

# Journalism in the 19th Century

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# Change as a Feature

- Change was a constant in 19th-century journalism
  - Rapid economic, social, and technological change
  - By start of century, more than 200 newspapers in U.S.
- Daily newspapers would grow even more common; news reporting more systematic
  - Newspapers would shift from being **sites of political debate** and toward **commercially driven enterprises**

# The Penny Press

- By 1830s, newspapers had become cheaper and gained even wider circulation under the **Penny Press**
  - Literacy rates rose, resulting in larger audiences
  - Disposable income rose, resulting in more customers
  - High-speed steam presses developed, resulting in faster and cheaper production
- Developments created more commercial options and further commodified news in the U.S. within a capitalist framework



# Growing Influence

## DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA.

BY  
ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE.

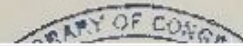
TRANSLATED BY  
HENRY REEVE, Esq.

A NEW EDITION,

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTICE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



## FREEDOM'S JOURNAL.

"RIGHTOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION"

CORNISH & RUSHWURM,  
Editors & Proprietors.

NEW-YORK, FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 1827.

VOL. I. NO. 11.

### TO OUR PATRONS.

IN presenting our first number to our Patrons, we feel all the diffidence of persons entering upon a new and untried line of business. But a moment's reflection upon the noble objects, which we have in view by the publication of this Journal; the expediency of its appearance at this time, when so many schemes are in action concerning our people—encourage us to come boldly before an enlightened public. For we believe, that a paper devoted to the dissemination of useful knowledge among our brethren, and to their moral and religious improvement, must meet with the cordial approbation of every friend to humanity.

The peculiarities of this Journal, render it important that we should advertise to the world the motives by which we are actuated, and the objects which we contemplate.

We wish to plead for our cause. Too long has the publick been deceived by misrepresentations in things which concern us dearly, though in the estimation of some more trifles; for though there are many in society who exercise towards us benevolent feelings; still (with sorrow we confess it) there are others who make it their business to enlarge upon the least trifle, which tends to the discredit of any person of colour; and professions are thus made and denials ever which lead for the misconduct of the guilty one.

We are aware that there are many instances of vice among us, but we know that it is because we are ignorant of its subjects to be virtuous; many instances of poverty, because no sufficient efforts are made to relieve the contracted by slavery, and deprived of early education have been made, to teach them how to husband their hard earnings, and to secure to themselves comfort.

Education being an object of the highest importance to the welfare of society, we shall endeavour to present just and adequate views of it, and to urge upon our brethren the necessity and expediency of training their children, while young, to habits of industry, and thus forming them for becoming useful members of society. It is surely time that we should awake from this lethargy of years, and make a concentrated effort for the education of our youth. We form a spoke in the human wheel, and it is necessary that we should understand our yerdence on the different parts, and their position, in order to perform our part with propriety.

Though not desirous of dictating, we shall feel it our incumbent duty to dwell occasionally upon the general principles and rules of economy. The world has grown too enlightened, to estimate any man's character by his personal appearance. Though all men acknowledge the excellency of Franklin's maxims, yet comparatively few practise upon them. We may deplore when it is too late, the neglect of these self-evident truths, but it is never too late to amend. One will be the task of admonishing our brethren on these points. The civil rights of a people being of the greatest value, it shall ever be our duty to

works of trivial importance, we shall consider it a part of our duty to recommend to our young readers, such authors as will not only enlarge their stock of useful knowledge, but such as will also serve to stimulate them to higher attainments in science.

We trust also, that through the columns of the FREEDOM'S JOURNAL, many practical pieces, having for their basis, the improvement of our brethren, will be presented to them, from the pens of many of our respected friends, who have kindly promised their assistance.

It is our earnest wish to make our Journal a medium of intercourse between our brethren in the different states of this great confederacy; that through its columns an expression of our sentiments, on many interesting subjects which concern us, may be offered to the publick; that plans which apparently are beneficial may be candidly discussed and properly weighed; if worthy, receive our cordial approbation; if not, our marked disapprobation.

Useful knowledge of every kind, and every thing that relates to Africa, shall find a ready admission into our columns; and as that vast continent becomes daily more known, we trust that many things will come to light, proving that the natives of it are neither so ignorant nor stupid as they have generally been supposed to be.

And while these important subjects shall occupy the columns of the FREEDOM'S JOURNAL, we shall not be forgetful of our brethren who are still in the iron-fetters of bondage. They are our kindred by all the ties of nature; and though but little can be effected by us, still let our sympathies be poured forth, and our prayers in their behalf, ascend to Him who is able to succour them.

From the press and the pulpit we have suffered much by being incorrectly represented. Men, whom we equally love and admire have not hesitated to represent us disadvantageously, without becoming personally acquainted with the true state of things, nor discerning between virtue and vice among us. The virtuous part of our people feel themselves sorely aggrieved under the existing state of things—they are not appreciated.

Our vices and our degradations are ever arrayed against us, but our virtues are passed by unnoticed. And what is still more lamentable, our friends, to whom we concede all the principles of humanity and religion, from these very causes seem to have fallen into the current of popular feeling and are imperceptibly floating on the stream—actually living in the practice of prejudice, while they abjure it in theory, and feel it not in their hearts. Is it not very desirable that such should know more of our actual condition, and of our efforts and feelings; that in forming or advocating plans for our amelioration, they may do it more understandingly? In the spirit of candor and humility we intend by a simple representation of facts to lay our case before the publick, with a view to arrest the progress of prejudice, and to shield ourselves against the consequent evils. We wish to conciliate all and to irritate none, yet we must be firm and un-

narrative which they have published; the establishment of the republic of Hayti after years of sanguinary warfare; its subsequent progress in all the arts of civilization; and the advancement of liberal ideas in South America, where despotism has given place to free governments, and where many of our brethren have filled important civil and military stations, prove the contrary.

The interesting fact that there are six hundred thousand free persons of colour, one half of whom might peruse, and the whole be benefited by the publication of the Journal; that his publication, as yet, has been devoted exclusively to their improvement—that many selections from approved standard authors, which are within the reach of few, may occasionally be made—and more important still, that this large body of our citizens have no public channel—all serve to prove the real necessity, at present, for the appearance of the FREEDOM'S JOURNAL.

It shall ever be our desire so to conduct the editorial department of our paper as to give offence to none of our patrons; as nothing is farther from us than to make it the advocate of any partial view, either in politics or religion. What few days we can number, have been devoted to the improvement of our brethren; and it is our earnest wish that the remainder may be spent in the same laudable service.

In conclusion, whatever concerns us as a people, will ever find a ready admission into the FREEDOM'S JOURNAL, interwoven with all the principal news of the day.

And while every thing in our power shall be performed to support the director of our Journal, we would respectfully invite our numerous friends to assist by their communications, and our coloured brethren to strengthen our hands by their subscriptions, as our labour is one of common cause, and worthy of their consideration and support. And we do most earnestly solicit the latter, that if at any time we should seem to be colour, or too pointed in the imputation of any important lesson, they will remember, that they are equally interested in the cause in which we are engaged, and attribute our zeal to the peculiarities of our situation, and our earnest eagerness in their well-being.

THE EDITORS.

From the Liverpool Mercury.  
MEMOIRS OF CAPT. PAUL CUFFEE.

On the first of the present month of August, 1811, a vessel arrived at Liverpool, with a cargo from Sierra Leone; the owner, master, mate, and whole crew of which are free blacks. The master, who is also owner, is the son of an American ssn, and is said to be very well skilled both in trade and navigation, as well as to be of a very pious and moral character. It must have been a strange and an enlightening spectacle to see this free and enlightened African, entering as an independent trader, with his black crew into that port, which was so lately the scene of the slave trade.—Edinburgh Review for August, 1811.

We are happy in having an opportunity of commencing the above account, and at the same time of laying before our readers an authentic

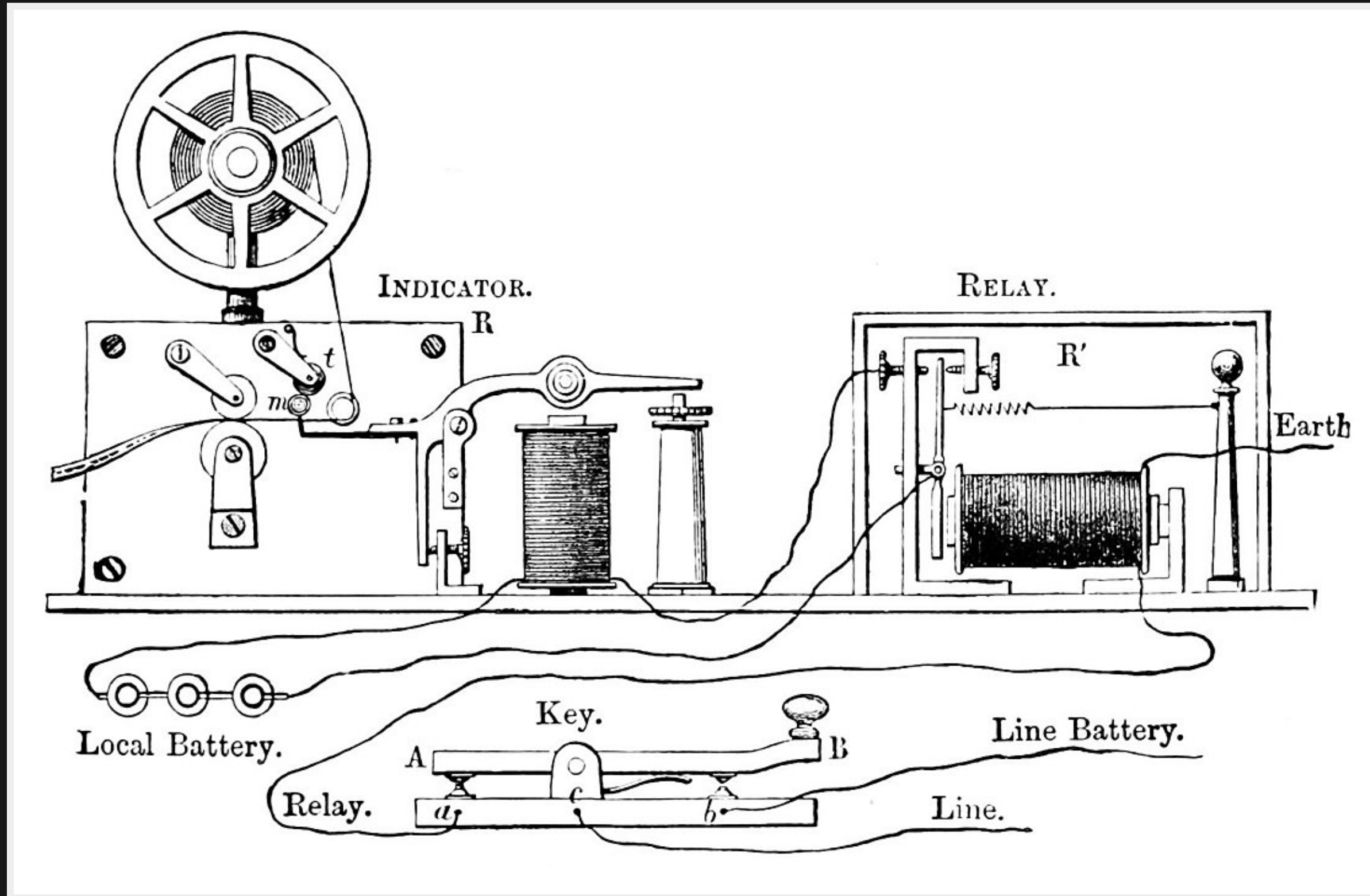
of his countrymen he possessed a mind superior to his condition; although he was diligent in the business of his master, as faithful to his interest, yet by great industry and economy he was enabled to purchase a personal liberty. At the time the remains several Indian tribes, who originally possessed the right of soil, resided in Massachusetts; Coffee became acquainted with a woman descended from one of those tribes, named Red Moccas, and married her. He continued habits of industry and frugality, and soon afterwards purchased a farm of 100 acres at a point in Massachusetts.

Coffee and Red had a family of ten children. The three eldest sons, David, Jonathan, and John, are farmers in the neighborhood of West Point; filling respectable situations in society, and endowed with good intellectual capacities. They are all married and have families to whom they are giving good educations. Of six daughters five are respectively married, while two remain single. Paul was born on the island of Cutcher's Key, one of the Elizabeth Islands, near New Bedford, in the year 1750—when he was about fourteen years of age, his father die leaving a considerable property in land, by which being at that time unproductive, afforded but little provision for his numerous family, and thus the care of supporting his mother and sisters devolved upon his brothers at himself. At this time Paul conceived the commerce furnished to industry more ample rewards than agriculture, and he was convinced that he possessed qualities which in their proper culture, would enable him to pursue commercial employments with prospect of success—he therefore entered at the age of sixteen, as a common hand on board of a vessel destined to the bay of Mexico, on a whaling voyage. His second voyage was to the West Indies, but on his third he was captured by a British ship during the American war, about the year 1770—after a short detention as a prisoner, at New-York, he was permitted to return home to Westport, who owing to the unfortunate continuance of his ill-luck he spent about two years in his agricultural pursuits. During this interval Paul and his brother John Cuffee, were called by the collector of the district, in which they resided, for the payment of a personal tax.

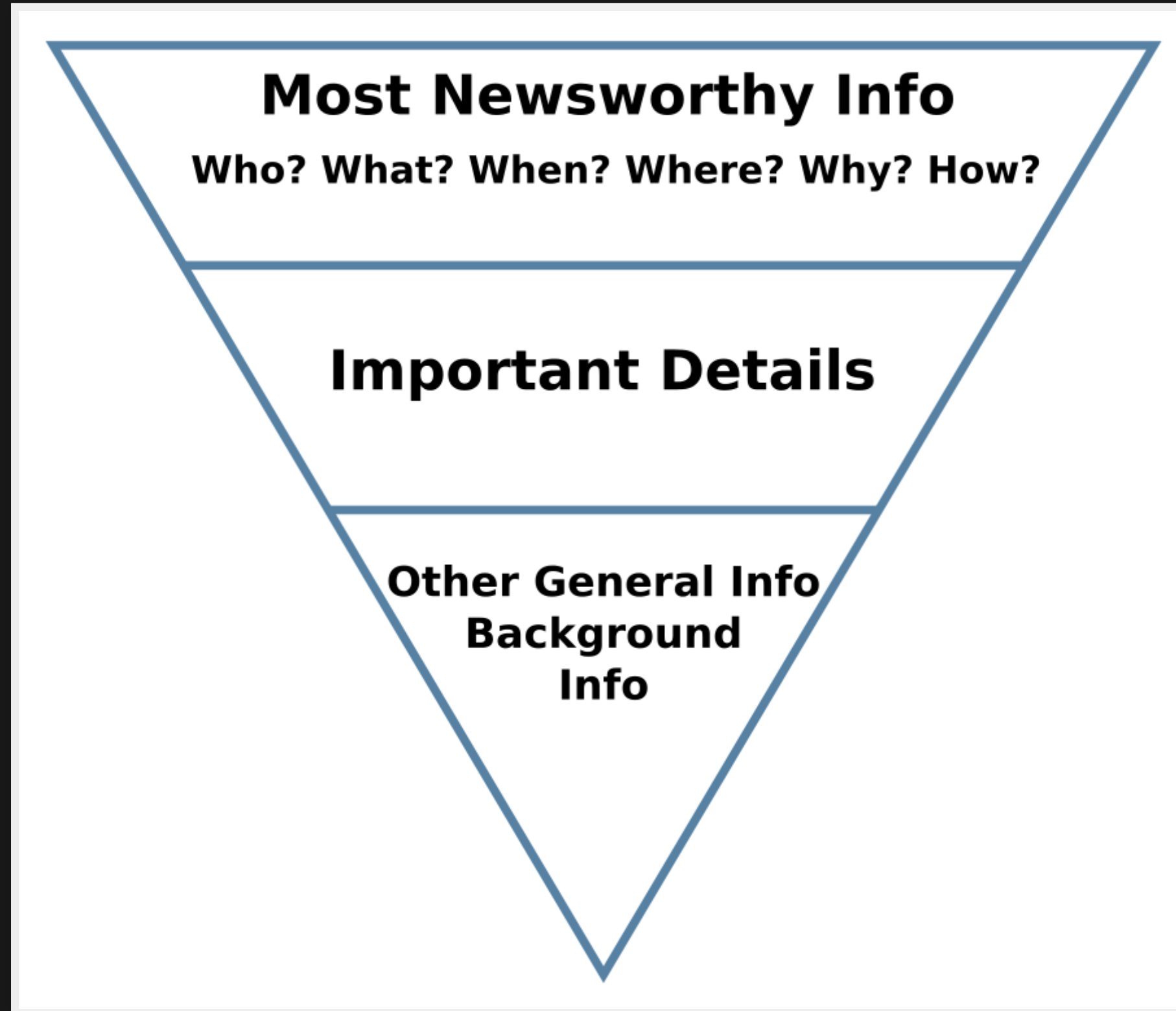
It appeared to them, that by the laws and constitution of Massachusetts, taxation and the whole rights of citizenship were united; the laws demanded of them the payment of the personal taxes, the same laws must necessarily and constitutionally invest them with the right of representing and being represented in the state legislature. But they had never been considered as entitled to the privilege of voting at election, nor of being elected to places of trust and honor. Under these circumstances they refused payment of the demands. The collector resorted to the force of the laws, and after many delays and detentions, Paul and his brother refused to pay the demands; but they resolved, if it were possible to obtain the rights which they believed to be connected with taxation. They presented a respectful petition to the state legislature, from some individuals if not with a very almost indignant opposition. A considerable majority was, however, favorable to their object. They perceived the propriety and justice of the petition, and with an honorable magnanimity, in defiance of the prejudice of the times, they passed a law rendering all free persons of color liable to taxation according to the established rate, for white men, and granting them all the privileges belonging to the other citizens. This was an equally honorable to the petitioners and the legislature—a day which ought to be gratefully remembered by every person of color within the boundaries of Massachusetts, as the names of John and Paul Cuffee, shall always be united with its recollection.



# The Telegraph and News



# The Inverted Pyramid



# A More Commercialized Press

- Growing demand in U.S. for entertainment, crime stories, and business news
- Increased competition also created new pressures for journalists to produce news quickly, accurately, and reliably
- Newspaper magnates also emerged during this period (some hands-on, others hands-off)
  - E. W. Scripps
  - William Randolph Hearst
  - Joseph Pulitzer



# Yellow Journalism

WORLD'S LARGEST PAPER, 1882. **863,956** WORLDS CIRCULATED YESTERDAY. **The**  **World.** **863,956** WORLDS CIRCULATED YESTERDAY. WOL. XXXVIII, NO. 11,111. NEW YORK, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1904. PRICE 10 CENTS.

## MAINE EXPLOSION CAUSED BY BOMB OR TORPEDO?

Capt. Sigsbee and Consul-General Lee Are in Doubt--The World Has Sent a Special Tug, With Submarine Divers, to Havana to Find Out--Lee Asks for an Immediate Court of Inquiry--Capt. Sigsbee's Suspicions.

CAPT. SIGSBEE, IN A SUPPRESSED DESPATCH TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, SAYS THE ACCIDENT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY AN ENEMY.

Dr. E. C. Pendleton, Just Arrived from Havana, Says He Overheard Talk There of a Plot to Blow Up the Ship--Capt Zalinski, the Dynamite Expert, and Other Experts Report to The World that the Wreck Was Not Accidental--Washington Officials Ready for Vigorous Action if Spanish Responsibility Can Be Shown--Divers to Be Sent Down to Make Careful Examinations.



Source



# Early Investigative Journalism



Source

# Key Takeaways

- Higher literacy rates, lower product costs, and more efficient printing presses helped popularize mass circulation newspapers by 1930s
- The telegraph changed the temporal and spatial nature of journalism, allowing journalism to be quickly transmitted from far-away places
- The mid- to late-1800s saw the development of an even more commercialized news industry, with powerful newspaper magnates and highly sensationalized journalism later emerging