

New Podcast Episode Explores Black Journalists and Fight for Racial Justice

The line between commercial and alternative newspapers quickly became murky in the history of the Black press as Black journalists tried to navigate reporting objectively while exposing the truth about being Black in America.

The latest episode of the Journalism History podcast features Fred Carroll, a lecturer in the Department of History and Philosophy at Kennesaw State University in Georgia, discussing his recent research about the Black press role and evolution throughout history.

The Black press hit its peak between the 1940s and the 1950s but its influence began earlier. In the 1920s, journalists like W.E.B Du Bois wrote for “The Crisis” about the achievements of Black Americans. This sensationalized writing quickly changed as World War II approached and Black journalists had to choose between supporting the war or continuing the fight against segregation and racism in America.

“And so they’re writing stories that humanize racism, that personalize it so that what could be seen as just an unlimited parade of racial wrong becomes a story that says, ‘Here’s a person’s life that was impacted, and this is what happened, and this is how their people are responding,’” said Fred Carroll, author “Race News: Black Journalists and the Fight for Racial Justice in the Twentieth Century.”

Carroll also covers how the Black Panther and Muhammad Speaks helped recast the alternative Black press when progressive influences were being removed from the news pages and the people’s ideas were marginalized and suppressed.

“Fred shares the history of the “Amsterdam News” and other newspapers across the country that gave a voice to underrepresented communities and changed perceptions about race in America,” said Nick Hirshon, the host of the episode.

Journalism History is a podcast that rips out the pages of your history books to reexamine the stories you thought you knew and the ones you were never told. Hosted by three professional media historians and listened to in 96 countries, Journalism History is available wherever you find podcasts. Transcripts are available at <https://journalism-history.org/podcast>.