I count it a privilege to be here tonight as your October speaker and to be the recipient of the gracious introduction that my old friend, C. V. Starrett, has just accorded me. Many times over the years I have sat where you are sitting, to hear distinguished lecturers share their knowledge of the history of this important region, and I cannot help recalling that the first historical lecture in my professional career was delivered in this room some thirty-eight years ago, on the subject “The Pittsburgh Gazette — a Pioneer Newspaper.” I had only recently come to Pittsburgh from Massachusetts to teach history at what was then called Carnegie Institute of Technology, and the invitation for me to present this lecture came from Dr. Solon J. Buck, then Director of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey. Those were exciting days here at the Historical Society when, for the first time, the history of Western Pennsylvania became the subject of scholarly histories underwritten by the Buhl Foundation and written by Drs. Buck, Russell J. Ferguson, Leland Baldwin, Randolph Downes, and others whose names are doubtless well known to most of you. Dr. Buck used to preside over weekly staff luncheons in the King Edward dining room to which I was invited, and it was in connection with these and other activities at the Society that I met two younger members of the historical circle, C. Stanton Belfour and John W. Harpster. I think...
I was rather self-conscious and inwardly uncomfortable the night of my lecture because Dr. Buck had advised me that the appropriate dress for the occasion would be a tuxedo, and of course my collar was too tight; and besides, it was my first experience of reading an historical paper to an exacting audience like this.

I had already become interested in newspaper history when I undertook to write my doctoral dissertation at Harvard on the history of the old Gazette. And when the dissertation was completed and afterward published in connection with the Post-Gazette's Sesqui-Centennial, my thesis adviser, Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, suggested the idea of a second book about newspapers on the Northern war correspondents of the Civil War. That book took considerably longer to write than I had expected, in part because of the interruption of my research by my military service during World War II. Then after the completion of the book on Northern reporting, in which Agnes Starrett played a significant role, the Princeton University Press suggested a companion work on the Southern news coverage of the war. I really doubted that I could write such a book because of the obscurity of the Southern newspapermen of the 1860's and the wholesale destruction of Southern newspaper files that took place during the Civil War. But after writing to a number of Southern libraries and considering the idea carefully, I found its symmetry attractive and decided to begin the investigation which resulted in my recent book.

You might be interested to know to what extent and where Civil War newspapers are available to a research scholar like me. Probably the Library of Congress in Washington has the most extensive collection of United States newspapers of the Civil War period of anywhere in the world. This includes the press of the larger Northern cities—New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis. It includes also newspapers published in Richmond, Charleston, New Orleans, Mobile and some other Southern cities. I found the Civil War files of the Southern newspapers more fragmentary and less accessible than those of the newspapers of the North, however. In part this is because of the destruction of Southern newspaper offices and their contents that occurred during the War. Some other important collections of Civil War newspapers are housed in the Boston Athenaeum library, the University of Wisconsin, Duke University and a number of public libraries, including the New York Public. At one time the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh had a fairly complete file of the leading New York papers of the Civil War period. And presently microfilm copies of Civil War files of the leading
Pittsburgh newspapers, *Gazette, Post, Chronicle,* and *Dispatch,* are available for public use at Carnegie. Your own Society contains significant holdings of Civil War newspapers, including representative files of the Pittsburgh *Gazette, Post,* and *Commercial,* and the important ten-volume Dibert collection of miscellaneous Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Johnstown newspapers. Being composed of rag paper rather than the brittle wood pulp that came in later, the files of the newspapers of the 1860's are surprisingly well preserved.

This leads me to the topic of similarities and differences between the newspapers of the 1860's and present-day newspapers. I think it could fairly be said that these two categories of newspapers were almost as different in appearance as the crinoline dress of a Mary Todd Lincoln or a Kate Chase Sprague differs from the miniskirt of 1969 and 1970. A glance at an April 1861 issue of a Richmond daily newspaper could illustrate what I am talking about. One particular newspaper, the Richmond *Daily Dispatch,* consisted of four pages, seven columns wide. You would be struck, I think, by the lack of pictures or of headlines wider than a single column. The small print would strain your eyes, especially if you had been living in that gaslit era before Edison's incandescent light transformed American night life. Small town newspapers in 1861 were still being printed on hand presses, especially in the South. And the content of Civil War newspapers was of much more limited scope than the content of newspapers today: no sports pages, no women's page, no comics, no advice-to-the-lovelorn column. They *did* contain political news, foreign news in the form of reprints from European newspapers brought to America by steamship, or by sailing ship (there was no Atlantic cable as yet), newspaper editorials, commercial news and one or more solid pages of advertising, whose tedium was only occasionally broken by a line cut.

My experiences of research and writing probably were rather typical of historians in general — the copying of quotations from newspapers and manuscript sources on innumerable note cards, poring over newspaper microfilm, travelling about the country on planes, trains and busses (on one occasion down in Georgia in a passenger coach that was hitched on to the rear of a freight train), and typing numerous letters to librarians, other historians and the descendants of the newspapermen I was writing about. I made some spectacular research finds and suffered some equally spectacular disappointments. Among the former, I rate the discovery of the papers of Uriah Hunt Painter, Chief Washington Correspondent of the Philadelphia *Inquirer* during the Civil War, in a seventeen-room mansion in West Chester,
Pennsylvania, belonging to his daughter. Still another was the diary of the Southern war correspondent, Samuel Chester Reid, which I literally traced from Maine to California. Also I was astonished to stumble quite by accident on the business records of one of the leading Southern Telegraph companies right here in my own front door yard, so to speak, in the Pennsylvania Room of the Carnegie Library.

After numerous attempts to discover a photograph of a Virginia war correspondent, James B. Sener, for use as a book illustration, in the newspaper morgue of the Washington Star, the Library of Congress and elsewhere, I was about to give up. Then a friend at the National Archives noticed in an obituary account of Sener that he had once been Chief Justice of Wyoming Territory. Informing me that the Wyoming State Archives had been progressive in its approach to its local history and records, he advised me to write to the Director and ask the cost of obtaining a good picture of the Chief Justice. In due time I received from the Wyoming Archives in Cheyenne the very picture I was looking for.

But, yes, I recall the disappointments, too, the long train ride to Buffalo, New York, in 1942 to investigate the possibility of locating the family papers of Samuel Wilkeson, Civil War-time Washington correspondent of both the New York Times and Tribune. I was most hospitably received in Buffalo by the granddaughter of Wilkeson, the wife of the Director of the Buffalo Museum of Fine Arts. Yes, she said, there had been such a valuable manuscript collection, which undoubtedly contained a number of priceless autographed letters from famous men such as Horace Greeley, William H. Seward, Henry J. Raymond, and President Lincoln as well. But the instincts of a good housekeeper on the part of Wilkeson’s second wife had caused her to burn them. Similarly a monument in Chickamauga Park on which supposedly were included the names of the leading Civil War correspondents of the South had mysteriously disappeared by the time one of my former students visited the park in 1960 to copy down the names for me.

I think that in writing history from Civil War newspapers I found all my previous writing experience helpful, including my work as a Naval Intelligence Officer in World War II. Certainly I owe much to the expert advice in matters of style and presentation to a long-time colleague in the English Department of Chatham College, Robert L. Zetler.

In the preface of The South Reports the Civil War, I stated my
preference for a combination of narrative and expository history to the topical approach favored by many present-day historians. In my view, history should tell a meaningful story as well as analyze the character and behavior of its principals — individuals and groups. In the words of the great British historian, George Macaulay Trevelyan, "The art of history remains always the art of narrative. That is the bed rock." ¹ I think history must begin with the scientific approach, applying rigorous rules of evidence to the testimony of the witnesses of historical events. But in the end it must give the reader the kind of thing the artist gives him, a view of life, an enlarged notion of what human beings are like, something of the vision of the struggle of finite man with an infinite fate.

I realize, to be sure, the limitations of the technique of imaginative reconstruction. While I enjoy historical fiction, I do not believe in fictionized history. I do not think the historian has the right to tell us what was passing through the mind of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo or of Robert E. Lee when he refused to accept the command of the United States Army from General Scott unless he, the historian, has documentary evidence to support his conjecture. In my own writing I have always tried to be careful not to introduce conversations, i.e., direct discourse, between historical characters unless such conversations were recorded in trustworthy contemporary sources.

Often in writing I have found it advantageous to get away from my desk for a prolonged "breather" so as to return to my labors refreshed in mind and spirit. I recall once being baffled for weeks by a particular problem of organizing my writing material, and of going out in the evening after dinner at the Methodist Building in Washington to sit for a few minutes on the east steps of the United States Supreme Court Building. It was dusk after a sunny hot day, and as I sat there in the cool of the evening, a covey of birds skimmed low and tarried for a moment on some nearby iron fences. In that moment of complete tranquillity, the solution to an apparently insoluble problem became transparently clear.

As from year to year I pored over the yellowed newspaper files of the 1860's and plowed through reams of private and official correspondence, I became better acquainted with the phlegmatic Grant, the peppery Sherman, dashing Phil Sheridan and the slow moving McClellan, and saw Lee, Longstreet and Hood in new perspective. Also I made the acquaintance for the first time of the knights of the quill

¹ George M. Trevelyan, Clio, A Muse and Other Essays (London, New York, Toronto, 1913), 149.
who chronicled their campaigns — of the South's intrepid Peter W. Alexander and the effervescent Felix Gregory de Fontaine, and of competent Yankee newsmen like Whitelaw Reid, Henry Villard and Charles Carleton Coffin.

Much of the news correspondence published during the war was written in railway cars and on steamboats, on camp chests and on tree stumps, and once at least, if we can believe a fellow reporter, on the barrel-shaped chest of a slumbering newspaperman. On the night after a great battle, the army correspondents would frequently sit up all night to write their stories by the dim light of a camp fire or of the commissary candles. At daybreak they would saddle their horses and gallop off, sparing neither themselves nor their mounts, until the product of their all-night vigil was safely on its way to the newspaper office. News scoops were more common practice on the part of the Northern than the Southern press. The longtime preference of Southern newspaper readers for editorials rather than news dispatches had de-emphasized the importance of up-to-the-minute news in the period before the War. And although the increasing appetite for news of Southern war-time newspaper readers changed the emphasis somewhat, the Southern system of news communication did not lend itself to news beats like Painter's Bull Run scoop for the Philadelphia Inquirer and Homer Byington's Gettysburg news beat for the New York Tribune.

I have sometimes been asked the question as to whether Civil War newspapers gave their readers an accurate picture of the War or whether they simply reported what they thought the public wanted to hear. I don't think that newspapers in war time are ever able to come up to the historian's standard of complete objectivity. I doubt that United States newspaper readers during the Vietnam War, the Korean War, or even World War II have been in a position to know all the relevant facts about the war effort. Generally the reliability of war news is at its lowest ebb when your country's army is taking a licking.

And so I repeat what I have said in my books that the press on both sides was an essential ingredient, not simply of journalism but also of the propaganda effort of the side with which they were identified. Even if the Civil War correspondents had desired to impart the bad news along with the good, they were at least partially inhibited from doing so by the rather hit-or-miss official censorship of War Department officials and generals and by the voluntary censorship of newspaper editors. Interestingly enough, whereas Northern censorship
was relatively lax at the beginning of the War and became more effective as the war progressed, precisely the opposite was true of Southern war-time censorship.

Although the public was avid for news, it was sporadically critical of the news it received. Writing to Jefferson Davis in the fall of 1864 the editor of the Macon Telegraph admitted that the people of the South had come to look upon the press as "pledged to make the worse appear the better side and the words of cheer we gave [give] them began [begin] to fall unheeded on their ears." 2 In similar vein a soldier in one of the New York regiments wrote to his wife from Norfolk, Virginia, in February 1863, "Everything I have read in the New York papers yesterday, that gave an account of the fight. [sic] There is some of it the truth, but most of it is lies. I cannot believe the newspapers anymore!" 3

The unscrupulous practices used by some reporters to get ahead of their rivals and the relations of important generals and reporters are some of the interesting themes of Civil War reporting.

While on the way to Washington during the Mine Run campaign of 1863 with dispatches of considerable importance, a New York Tribune correspondent named Francis Long was hailed by a rival reporter who professed to be the sutler of a western regiment but was in reality Frank Chapman of the New York Herald. Chapman sat down beside Long and began pumping him for information, but guessing at his true character, Long refused to give him any information. Chapman showed no particular resentment. Indeed he seemed to be on good terms with everyone on the train and was very liberal in passing out cigars and mysterious-looking black bottles, especially when the officer in charge of the train guard was around.

As the train was pulling into Alexandria, Chapman disappeared very suddenly, and almost at the same time Long missed his dispatches. It seemed probable that the inquisitive stranger had picked his pocket, but this might be hard to prove. While he was debating what to do next, the officer in charge of the train was relieved, and Long saw him point in his direction while talking to the substitute. Presently the new officer walked up to the Tribune correspondent and demanded to see his pass. After examining it for a moment, he said he had serious


3 Typed Copy of letter of Sgt. George Tipping to his wife ("Dear Catherine"), Suffolk, Va., Feb. 5, 1863, loaned to the author by Miss Kathleen Cochrane.
doubts as to it being genuine and would not permit Long to cross the Potomac until the pass had been countersigned. Long had to leave the train for this purpose, and before he could get back on, the train pulled out, depriving him of his last chance to reach the Washington telegraph office that evening. The gist of the stolen dispatch appeared in the *Herald* the next day, some parts of it *verbatim*.

Before many days passed, Long found the opportunity to turn the tables. Heading north with dispatches summarizing the decisive action of the campaign, Long reached Rappahannock Station, where he made a deal with Stanton to forward his dispatches to the War Department via the military telegraph in return for the privilege of having their substance transmitted to the *Tribune*. Having performed his part of the bargain, Long boarded the Washington train. One of the first people he met on board was the ubiquitous Chapman, who was ravenous for news and set out to get it by offering Long one hundred dollars for the privilege of reading his account of the fighting near Mine Run. When Long refused to bite, Chapman raised the offer, first to two hundred dollars and then to two hundred and fifty dollars. Long still refused, although he was strongly tempted to accept the bribe out of pure spite, since the story had already passed over the wires. Instead, he took out his notebook to jot down a memorandum.

As he did so, he noticed that Chapman had taken a seat directly behind him, obviously in order to read what he was about to write. This was too good an opportunity to be missed. Pretending not to notice the *Herald* man, Long set to work on an imaginary account of a terrible battle which was supposed to have occurred near Chancellorsville the day before. Rising to the bait, Chapman copied page after page of the spurious manuscript. Finally Long completed his masterpiece by drawing from his haversack an old list of casualties which had occurred at another place and to which he added the fictitious names of several generals. Within a few days he had his revenge, for the *Herald* on December 4, 1863, contained a glowing account of a bloody battle that was supposed to have occurred near Chancellorsville, together with a list of killed or wounded not to be found on the Adjutant’s muster rolls, and an elaborate map of the country around Chancellorsville showing the respective positions of the forces engaged!4

An extraordinary tale about the relationship of generals and the press involved a Chicago *Times* reporter named Sylvanus Cadwallader.

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According to Cadwallader, he was in the tent of a staff officer one night during the Vicksburg campaign of 1863 when Grant came in at midnight to ask the staff officer for a drink. The question as to whether Grant was a drinker had been agitating the press for some time. It was known that he had been cashiered from the army for drinking before the War, but it was now generally understood that he had sworn off. Grant was sitting on the edge of the officer's cot pouring some whiskey into a tin cup when he caught sight of Cadwallader for the first time. Neither man said anything, but Cadwallader did not need to be told that from then on he could have anything he wanted at headquarters.

A few days later, the reporter accompanied Grant on a boat trip up the Yazoo River which might have had momentous consequences. Before they had been aboard very long it became evident that Grant had been drinking heavily and was still keeping it up. Cadwallader approached Lieutenant H. N. Towner, the only staff officer on board, and tried to persuade him to get Grant into his stateroom and refuse him any more whiskey. But the lieutenant was timid and afraid the general would resent it. Cadwallader then persuaded the captain of the ship to close the bar room and taking the general in hand himself, locked himself in the stateroom with the general and commenced throwing whiskey bottles out the window into the river. Grant ordered him out, and when he refused, lurched to the door and tried to wrench it open. After much argument, Cadwallader persuaded him to lie down and finally fanned him to sleep. When they arrived at Haynes' Bluff the next morning Grant was sufficiently recovered to receive Assistant Secretary of War Dana, who had recently come down from Washington to look over Grant and settle the drinking question once and for all. Cadwallader went ashore for an hour to hustle up some news. When he came back to the boat, he discovered that Grant had obtained some whiskey from on shore and was as much intoxicated as the day before. Cadwallader made some rapid calculations. In a little while the boat was to touch at Chickasaw Bayou where the landing would be alive with officers and men on commissary duty from all parts of the army. It would never do for Grant to be seen in that condition. And so Cadwallader persuaded the captain to delay their departure on one pretext after another. But just as everything seemed under control, the reporter found that Grant had somehow contrived to go aboard the sutler's headquarters boat which was moored nearby and, glass in hand in a saloon adjoining the lady's cabin, was glorious-
ly drunk. Cadwallader succeeded in luring him out of there, whereupon the grumbling commander made for his mettlesome steed, Kangaroo, gave him the spurs as soon as he hit the saddle, and shot away. Cadwallader took off after him, finally caught up with him, persuaded him to dismount, and sent back to headquarters for an ambulance. Through Cadwallader’s efforts the general’s escapade did not become common knowledge, and from that time on the reporter worked in combination with the general’s staff to keep Grant from getting any more liquor. In spite of the remark attributed to Lincoln about sending Grant’s brand of whiskey to his other generals, no one doubted that if the news of such a carousal became generally known, Grant’s career in the army would be at an end. Grant never alluded subsequently to the Yazoo spree, but he showed his gratitude to the reporter for protecting his reputation in very substantial form thereafter.5

Whereas Lincoln had fairly intimate press relations with newspapermen like Noah Brooks and Henry Villard, Jefferson Davis tended to be remote and uncommunicative with Richmond correspondents of the Southern press.

A sample of his evasive treatment of reporters occurred when he was returning to Atlanta from a visit to Bragg’s army in October 1863. A war correspondent of the Mobile Tribune, Sam Reid, was on the same train. Presuming on his previous acquaintance with the President, Reid endeavored in vain to draw him out. When, for example, Reid spoke slyly about certain plans in relation to Tennessee, Davis blandly agreed that they would be very desirable. When next the reporter mentioned an active rumor about a movement in middle Tennessee, his travel companion made the noncommittal comment that it would be a fine country to be in. When at length Reid opined that if he were President Davis, he could tell a good deal more than he was at present supposed to know, the President retorted, “You may be sure I shall not enlighten you, sir, and so you need not attempt to pump me.”

Reid hastily disclaimed any intention of seeking any improper disclosures, and the two men parted without the reporter being any wiser for the experience.6

5 B. P. Thomas (ed.), Three Years with Grant As Recalled by War Correspondent Sylvanus Cadwallader (New York, 1955), 103-109. The reliability of Cadwallader’s narrative is the subject of a controversy between historians Kenneth Williams and Benjamin P. Thomas in American Heritage (August 1956), VII, 106-111.

I suppose you may be interested in knowing what I learned about life in Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania from reading Civil War newspapers. Although as a city of about fifty thousand at the beginning of the war, Pittsburgh was not large enough to support newspapers that could afford paid professional war correspondents, I encountered reflections of life in Pittsburgh at the time in various places. One of my students at Chatham College furnished me with a picture that had been passed down in her family showing news bulletins that were posted at the Pittsburgh Dispatch office on Fifth Avenue in June 1862. Her ancestor, Joseph Singerly Lare, was the wartime editor of the Dispatch. Also, I was interested to learn that the Charles D. Brigham who became editor-in-chief of the Pittsburgh Commercial in 1864 was a former war correspondent of the New York Tribune who had represented that newspaper, in Charleston, at the beginning of the War and later during the Chattanooga campaign in the latter part of 1863.

Brigham's success with the Pittsburgh Commercial soon netted him a controlling interest in the paper. Nine years later, he sold out and went to Florida where he lost the large fortune which he had accumulated from his newspaper work, through imprudent land speculation. At a later time he was a Washington correspondent of several Pittsburgh newspapers and from 1885 to 1890 editor of the Pittsburgh Times.7

Still another interesting story has to do with the brief stay in Pittsburgh of a Southern newspaperman, Captain Theodoric Carter of the Chattanooga Rebel, who had been a prisoner of war at Johnson's Island in Lake Erie for four months at the beginning of 1864. While being moved to another prison, he escaped near Massillon, Ohio. Travelling incognito by train to Pittsburgh, he stopped overnight at Pittsburgh's leading hostelry, the Monongahela House, with a Union soldier from a Pennsylvania regiment. The Pennsylvanian snored away quite lustily, unaware that his roommate was an escapee "Rebel" army correspondent.

Carter told of strolling along the streets of Pittsburgh the next morning and stopping in at a beer saloon on Market Street where three convivial Yankee soldiers were fraternizing with a deserter from Imboden's Cavalry. Leaving the deserter in the act of protesting his devotion to the Union cause, Carter boarded a train for Cincinnati.

7 National Cyclopedia of American Biography, IX, 280-281; Erasmus Wilson, Standard History of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania (Chicago, 1898), 855. The first issue of the Pittsburgh Daily Commercial was dated Sep. 7, 1863.
and after several narrow escapes from recapture returned to the Con-
federate lines in safety.8

One fragment of newspaper history that contains some interest-
ing gossip about wartime Pittsburgh appeared in a letter that I did not see fit to include in either of my two books on Civil War reporting. On June 9, 1862, the Richmond *Daily Dispatch* printed extracts from a letter picked up on the battlefield of Fair Oaks, Virginia. The letter had been written by a young Pittsburgher to his father, Alexander Hays, who was then Colonel of the 63rd Pennsylvania Regiment and later a division commander in the Army of the Potomac.

Young Hays told his father: ‘From what we can learn, it looks as though the rebellion was about ‘played out.’ At every point they have been beaten, and for some months past they have not gained anything of particular and lasting benefit, while we have steadily advanced, sweeping everything before us, taking New Orleans and Norfolk, beside numerous minor points, and with a well founded expectation of being victorious at the impending battles near Richmond and Corinth. But we must not underrate our foe. We cannot disguise the fact that there is a powerful enemy before us, *ready and able to fight*. Their soldiers are of the same stock as ours and are as *brave and valiant*. Their officers were educated at the same school, and are as talented and able as ours, and we have found out that they have as many and as good guns and munitions of war as we have . . . .

“I do not write this to excuse the rebels — for I believe if ever a rebellion was unnecessary it is this — but to show the difference between the two sections. When we were defeated at Bull Run last July, you remember what a sensation it created. You would have thought we were all doomed — stocks down, business dull, and long faces everywhere! *Every engagement we are expected — aye it is demanded — that we be victorious*, and unless we are you would think that it is the last effort we are capable of making. Oh, that our people *had a little courage, like our foes* to bear up against misfortune . . . .

“I see by the papers that Col. David Campbell has been appointed Military Governor of Williamsburg, Va. He is looking up. But maybe that will suit him better, as he will not get into action. Some of these Colonels and Generals will serve their country better that way than by murdering our soldiers in battle by *incapacity*. A title is empty honor, unless accompanied by merit, and benefits neither the one that bears it or the country that bestows it . . . .

8 Atlanta *Daily Southern Confederacy*, April 8, 1864; *Andrews, The South Reports the Civil War*, 432.
"I saw Capt. McKee yesterday. He is very hard on Curtin (Governor), and if what he says is true, there is much cause. He says he went into this war as a family affair, to serve his country, but he finds it is only those who thieve and lie that can get along. Those that have plenty of money can succeed, but the poor man must 'clear the track.' He says his was the first company offered and accepted in Pennsylvania for the three months' service. He served that time, came home, commenced recruiting for the war, spending every dollar he had, going away from here in Col. Lehman's 103rd regiment with 78 men, according to the Quartermaster's account, but when he arrived in Harrisburg was told he had but seven men, and therefore had no command. He says by villainy and treachery he was thrown aside, because he was a poor man, and had no money to buy his commission from Gov. Curtin. Now he is a poor man at home with his family, while some little 'squirt' is marching around, with gold fringe and brass buttons, at the head of the men he enlisted. Andley W. Gazzam, son of Dr. E. D. Gazzam, is the Major of the regiment. Capt. McKee says he knows for a certainty he paid $500 for his commission. I do not think his military capacity would get it for him."

The Col. Campbell mentioned in what was intended to be a private letter was initially Colonel of the Twelfth Pennsylvania Regiment and later was transferred to the Fifth Cavalry. Captain McKee was probably Samuel A. McKee, Capt. Company A, Twelfth Pennsylvania Regiment. Andley Gazzam was born in Allegheny City in 1836, educated at Russel's Military Academy in New Haven, admitted to the bar in Pittsburgh in 1860, and served during the War in the 103rd Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry and the United States Veteran Reserve Corps.9

One of the lessons I learned as an apprentice historian was never to accept at face value the statement by a librarian or some other researcher that a particular collection of historical material contained nothing that would be of interest to me. I was assured by the biographer of Whitelaw Reid, Royal Cortissoz, that the Reid papers would be of no use to me and that there was no point in my examining them. He went on to say: "I examined them piece by piece when I was writing the biography to which you refer, and I particularly remember the zeal in which I searched for material relating to his work as a correspondent. Of all that I could find I made the fullest use, and you

9 Twentieth Century Bench and Bar of Pennsylvania (Chicago, 1903), II. 889-890.
will find it embodied in the biography. There is not a shred that is otherwise available. This you may take as conclusive fact." Fortunately I was skeptical, eventually did use the Reid papers, then in possession of the publishers of the New York Herald-Tribune, and discovered some material which I should not like to have missed. I am convinced that Cortissoz was perfectly sincere when he wrote me what he did. The explanation for the apparent discrepancy was the difference in our point of view. Cortissoz was writing a biography of Reid. I was writing a book about Reid and several hundred other reporters. It goes without saying that our criteria for the selection of material were different.

I do not wish to mislead anyone into thinking that it is easy to write history from newspapers. Reporters vary considerably in their ability to observe accurately even the simplest happenings, and some of them are not prone to allow truth to stand in the way of a good story. Moreover, the Civil War reporter's news sources were of varying reliability. The informants best able to provide him with an accurate picture were often the very people who were the least willing to talk. Under the circumstances Civil War correspondents were obliged to pick up news wherever they could find it — from quarter-masters, returned prisoners, refugees, intelligent Negroes, scouts, and deserters. Generally officers were better informed sources of information than enlisted men, although they were not as a group more truthful.

And yet in many ways writing history from Civil War newspapers, although a difficult experience, has been an exciting one. Like most historians, I owe a heavy debt of gratitude to a host of librarians, archivists, professional colleagues, and friends. No work of history is any more an individual product than is a mechanical invention like the telephone or automobile. Historical societies like this, through their collections of newspaper files and other kinds of historical records and their publication of articles and documents, make possible the efforts of journeymen historians like me. Such cooperation fosters the historical scholarship that is so necessary for public understanding of the vital issues of this perplexing and ominous twentieth century.