandum in which Hastings pointed out:

. . . the work of passing the Star will be difficult and not so rapid. The Star people are alarmed. They have brightened up that paper considerably. They are illustrating their paper, and resorting to more effective methods of playing the news.

In comparison with the Baltimore Sun, which was rather slow to respond to the Hearst challenge, Hastings said, ". . . the Star has already awakened and is driving desperately."³⁶

In spring, 1935, Hastings said the Times was "exerting every ounce of energy," organizing and reorganizing the staff, working "under forced draught to pass the Star." Hearst wearily commented that he hoped Hastings was right that the Star would be passed by the summer, as they had "been trying to do it for years." In October, Hastings did report that the Times, for the first time, passed the Star for the previous 43 consecutive days. Hearst's

congratulations to Hastings "very good paper" proved somewhat premature, as the Star pulled ahead again, leading the Times by 8,000 during 1936.³⁷

One of the biggest competitive concerns faced in both the Baltimore and Washington, D.C., as well as other Hearst markets during the 1920s and 1930s, was the circulation inroads made by tabloid newspapers. The tabloid paper with its small 10 1/2-inch by 16 1/2-inch size, huge headlines, big action photos, and breezy and brief stories offered an easy-to-scan format for the restless twenties. The tabloids focus on sports, screen stars, features, sensational trials and tremendous trifles influenced the standard-size papers, not only with their content, but with their greater emphasis on photos, heavy headlines and rowdy tone. Whatever its journalist worth, the tabloid reflected the outstanding characteristics of the era--candid interest in sex and crime, hurry, intense application to diversion, and feverish excitement. A task of the standard-size papers was to adjust to the tabloid challenge.³⁸

Concern with tabloids spilled over in memorandum after memorandum of the Hearst executives. In one 1925 letter Hearst complained that the Washington Times was "a very dull paper," but that it could be more of a tabloid-style picture paper. Brisbane pointed out the way to "swamp the tabloids is to give them BIG PICTURES." Later, in a proposal that was not acted upon, he

suggested that Hearst and the Sun paper jointly start a one-cent tabloid, as a way of controlling that end of Baltimore's market.³⁹

Hearst enlarged on his concept of how tabloid principles should be applied in this telegram:

The paper needs snapping up . . . We should try to express the news in pictures. [We should] . . . make news articles briefer and brighter. There is no reason why the principles which make tabloids big circulators should not be applied generally. Condensation always helps papers when all news is retained and merely told in briefer and brighter form. . . . Lets make the paper short and snappy and easy to read and summarize the news in news pictures with smart entertaining subtitles.

Another time Hearst complained that the Baltimore News ought to more scrupulously apply the "principle of tabloid" journalism. In 1931 he remonstrated with the Washington Times for running too long stories and too big pictures. He issued a condensed lecture on the news values of tabloid journalism, exhorting the paper to have a lively, animated look, with bright snappy headlines, and brief and bright stories, "like the tabloid papers."⁴⁰

Hastings complained that the chief difficulty of getting the Times to pass the Star was the presence of the Scripps-Howard tabloid News, because the Times and News competed for the same end of the market. The situation, he said, was analogous to that of Baltimore where the News had to struggle to pass the Sun. But when the Scripps-Howard tabloid in Baltimore suspended, the News gained 45,000 circulation and the Sun added almost nothing. Hearst responded that he agreed with the analysis "entirely." But he felt that Scripps-Howard had to have a Washington, D.C. paper, so

would not let the News fold. Therefore the Times would have to do as well as it possibly could under the circumstances.⁴¹

Hastings had tried hard to build up Hearst's News in Baltimore, and Times in Washington. In both markets it had been, in Hastings' words "a bitter fight." He had faced budget problems, the adaptability of his competitors, and in Washington, the greater resources of the Star. In both markets tabloids competing for the same end of the market as Hearst hampered circulation-building efforts. The News in Baltimore did come from second place to pass the evening Sun. The Times in Washington came from fourth place to second, but did not pass the Star. On this narrow basis of comparison, Hearst's efforts were crowned by great improvement, but he was not completely successful.

Overall, though, Hearst moved into leadership of the evening and Sunday markets in Baltimore. In Washington his Herald moved into leadership of the morning market, and retained leadership of the Sunday market. In total circulation gains Hearst outstripped everyone else. His papers in Baltimore went from 289,000 in 1926 to 431,000 in 1936. In Washington during those years his papers went from 231,000 to 410,000.⁴²

During the whole competitive struggle Hastings had been a loyal executive, sending Hearst reports replete with information, data and requests. In his turn, Hearst fired telegraphic bulletins, critiques and letters of instructions at Hastings exercising a firm and controlling hand over Hastings' activities

in both Baltimore and Washington. As the nature of the Hearst-Hastings relationship has already been explored, only a few salient Hearst directives will be mentioned here, to give the spirit of Hearst's news control.

In an effort to stimulate circulation on the Baltimore and Washington morning papers, Hearst sent Hastings a budget of a half dozen or so specific instructions. Again, Hearst exercised control when he ordered that W. M. Baskerville be made managing editor of the Baltimore News. The "Chief" came close to a peremptory remark when he observed of the previous managing editor that he was too impressed by the opposition Star, and Hastings better ". . . teach him to believe in our kind (of newspaper) or get another . . ." man. Hastings domicile came under Hearst's purview, as well, when Hearst asked him to live in Baltimore so he could better observe the News's progress.⁴³

Exercising his authority in another area, Hearst overruled the proposal to abandon an unprofitable eight-page Saturday section, by ordering that it be improved and used to secure more advertising. In another critique, Hearst objected to the Baltimore News's "scatterbrained" appearance, and asked for more order and "harmony of typography." Later on, Hearst complained about the Washington Times's "feeble and ineffective" editorial page, and issued specific instructions for correction. Although this brief survey of Hearst news control directives does not prove that he controlled the news, it reveals his characteristic directive

attitude. There was nothing in the Hearst correspondence to suggest the impression conveyed in this brief summary was not an accurate reflection of Hearst's news control.⁴⁴

From the Hastings manuscript material a general observation emerged about the Hearst management scene. The level of management concerns was mundane, materialistic and prosaic, but the action was furious. Market positions of contending Washington and Baltimore newspapers were fluid, subject to financial erosion, or to being pushed into leadership, within a brief span of time. The struggle for circulation was intense, an accountant's milieu, and a number's game. Because of Hearst's executives' preoccupation with market performance, journalism emerged in its aspect as a branch of industrial economics--just a money-making business.

Because of the newspaper executives' preoccupation with distribution vans, circulation figures, and the market effectiveness of late sports editions, there was no time left over for consideration of the press's roles of public service, abetting social welfare and political democracy, and whether the press effectively served in the role of mediating between publics and institutions. People like Hastings and his contemporaries were too busy fighting the competition to think about journalistic ethics, ideals, deeper values, and normative roles. Service was displaced by profits. The pragmatic, more-bang-for-a-buck attitude of Hearst's executives suggest that the media was not reflective enough to define and comment critically on its own role in American

society. Perhaps normative commentary on the press was better left to academics in journalism schools, who presumably had the leisure to think about such things. But was anybody in the marketplace listening?

In regard to news control, Hearst exercised control over Hastings by issuing instructions and critiques. He monitored the progress of his Baltimore and Washington papers closely. Hastings sent him reports full of circulation trend data, and observations about the strengths, weaknesses and needs of the papers. There was little evidence of didactic control being exercised over Hastings, as Hearst had exercised over John Neylan of the San Francisco Call. This seemed to be because Hastings was a highly experienced editor, who had trained other Hearst editors, and his mind worked in tandem with Hearst's toward the same goal.

A glimpse was obtained of management relations between a small group of top Hearst executives. Of those viewed, all long-time Hearst men, their relations seemed cordial. The key to making their correspondence legitimate to one another seemed to be ritual invocation of and genuflection to the name of Hearst--whose appellation the "Chief" surfaced as more than just a nickname.

NOTES

¹National Cyclopedia of American Biography, articles on Knox and Bitner; Editor and Publisher, Dec. 27, 1930, p. 7, for White's years as general manager.

²R. B. Carter to Mrs. John R. Hastings, March 18, 1949, John R. Hastings Papers, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California, draft of Hastings' biography article to appear in the National Cyclopedia of American Biography.

³ibid.

⁴William R. Hearst to John R. Hastings, April 30, 1926, ibid.

⁵Hearst (J. Willicombe transcript) to Hastings, Oct. 10, 1926, ibid.

⁶Carter to Mrs. John R. Hastings, March 18, 1949, ibid.

⁷Arthur Brisbane to Hastings, Sept. 2, 1926; and Jan. 30, 1933, ibid.; Brisbane memorandum, seven-page memorandum dated somewhere between Dec. 28, 1934 and July 4, 1935, ibid.

⁸Hastings to Hearst, March 15, 1935, ibid.

⁹Hearst to Hastings, Jan. 27, 1928, ibid.

¹⁰Hearst to Hastings, April 5, 1937, ibid.

¹¹Hearst to Hastings, Sept. 29, 1929; April 29, 1929; April 27, 1926; and May 2, 1926, ibid.

¹²Hastings to Hearst, Aug. 17, 1927; June 2, 1928; July 20, 1927, ibid.

¹³ibid., Aug. 17, 1927.

¹⁴ibid.

¹⁵General managership dates for Knox and Bitner from National Cyclopedia of American Biography, which did not have dates for White. White's dates from Editor and Publisher, Dec. 27, 1930, p. 7. Discrepancy between White and Bitner's dates noted, but was not able to reconcile them.

Frank Knox memorandum, Jan. 10, 1929, *ibid.*; Hearst to Hastings, May 16, 1929, *ibid.*

The management structure described above was set up in Jan., 1929, during Knox's tenure as general manager. There is no way to know, from the Hastings manuscript materials, whether it lasted any longer than Knox. The reader should be cautioned that inferential evidence suggests management structures were fluid, and were set up mainly to suit Hearst's convenience.

¹⁶Finding key to Edmond Coblentz manuscript collection, undated, Coblentz Papers, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

¹⁷Frank Knox to All Publishers, Jan. 21, 1929, Hastings Papers, *op. cit.*; Arthur Brisbane to Hastings, April 21, 1933, *ibid.*; Edmond Coblentz to Hastings, Nov. 10, 1937, *ibid.*; Joseph Willicombe to Hastings, Nov. 23, 1927, *ibid.*

¹⁸Hearst to Hastings, Aug. 14, 1926, *ibid.*; Hastings to Bitner, July 29, 1935, *ibid.*; and Knox to Hastings, May 28, 1928, *ibid.*

¹⁹Brisbane to Hastings, May 15, 1929, April 17, 1929; and April 21, 1933, *ibid.*

²⁰Hastings to Hearst, July 19, 1928, *ibid.*, lists the number of Hearst's newspapers.

²¹N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Son, 1926-36), statistics and trends gleaned from the Baltimore market section of the 1926, 1927, 1928, 1930, 1932, and 1936 editions. Numbers rounded off to nearest thousand.

²²*ibid.*

²³*ibid.*

²⁴*ibid.*

²⁵*ibid.*

²⁶Hastings to Hearst, Hastings Papers, June 2, 1928, *op. cit.*

²⁷Hastings to Hearst, July 19, 1928, and Nov. 17, 1930, *ibid.*;
Hastings to Frank Knox, Oct. 3, 1928, *ibid.*

²⁸Hastings to Knox, June 27, 1928, and Oct. 3, 1928, *ibid.*
Hastings to Hearst, June 2, 1928, *ibid.*

²⁹Hastings to Hearst, Feb. 10, 1929, and Nov. 17, 1930, *ibid.*;
page six of seven-page Arthur Brisbane memorandum, between
Dec. 28, 1934 and July 4, 1935, *ibid.*

³⁰N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory,
op. cit., statistics and trends gleaned from the Washington, D.C.
market section of the 1926, 1927, 1928, 1930, 1932, 1934 and 1936
editions. Numbers rounded off to nearest thousand.

³¹*ibid.*

³²*ibid.*

³³*ibid.*

³⁴Hastings to Hearst, June 2, 1928, Hastings Papers, *op. cit.*;
Hastings to Knox, Oct. 3, 1928, *ibid.*

³⁵Hearst to Hastings, April 2, 1930, *ibid.*; Hastings to Hearst,
Sept. 28, 1930, and March 31, 1933, *ibid.*; and Hastings to
Arthur Brisbane, April 19, 1933, *ibid.*

³⁶Hastings to Hearst, Jan. 2, 1935, *ibid.*

³⁷Hastings to Hearst, March 15, 1935 and Oct. 5, 1935, *ibid.*;
Hearst to Hastings, June 28, 1935 and Oct. 10, 1935, *ibid.*
N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory,
op. cit., Washington, D.C. market section, 1936.

³⁸Simon M. Bessie, Jazz Journalism The Story of the Tabloid
Newspapers (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1938), pp. 229-30, 232, and
240.

³⁹Hearst to Mr. Payne, Nov. 16, 1925, Hastings Papers, *op. cit.*;
Brisbane to Hastings, Feb. 4, 1926; and Sept. 2, 1926, *ibid.*

⁴⁰Hearst to Hastings, May 19, 1931 and Dec. 10, 1931, *ibid.*

⁴¹Hastings to Hearst, Jan. 2, 1935, *ibid.*; Hearst to Hastings,
Dec. 10, 1931, *ibid.*

⁴² N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory,
op. cit., figures compiled from the Baltimore and Washington
market sections of the annuals for 1926 and 1936.

⁴³ Hearst to Hastings, May 2, 1926, Nov. 23, 1926, and
Oct. 29, 1927, *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Hearst to Hastings, Jan. 25, 1930, Oct. 8, 1930, and
Oct. 5, 1931, *ibid.*

CHAPTER VI

NEW YORK AMERICAN: WINDOW ON THE NATIONAL SCENE

Chapter VI and VII continue the analysis of news control by William R. Hearst, moving the discussion to the national level. The newspaper used for the discussion in chapter VI is the New York American, the editorial bellwether of the Hearst flock, where publisher Edmond Coblentz cleared the policies of the entire organization, but especially the morning papers. Coblentz was regarded as Hearst's editorial funnel.¹ In chapter VII the focus broadens to include Hearst newspapers in general, during the period from 1937-1940, when Coblentz was supervising editor of all Hearst papers.

Chapter VI uses the New York American as a narrative thread. The chapter peers through the window that the American provides into Hearst national operations. The chapter includes a discussion of the biography, role and relationship of Coblentz to Hearst. As Hearst exercised much of the news control that he did through his executives, the relationship of Coblentz to Hearst has a bearing on the paper's news control thesis. The market context, and declining fortunes of the American will be briefly sketched. While the American declined, tabloids flourished, a fact often remarked by a concerned Hearst. The tabloid influence, marking the fourth major contributor to Hearst news, is discussed,

bringing to fruition the influences on Hearst news. (The other three major historical influences on Hearst news were described in chapter II as emanating from James Gordon Bennett, Charles A. Dana and Joseph Pulitzer.) Finally Hearst news control over the American is discussed at some length.

The vehicle for the analysis in chapters VI and VII is the Edmond D. Coblentz manuscript collection. The material in the collection between Hearst and Coblentz range from 1917 to 1951, but the bulk of the collection, and the most useful material, falls into the years 1927 through 1940. The Coblentz collection, of over 10,000 items, is regarded as of primary importance to the study of American journalism by virtue of the extensive correspondence between Hearst and Coblentz which it contains. The collection affords "an intimate insight into the personality of Hearst and reveals much of how he managed his newspaper empire."²

Coblentz, whose entire 50-year professional life was spent in the employ of Hearst newspapers, was born in 1882 in San Francisco, and died of a heart ailment in 1959 in Sonoma, California. Known as Cobbie to his wide circle of friends, Coblentz, like many other Hearst executives was not a college graduate. Upon graduation from high school in 1900, Coblentz began his professional career as a cub reporter on the San Francisco Examiner at a salary of \$10 per week. He spent the next six years covering the "old San Francisco," including the Barbary Coast and the bustling waterfront. When the

great earthquake of 1906 struck San Francisco, Coblentz was assistant city editor of the Examiner. He was one of four editors who put together in an Oakland plant the first newspaper to reach the streets after the disaster.³

Coblentz worked on the Examiner for 25 years. He worked successively as a reporter, then city editor from 1907 to 1913. After a brief hiatus as managing editor of the San Francisco Call, 1913 to 1915, he was back on the Examiner, working as managing editor, 1915 through 1925, and publisher 1925 to 1927. Hearst displayed his esteem for Coblentz in July 1925, in the following telegraphed message: "I want to congratulate myself and the Examiner on the fact that you have been with us 25 years. I hope you will be with us another 25 and then some." A few months later, in September, Hearst made Coblentz publisher of the Examiner, a job in which he earned \$32,500 per year.⁴

In late 1926 Hearst tried to entice Coblentz to come East and be publisher of the New York American, with an offer of \$1,000 per week salary, and a bonus of \$25,000 if he could add 100,000 circulation to the paper. In his offer, Hearst characterized the American as the most important paper in his chain, both because it was in New York, and because it was the base for features for all other Hearst morning papers. Coblentz did not want to come to New York, as he was concerned that it might become a permanent position, and he was concerned over his daughter, Denise's ill

health. Hearst continued pressing and Coblentz, who was a Hearst loyalist, complied.⁵

Coblentz was managing editor of the American from 1927 through 1934, and publisher of the paper, 1934 to 1937. After serving as supervising editor of Hearst papers from 1937 to 1940, he was made publisher of the San Francisco Call-Bulletin from 1940 through 1950. In retirement after 1950 he acted as an editorial consultant to the Hearst papers from 1950 through 1959.⁶

During his last years, he compiled, largely from Hearst manuscript materials, and edited the book, William Randolph Hearst, a Portrait in His Own Words (1952). An obituary writer commented of the book, "As one who knew the late publisher best, and had acted as his ambassador and special advocate on many occasions, he was well qualified for the task." In 1954 Coblentz edited Newsmen Speak, a collection of sayings of William Allen White, Adolph S. Ochs, Hearst, O. O. McIntyre, Lord Northcliffe, and other leaders of the newspaper industry.⁷

Coblentz was a small man, suave, a master of diplomacy, and a manipulator of tangled strings. He was also a steady and conservative person. In a picture of him taken standing next to Hearst at Wynton, a Hearst estate on the McCloud River in California, Coblentz contrasts sharply with the elephantine, flashily dressed Hearst with his boyish grin. Bald pate gleaming in the sun, Coblentz eyes the camera warily, cautiously behind tortoise shell

glasses. Almost of owlsh mien, his skin is pasty. The inscription written on the photo by Hearst says, "Good luck to you, my friend."⁸

Coblentz was a talented mimic who could do side-splitting imitations of everything from President Calvin Coolidge's nasal twang to the linguistic peculiarities of executives in the Hearst organization. What Hearst did not know was that his favorite, Coblentz, occasionally did devastating imitations of the high-pitched Chief's voice delivering judgments to his subordinates. But being a picked companion of Hearst carried a price with it. On occasions Coblentz was dispatched to perform personal errands for Hearst. One time when he was accompanying Hearst to the train station in a taxicab, Hearst saw a painting in an art store that caught his eye. He turned to Coblentz and asked him to find out who painted it and how much it cost.⁹

Shortly after Coblentz went aboard the American in 1927, Hearst had a LaSalle car purchased to be presented to Coblentz with his compliments. Hearst increased his measure of gratitude only three weeks later when he commented, the "American is certainly fine Cobbie," and gave him a \$10,000 bonus.¹⁰

By 1929 the bloom had worn off Coblentz's situation at the American. He offered to resign, and turn full charge of the paper over to Victor Watson, the day managing editor, who was interfering with his authority. As Coblentz said, "I cannot assume responsibility for a paper without exercising the authority that

goes with that responsibility." Hearst responded in a placating mode, asking Coblentz to have a little patience and give the job a fair trial. Two days later Hearst wired Coblentz informing him that he had sent an urgent telegram to Victor Watson demanding harmony, and assuring him things would be all right now. But that was not the end of Watson's interference, as Coblentz complained again in 1931 that Watson had dispatched unauthorized news handling instructions regarding an important story.¹¹

In Spring, 1929 Coblentz added new responsibilities to his position as editor-in-chief of the American. He was made supervising editor of all Hearst morning papers, assuming responsibility over maintaining Hearst's principles and policies in news and editorials, and consistency in make-up and methods. In May and again in October, 1929 Hearst gave Coblentz authority over the number of pages and the content of the American, stating that the business department should not interfere.¹²

Hearst stated in May, 1930, that Coblentz's authority enabled him "to compel compliance" to his recommendations. That hereafter he should "issue instructions and not suggestions." But he did point out that Coblentz was answerable to Arthur Brisbane, as he told Coblentz to discuss the editorial character of the paper with him. And that Brisbane occupied "exactly the position" Hearst would occupy if he were in New York." In November Coblentz's duties were expanded to be included on a three-man committee to screen possible purchases of special features.¹³

Apparently Coblentz exercised his grant of authority from Hearst with discretion, and performed his supervisory editorial functions well, as Hearst occasionally complimented him. In 1930 Hearst wrote: "The paper this Thursday was a corker. . . . The American today is a mighty good newspaper." Again, in 1933 Hearst wired, "Grand paper election day and good paper every day." And in 1936 Hearst's secretary relayed his appreciation on the picture use, and the printing improvement in the American. During these years Hearst issued numerous exhortations to Coblentz to create circulation for the American, but he never directly criticized him. His usual tone of address was sympathetic, as in addressing a loyal and kindred spirit.¹⁴

Part of Coblentz's closeness to Hearst was probably due to his willingness to comply with instructions, and partly because of Coblentz' gratitude. One time he wrote Hearst the fashion pictures in the American would be made "as per your instructions." A year later, in taking on a new duty, Coblentz said it would be no easy task, but if he succeeded he would feel that he had really done something for Hearst, who had "done so much for" him.¹⁵

Coblentz's relationship with Hearst often was that of an ordinary business relationship, where he responded to routine requests, met Hearst concerning agendas of coverage and display items, raised queries about Hearst's editorial policies, and made requests of Hearst. This aspect of the relationship included Coblentz finding out information about New York's Eighth Avenue

subway, which Hearst requested, and of Coblentz requesting Hearst to send a cheering note to an employee who suffered a nervous breakdown.¹⁶

At other times Coblentz performed extraordinary roles for Hearst, even acting as his personal emissary to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Once Hearst asked him to organize other newspapers to fight court orders that required newsmen to divulge their source of information. In the 1936 Presidential campaign Coblentz, coordinating with one of Hearst's main political strategists, John F. Neylan, provided a political assessment that Communism would be the big issue of the campaign. Again, Coblentz acted as an emissary of a well-organized anti-federal tax group that consisted of a formidable array of industry and lobbies to Hearst.¹⁷

On at least two occasions Coblentz acted as an envoy to Roosevelt. In 1933 he was dispatched to inform the President that Hearst considered the proposal to license the press under the National Recovery Administration (NRA) unconstitutional and that he would fight it, even if it meant costing him every nickel he possessed. In 1935, in a nearly four-hour talk with FDR, Coblentz relayed Hearst's views on such subjects as the Wagner Act, taxes, FDR's "Brain Trust," and Communism. This 1935 visit indicates the extent Hearst would go to try to impress his class views on the public. Coblentz's candid comments on the meeting show his sympathy with Hearst's views. He said that FDR did not care about

the "plight of wealthy men," that FDR was bitter about the Chicago Tribune's coverage, and that the President only listened to the "bunch of crackpots" with whom he associated.¹⁸

In all of these roles and relationships Coblentz remained the loyal subordinate. He rarely showed the initiative of John Neylan of the San Francisco Call, who bombarded Hearst with advice and suggestions. Nor did he have the stature of Arthur Brisbane, a whirlwind of managerial energy, and a celebrated writing phenomenon. Coblentz's virtues were those of steadiness in the harness, a reliable conduit for information and ideas, and fealty to his Chief. There was never any suggestion that Coblentz was not a faithful managerial agent for Hearst.

By way of introducing a discussion of the tabloid influence, efforts to make the American gain circulation, and news control exercised through the American, let us briefly survey the New York journalism market. Between 1927 and 1940, when Coblentz was successively managing editor and publisher of the American, and supervising editor of all Hearst papers, the New York metropolitan daily newspaper market experienced a contraction in the number of standard-size dailies, Hearst papers lost influence, and two tabloids made outstanding circulation gains. In 1927, the market was crowded with 10 newspapers: three morning standard-size papers, four evening standard-size, and three tabloids. By 1940 the scene was somewhat thinned out, as the paper with the least

circulation in each of the above three categories had become defunct, leaving a still full field of seven papers.¹⁹

The papers in 1927, with the ones noted that went out of business by 1940, and their characteristics, included the following. Leader of the morning standard-size dailies was the Times, an independent Democratic paper, founded in 1851, owned by Adolph S. Ochs. In second place was the Herald-Tribune, an independent Republican paper, founded in 1835, and edited by Ogden Reid. In last place was Hearst's American, edited by Coblentz, an independent paper, founded in 1882. The American went out of business in 1937.²⁰

Leader of the evening standard-size dailies, with the largest circulation of all the standard-size papers, was Hearst's Journal, a Democratic paper, founded in 1882, and edited successively by John R. Hastings, Arthur Brisbane and William A. Curley. In second place, with less than half the circulation of the leader, was the World, an independent Democratic paper founded in 1860, and edited by H. S. Pollard. The World also had a morning edition, which was discontinued in 1931, when the World was merged with the Telegram. In third place was the Sun, an independent Republican paper, founded in 1833, and edited by Frank M. O'Brien. Limping in last place was the Telegram, an independent, founded in 1867, and edited successively by F. A. Walker, W. L. Sturdevant

and Roy Howard. Scripps-Howard interests purchased the World in February, 1931, and merged it with their Telegram.²¹

The leader of the tabloid papers, with by far the largest circulation in the market was the morning Daily News, a "people's paper" founded in 1919 and edited by Robert R. McCormick and Joseph M. Patterson. In second place was Hearst's morning-except-Sunday Mirror, founded in 1924, the year the Daily News became America's most widely circulated newspaper. It was edited successively by Victor Watson, Emile Gauvreau and Jack Lait, operating under the publisher, A. J. Kobler. In last place was Bernarr Macfadden's lurid, evening Graphic, founded in 1924. Never winning advertising support, it died unmourned in 1932. It was edited successively by Martin H. Weyrauch and T. Von Ziekurseh. Hearst recruited both Gauvreau, and show-biz columnist Walter Winchell from the Graphic.²²

Hearst was the major influence in the market during these years, but his circulation share declined to second place. In 1927 he had three papers, with an aggregate circulation of 1,221,000, which increased to 1,379,000 by 1940. These figures conceal the fact that his flagship morning paper, the American, went out of business. His bellwether evening paper, the Journal, slightly declined in circulation, from 696,000 to 611,000. Meantime the number two circulating standard-size paper, the Times, showed a healthy circulation advance from 356,000 to 474,000, firmly consolidating its grasp of the serious, respectable end of the circulation

market. The increase in Hearst's circulation was due to the rapid circulation gain of his tabloid Mirror from 310,000 to 768,000. But the Mirror never became profitable, nor was it a serious challenge to the entrenched Daily News, which scored stunning circulation increases. The Daily News over the period increased from 999,000 to 1,880,000.²³

The major story of the New York journalism market between 1927 and 1940 was the circulation gains of the tabloid newspapers, and their displacement of the standard-size dailies in terms of circulation influence. In 1927 the situation was: seven standard papers with a total circulation of 2,291,000 versus three tabloids with a circulation of 1,450,000. Between 1927 and 1940 two standard papers went out of business, compared to one tabloid, and the standard papers lost an aggregate of 141,000 circulation, compared to a gain of 1,198,000 for the tabloids. The standings in 1940, then, were two tabloids totaling 2,648,000 circulation, compared to five standard dailies with 2,150,000. These figures suggest that the tabloid should be studied as an agent in the demise of the standard dailies in New York.²⁴

Hearst was very alive to the tabloid challenge. He experimented with the tabloid format in Boston. In response to the circulation incursions scored by the Daily News in the early 1920s, Hearst tried to recapture readership by filling his morning American's columns with tabloid-style pictures, features, and borrowed tabloid news display and handling techniques. Hearst's

concern over the tabloid, as some of the following data reveals, was so lively, that the tabloid element comprises the fourth major element in the historical genesis of Hearst news. In chapter II, the other three historical elements contributing to Hearst news were associated with the influences of Bennett, Dana, and Pulitzer.²⁵

Aside from starting his own tabloid, Hearst tried to adopt tabloid characteristics for his papers. One tactic was to make stories shorter, imitating the Daily Mail of London, a standard-size paper. Hearst said the Daily Mail maintained a dominating circulation in spite of the tabloids by making its articles "as short as they are in the tabloid." Another time he suggested putting pictures at the bottom of pages two and three, thereby depriving the tabloid papers their advantage of interesting picture pages.²⁶

Hearst wrote to Coblenz asking him to interpret the tabloids' success, and then proceeded to do so himself. Hearst thought the size might have something to do with it but not much. He believed it was the tabloids' "briefness and brightness" that was mainly responsible. That made it possible to produce a page that was attractive and alluring with headlines and pictures spangled all over it. Again, he mentioned that even the tabloids had to have the news, and that they were failures until they did so.²⁷

In another missive Hearst analyzed the success of the tabloid as being due to its striking news picture use, and to its size

compelling the use of condensed news stories. The American's picture page, intended to compete with the tabloids with strong news pictures, was so important to Hearst that he wrote a two-page memorandum critiquing it, and threatening to fire the picture editor if he could not do better. But it was not just condensed stories that Hearst wanted, he demanded "vital human interest news" --the romances, divorces and tragedies of life to compete with the tabloids human interest fare. Hearst wanted less politics, book reviews and music in the American and more on moving pictures, which interested the average citizen.²⁸

Hearst wanted editors on the American to quit shooting over people's heads, and to quit thinking of the New York Times and the New York Herald Tribune, the morning standard-size papers, as the paper's competitors. He said the marketing target was the average citizen, and the paper's competitor was the Daily News, a morning tabloid, and market circulation leader.²⁹

In a 1936 statement of news values that may be taken to be a culmination of the historical development of Hearst news, Hearst emphasized the following: news, news pictures, dominant departments and features, news condensation, picture selection, typography, news and picture display and intelligent summaries. In this list may be seen the tabloid influence, which made itself felt not only on Hearst, but on American journalism in general. That influence may be capsulized as an emphasis on bold, action photos, striking

typography, condensed news treatment, and adoption of lighter human interest material and sensations.³⁰

The American's circulation health, and how to make the paper grow was a source of concern to Hearst. When Coblentz came in as managing editor in 1927 the paper's weekday circulation stood at 225,000, compared to 285,000 for the Herald-Tribune, its closest morning competitor. By 1930 the American had declined to 201,000, while the Herald-Tribune advanced to 313,000. Then in 1931 the morning World ceased publication, and the American's circulation increased over 50 percent to 321,000 in 1932, surpassing the Herald-Tribune's 319,000. From then until the American went out of business in 1937, it stayed ahead of the Herald-Tribune, though its circulation increased slightly then settled back to 314,000 in its last year.³¹

Hearst spent part of his time demanding circulation growth, and another part offering suggestions to make the paper more attractive to readers. Sometimes he did both in the same memorandum. In May, 1933 after asking that the American's departments be made authoritative so as to better secure advertising, Hearst complained about circulation. He said the prestige appeal of the paper was great, but its circulation appeal was weak. He wanted Coblentz to put in more news of intense emotional appeal, and of vital and compelling interest, following the 1890s Arthur McEwen formula of using jazzed-up news that made the

readers gasp: "Oh Gosh! Gee Whiz! and Holy Moses!" as they turned the pages.³²

"How can we make the American grow?" was how Hearst began a memorandum toward the end of 1933. He again suggested the McEwen gee-whiz formula, commenting the editors should get excited about the news. He thought bringing in some young people, to whom it was not all a dreary routine, and who would show more surprise and excitement over news possibilities, might help. In February, 1934 he was again exhorting Coblentz that circulation has "got to grow. . . ." He complained that the paper was too staid, sedate and routine, and that a day managing editor was needed who would get the paper out of the rut, and get results.³³

On another occasion he asked Coblentz to study the San Francisco Examiner as a model of the news values Hearst favored: a "bright, brief, interesting, entertaining paper, . . . (with) smart, vivid headlines and good pictures." In early 1936 Hearst complained that the "damned American (was) intensely unsatisfactory" from a circulation point of view, and something had to be done "no matter how drastic." A few days later, still on circulation, Hearst said the American should not "high-hat the public" and be too sedate and dull. Rather Coblentz should try to make the paper's sports and filmland fare the best, so as to get some circulation out of that.³⁴

The discussion of how to make the American's circulation grow proceeded through 1936. Hearst commented that he thought the paper

was improving in February, but he believed it could be more effective pictorially. Coblentz responded in a five-page letter, replying that the American got more picture awards than any other Hearst newspaper in a 1935 photo contest. He echoed many of Hearst's catch phrases, assuring the "Chief" he accepted the goals of 400,000 or 500,000 circulation, and of making the paper bright, sprightly and vividly pictured.³⁵

Why the American went out of business on June 23, 1937, is not clear from the Coblentz manuscript materials, as they are silent on that point. The Hearst-Coblentz memoranda shows that circulation was an intense preoccupation, so certainly it did not go defunct for lack of effort. Secondary sources, however, indicate the American was losing money. The paper's losses were pegged at \$400,000 in 1934 by Fortune, and at \$1 million by Time. Fortune said a big effort was made to make the American to break even in 1935 by slashing its budget by \$30,000 per month. The precipitating cause of the American's demise during Hearst's financial crisis of 1937 was probably its money losses. Probably linked to that cause were the contributory causes of tabloid incursions eroding its market position, and the corresponding shift of advertiser dollar.³⁶

Where the Hearst-Coblentz memoranda are rich is in the area of Hearst news control of the editorial area of the American a

subject now coming under discussion. Hearst's exercise of authority in this area was general, constant and pervasive. He accepted suggestions from respected subordinates, but he was the authority in charge. For analysis, the exercise of Hearst's control has been divided into topics, even though it is doubtful Hearst was in any way conscious of exercising authority through these categories. He exercised control in a holistic fashion, according to his plans or the needs of the moment.

Basic to the other areas in which Hearst exercised control was the basic, agenda-setting area of general policy and editorial platform. As well, he exercised control through his crusades and campaigns (some for political ends, others for the public welfare), edicts for subjective coverage and through hiring and firing. These areas now come under discussion.

The basic Hearst editorial platform of the 1930's was laid down in a 12-point platform enunciated in late 1930. Its points reveal Hearst's interest in the nation's political-legal-economic framework. Some of the points in it were admirable ideas which no doubt would have benefited the nation. Others, such as the federal sales tax to replace the income tax, and the idea of having all holidays fall on Saturday probably were motivated by financial self-interest. The 12-point list is reproduced here:

1. "Honest friendship with all nations--entangling alliances with none," George Washington.
2. Proportional representation in the United States Senate--no state to have less than two senators.
3. Army, Navy and Aviation--all united under a secretary of national defense.

4. Vigorous federal action under a secretary of education to abolish illiteracy in the United States.
5. Installation of President and of Congress on first of January following election in November.
6. Federal sales tax and excise taxes to replace entirely income taxes.
7. A calendar year of thirteen months of four weeks each, all holidays to fall on Saturday.
8. Construction of Nicaragua Canal for commerce and defense, advocated by Hearst papers since 1895.
9. Acquisition of French and English West Indies as part payment on debt to United States.
10. Selective immigration to admit only those suited for American citizenship and American needs.
11. Deportation of undesirable aliens and extension of preliminary citizenship periods to ten years.
12. Modification of Volstead Act to permit light wines and beers under Federal regulation.³⁷

In 1935, when Hearst papers were being boycotted for their unwarranted attacks on liberal professors and labor leaders as "communists"--one of Hearst's favorite loaded terms for those who disagreed with him, Hearst enunciated his newspapers' stand for "Americanism and Genuine Democracy." The prose is redolent of high virtue, and his position is that of a flag-wrapped patriot. But the reader should be forewarned that this is the same Hearst who stridently opposed the Wagner Act, and the American Newspaper Guild, assailed the intellectual integrity of teachers, opposed the progressive income tax in the 1920s and 1930s, and supported the Presidential candidacies of conservatives like Andrew Mellon, and Alf Landon. This is what Hearst had to say:

The Hearst papers are American papers published for the American people.

They support the American system of government, the American Constitution, American institutions and American ideals.

They labor to maintain the American standard of living.

They are opposed to the various forms of tyranny which our American forefathers came to this country to avoid.

They are in favor of American independence, American rights and liberties, free speech, free assembly, freedom of thought and action, and freedom of the press.

They are advocates of rugged individualism, and of the industrial independence and enterprise which have made our country the richest and greatest in the world.³⁸

They are opposed to paternalism in government.

These broad-stroke platitudes make it evident that Hearst was all-"American." It was a favorite Hearst technique to buttress his editorials with out-of-context quotes from such founding fathers as George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson. The effect of his class-biased, militant nationalism was to leave the implication that if you did not agree with Hearst you were un-American. And if Hearst disagreed with you, according to Hearst, you were a rowdy, red radical, a punk pink, or an out-and-out Communist. The Hearst editorial world was one of conclusory statements, heavy invective, loaded language, and appeals to strong emotions, which brooked no opposition.³⁹

That Hearst was vitally concerned with his editorial stances, their guidance for his papers' news, and their impact on the public was evident by the facts that he wanted to advertise them in other media, and the painstaking control he exercised over them. Once in 1935, and again the next year, Hearst suggested his editorials be run as advertisements in other media. He conjectured in 1935 an additional eight to ten million readership could be gained if some of his editorials on basic policy positions were run in competing

papers, and in markets where there was no Hearst paper. He asked his general manager to find out how much a fairly liberal schedule of ads would cost. In 1936 Hearst said he wanted his recent pieces run in non-Hearst papers as full-page, paid advertisements on an exchange basis if possible.⁴⁰

Hearst considered his editorials to be policies for his papers, to be pursued at every opportunity, and saved in a scrap-book for reference. He emphatically did not want all opinions published, particularly those of a "controversial or subversive" nature, probably meaning anything that disagreed with his policies. When editors chose not to use Hearst policy articles, they were supposed to inform general management why. The influence of his editorials over the news section of his newspapers may be seen in a couple of Hearst's requests. One was that he asked that a series of editorials be prepared advocating merging the railroads, and a series of "news" articles prepared supporting that idea by academic experts. In another case he asked that the headlines on important foreign news be given an editorial slant that would prepare the reader for the editorial. In these cases editorials and news worked in tandem.⁴¹

Hearst's control over national editorials was explicit and direct--he wanted them promptly telegraphed to him, so he could approve them for timely release. He also made it clear only he had authority to decide whether editorials should appear in morning or evening papers, or both. But the job of verifying facts in

editorials he delegated to Coblentz. When Hearst did not approve of local editorials, for instance on New York's Tammany machine, he asked that they too be submitted for his personal inspection. He also monitored editorial cartoons, which he expected to conform to his policies, and issued reprimands when they did not.⁴²

Specific evidence has been cited showing that Hearst's editorial policy thrust into and colored the news pages. The general pattern of evidence indicates Hearst's interests extended on an axis from editorial page, to news (sometimes in the form of crusades of policy articles) to attaining legislative enactments conforming to his public policy attitudes. Thus Hearst, the frustrated politician, used the editorial side of his newspapers in an integrated manner to exercise influence over legislatures and the body politic.

Hearst went after both uniform narcotics laws, and a prison reform measure with a tripartite program of editorials, news coverage and introduction of draft laws in the legislature. On two other occasions Coblentz reported that bills on temperance, and for some kind of federal bank deposit insurance (anticipating the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) were being drafted according to Hearst's instructions. When a Hearst crusade was under way against children being accidentally poisoned in hospitals by boracic acid, he told Coblentz to have a law passed. Hearst did not want to let up on a crusade until a satisfactory solution was reached. Finally, on another occasion, Coblentz forwarded to

Hearst a report on progress on legislation to simplify county and municipal government along lines suggested editorially by Hearst papers.⁴³

Operating in a similar pattern to his control over editorials was Hearst's newspapering hallmark of launching crusades. They also often were integrated efforts encompassing editorials, "news" articles and attempts to sponsor legislation. The ironic accent is placed on the "news" aspect of Hearst's crusades, as what Hearst chose to crusade about was up to his subjective fancy. Whatever he thought might boom circulation, catch the public eye, conform to his idea of "Americanism," or promote the class-biased Hearstian idea of public welfare might be subjects for crusades. Hearst's crusading appears to fit the idea of the press's agenda setting function--not telling the public what to think, but what to think about. And with Hearst that might be quixotically Hearstian, as in his nationalistic crusade against "Communism," or his class-motivated crusade for a federal sales tax.

A list of some of the crusades Hearst started in the ten years between 1927 and 1937 show some laudable initiatives. They include anti-child labor, conservation of oil resources, improvement of schools, a Constitutional amendment to limit the President to two elected terms, anti-dope, pro-stage censorship, regulation of corporate securities, buy American, anti-World Court (Hearst wanted an everyday fight) and for clean motion pictures. But some were comical, too, as they were hardly issues in the sense

there would be an opposition to them. These included the anti-gangster, and anti-high taxes campaigns. Some, such as his anti-dope and pro-Nicaragua Canal campaigns were old standbys that he dusted off and used when news events were slow. Hearst's unconscious comic side emerged in connection with crusades when he ordered a Supreme Court campaign called off for the reason that the justices were "just nine more punk politicians."⁴⁴

Hearst's crusade against "Communism" might be regarded with tolerant good humor, had it not been so vicious. To Hearst the word Communism had an idiosyncratic definition: he used it as a label for government "by disorderly elements . . ." and by "the high brows and the low brows, the fanatics and malcontents. . . ." Thus Hearst attacked liberal professors, the Wagner Act, industrial unionists, the New York Herald-Tribune newspaper, and John L. Lewis, head of the United Mine Workers, as Communists. According to Hearst, Franklin Roosevelt was surrounded by "pinks," the Democratic party was slipping toward "red radicalism," France was going Communist within a year or so, and Russia was little better than a slave state.⁴⁵

The panacea of a federal sales tax was pursued with the same enthusiastic vigor in the 1930s in Hearst editorials and news columns as the anti-Red crusade was prosecuted. Hearst was convinced the progressive income tax, inheritance tax and taxes on undistributed profits were immensely unjust. He so favored the

sales tax that he organized an expedition to study Canada's sales tax, got academics and economists to write favorable articles, had United States Congressional candidates polled on the subject and campaigned against political extravagance--"the cause of our taxes." In Hearst's vigorous advocacy of the sales tax is evidenced his class bias creeping into the news. A sales tax operates so that people in low income brackets bear a proportionally greater tax burden than do those in higher income brackets. For that reason, economists label the sales tax "regressive," meaning it does not abet the general social welfare.⁴⁶

Aside from control exerted through editorial policy and crusades, Hearst also exercised a direct control through subjective news demands. Subjective news demands are here distinguished from the function of news judgment. Subjective news demands largely proceed from personal caprice, whereas news judgments are based on various consensus, traditional and institutional rationales.

A good deal of Hearst's subjective news requests fell into the broad categories of promoting his friends and business associates, and ignoring, or on occasion giving a bad press to people or things he opposed for one reason or another. Most of his subjective news requests dealt with soft news areas, such as dramas, travel, society and movie actors. On one occasion he requested "no personal attacks on our friends." When Hearst took

a shine to the historical drama "Rasputin" he requested it be given favorable publicity. He also liked favored politicians to be puffed, and wanted pleasant reviews for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer motion pictures, as he had a business tie with the firm.⁴⁷

When it came to subjects of which Hearst disapproved, he could be caustic. He said Al Jolson was a "swell-headed egg," and actress Joan Blondell was ordinary looking and couldn't act, so he wanted their names left out of the paper. When his columnist Bruno Lessing wrote a column praising Paris, he called it junk and propaganda, and ordered Coblentz to leave it out. In addition, Coblentz wrote a letter to Lessing admonishing him that praising Paris did not fit in with Hearst's "see America," and "buy American" campaigns. Hearst also ordered that the Hearst family be kept out of the paper.⁴⁸

The final way Hearst exercised news control that will be examined in this chapter was through hiring and firing of personnel. Hearst's purview was directed to some of those personnel who had most impact: columnists, editorial writers and cartoonists with established followings, and editorial department heads. A discussion of hiring and firing in part anticipates a criticism that could be leveled against a discussion of the exchange of management memoranda. That is that the exchange of memoranda constitutes a paperwork shuffle, out of which nothing concrete emerges. A hiring or firing is a concrete event that directly

impacts on the organization, and the editorial output of a newspaper.

Much of Hearst's attention was directed to brightening and strengthening the American's editorial page by hiring new people and shuffling employees around. Between 1927 and 1937, he put at least three different people in charge of the page, and asked that a good editorial writer be hired to write on New York subjects. He tried to recruit outstanding editorial contributors. One time he wanted to hire someone who could write short, vital editorials, and another time, a writer who could make politics interesting, and later on someone who could turn out bitter, slashing editorials. And Hearst ordered his editorial page color cartoonists reassigned between New York and Chicago.⁴⁹

Hearst also showed interest in hiring a science editor, like the Scripps papers had. He wanted to hire a distinctive book reviewer; Coblentz suggested the head of the English department at Yale. Hearst favored hiring outstanding people away from other jobs. Once he suggested picking up an outstanding person for the contributors' page, such as Dorothy Parker Benchly of the New Yorker magazine. Another time he asked that writing samples of eight star writers already employed with other firms, including Joe Alsop, Paul Gallico and Bob Considine, be sent to him.⁵⁰

His suggestions for firing were not as frequent, as those for hiring. Once he complained about the American's dramatic reviewer, and suggested he be replaced. He also suggested letting go of

Charles Hansen Townes, and his "worthless personal tattle column." Another time Coblentz suggested that Adela Rogers St. Johns' column be dropped, as she was careless with her facts. It seems likely that many of the routine decisions to dismiss employees were handled by individual publishers without Hearst getting involved.⁵¹

In chapter VI the role and relationship of Coblentz to Hearst was discussed. Coblentz, due to his long and trusted association with Hearst, was closer to him than many other Hearst associates. He did everything for the Chief from running personal errands, to acting as editorial envoy for the Hearst organization to the White House. For his loyalty and exemplary service Coblentz was made beneficiary of an automobile, a trip to Europe with Hearst, and munificent cash awards. Coblentz was given considerable authority, but he always seemed acutely conscious that it was a grant to be exercised within the framework of Hearst's policies and predilections. When he was not sure, he wrote Hearst a memorandum and asked. Hearst responded promptly and authoritatively. In sum, Coblentz was a dutiful, loyal, and respected subordinate who operated well under the aegis of Hearst's demanding news, policy and managerial authority.

Chapter VI's review of the New York journalism market plotted Hearst's fortunes there, and pointed out the circulation incursions of the tabloid newspapers. The tabloid challenge introduced the fourth element in the historical genesis of Hearst news--the tabloid influence. (The other elements were associated with the influences

of Bennett, Dana and Pulitzer.) The tabloid influence at work on Hearst news was the tendency toward striking photos and typography, condensed news, and sensational news fare.

An insight emerged from the New York market and tabloid discussion concerning a reason for the low-brow quality of American news during the 1920s and 1930s. The basic fact was that quality standard papers were displaced while tabloid papers emphasizing sensations, pictures, brief stories and bold typography made outstanding circulation gains. Between 1927 and 1940 tabloids gained 1,198,000 circulation, while the standard papers lost 141,000. To try to stay in business publishers had to attempt to cater to low common taste. Thus Hearst ordered that more romances, divorces, and melodramas be used, and thoughtful material on books, politics and music be softpedaled.

Hearst news control extended to trying to improve circulation, and to finding the right news formula for the American. The discussion of Hearst's control over the editorial end of the American included general editorial policy, crusades, subjective news demands, and hiring and firing of personnel. Hearst's news control over the editorial end of the American was assessed as constant and pervasive. In chapter VII the discussion moves on to a consideration of Hearst news control when Coblentz was supervising editor of all Hearst papers between 1937 and 1940.

NOTES

- ¹"Hearst," Fortune, Oct. 1935, p. 146.
- ²Key to the Coblentz Collection, Edmond D. Coblentz Papers, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.
- ³Ibid. New York Times, April 17, 1959, p. 25.
- ⁴Key to the Coblentz Collection, op. cit.; William R. Hearst to Edmond D. Coblentz, July 18, 1925, and Sept. 26, 1925, ibid.; Hearst to John F. Neylan, Oct. 17, 1926, ibid.
- ⁵Hearst to Neylan, Sept. 28, 1926, and Jan. 4, 1927, ibid. Neylan to Hearst, Jan. 3, 1927, ibid. "Hearst," Fortune, op. cit., p. 149.
- ⁶Key to the Coblentz Collection, op. cit.
- ⁷New York Times, op. cit.
- ⁸John Tebbel, The Life and Good Times of William R. Hearst (New York: Dutton, 1952), p. 296. "Hearst," Fortune, op. cit., p. 149. Edmond D. Coblentz, William R. Hearst, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), photo following p. 6.
- ⁹W. A. Swanberg, Citizen Hearst (New York: Scribner's 1961), pp. 496, 564.
- ¹⁰Hearst to Coblentz, Coblentz Papers, Sept. 8, 1927, and Sept. 30, 1927, op. cit.
- ¹¹Coblentz to Hearst, March 20, 1929, and Oct. 20, 1931, ibid.; Hearst to Coblentz, March 20, 1929, and March 22, 1929, ibid. Hearst to Coblentz and Victor Watson, Oct. 7, 1931, ibid.
- ¹²Item titled, "Exchanges," March-April, 1929, ibid.; Hearst to Coblentz, May 15, 1929, and Oct. 7, 1929, ibid.
- ¹³Hearst to Coblentz, May 13, 1930, ibid. Frank Knox to Coblentz, Nov. 26, 1930, ibid.
- ¹⁴Hearst to Coblentz, June 19, 1930, Nov. 12, 1933, and July 30, 1936, ibid.

- ¹⁵ Coblentz to Hearst, May 6, 1932, and Sept. 10, 1934, *ibid.*
- ¹⁶ Coblentz to Hearst, Jan. 6, 1932, *ibid.* Coblentz to Hearst, March 10, 1932, and March 23, 1935, *ibid.*; Item titled, "Matters To Take Up With Mr. Hearst," approximately Dec. 1932, *ibid.*
- ¹⁷ Joseph Willicombe to Coblentz, Jan. 8, 1936, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Hearst, Sept. 25, 1935, and Oct. 9, 1936, *ibid.*
- ¹⁸ Item titled, "Message dictated over the phone from San Simeon in 1933, by Mr. Hearst," Jan. or Feb., 1933, *ibid.* Coblentz to Hearst, May 9, 1935, *ibid.*
- ¹⁹ N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Son, 1927-40), statistics gleaned from New York market section of the 1927 and 1940 annual editions.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, newspaper characteristics, and successive editors gleaned from the 1927, 8, 1930, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 1940 editions.
- ²¹ *ibid.* Edwin Emery, The Press and America (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1972), pp. 354, 244-5, 432, and 166.
- ²² *ibid.* Emery, *op. cit.*, pp. 558, 561.
- ²³ *ibid.*, p. 561. N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory, *op. cit.*, 1927 and 1940 editions.
- ²⁴ N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory, *op. cit.*
- ²⁵ Emery, *op. cit.*, p. 558.
- ²⁶ Hearst to Managing Editors of Hearst Morning Newspapers, Coblentz Collection, Dec. 16, 1924, *op. cit.*; Hearst to Publishers of All Hearst Newspapers, Sept. 25, 1929, *ibid.*
- ²⁷ Hearst to Coblentz, Feb. 26, 1931, June 19, 1930, *ibid.* A former editor on the New York Times, and professor at the University of Washington, Fendall Yerxa, maintained that the size had a great deal to do with the tabloids success, as their size made them ideal to read on the subway and other public conveyances. Conversation, April 6, 1979, Seattle, Wash.
- ²⁸ Hearst to Coblentz, Oct. 7, 1931, July 9, 1934, July 23, 1934, and April 11, 1935, *ibid.* Edmond Coblentz, William R. Hearst, A Portrait in His Own Words, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), p. 263.

²⁹Hearst to Coblentz, April 11, 1935, *ibid.*

³⁰Hearst to Publishers and Managing Editors of All Hearst Papers, June 8, 1936, *ibid.* Emery, *op. cit.*, pp. 557, 8. Simon M. Bessie, Jazz Journalism, The Story of the Tabloid Newspapers, (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1938), pp. 229-32, 234.

³¹N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory, *op. cit.*, figures gleaned from 1927, 8, 1930, 2, 4, 6 and 1937 editions.

³²Hearst to Coblentz, May 1, 1933, *ibid.* Arthur McEwen was Hearst's city editor of the San Francisco Examiner in the late 1880s and early 1890s, when the youthful Hearst indulged in stunts, sensations and feats of news enterprise to attract an audience of San Franciscans to his first venture in newspapering.

³³Hearst to Coblentz, Dec. 17, 1933, and Feb. 4, 1934, *ibid.*

³⁴Hearst to Coblentz, July 22, 1935, Jan. 25, 1936, and Feb. 1, 1936, *ibid.*

³⁵Hearst to Coblentz, Feb. 3, 1936, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Hearst, Feb. 21, 1936, *ibid.*

³⁶"Hearst," Fortune 12 (Oct., 1935):146; "The Press," Time, March 13, 1939.

³⁷Item titled, "The Hearst Papers Advocate," Coblentz Collection, Nov. 28, 1930, *op. cit.*

³⁸William Randolph Hearst, "The Hearst Papers Stand for Americanism and Genuine Democracy," New York American, April 21, 1935.

³⁹Hearst, "The Rake's Progress," Jan. 13, 1935; "America Must Keep Aflame the Beacon Light of Liberty," March 3, 1935; and "The Hearst Papers Stand for Americanism and Genuine Democracy," April 21, 1935, all in the New York American. For a Hearst diatribe against the American Newspaper Guild's strike against the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, see "Mob Rule Destroys a Free Press and a Free Country," published Aug. 21, 1936, in Hearst's Selections (San Francisco: published privately, 1948), p. 342. Also, see the sections on "Americanism," and "Nationalism," in Selections for further evidence of Hearst's nationalism as expressed in his editorials.

⁴⁰Hearst to Mr. White and Mr. Coblentz, Coblentz Collection, op. cit., April 2, 1935; "Trans-Atlantic Instructions from Mr. W. R. Hearst," *ibid.*, Nov. (?), 1936.

⁴¹The question of corroborating that Hearst's instructional directives actually affected newspaper content comes up in chapter VIII. Hearst to Coblentz, Dec. 2, 1929, Dec. 31, 1930, May 23, 1933, *ibid.*; Hearst to Editors and Publishers of All Hearst Newspapers--Morning and Evening, Feb. 15, 1937, *ibid.*

⁴²Hearst to Coblentz, Nov. 25, 1930, Jan. 9, 1931, and April 19, 1939, *ibid.*; S. S. Carvalho to Coblentz, Aug. 27, 1929, *ibid.*; and J. Willicombe to Coblentz, April 7, 1932, *ibid.*

⁴³Coblentz to Hearst, Feb. 20, 1931, April 20, 1931, Jan. 29, 1936, *ibid.*; Hearst to Coblentz, Dec. 4, 1929, Feb. 10, 1933, *ibid.*; Joseph Willicombe to Coblentz, Sept. 15, 1932, *ibid.*

⁴⁴S. S. Carvalho to Coblentz, June 13, 1927, *ibid.*; Hearst to Coblentz, Sept. 16, 1927, Oct. 18, 1927, Jan. 16, 1933 and March 27, 1933, *ibid.*; Hunter to Coblentz, Jan. 17, 1931, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Hearst, Jan. 17, 1931, Aug. 1, 1931, Dec. 12, 1932, Dec. 13, 1932, Dec. 8, 1934, *ibid.*; Hillman to Universal Service, Aug. 15, 1934, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Editors of All Hearst Papers, Dec. 31, 1935, *ibid.*; and, Willicombe to Coblentz, Nov. (?), 1936, and April 12, 1937, *ibid.*

⁴⁵Hearst to Coblentz, Dec. 22, 1935, June 23, 1936, April 20, 1936, Aug. 7, 1936, Aug. 10, 1936, and April 9, 1937, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Hearst, Sept. 11, 1936, *ibid.*; and, Willicombe to Coblentz, Dec. 17, 1934, *ibid.*

⁴⁶Hearst to Coblentz, Sept. 6, 1931, May 21, 1932, Feb. 9, 1932, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Hearst, Sept. 3, 1931, Oct. 21, 1931, *ibid.*; Willicombe to Coblentz, March 14, 1936, *ibid.*; Willicombe to Editors All Hearst Morning Papers and Afternoons Where No Mornings, Oct. 23, 1932, *ibid.*; Hearst to Publishers and Managing Editors of All Hearst Papers, July 9, 1935, *ibid.*

⁴⁷Hearst to Coblentz, April 21, 1931, Dec. 20, 1932; Feb. 2, 1933, Feb. 10, 1933, and March 13, 1937, *ibid.*; Willicombe to Coblentz, Dec. 15, 1932, *ibid.*; Willicombe to the Managing Editors of All Hearst Papers, July 27, 1933, *ibid.*; Hearst to Managing Editors of All Hearst Papers, Dec. 21, 1933, *ibid.*; and Coblentz to Rudolph Lessing, Feb. 13, 1933, *ibid.*

⁴⁸Hearst to Coblentz, Aug. 3, 1924, Feb. 10, 1933, March 13, 1937, *ibid.*; Willicombe to Managing Editors of All Hearst Papers, July 27, 1933, *ibid.*; Hearst to Coblentz, W. R. Hearst, Jr., and W. A. Curley, Sept. 19, 1931, *ibid.*; and Coblentz to Rudolph Lessing, Feb. 13, 1933, *ibid.*

⁴⁹Hearst to Coblentz, Dec. 7, 1927, May 15, 1929, Nov. 28, 1929, July 30, 1934, May, 1936, note attached to New York American editorial page critique, 1937, *ibid.*; Willicombe to Coblentz, May 9, 1929 and Aug. 7, 1936, *ibid.*

⁵⁰Hearst to Coblentz, April 4, 1928, Feb. 22, 1932, and March 27, 1931, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Hearst, April 23, 1931, *ibid.*; Miss Livingstone to Coblentz, Jan. 12, 1936, *ibid.*

⁵¹Hearst to Coblentz, Feb. 22, 1932, *ibid.*; Willicombe to Clarence (Lindner?), Dec. 15, 1927, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Willicombe, April 6, 1933, *ibid.*

CHAPTER VII

THE NATIONAL SCENE

William R. Hearst's news control between the years 1937 to 1940 is examined in this chapter. These years fell into a period of financial tribulation for the Hearst organization, and in particular for the newspaper enterprises. The declining market situation of Hearst newspapers, changes in the general management team, and Hearst's diminution of power are recounted.

Edmond Coblentz's evolving role and relationship with Hearst, from 1937 to 1940, when he was supervising editor of all Hearst newspapers is outlined. The Coblentz manuscript materials are examined to discern what lights they reveal about Hearst news control over all of Hearst papers during the same period. Finally a number of memoranda are spotlighted, which reveal Hearst as a didactic newspaper maker and teacher of editorial craft.

In 1937 financial problems that had been plaguing the Hearst organization since the early 1920s became so acute that Hearst had to relinquish his authority in the financial area. The problems had their roots in Hearst's enormous and self-indulgent spending on art treasures, castles, and on Hollywood publicity for Marion Davies. Despite competent financial counsel, Hearst drained earnings from his media properties. In 1924 Hearst began borrowing

heavily on his newspapers and real estate. In 1927 Hearst arranged to have a securities company issue \$10 million worth of bonds to the public on five of his most profitable magazines, organized into Hearst Magazines, Inc. Then in 1930 ten of his most profitable newspapers and his Sunday supplement, American Weekly, were organized into Hearst Consolidated Publications, and \$50 million dollars more of public ownership was arranged through stock sales. In 1935 Hearst's top holding company, American Newspapers Inc., sold his Baltimore, Atlanta and San Antonio papers to the publicly held Hearst Consolidated for \$8 million (of which \$6 million represented intangibles such as "circulation, press franchises, reference libraries, etc.") in spite of the fact these papers lost \$550,000 in 1934. This deal was later questioned in a stockholder's suit.¹

Other Hearst newspapers were losing money, too. For instance, the New York American was estimated to have lost as much as \$1 million in 1934. Real estate values slumped during the depression, and Hearst owned more than two million acres of it, much of which yielded nothing. Hoping the public could once again extricate him from his continuing financial problems, Hearst filed registration statements with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to issue \$35 million in bonds. But the bonds were never issued as a brief was filed with the SEC complaining that the registration statements tended "to mislead the public."²

Harried by creditors, in June, 1937 Hearst went to see Clarence John (Judge) Shearn, an old friend, and close to a source of credit, the Chase National Bank. After consultation Judge Shearn was appointed in June, 1937, sole voting trustee for the 95 percent control of the American Newspapers Inc., (Hearst's top holding company) owned by Hearst. He set out to clean up the financial mess, in part created by Hearst's ill-advised attempt to hold on to all of his properties for the sake of national policy influence and bigness, regardless of whether they were making or losing money.³

Within a short time Shearn withdrew the proposed bond issues from the SEC, got enough bank credit to stave off the immediate crisis, and Hearst was given the post of editorial director of his own newspapers. Retrenchment required discontinuing the New York American, and Hearst papers in Rochester and Omaha. The Washington Times-Herald was leased to Eleanor (Cissy) Patterson, who bought it two years later. Staffs of the morning and evening papers in Milwaukee were combined and the Boston American tabbed. The Hearst half-interest in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette was sold. Within two years of Shearn's appointment six Hearst newspapers, one news service (Universal Service, serving morning papers), one magazine, seven radio stations, real estate and valuable art treasures were sold or scrapped.⁴

With the selling of six newspapers, Hearst newspapers declined from 26 in 1935, with a circulation of 5.2 million, accounting for

13.6 percent of the nation's daily circulation. After the liquidation, completed in 1939, Hearst still had 20 newspapers. He retained the largest daily circulation in the nation, which was 4.4 million in 1938. His papers were published in three rough geographic zones: the West (Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, and Seattle), the Midwest (Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, and San Antonio, Texas), and the East (Boston, New York, Albany, Syracuse, Baltimore and Atlanta). Some of these papers were ailing financially, but Hearst still had 18 papers when he died in 1951.⁵

A general management chart, prepared in September, 1937 as part of an internal Hearst corporate management study, still showed Hearst in the number one position. Holding the reins of financial and corporate reorganization decision-making was Shearn. The management team that Shearn inherited from Hearst included Thomas J. White as general manager. Below him, the other top executives included Harry M. Bitner, general manager of newspapers; Richard E. Berlin, general manager of magazines; and Joseph V. Connolly, head of features, wire services and radio.⁶

The executive superstructure in charge of supervising Hearst's newspapers was divided into the following categories: general manager, advertising, circulation, labor relations, editorial assistant, mechanical, international advertising and newsprint. Under Bitner, the general manager of newspapers, were three assistants, probably assigned by geographic regions. They included J. D. Gortatowsky, who later became general manager of the whole

executive superstructure, as did Bitner; Arthur G. Newmyer, and E. D. Fulton.⁷

Mention should be made of the two men listed under the category editorial assistant, Edmond D. Coblentz, and John R. Hastings. During this period Coblentz carried the title of supervising editor of all Hearst papers. Hastings title during this period is not known. Their functional capacity was that of editor of Hearst newspaper editors, working directly under Hearst's instruction.⁸

Between June, 1937, when Shearn came in, and July 1938, when the executive management team was reorganized, evidence indicates it was Hearst who mainly was in charge of editorial affairs. In an October, 1937, memorandum to Coblentz, Harry Bitner, general manager of newspapers, defined himself and Thomas White, the overall general manager, as being obligated to accept Hearst's policies. Coblentz's role is defined as being "in charge of news and editorial matters" of Hearst newspapers, on the level of daily operations. In January, 1938, Hearst expressed irritation at Victor Polachek, of the Sunday supplement, American Weekly, for an expensive circulation-building scheme of which he disapproved.⁹

In March, 1938, in a telegraphic message, Hearst assigned the power to order newspaper features to be used by editors to Coblentz and himself. But the power of corporative restraint on Hearst's decision-making was evident in a querulous Hearst letter of May, 1938. He complained that he was "damned if . . ." (he was

going to be) marooned on a reef like an abandoned pirate." Hearst continued that he was going to have his say about trying to stimulate circulation on his Boston papers by sending Coblentz there, notwithstanding Bitner's complaint that his prerogatives had been violated.¹⁰

During the first weeks of June, 1938, Hearst was in the role of defining Coblentz's job as including improving the Sunday New York Journal-American. Hearst told Coblentz that improving the Sunday paper was an important part of his job, but that he should use more than one Sunday paper as a specimen before making changes. The same day he wrote to White, and informed him that he had instructed Coblentz about the Journal-American, and said that Coblentz should be able to make an immediate improvement there. A couple of weeks later Hearst's influence was very much in evidence, as he went on an inspection tour of his newspapers in Baltimore, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Detroit. Accompanying him were White, Connolly, and Coblentz, who was described as editor-in-chief.¹¹

During these months, though Hearst had to accept Judge Shearn's instructions on financial retrenchment, he seems to have had a fairly free hand in editorial control. Yet a corporative influence is present in Hearst's responsiveness to White and Bitner that had not been seen before Shearn came onto the scene. Hearst is seen working his will in trying to revitalize and stimulate circulation

on ailing papers through Coblentz, who as a roving editor-in-chief is responsive to Hearst's instructions.

The initial liquidation of properties did not end Hearst's financial problems, as the year 1938 brought more woes in its train. First, Hearst-Brisbane Properties, Inc. failed to make a regular bond payment and had to take advantage of the New York State mortgage moratorium provision. Then, Hearst Magazines had trouble meeting bond payments, with the result that a director from Chase National Bank was put in charge of that big subsidiary. The troubles that beset all publishers in 1938 nearly sunk Hearst. Newsprint went up in price, costing Hearst an additional \$5 million a year, while advertising revenue fell off 25 percent, a \$10 million loss, and circulation declined.¹²

In July, 1938, the Hearst management team was shuffled with the effect that Hearst's influence was diminished. General Manager White kept his title but lost his authority. General manager of newspapers Harry Bitner lost both his title and his authority. Joseph Connolly was elevated to general manager of all Hearst newspapers, responsible directly to Judge Shearn. Hearst kept his job as president of Hearst Consolidated Publications, the position of editorial director of his own newspapers, but his salary was reduced from \$500,000 a year to \$100,000.¹³

Connolly, supported by Shearn, the sole voting trustee, told Hearst publishers to do their best and to make their own decisions. If only occasionally, orders and directives from "the Chief" were

ignored. These were limited to the most extreme blasts from San Simeon. For instance, when France set up a garrison on the Somalialand-Eritrea border in 1939, Hearst sent out orders that this was a "warlike" act against Italy. Not a Hearst paper played the story that way.¹⁴

Hearst, however, was the one man in the over 25,000-person Hearst organization who knew most about his particular brand of journalism. He worked doggedly to save the papers that remained in his chain, and allowed some of his extreme editorial positions to be blunted. Still his newspapers carried his name on their editorial pages and prominently displayed his editorials. Hearst continued sending out an undiminished stream of instructions to Coblentz from 1938 through 1940 covering news display and handling, improving his papers, and on policy. Hearst was just as vigorous in defending "Americanism," opposing social welfare policies, fighting Communism, attacking creeping government socialism, opposing Presidential third terms, and supporting American neutrality vis-à-vis European wars as he had ever been.¹⁵

In 1938 Hearst Consolidated managed to pay \$1.6 million against its funded debt, and \$600,000 of its back taxes, but it passed its preferred dividend. This was a serious situation as the Class A shareholders had the right to elect a majority of the board of directors whenever four quarterly dividends were passed. Three quarterly dividends had already been passed, and a

stockholders' committee was threatening to vote its 30,000 proxies for a new set of directors if the fourth quarterly dividend was passed on March 15, 1939.¹⁶

At this time the dividends were \$2.6 million in arrears, and the \$25 par value stock was selling at \$6.25 per share. The organization had to scrape to come up with the money. During the time of financial tribulation, Hearst negotiated personal loans of \$1 million at five percent from Cissy Patterson, and \$1 million without interest from Marion Davies. The back dividends were paid, and disaster averted.¹⁷

The financial stringency Hearst faced produced a number of personal setbacks for him, and required him to undergo painful austerities. After spending an estimated \$7 million on Marion Davies, in an attempt to make her Hollywood's brightest star, he finally had to drop his movie enterprises, and vacate Hollywood. Davies never did make it to the superstar category. He faced loss of his beloved San Simeon, on which so much of his fortune had been lavished, when he could not meet a \$600,000 mortgage payment. But his rival publisher, Harry Chandler of the Los Angeles Times, good humoredly agreed not to foreclose. Austerity also forced Hearst, a manic "spendaholic," to sharply curtail his personal expenditures.¹⁸

Hearst also had to undergo the indignity of widely broadcast personal attacks in the mass media. Aldous Huxley's After Many a Summer Dies the Swan, was about a tycoon who mercilessly

caricatured Hearst's trappings and psychological twists. Then in 1939 Time did a splashy cover story that dissected Hearst in unflattering terms, and gave him the worst of it. In 1941 the movie "Citizen Kane," which won a best picture of the year award, spread Hearst's and Marion Davies' private and public lives on the screen with only a thin veneer of disguise.¹⁹

A lesser man than Hearst would have broken down under the strain of all these humiliating reverses. But to his credit Hearst struggled onward. World War II helped to rescue his corporate organization, as the demand for news bolstered circulation, and advertising increased, too. A Hearst newspapers profit and loss statement showed that total net profits for Hearst newspapers increased from \$3.6 million in 1942 to \$5.6 million in 1943. Hearst was so anxious to regain full control of his organization that he sued Shearn in federal court in 1943 to oust him from his position of financial power. But the suit failed, and Shearn kept his post until 1945 when he was relieved of his duties, and Joseph Connolly was put back to running the feature and wire services. Hearst was restored to undisputed sway.²⁰

The foregoing traces Hearst's loss and recovery of power over his organization due to a financial debacle and credit crunch that lingered in an acute stage from 1937 into the World War II years. Hearst was displaced from financial control, and from the power of corporate reorganization and retrenchment. For a time Hearstian control of his organization was at low ebb. Judge Shearn, an old

friend of Hearst's, was made sole voting trustee of American Newspapers, Inc., the top holding company. John S. Brookes, Jr. was put in as president of the same corporation, at the insistence of bank creditors, and Canadian newsprint suppliers. Herman Place, of Chase National Bank, was put in charge of Hearst Magazines. Other personnel in operating control were those already in the Hearst organization.²¹

Hearst also suffered, for some time, a diminution of control over news. A more cooperative and consultative corporate spirit was in evidence. When Connolly was made general manager of newspapers he gave newspaper publishers more leeway to use their own judgment. But Hearst was always active, on the scene sending out a continuing stream of instructions. The loss of Hearst's news control should not be exaggerated as he still exerted predominant influence.

During the 1937 to 1940 period Coblentz, as supervising editor of Hearst papers, was a major recipient of Hearst directives. The roles he performed during this time and the relationship he had with Hearst will now be explored. During 1937 and 1938 Coblentz went around the country making reports on newspapers, worked to improve the March of Events news feature and picture page, and tried to improve the Sunday predate newspaper editions. During 1939 and 1940 he was occupied with Hearst's editorials, editorial views, and the March of Events page.

Coblentz was busy in 1937 surveying Hearst's New York Mirror, and comparing it to the more successful tabloid Daily News. He monitored the progress and made reports on the San Francisco Call, the Los Angeles Examiner, the Chicago American, and compared the New York Journal-American to its market competitors, and made suggestions to improve it. In 1938 he compared the respective attractiveness of the Los Angeles and San Francisco Examiners, and reported on getting all publishers to add 10 percent to their Sunday circulations. He also analyzed stories used in the Journal-American's March of Events page, and requested improvement on the Sunday papers' predate editions.²²

The year 1939 saw Coblentz corresponding with Hearst on the heavy mail support his tax editorials received, and telling editors to keep up the crusade against the anti-neutrality bill. Fitting in with Hearst's anti-communist theme, he advised against the use of an H. G. Wells letter as a "one hundred percent plea for communism." In 1940 Coblentz queried Hearst on his support for an anti-communist textbook crusade, and suggested that Gene Lyons was a "find" as a columnist. He also solicited United States congressmen for articles upholding a Constitutional Congress.²³

Hearst's, and his son, Bill Hearst's, relationship with Coblentz was warm and positive during the late 1930s and beyond. In a letter to his general manager written during his financial debacle, Hearst expressed strong approval of Coblentz when he wrote, "of COURSE Mr. Coblentz is entirely right and very OBVIOUSLY

right." Later in the letter he expressed more general approval: "All Mr. Coblenz's observations and recommendations are perfectly sound--and all have been made to the editors and publishers many times. ²⁴

Bill Hearst, who had been publisher of the New York Journal-American when Coblenz was on the scene, wrote him in 1952 assuring him that he had the right to use and publish "any of (W. R. Hearst's) letters" for his projected book that he deemed necessary. The book in question, issued in 1952 under the title William Randolph Hearst, A Portrait in His Own Words, did make extensive use of Hearst letters. Bill showed his personal appreciation of Coblenz when he sent a telegram wishing him "many happy returns of the day," stating that if newspapering were not enough, he had to take on the care and raising of Hearst boys, too. The same year, addressing Coblenz as "Uncle Ed," Bill asked Coblenz if he could arrange for him and his wife to tour a movie studio. The correspondence from Bill Hearst add to the sense that Coblenz moved far into the confines of Hearst's confidence. ²⁵

Coblenz maintained a deferential and warmly appreciative attitude toward Hearst during the late 1930s. In the instance of a decision about a particular type face, Coblenz said he would defer to "the Chief," because "if the Chief likes the type as is, it is good enough for me." A few months later Coblenz congratulated Hearst on his "superb" Sunday editorial, commenting that if there were only a few great young editors left, Hearst was "all of 'em."

When Hearst started his editorial column "In the News," in 1940, Coblentz was loud in his praise, saying it was a "super-feature for the Journal," and it was attracting widespread and favorable comment.²⁶

In a speech given in late 1939 Coblentz summarized what he respected in Hearst. The tone of the speech was laudatory, as one would expect in a public speech by a loyal employee, but there was an undercurrent of genuine admiration. Coblentz enumerated many of the fights and crusades Hearst fought, some of which were praiseworthy and courageous, and cited his staunch principles of Americanism. His strongest praise was directed toward labeling Hearst a "genius as a maker of newspapers." Coblentz said Hearst's talent at newspapering extended to all parts of newspapering, and was born of hard work, study and innate genius.²⁷

The character of the roles and relationship of Coblentz to Hearst can be summarized as loyal and warm during the period of 1937 to 1940 when Coblentz was supervising editor of Hearst newspapers. This period did not see any substantial change in the Hearst-Coblentz relationship, as compared to the early and mid-1930s period discussed in chapter VI. Coblentz was, however, operating in different roles in 1937 through 1940, chiefly as supervising editor, and an expanded role in the editorial policy handling area, as has been described.

The bulk of the correspondence between Hearst and Coblentz dealt with editorial policy. It will be viewed here from the

perspective of what it reveals about Hearst news control. By way of introduction it may be pointed out that Hearst's temperament was activist. "Life is action," he said. He connected activism with his interest in "Americanism." Of the forefathers and pioneers, he said, "they came to find life and liberty--the pursuit of happiness, which is life in action and creation, effort and achievement."²⁸

His editorial creed, periodically enunciated, formed the foundation of his newspaper's public policy focus. Hearst's creed may be summed up with his label, "Americanism." It formed the fundamental policy basis that all his newspapers were supposed to follow. Of "Americanism" Hearst stated it was the policy "under which these Hearst papers should be run." These facts and relations bear on the news control question in that Hearst was the formulator of his ideas on "Americanism," and he explicitly stated that his editorials (based on his "Americanism" creed) were not sacred cows to be run and thus discarded, but were general policy guidelines to be pursued at every opportunity thereafter.²⁹

By the late 1930's Hearst's editorial creed had shifted considerably from the 1930-one quoted in chapter VI, reflecting his distress at the prospect of America being dragged into World War II. The new slant to his editorial creed, written as it is in Hearst's handwriting and bearing his signature, bears reproduction here:

A fundamental policy of the Hearst papers is to keep America out of war.

Keep it free from foreign entanglements.

Keep it free from foreign propaganda.

Keep it free from Communism, Bolshevism, Fascism, Naziism, and all class antagonism.

Keep it free from either anarchy or autocracy.

Keep it free from racial prejudice and religious intolerance.

Keep it free from the hateful causes of war, and the dreadful consequences of war.

Keep it free.³⁰

The editorial creed of Americanism also had a dynamic side: Hearst's promulgation of it through his editorials. As has been pointed out before, Hearst's editorial policies guided national news coverage. When in 1938 he decided to go on an "Americanism" crusade, he wanted to kick it off with six "Americanism" editorials, then follow up those with companion news articles in the "March of Events" section that contained the same theme. The facet of Americanism to be pursued in these articles was economic protectionism for America. He wanted to send United States senators abroad and have them write articles on England's success with economic protectionism, and the fallacy of the American government trying to artificially peg the price of cotton.³¹

Another time Hearst ordered his subordinates to "get busy" on a "back to democracy campaign" without waiting for editorials in support. The campaign aimed to undermine public support for the Franklin Roosevelt administration with "news article" attacks on administration trade treaties, and demanding a repeal of powers that Congress had delegated Roosevelt. The campaign included

introducing bills into Congress, supporting favored Congressional candidates, and rallying patriotic organizations in support.³²

In 1939 Hearst ordered a series of "news" articles prepared on editorial policy attitudes. He issued a budget of seven Constitutional amendments that he wanted passed, which aimed at limiting Presidential and Congressional power, and Congressional tax authority. The proposed amendments included limiting the President's terms of office, reducing his appointive power, and stemming the shift in power from Congress to the President.³³

It should be made clear that Hearst took these initiatives at programming the public mind very seriously. In the case of a crusade against high taxes that was to be composed of editorials, cartoons, "news articles," and polling Congressmen's votes, he said this fight was "absolutely essential for the salvation of the country." These were words guaranteed to galvanize the attention of his editors.³⁴

Another application of, and a test of the mettle of, Hearst's editorial creed came in fall, 1939, when he wrote strong editorials urging America to maintain neutrality, and to continue the embargo of shipments of arms against England. This position angered Hearst's Canadian newsprint suppliers, who put pressure on the Hearst organization, and threatened to cut off its newsprint supplies. Judge Shearn, then in financial control of the Hearst organization, on several occasions urged Hearst to back down and change his editorial position. But Hearst declined to be budged.

Hearst responded that he refused to have people "meddling" in something they did not know anything about. Emphasizing his policy was for the good of America, Hearst another time said, ". . . I am not going to change the elemental policy."³⁵

This episode reveals the limits of risk that Hearst would take to control his papers news and editorial policies. In this case, he was not open to persuasion from Judge Shearn, sole voting trustee of Hearst's top holding company, American Newspapers, Inc. Nor was he open to threats that if carried out would have entailed serious financial difficulties--which came at a time when the Hearst organization was already in a financial state of serious stringency.

Hearst agreed only reluctantly with his general manager Thomas White to order his editorials off the front page of his newspapers. He made a concession to his organization's financially beleaguered status when he commented that the editorials were good for patriotic purposes but not good for circulation. This tenacity with which Hearst tried to use his newspapers as a personal ideological megaphone can be contrasted with his attitude toward his features. He asked publishers to make periodical polls of comics, features and of contributors. Hearst ordered them to "drop out those the public do not like." Such an attitude underscores the notion that Hearst's feature fare was bait to attract readers to his public policy positions.³⁶

An interesting aspect of the Coblentz-Hearst correspondence of this period are the budgets of photo, feature, news handling and editorial suggestions sent to all publishers over teletype from Los Angeles, Wynton or San Simeon, where Hearst maintained residences. The editorial messages span a variety of Hearstian biases--encouraging industry, gold hoarding, Constitution Day and anti-Communism--among others. The teletyped messages, in capital letters, are framed as authoritative, terse bullets of instruction. They reveal Hearst restlessly monitoring his papers, and supervising and directing their unified policies.³⁷

From a consideration of Hearst's editorial policy in its relation to news control, the focus now shifts to a discussion of Hearst's management practices. He was a believer in clear lines of authority. The line of authority proceeded downward from Hearst through his general management to the publisher of the newspaper. Hearst said "in any proper system there must be well defined authority, adequate organization, and complete cooperation," and systematic business operations. On another occasion Hearst emphatically stated: "an organization must have ORGANIZATION; and the bigger the organization, the more absolutely and immediately cooperative this organization must be." By this Hearst meant his newspapers should be responsive to his direction.³⁸

Hearst's authoritarian management concept extended to control within his newspapers. The publisher was the one in chief

authority on his papers. The weight attributed to "chief authority," Hearst stated as, "there always must be a chief authority if the paper is to be successfully managed." Under the publisher's authority, Hearst designated the areas of: general news policy, editorial policy, the budget (which had to be observed by all departments) hires, pay raises and reductions, publication of special sections, fixing regular edition schedules, and expenses. The publisher was to prepare the budget after consulting the editor and business manager. The publisher's decision on all expense matters was "final," subject only to appeal to general management. The publisher was to control all established budgetary expenses, unusual expenses, and the detail of expenses (for example the amount of type cut in an edition, or for contests involving prize awards). Hearst very definitely and specifically fixed authority on the publisher.³⁹

By so concentrating authority Hearst could directly control the editorial and business operations of his papers. He could control the publisher directly, as was detailed in chapters III and IV on his relations with publisher John F. Neylan of the San Francisco Call. He could operate through his surrogates, his roving editor of editors, John R. Hastings, and Coblentz, as described in chapters V through VII. Or he could exert control partly through publishers, partly through surrogates like Coblentz, and partly through his general management personnel, which he also

did. In other words, Hearst could exercise control in a flexible fashion, according to the situation and circumstances.

An aspect of Hearst news control that might be considered is "the Chief" in the guise of didactic news teacher. Hearst commented that his instructions on news might make "a good course on the elements of journalism some day." Coblentz commented that Hearst had a thorough mastery of the news and editorial departments of newspapering, as well as the advertising, mechanical and circulation departments. And Coblentz said all Hearst's newspapers came under his daily scrutiny, giving Hearst ample scope as news teacher.⁴⁰

The connection of news teaching with news control is fairly direct. Hearst's instructions in this area contribute to a climate of control, habituating publishers to accepting directions. News teaching contributes to the packaging of the newspaper. A Hearst paper spangled with action photos and brightly edited with alluring features would supposedly attract both readers and advertisers to Hearst papers. Such a salable and profitable product was a better vehicle for Hearst's subjective news. Also, the standardization sought by Hearst in his news, features and newspapers' typography made his papers more identifiably Hearstian.

Hearst displayed not only considerable knowledge, but a keenly discriminative critical sense, developed over years of practice, in his news teaching. His remarks are pointed, well presented, thoughtful and judiciously balance competing values. He had a

sense of the cycle by which a good news newspaper is developed, a set of news principles, and a mental budget of news priorities.

His view of the cycle of growth for developing a good newspaper was that the first thing to do was to "work hard to make a good paper." Often this required infusions of fresh talent, and freshets of cash, which for years Hearst was able to do, giving him a competitive edge over less rich rivals. Then Hearst said the paper had to "work hard to get circulation," and then finally toil manfully for increased advertising to put the whole effort on a profitable basis.⁴¹

Hearst's starting point in strengthening a paper was to make it a good news paper, which ties in with his notions of being a news teacher. Among the principles of good news he stressed were clarity, condensation, lively copy and standardization. On clarity he instructed: "always overclarify everything." He quoted the populist politician, Tom Watson of Georgia, in adding: "it is impossible to overestimate the carelessness and indifference of the average reader." Hearst's intent was that his editors should make their points and purposes so clear, that the average reader would "have to understand." He also stressed intensive editing of long articles for clarity: brief, pointed introductions, the burden of the story verbatim, cutting to essentials, boxed summaries and easy-to-read type.⁴²

Condensation of the news was an oft repeated Hearst principle. One time he instructed: "condense your news. . . ." Again, he said, "the whole paper would benefit by much greater condensation." He wanted the news carefully and intelligently condensed so as to get it all in the paper. In respect to lively copy, he asked for "vividly interesting" articles. Hearst inveighed sharply that the kind of thing to avoid like the plague was dull articles written by dull people on dull subjects without any attempt at enlivening treatment.⁴³

Two reasons Hearst gave for insisting on standardization were to raise the average standard of excellence of his papers, and to improve circulation. Of particular interest to him was standardizing his "March of Events" pages and his Sunday papers. Of the latter he said they should be largely one "periodical issued from different press rooms with different news sections but standardized in main qualities and characteristics."⁴⁴

As regards his news priorities, Hearst favored, first, news, then pictures, and finally, features. He asked his editors first of all to devote an adequate amount of space to news; then to treat pictures with the same judgment as regards value and space as they did news. He did not want features to encroach on news space. The text of the paper, its headlines, pictures, subheads and titles should all be geared toward the purpose of telling the news. The points embodied in this paragraph were so important to Hearst

he incorporated them in a directive that he instructed to be framed and hung in a conspicuous place in all editorial rooms.⁴⁵

With the above is concluded both the examination of Hearst the news teacher, and the substantive discussion of this chapter. Chapter VII traced the Hearst organization's financial problems of 1937 into the World War II years. The grinding series of reverses suffered by Hearst, his struggle to retain control over news, and his final restoration to both news and financial control was depicted. This discussion afforded an expanded look into Hearst general management. Hearst, of course, did not die in 1940, but lived on until 1951 when he expired. But the manuscript material used does not permit following Hearst news control up to the time of his death. The biographical survey of Hearst in chapter II does sketch his life through his death.

Coblentz's activities were followed from 1937 through 1940. His relationship with Hearst was assessed as loyal and warm. An examination of Hearst editorial control started with Hearst's editorial creed, and followed it into editorials and news. It was posited that Hearst's features were used primarily as bait to attract readers to his public policy views. Two final facets of Hearst news control examined were his direct control over his publishers, and Hearst in the light of news teacher. This concludes the examination of Hearstian manuscript materials. Chapter VIII offers this paper's conclusions.

NOTES

¹"The Press," Time 33 (March 13, 1939):50, 51; Burton Crane, "Hearst Built Corporate Empires in Newspapers, Magazines, Radio and Real Estate," New York Times, Aug. 15, 1951, p. 21.

²Time, *ibid.*, p. 51; New York Times, *ibid.*

³New York Times, *ibid.*

⁴Time, *ibid.*, Op. 49, 50; New York Times, *ibid.*

⁵William Weinfeld, "The Growth of Daily Newspapers in the U.S., 1923, 1926-35," Journalism Quarterly 13 (1936):378. Time, *ibid.*, p. 55. Damon Runyon, "An Interview with W. R. Hearst," Edmond D. Coblentz Papers, Bancroft Library, April, 1939; "Properties Now Include 18 Papers, 9 Magazines," New York Times, Aug. 15, 1951, p. 20.

⁶Chart titled "General Management," from the 32-page Clarence J. Shearn report, Coblentz Papers, Sept., 1937, *op. cit.*

⁷*ibid.* Article on H. M. Bitner, National Cyclopedia of American Biography. John R. Hastings Papers, Bancroft Library, Jan. 12, 1930.

⁸Of significance to the credibility of the findings of this dissertation are that of top executive personnel closely related to Hearst, the manuscript collections of both Coblentz and Hastings were examined. These two had special roles with Hearst, inasmuch as they were conduits from Hearst to editors of Hearst papers for editorial instructions and control from Hearst.

⁹Harry M. Bitner to Coblentz, Oct. 30, 1937, Coblentz Papers, *op. cit.* Hearst to Thomas J. White, Jan. 30, 1928, *ibid.*

¹⁰Hearst to Coblentz, March 22, 1938, *ibid.*; Hearst to White, May 26, 1938, *ibid.*

¹¹Hearst to Coblentz, June 2, 1938, *ibid.*; Hearst to White, June 2, 1938, *ibid.*; "Son Interviews W. R. Hearst on Visit East," New York Journal-American, June 14, 1938, p. 3.

¹²Time, *op. cit.*, p. 52; New York Times, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹³Time, *ibid.*, pp. 49, 52.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; "Career of Hearst Marked by Power, Increased Wealth, Crusading and Controversy," New York Times, Aug. 15, 1951, p. 20. Hearst to Coblentz, Jan. 21, 1940, and Nov. 13, 1938, Coblentz Papers, op. cit.; Coblentz to Editors of AMs and PMs, Oct. 5, 1938, *ibid.*; Willicombe to Editors of All Hearst Papers, June 2, 1938, and Sept. 2, 1938, *ibid.*; Willicombe to Coblentz, Oct., 1938, *ibid.*; "Roosevelt," 1940 (?), *ibid.*; Coblentz to Editors of All Morning Papers, June 28, 1939, *ibid.*

¹⁶ New York Times, op. cit., p. 21; Time, op. cit., p. 54.

¹⁷ Whether Hearst negotiated these million dollar loans to make this particular dividend payment is not clear from the sources used. W. A. Swanberg, Citizen Hearst (New York: Scribner's, 1961), p. 581. New York Times, *ibid.*

¹⁸ Swanberg, op. cit., pp. 576-7; New York Times, *ibid.*

¹⁹ Swanberg, *ibid.*, pp. 582-3, 590-1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 600; New York Times, op. cit., p. 21; Profit or loss statement, titled "Hearst Newspapers," Coblentz Collection, Dec. 8, 1943, op. cit.

²¹ Edmond D. Coblentz, ed., William Randolph Hearst (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), p. 205; New York Times, op. cit., p. 21.

²² Coblentz to Hearst, Aug. 9, 1937; Aug. 17- 1937; Oct. 11, 1937; Oct. 13, 1937; Jan. 5, 1938; April 30, 1938; and June 6, 1936, Coblentz Papers, op. cit. Coblentz to Sunday Papers, June 22, 1938, *ibid.*

²³ Coblentz to J. Willicombe, May 11, 1939, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Editors Hearst Morning Papers, June 28, 1939, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Hearst, Oct. 7, 1939; June 19, 1940; and Jan. 26, 1940, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Hon. Hohn R. McCarl, May 6, 1940, *ibid.*

²⁴ Hearst to Mr. White and Mr. Bitner, Oct. 10, 1937, *ibid.*

²⁵ Bill Hearst to Coblentz, Feb. 27, 1951, Sept. 29, 1952 and Nov. 21, 1952, *ibid.*

²⁶ Coblentz to Lee Ettelson, July 12, 1938, *ibid.* Coblentz to Hearst, Oct. 20, 1938, and March 14, 1940, *ibid.*

- ²⁷Coblentz, "An Intimate View of William Randolph Hearst," speech transcript, late, 1939, *ibid.*
- ²⁸Coblentz, ed., William Randolph Hearst, op. cit., pp. 280-1.
- ²⁹Hearst to Coblentz, Dec. 2, 1929, Coblentz Papers, op. cit. Hearst to Publishers and Editors of All Hearst Newspapers, Sept. 23, 1939, *ibid.*
- ³⁰Untitled item on Los Angeles Examiner letterhead stationery, undated, *ibid.*
- ³¹Hearst to W. A. Curley, Dec. 28, 1937, *ibid.*
- ³²E. F. Tompkins to Coblentz, "Back to Democracy Campaign" memorandum, probable date, April 4, 1938, *ibid.*
- ³³J. Willicombe to George Rothwell Brown, July, 24, 1939, *ibid.*
- ³⁴W. R. Hearst to W. A. Curley, Jan. 24, 1938, *ibid.*
- ³⁵Coblentz, ed., William Randolph Hearst, op. cit., pp. 205-10.
- ³⁶Hearst to T. J. White, March 30, 1938, and April 14, 1938, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Publishers and Editors All Hearst Papers, April 28, 1938, *ibid.*
- ³⁷Willicombe to Coblentz, April 9, 1938, and June 2, 1938, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Editors All Hearst Sunday Papers, Sept. 2, 1938, *ibid.*; Willicombe to Editors of All Hearst Papers, Sept. 2, 1938, *ibid.*
- ³⁸Hearst to Coblentz, June 5, 1938, Coblentz Papers, op. cit.
- ³⁹Two-page policy statement, signed by Hearst, undated, *ibid.*
- ⁴⁰Hearst to Coblentz, May 15, 1938, Coblentz Papers, op. cit. Coblentz, ed. William Randolph Hearst, op. cit., p. 254.
- ⁴¹Hearst to Coblentz, May 15, 1938, *ibid.*
- ⁴²Hearst to R. T. Van Ettisch, Jan. 23, 1938, *ibid.*; Hearst to All Editors of Papers and News Services, Nov. 14, 1937, *ibid.*
- ⁴³Hearst to Coblentz, Jan. 21, 1940, an undated item, most probably early March, 1938, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Editors All Hearst Sunday Papers, Oct. 14, 1937, *ibid.*; Coblentz to Publishers and Editors All Hearst Papers, April 28, 1938, *ibid.*

⁴⁴Hearst to Coblenz, Feb. 12, 1938, and Jan. 21, 1940, *ibid.*

⁴⁵Hearst to Coblenz, no date, but most probably early March, 1938, *ibid.* Same points in the memorandum: Coblenz to Editors All Hearst Sunday Papers, Oct. 14, 1937, *ibid.* For a lengthier discussion of Hearst as a news teacher see Coblenz, ed. William Randolph Hearst, *op. cit.*, the chapter, "Newspaper Publishing," pp. 254-267. On pp. 258-9 Coblenz reproduces verbatim the memorandum from which the points were extracted for this paragraph.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Having come to the end of the dissertation's data analysis, the findings of this paper will be briefly summarized. Then the adequacy of the concepts and findings will be assessed. A comparison of the findings of the paper will be made with the genres of literature explaining news making that were presented in chapter 1. Finally, the meaning and implications of the research, and the directions for further research will be considered.

In chapter 1 an intellectual framework for the inquiry was constructed. This involved defining and assessing four genres of news-making explanations: gatekeeping, coorientation, specification of a small number of shaping factors, and news control. After dividing the literature on news control into two groups: popular treatments and scholarly studies, it was extensively surveyed and assessed. A definition of news control was offered which accepted the idea that many factors shape news, but stressed that news control was the central factor around which other factors cohered. In a lengthy descriptive specification of news control, the following elements were mentioned: hierarchy, information flows, policy-making authority, and the publisher's instruments of control. To illustrate that control is relative, a number of checks on publisher's news control was cited.

An inquiry was made into the historical origins of Hearst news. Secondary sources and the manuscript data placed Hearst squarely in the mainstream of the lineage of popular news producers and fare running from James Gordon Bennett, Charles H. Dana, and Joseph Pulitzer to the tabloid influence of the 1920s. Briefly, it was found that Hearst absorbed the idea of news enterprise and getting all the news from the Bennetts, and ideas on news handling and the news concept from Dana. From Pulitzer, the biggest influence, he took many of his early top personnel, and the idea of sensational news play to attract the public to his serious public policy positions (carried as editorials, "news," or crusades). From the tabloids Hearst absorbed ideas in the areas of vivid photo usage, bold typography, news handling and story selection. Hearst's news formula was described as using entertainment as bait to entice the public to his public policy positions, which Hearst hoped would influence the national political process. It was posited also that Hearst's aim in operating his papers was to achieve a balance of profits and public policy influence. Both were important to Hearst.

The paper took two basic approaches in attempting to establish that Hearst controlled the news of his newspapers. One was a management relations approach. Second was examining Hearst's news directives on newspapers in local, regional and national markets.

In respect to management relations, the roles and relationships to Hearst were examined for Fremont Older, editor, and John Neylan,

publisher, both of the San Francisco Call; John Hastings, roving editor in the mid-Atlantic region (Baltimore News and Washington Times); and Edmond Coblentz, managing editor and publisher of the New York American, and supervising editor of all Hearst papers. There was some discussion of the organization of the Hearst corporation's general management, and the relations among those personnel. Hearst's partial eclipse from organizational control, due to acute financial stringency during the late 1930s, was also explored.

Hearst's control over his personnel was described as emanating from Hearst and flowing down from him through three different channels: through his general management personnel, through Hearst surrogates acting in the capacity of roving editors-in-charge, and thirdly in a short-circuit channel interacting directly with his publishers. The publisher was described as the chief authority in full charge of the individual newspapers. Directly below him on the news side, consulting with the publisher on news matters was the managing editor. Hearst's primary means of conveying his instructions were the teletype, telephone, letters, conferences and inspection tours. This paper made use of manuscript materials consisting of written documents.

All the Hearst control channels described above came under discussion in the dissertation. The discussion of general management relations was limited. The discussions of both Hastings and Coblentz covered the role of Hearst surrogate as roving

editor-in-charge. The 1937 organizational chart identified these as the only two men in the organization in that capacity. As for consideration of Hearst in regard to his publishers, both Neylan and Coblentz filled publisher roles. Coblentz and Older filled the roles of managing editors, providing a view into Hearst's relations with those operatives.

The second approach in establishing Hearst's news control was through looking at newspapers in local, regional and national markets. The papers drawing principal concentration included the San Francisco Call in San Francisco, the Washington Times and Baltimore News in the mid-Atlantic region. Discussion of the New York American was identified with the national market as it was the channel through which many of Hearst's editorials and policy stories were distributed to all his morning papers.

It would be misleading to think that the dissertation connected with only four Hearst papers. The Neylan, Hastings and Coblentz manuscript files contained memoranda dealing with more than two-thirds of Hearst's newspapers located in the most important markets. Neylan, as regional director for West Coast matters was extensively involved in five West Coast papers (San Francisco Bay area, and Los Angeles), and tangentially so with the Seattle one. Hastings's activities connected him with about ten papers in Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Albany, Rochester, Boston and Atlanta. Coblentz was involved during the period of study touring or preparing reports on a number of papers including these markets not

already mentioned: Pittsburgh, Chicago and Detroit. In addition, Hastings and Coblentz were involved in such standardized Hearst fare as his editorials, the "March of Events" news feature and picture pages, nationwide crusades, and the Sunday pre-date papers.

The subjects of discussion taken in the news directive approach to news control included dividing news into coverage (including public policy and entertainment), news handling and display, and the business, administrative area. News control from the perspective of reorganization of a newspaper over time was considered. Hearst's building up his newspapers with driving energy in the San Francisco, Washington, D.C. and Baltimore markets was explored. Market relations of the Hearst papers in these markets, and in New York was examined.

Over the course of the dissertation a number of news control topics came under purview. One was an attempt to identify the core of Hearst's news control efforts as starting with his editorial platform--his Americanism creed. From the editorial platform conceptual linkage was traced into editorials, Americanism "news" initiatives, crusades (with some discussion of Communism, dangerous drugs and federal sales tax), and demands for subjective coverage. A number of other news control topics explored included: hiring and firing, shifting control patterns during Hearst's financial problems of the late 1930s, budgets of news directives, control in reference to publisher authority, and Hearst as a didactic news teacher.

Some of the observations that emerged during the paper included: the idea of a "Hearst" newspaper, that Hearst demands for subjective coverage stained both news coverage, and news handling and display, and that the San Francisco Call operated within a national pattern of control. That Hearst's promotion of his opinions was reminiscent of nineteenth century opinion journalism, and that he followed a Pulitzerian news formula. Hearst was presented as comfortably fitting into the context of the large chain and metropolitan newspaper owners of the 1920s and 1930s. These owners social views were assessed as conservative, even regressive, in that they opposed specific pieces of social welfare legislation.

The leading concepts developed in the paper were three. Each dealt with definitional specification so as to better approach the two main research questions mentioned in the introduction. Two concepts had to do with explicating Hearst news. A classification of news was offered that divided news into three categories: coverage (including public policy and entertainment), news handling and display, and the administrative, business area. The discussion of Hearst's idea of how to build up a newspaper, based on a cycle of improving news, circulation, and then advertising, contributed to the plausibility of this classification of news.

A second concept concerned with Hearst news related to its historical context of development. As previously stated the Hearst news of the 1920s and 1930s was influenced by Bennett, Dana, Pulitzer and the tabloids. Manuscript materials quoting Hearst were

marshalled to document these influences. Thus Hearst was placed squarely in the context of purveyors of news directed to the mass taste.

The major concept of the paper, on which its thesis rested, was that of news control. It was explicated in chapter I in connection with assessing the news control literature. That concept stood up reasonably well under the test of having to apply it to an examination of Hearst's top management memoranda. The idea of vesting control at the top was suited to Hearst, as that fit his management style, and the fact his organization, by all accounts, was responsive to his personal dictates.

Some ideas may be added to the news control concept that emerged from an examination of the manuscript evidence. First was the idea of the publisher (Hearst) as a news teacher, laying out a basic framework of news ideas in which the whole organization has to operate. A second was the idea of several channels of control which Hearst used. Third was the idea of vesting "final" authority in the publisher, so that he could be held accountable for all the news operations of the paper. A fourth was the idea of conceptual linkage extending from editorial creed, through editorials, "news" initiatives, crusades and demands for subjective coverage. Thus it was shown as a control phenomenon, that editorial creed colored news.

From the memorandum that vested "final" control in the publisher emerged various news control ideas, none of which had

originally been explicitly specified in chapter 1. (However other general labels used could have been construed to cover them.) These included: authority over news policy and editorial policy, control over regular edition schedules, authority over publication of special sections, control over extraordinary and ordinary expenditures, and authority over job assignments. The news control concept of chapter 1 was revised to include all these specifics. At that time three other news control factors were added: holding periodic conferences, issuing policy guidance, and managerial internalization of owner's values.

Two other ideas emerged after additional consideration of the evidence and the literature. One was the idea of multiple centers of control, ranging through the publisher, managing editor, sub-editors and reporters. This type of approach did not suit the Hearst management style very well, as he tried to control everything himself. But there was limited support for it in the Hearst manuscript materials in that Fremont Older, and John Neylan exercised some discretion, and there was fragmentary evidence in the Hastings material that the publisher of Hearst's Atlanta Georgian was not following Hearst's instructions. The ideas of multiple centers of control seems to correlate with the coorientation approach of Popovich, who studied the news preferences of reporters, editors and publishers. Multiple centers of control seems to tally with the discussion of Argyris and Talese,

concerning the New York Times, where decision-making authority was reported as more diffuse.

A second idea is that a study of news control could benefit from a study of the business management literature. The decision-making process about subjective news, policy news, and basic editorial policy probably is similar to that of decision making and policy making of other corporate entities. Styles of management in newspapers that affect news are probably similar to management styles in other corporations, where that may have an effect on the public product.

In response to a general summary of findings, a question arises as to how well the dissertation dealt with the questions posed in the introduction. First the two interrelated research questions, then, the three problems that were identified in the literature. First to be considered will be the research question of the historical origins of Hearst news. The lineage of influences has already been traced. It has been pointed out that documentary evidence was used in determining the major influences on the origins of Hearst news. It seems definite that these were major influences on the origins of Hearst news. Whether other influences could be added to this list remains an open question.

Given that Hearst fell into the lineage of popular publishers that ran from Bennett, Dana, and Pulitzer to the tabloids, one wonders what Hearst contributed to news. In his early days in New York, Hearst's journalism was largely imitative in its news

practices and headlines of the World. Hearst pirated Pulitzer's top staff. Like Pulitzer he launched crusades, and he sensationalized and carried out news stunts. Writing in the 1920s, journalism historian Willard Bleyer concluded that Hearst's news influence was mainly in the area of typography: his constant use of large display headlines on the front page, and the typographical form of the editorial page. The use of Hearst syndicate features in the form delivered changed the character of subscribing papers non-news content.

It could be argued that Hearst contributed his own news synthesis, which though derivative, was identifiably Hearstian. As Bartness pointed out in his dissertation, the Hearst synthesis included plugging crime, sob sister fare, boldly opinionated politics, crusades and campaigns in the public service, and top-ranked feature and syndicate material. A definite part of this synthesis as Hearst's long-standing, and sometimes successful crusades on such subjects as anti-crime, anti-narcotics, pro-sales tax, and pro-popular government. Some crusades, such as anti-participation in the League of Nations had great public influence. Another aspect of Hearst's news synthesis was his huge scale of operations and organization, which had an impact on news fare standardization. The great size of the Hearst organization enabled him to collect a large stable of writing stars, making his papers foremost in entertainment in many markets.

On the negative side of the ledger of the Hearst news synthesis, Hearst news lacked depth of intellectual appeal and sincerity. He hired outstanding entertainment stars, such as Walter Winchell, but there were no outstandingly thoughtful editorialists, such as Walter Lippmann. Nor did Hearst journalism garner Pulitzer Prizes. Hearst news was loud, vulgar, slanted, anti-intellectual, sensational, class-biased and distorted; it did not have much high quality, social, economic and government news and interpretation. Hearst's great wealth, and willingness to pump millions of dollars into markets such as Atlanta and Chicago, drove up entry and competitive costs for other owners and prospective owners.

Of the dissertation's research questions, the more important one deals with the news control thesis. Did the Hearst case history substantially demonstrate that news control is the leading factor in news making? Of importance to the case history itself, was it substantially demonstrated that Hearst controlled the news on his newspapers? The answer is a qualified yes to both questions.

The manuscript materials lent themselves to a news control explanation more than to any other. Although the manuscript materials demonstrated that news control was the leading factor in news making insofar as Hearst was concerned, it is not warranted to generalize that finding beyond the data examined. The explanations offered in the secondary literature likewise supported a

news-control explanation. As for Hearst controlling the news on his newspapers, the manuscript evidence made an overwhelming case. The Neylan material alone made a persuasive case. The material from the Hastings, Older, and Coblentz collections added important information, but did not alter the basic perception of Hearst controlling the news of his papers.

Of the three problems cited in the literature, the first, posed by Garvey, was that access to top management was difficult. This paper examined a wealth of memoranda dealing with the highest levels of Hearst management. Hearst, Neylan, and Coblentz were opened to close scrutiny. Penetration of top management went from Hearst, through general management, publisher to managing editor level. Aside from the managing editors examined, the manuscript materials contained information about other Hearst editors, such as: Clarence Lindner, San Francisco Examiner; Victor Watson and Walter Howey, Chicago Herald and Examiner; William A. Curley and William R. Hearst, Jr., New York Journal; Arthur Brisbane and Charles McCabe, New York Mirror, and Charles Young of the Oakland Post-Enquirer, among others. It would seem that this paper adequately dealt with the problem of access to top management on a historical basis. Additional information about Hearst will be available when his manuscript collection is opened at Bancroft Library.

A second problem cited in the literature was that many of the secondary sources relied on indictments handed down in adjectival

prose, and did not explicate the operating pattern of control. This paper tried in particular to explicate in detail Hearst's pattern of control over the San Francisco Call. It also worked at explicating Hearst's pattern of control in the area of editorials, and their relation to news, using the Coblentz material.

The material concerning newspapers and editorials, especially in their relation to national news was explored rather thoroughly. The entertainment and syndicated sides of Hearst news could have been further examined. In this respect it would have been instructive had the author obtained the manuscript collections of people such as Moses Koenigsberg and Joseph Connolly, who had important roles in developing Hearst features, national entertainment fare and syndicates. Koenigsberg's book King News (1941) was consulted, but it is largely autobiographical, leaving knowledge about Hearst's syndicates incomplete.

The third problem raised by the literature concerns tracing news control from management memoranda and showing that policy affects content. This problem was not squarely addressed in the paper. One reason was that the problem assumed less importance as research progressed. Garvey, in his television newsroom study, did trace policy into content, establishing that there was a linkage. The Bartness dissertation on the Wisconsin News gave ample evidence that there was a typically "Hearst appearance" to Hearst newspapers, implying standardization and central control. Evidence indicated the San Francisco Call was part of a national

pattern of management supervision. The dialogue between Neylan and Hearst covered in chapters III and IV established that Hearst's instructions were being followed. Hiring and firing information in chapter VI suggested Hearst's instruction being followed. A Hearst marked crayon critique of a newspaper front page found in the manuscript materials indicated his exercise of control over make-up.

Another reason for not making a special effort to trace policy into content was that priorities changed as additional materials were found. Research started with the Neylan and Older manuscript materials. While the project was under way the Hastings and Coblenz materials were found. They added a great deal to the author's perception of news control and management relations. Since access to top management, and explicating the pattern of control, are important scholarly problems emphasis moved in that direction. The problem of showing that policy affects content was already dealt with by Garvey in the area of broadcasting.

In comparing the findings of this study with those of the scholarly news control studies cited in the introduction, the following may be said. The news control findings tally with those of Swanson, Breed, Garvey, Stark, Donohew and Bowers, which indicate some owner or publisher control over news. On a narrower level, this study agrees with Breed and Garvey that the owner or publisher sets policy and that it is usually followed by staff. Unlike Stark, this study did not find any evidence of reporters

struggling against the policy dictates of management. But the observational vantage points of the two studies were different. Stark drew his data from observing newsmen in the newsroom, whereas this study examined management memoranda.

Donohew found that publisher's influence was the biggest force in the news channel. The findings of this study were similar in that Hearst appeared to be the biggest force in the news channel. Bowers found that publishers were active in directing local news, in matters affecting revenues, in areas involving the publisher or his concerns, and in the area of news display and content. This study corroborated vigorous Hearst activity in all these areas, except he was active in national news, and generally not very active in local news. Except for being active in New York city news, when he lived there, Hearst's interest in local news was to enjoin his editors to avoid unnecessary attacks on local institutions, and to avoid libel suits.

When the context of comparison is broadened, and Hearst news control is discussed in relation to the institutional map of news making introduced in the first chapter, a question arises. Does Hearst news control, in taking its place among other news-making factors, decline in status from "control" to "influence?" The answer depends on the frame of reference. From the most inclusive angle of vision, viewing the newspaper as one institution among many in a society, Hearst's control takes its place among other influences. Some of the other influences

include: advertisers, universities' training of manpower, official scoring machinery, bargaining games, and the level of technology.

From the angle of vision narrowed to trying to interpret operations within a particular institution, Hearst's news control retains its status as control. Abundant evidence was cited to show that Hearst news from the basic editorial creed of "Americanism" to editorials, crusades, subjective coverage, hiring and firing, news handling and display, and improving newspapers' market positions emanated from Hearst. Hearst was not disposed toward engaging in bargaining games, especially in the areas of news content, editorials, crusades, credit or unions. The chief gave positive instructions, relayed through loyal subordinates, and he anticipated they would be followed.

In discussing the findings of the study in relation to the institutional news-making map a problem emerges. The institutional news-making map is circular, and does not provide a starting point for news making. In this study the starting point was Hearst's subjectivism. His internal need state impelled him into the news business, despite his father's objections. Hearst's own drive carried him onward from his original start with the San Francisco Examiner to develop the largest circulation newspaper and magazine chains, and feature syndicates, in America.

Hearst's motivation for amassing his media chain is an important consideration. The paper offered evidence that political influence and profits were the two leading motives. His motives

are of importance in respect to the kind of news that Hearst produced. When one thinks about the starting point of Hearst news one should take into account how his motives contributed to the finished news product. Two ways that motive affected content: ideological shaping, and pecuniary shaping, will be considered.

Hearst using his newspapers to gain political influence, and to influence political events was ideological shaping of news. Here ideology refers to attitude expression in the news of an explicit political and economic character that tends to move people toward action. Hearst's ideological position in the 1920s and 1930s was that of a rich, militantly nationalistic capitalist, who righteously supported the church, the military, and opposed unions. He promulgated this class and sectarian view. Though he had drifted away from the activist Progressivism of his early years, vestiges of Progressive Era values still lingered in his beliefs in: individualism, responsible capitalism, the efficacy of exposure and reform, and political independence. Starting with his editorial creed of "Americanism," his ideology found dynamic expression through editorials, crusades, choices of what to cover, not to cover and what slants would be put on the facts. Expressions of ideological shaping, (such as anti-Communism, pro-federal sales tax, and anti-industrial unionism) were promulgated as "news."

Hearst also used his newspapers as instruments to earn profits. At times his papers earned him several million dollars per year. He used this money to buy and build castles, to acquire

vast amounts of art objects, and to spend millions on a film career for his mistress. Accepting Hearst's own professions that his papers were used instrumentally to amass wealth sheds light on the kind of "news" Hearst selected for his paper. He required widely appealing entertainment fare, the most entertaining columnists, thundering crime stories and melodramas, all handled brightly and briefly with compelling typography. Why? It sold well. Hearst's purpose heavily influenced the kinds of news selected and the way it was handled--hence pecuniary shaping.

The institutional news-making map might lead to a false inference that news is objective. But it is not. Pains have been taken to show that Hearst news was not an objective, representative sample of important current information somehow appearing on the pages of newspapers, displayed according to a consensus priority of importance. Rather Hearst news was distorted by subjectivism, class bias, and ideological and pecuniary shaping. As a matter of policy and practice Hearst papers limited access to and excluded ideas, facts and opinions. An area deserving more study is the relation between motive and content, on which the institutional news-making map does not shed any light.

Given the inherent subjectivism of Hearst's approach to news, it is useful to attempt to find a proper designative label for his news. It helps to place his news in a larger context of understanding. It also aids in cognitive filing and manipulation.

Gaye Tuchman articulates a concept of news as a socially constructed product in Making News (1978), which may be applied to Hearst's subjective news creation. She speaks of news as shaping and defining events. To her making news is "the act of constructing reality itself rather than a picture of reality." Hearst's "Americanism," his editorials, crusades, and arbitrary choices about what to cover and not to cover fit into Tuchman's explanation. One might point out that Hearst's subjective news had the flavor of ersatz social reality, as his views were not necessarily corroborated elsewhere. Although other major chain owners had similar social views to Hearst, other media instruments were available to readers. By reading papers with a different slant, readers could penetrate the screen of Hearstian creed and policy stories to obtain a different interpretation of the social environment.¹

Moving to a more pejorative construction, Hearst's subjectivism, his ideological and pecuniary shaping of news fit L. John Martin's definition of propaganda. His definition is: "a systematic attempt to influence opinion or attitude in the interest of some cause." Webster's New World Dictionary points out that the label propaganda is still appropriate when there is no intentional distortion or deception. Martin notes propaganda as being often applied to the spread of political principles. Hearst's activities conform to these definitions: he attempted to propagate his creed in editorials and commissioned "news" stories. He considered the dissemination of his "propaganda" so important

that he weighed buying advertisements in other newspapers so they could be put before a larger audience. Also, he did not want his audience confused by putting all the opinions in his papers.²

The application of the labels of "reality construction" and "propaganda" leave Hearst in the position of being tagged an "ersatz reality constructor," and a "propagandist." During his lifetime he was called worse names than these. Such was the impact of Hearst that his leading biographer, Swanberg, could not resist calling him a few names. Swanberg called him "the champion loser of his time," "a supreme screwball," "a heavy," and "a clown," to list a few. But Hearst refused to be perturbed by name callers. He declined to get down on all fours and bark back at his critics. Hearst's idea was that the best way to punish them was "to succeed more," which he tried to do.³

According to his own terms Hearst succeeded in journalism to a great degree. It may be recalled that after studying Boston and New York papers Hearst went West to take over his father's San Francisco Examiner with the ambition of out-Pulitzerizing Pulitzer. In terms of the amount of noise he made, and the size of the media organization he built over the years, Hearst definitely succeeded in out-Pulitzerizing Pulitzer. But, no doubt, these are narrow terms on which to judge the impact of Hearst.

The fact that Hearst's career was so long, 1887 to 1951, some 64 years, complicates the question of judging his impact in relation to his contemporaries. Hearst's career bridged the period

of opinion editors of the nineteenth century, to the period of corporate journalism of the twentieth century. Hearst's journalism was both opinionated and corporate, in a sense a synthesis of opposing tendencies. This statement rests on the observation that opinion journalism was small-scale, and that personalities tended to recede in the twentieth century as journalism became standardized by wire service and syndicate fare, and became a large-scale corporate and chain phenomenon.

Since Hearst owed a heavy debt of influence to nineteenth century opinion journalists, it would be well to examine him in both contexts. Among the most notable of the journalists active in the late nineteenth century, against whom Hearst might be measured, were Charles A. Dana of the New York Sun, Joseph Pulitzer of the New York World, Edward W. Scripps, owner of a chain of Midwestern labor papers, and Lawrence Godkin of the New York Evening Post.

Of these editors Hearst and Dana rank at the bottom of the scale. Dana was an idealist turned cynic. His New York Sun had such an erratic editorial page that he had little influence on public affairs. Dana vituperated men prominent in public life, preached arch-conservative economic doctrines and opposed reforms. Dana's redeeming feature was that his paper was a training school for rising journalists, and the Sun was considered at its peak the best edited paper in the United States.

Hearst borrowed ideas on how to edit a paper and display the news from Dana. During the late nineteenth century Hearst drew

many outstanding journalists to his New York Journal, and made the paper the top circulating medium in the city within a brief time. But like Dana he must be scored for his lack of editorial integrity, and irresponsible attitude toward his readership. The circulation war he waged with Joseph Pulitzer on the occasion of the Spanish-American War was one of the low points in American journalism. In that contest Hearst appeared to be the worse offender against journalistic taste, decency and probity.

Both Pulitzer and Scripps would have to be rated above Hearst. All three professed to be champions of the common man. These professions were somewhat tainted by the fact that journalism brought them wealth, which they spent on yachts, mansions or both. But one must remember that the late 1890s was the age of the robber barons, when an ethos of survival of the fittest prevailed in business circles, and the federal government was hostile toward unions. In this context, Scripps' labor papers, which were tightly written and espoused the view of the laboring man, were a departure from existing norms. Pulitzer's crusades for the poor, his earnest and powerful social conscience, and his trenchant editorial page likewise moved against the grain of the prevailing naturalistic view.

Hearst was not alone among the nineteenth century editors in being either a news teacher or in developing a chain. Both Dana and Pulitzer were full of didactic and specific instructions on how

to cover stories, what constituted desirable news, and how to display the news. Both closely monitored and supervised the editorial activity of their newspapers. Pulitzer's biographer, Swanberg, credits him with similar news control to what this research assigned to Hearst. Scripps was a powerful constructive force, who developed his newspaper properties and his wire service on cooperative principles. At his retirement in 1908 he left behind a chain of 26 newspapers, a wire service, an educational news syndicate, and a science news service. Unlike Hearst, Scripps early education was meager, nor was he born rich, but he came from a newspapering family.

Of the late nineteenth century journalists Godkin attained the highest mark. He was a lofty-minded Irishman, son of a preacher turned editor, who immigrated to America because of his ideals about this country. In editing the New York Evening Post during the 1880s and 1890s Godkin raised the plane of discussion in regard to reform issues and public affairs to a higher plane than hitherto had been experienced in American journalism. Godkin's towering influence on public affairs was assessed by William James as molding and interpreting the whole current of discussion. Godkin was weak where Hearst was strong: he could be an unfeeling snob and he left the masses behind, pitching his appeal to the most refined minds of the day.

Had Hearst died before 1900 it is probable that he would not be a notable name in American journalism. Before 1900 he owned

only two newspapers, the San Francisco Examiner and the New York Journal. In comparison with other opinion editors of the late nineteenth century he did not rank high in terms of his achievements or contributions. Before the turn of the century Hearst's influence had been aggressively geared toward mass consumption, and he may have helped lower the tone of journalism.

Hearst's wealth, his organizing ability and drive to develop a large chain of papers put his journalism in a different light in the twentieth century. The forces which created the modern mass paper in the late nineteenth century--urbanization, industrialization and mechanization--contributed to the decline of individuality of newspapers in the twentieth century. As the twentieth century progressed the standardization of daily journalism was abetted by the wire services, the syndicates and advances in distribution due to improved roads.

Coincident with these forces was the fact the number of dailies stopped increasing in 1910 and thereafter begin to decline. The general journalistic climate for daily newspapering of the twentieth century became one of consolidation in the number of dailies and accentuation of the chaining trend. Hearst was in the forefront of both these trends.

During the period of 1918 to 1928 the Hearst organization accounted for the demise of 16 papers, in order to augment the positions of Hearst-owned dailies. Major cities where these consolidations occurred were: Chicago, Boston, Washington, D.C.,

Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, San Francisco and Los Angeles. To put Hearst's consolidations in perspective, the Scripps-Howard chain was responsible for closing 15 newspapers between 1923 and 1934.

The growth of chain ownership expanded from a small base after 1900 to the point that by 1935 some 63 chains accounted for 41 percent of the country's daily circulation. Hearst's chain of 26 dailies in 1935 was the largest in the nation, accounting for 13.6 percent of the country's daily circulation. In second place was the McCormick-Patterson combine with 6.4 percent, and third was Scripps-Howard with 5.1 percent of the daily circulation.

The two major trends of consolidation and chaining gave journalism of the 1920s and 1930s a big business character. The raucous and intensely competitive journalism of that era was geared toward mass circulation appeal. Both Hearst, and Scripps-Howard, which for a time was the second largest chain, were flexible and aggressive enough to develop highly marketable mass appeal papers. They both foresightedly developed their own feature syndicates and wire services so as to obtain standardized fare at low acquisition cost.

Of Hearst's accomplishments of the 1920s and 1930s, he was an astute practitioner of chain journalism. His scale of operation was immense, and has not been duplicated. Hearst papers had strong mass circulation appeal. To Hearst must go the credit of building such a large organization, and to attracting the personnel to staff

the top management positions. At the same time it may be pointed out that Hearst was not the first to promote chain newspaper standardization through developing his own wire service and feature syndicate.

Given Hearst's nineteenth century opinion journalism background, it is possible the Hearst papers were marked by a more personal and subjective flavoring of editorials and news than other large chain papers. But as was pointed out in chapter II, other large chain papers were similar to Hearst's in their right-wing militant nationalism, their tendency to argue the case of big business, and their exhibition of class bias. It is not known whether their publishers practiced news control to the extent that Hearst did. Hearst's predilection towards news control did not seem to be a healthy phenomenon for American journalism, or for the public which depended on such slanted information for their political and economic intelligence about their environs.

It would seem that Hearst's greatest impacts on journalism were two. First was his construction of a large chain of metropolitan newspapers in major cities. Such large media holdings gave him political influence all out of proportion to the pedestrian stock of nationalistic slogans and catch phrases his newspapers promulgated. No one since has built such a powerful chain based in major metropolitan cities. The general tendency of chains today is to be extensive in small towns and cities, or to be strong in a state or region.

Hearst's second major impact was the longevity of his career. In his 64 years in journalism Hearst bridged the period of opinion journalism to corporate journalism. Like an elemental phenomenon he made his force felt during both periods. But it was not a very memorable force. Hearst ranked low among the major late nineteenth century editors, and in the 1920s and 1930s his attitudes seemed typical of other major chain publishers. Hearst papers were not characterized by either quality journalism or high ethical standards.

It is difficult to think of any enduring legacy that comes down through the years from Hearst to benefit contemporary journalism. One of the unfortunate aspects of Hearst's journalism was that it dealt poorly with the tension between the journalistic values of public service and giving the public what it wanted. Hearst journalism tilted toward giving the public what it wanted to the degree that it may have degraded public taste. Not merely did Hearst journalism cater to the lowest common denominator but it was guilty of numerous, sometimes serious, infractions against ethical and fairness norms.

The Commission on Freedom of the Press's report of 1947 held the view that the mass press's performance in providing a professional public service should be improved. The Commission's view was that the press's orientation toward profit making should be tempered by the recognition the press had a public service role to perform within our democratic political system. In that respect

the duty of the press was to attempt to provide a good quantity, quality and variety of information and opinion commentary. It was in the area of his sense of responsibility to public service that Hearst had a great blind spot.

After Hearst died in 1951 his organization continued to be operated by his associates and sons. But it was not directed with the same driving energy and managerial verve, and it declined in stature. Today the Hearst organization is neither the dominating journalistic enterprise it once was, nor is it so completely under the influence of one man the way it was during William Randolph Hearst's rule. Still disseminating mass taste journalism, the chain rarely has distinguished itself in the area of public service.

Turning to the question of directions for further research, this research suggested inquiries that could be undertaken in a number of directions. Some concern Hearst, others the period of the 1920s and 1930s, and finally some general considerations. Regarding Hearst, it would be helpful and useful to find out more about the entertainment and syndicate sides of his news. It would be of interest to examine Hearst's manuscript collection, when it eventually opens at Berkeley's Bancroft Library.

In the period of the 1920s and 1930s, did other major publishers such as Robert McCormick, Roy Howard, Paul Block and Frank Gannett (all among the top seven newspaper chain owners in 1935) exercise news control on their newspapers? More research

could be done into the social orientation of major chain owners in the 1920s and 1930s. (If these publishers had a class bias that resulted in distorted news, and, if their dominant social tendency was regressive, why do the standard journalism history texts not bring that out in a forceful manner?)

On a general level, what has been the dominant tendency of chain, commercialized journalism in relation to the social and political progress of the nation? A good deal more thought and study could be directed toward owner motives and how they affect content. (This paper hypothesized ideological shaping and pecuniary shaping.) Business management literature could be studied to see what light it sheds on the concept of ownership and management news control. The question could be studied of how the news control thesis applies to present-day newspapers, which are reported to be run by management committees. Finally, it would be interesting to do a newsroom study that included role observation of reporting and evaluation of management memoranda, so that the perspectives of boardroom and newsroom could be better integrated.

NOTES

¹Gaye Tuchman, Making News (New York: Free Press, 1978), pp. 182-5. D. Charles Whitney, review of Tuchman's Making News, in Journalism Quarterly 55 (Winter, 1978):803.

²L. John Martin "International Propaganda in Retrospect and Prospect," in H. D. Fischer and John C. Merrill, eds. International Communication (New York: Hastings House, 1974), pp. 178, and 179 fn.

³W. A. Swanberg, Citizen Hearst (New York: Scribner's 1961), pp. 624-5. E. D. Coblentz, ed., William Randolph Hearst (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), p. 282.

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He has worked primarily as a journalist, editor and writer, and traveled to 47 countries. Coincident with completing a Ph.D. degree he accepted an appointment as assistant professor to teach journalism courses at Weber State College, Ogden, Utah.