Civil War Symposium at UTC November 5 - 7

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga’s twenty-third annual Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression will be held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, November 5-7. The conference will begin Thursday afternoon at the Read House hotel and continue Friday and Saturday at the UTC University Center. All paper sessions are free and open to the public.

The symposium will feature forty speakers from across the nation and beyond, and will include a video conference presentation by Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer, who will discuss “Abraham Lincoln and the Power of the Press,” the subject of his new book, at 1:00 p.m., Friday, November 6, in the Raccoon Mountain Room.

The purpose of the conference is to share current research and develop a series of monographs on the 19th century press, the Civil War and the press, and 19th century concepts of free expression. Papers from the first five conferences were published by Transaction Publishers in 2000 as a book of readings called The Civil War and the Press. Purdue University Press published papers from past conferences in three distinctly different books titled Memory and Myth: The Civil War in Fiction and Film from Uncle Tom's Cabin to Cold Mountain (2007), Words at War: The Civil War and American Journalism (2008), and Seeking a Voice: Images of Race and Gender in the 19th Century Press (2009). In 2013, Transaction published Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th-Century Reporting, and last year, it released A Press Divided: Newspaper Coverage of the Civil War.

The conference will begin Thursday, November 5, at the Read House at 3:30 p.m. with six presentations: “At War with Madison” by Joe Marren of SUNY Buffalo State, “Winston S. Churchill on the American Civil War” by David W. Bulla of Zayed University, “The Lone Woman of San Nicolas Island in the Popular Press: Tracing a Narrative's Circulation” by Rachel M.A. Manuszak and Sara L. Schwebel of the University of South Carolina, “Fire Eaters, Lightning Wires & Total War: The Electric Telegraph & the Evolution of Modern Journalism in the Charleston Mercury” by Simon Vodrey of Carleton University, “Dennis A. Mahony: Prophet, Martyr, True Patriot? The Content of a Copper Head” by David L. Salvaterra of Loras College, and “Sifting Comic Wheat from Western Chaff: Alex E. Sweet, John Armoy Knox and the Humor of the American West” by Mary M. Cronin of New Mexico State University.

The Thursday evening session will include presentations on “Rest Under the Shade of the Trees: Fourth Level Agenda Setting and Framing the Civil War and the Lost Cause through Obituaries of Union and Confederate Generals, 1863-1916” by Thomas C. Terry of Utah State University and Donald L. Shaw of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, “Sumner, Brooks, and Buchanan: Paving the Way to 1860” by Dianne M. Bragg of the University of Alabama, “Traitors, Smugglers, Wayward Women and Individual Anguish: Newspaper Tales about the Old Capitol Prison” by Angie M. Zombek of St. Petersburg College, “‘Let Every Comrade Lend Us A Hand’: George E. Lemon, the National Tribune and the Civil War Veteran Press” by Crompton B. Burton of the University of Maine, and “The Presidency and the Press in 19th Century: From Lapdog to Watchdog” by Jack Breslin of Iona College.

The symposium will continue on Friday, November 6, in the Raccoon Mountain Room of UTC’s University Center at 9:00 a.m. with the following presentations: “Henry Clay is Dead: The End of Compromise in Antebellum America” by Joseph J. Cook of Saber & Scroll Journal of History, “John Brown is Not Insane: The Perception of John Brown in Newspapers After the Harpers Ferry Raid” by James Scythes of West Chester University of Pennsylvania, “The Rocky Mountains, Yosemite, and Other Natural Wonders: Landscape in Travel Correspondence of the Post-Civil-War Press” by Katrina J. Quinn of Slippery Rock University, “Changes in the News: Characterizing Immigration, 1850-1890” by Timothy L. Moran of Wayne State University, “Riot, Race, and Who's To Blame: Press Coverage of the 1885 Rock Springs Chinese Massacre” by Rich Shumate of the University

After lunch, Harold Holzer will present “Abraham Lincoln and the Power of the Press” via video conference in the Raccoon Mountain Room. The afternoon session will continue with four presentations: “President Lincoln’s Emerging Legacy: Assassination Coverage in the New York Times and Chicago Tribune” by Gregory A. Borchard of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, “‘My star is ever in the ascendant!’ Success and the Not-so-gentle Art of Self-promotion Among Civil War Union Political Generals” by Richard Junger of Western Michigan University, “Rossetti and ‘The Real Soldier’: Walt Whitman and American War News in Britain” by Sam Graber of Valparaiso University, and “Nikola Tesla: An Invisible Genius; A Revealing Look Through the Eyes of the Press About a Man We Know Nothing About” by Anet Frasto of Georgia State University.

The Friday afternoon session will conclude with a panel on “Adventure Journalists” moderated by Lee Jolliffe of Drake University and featuring presentations by Mary M. Cronin of New Mexico State University, Katrina J. Quinn of Slippery Rock University, Stephen Banning of Bradley University, Joe Marren of SUNY Buffalo State, James E. Mueller of the University of North Texas, and Paulette D. Kilmer of the University of Toledo.

The Friday dinner speaker will be David B. Sachsman of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, who will discuss “Yellow Journalism: Yesterday and Today.”

The conference will conclude Saturday morning, November 7, in the Chickamauga Room of UTC’s University Center. The session will begin at 9:00 a.m. and include: “Fear and Division: Northern and Southern Newspaper Coverage of the Harpers Ferry Raid, 1859-1860” by Laura Diaz-Zuniga of Georgia State University, “Union Raiders in Alabama: Newspaper Coverage of Federal Assaults in the Yellowhammer State, 1863-1865” by Donald Campbell of the University of Alabama, “(New) ‘Woman as Athlete?’ The Negotiation of the Sporting Woman in the Gilded Age Press” by Amber Roessner of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, “Why Women Dared to Make Journalism Their Calling” by Paulette Kilmer of the University of Toledo, “‘Running the Gauntlet’: Representations of Women in the Gilded Age Press” by Jennifer E. Moore of the University of Minnesota Duluth, and “‘Muscular Heathenism’ v. ‘Odor of Chivalry’: A Critical Cultural Comparative Analysis of Illustrated Newspaper Coverage of an 1860 Boxing Match” by Scott Peterson of Wright State University.

The symposium is sponsored by the West Chair of Excellence, the UTC communication and history departments, the Walter and Leona Schmitt Family Foundation Research Fund, and the Hazel Dicken-Garcia Fund for the Symposium, and because of this sponsorship all sessions are free and open to the public. For further information, contact David Sachsman, holder of the West Chair, 423-425-4219, david-sachsman@utc.edu.