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- 2001 Aleen J. Ratzlaff, "Black Press Pioneers in Kansas: Connecting and Extending Communities in Three Geographic Sections, 1878-1900"; Director: Bernell E. Tripp, University of Florida
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2003 MARGARET A. BLANCHARD

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION AWARD

FIRST PLACE AWARD

Mark Feldstein, "Watergate's Forgotten Investigative Reporter:
The Battle Between Columnist Jack Anderson and President Richard Nixon."
Director: Margaret A. Blanchard, University of North Carolina

HONORABLE MENTION AWARDS

Naeemah Clark, "These Dames are Bananas:
The History of Action for Children's Television, 1969-1992"
Director: Bernell E. Tripp, University of Florida

Margot Opdycke Lamme, "The Campaign Against the Second Edition of Hell:
An Examination of the Messages and Methods of the Anti-Saloon League of
America Through a Framework of Public Relations History, 1893-1933"
Director: Lori M. McKinnon, University of Alabama

Vanessa Murphree, "The Selling of Civil Rights: The Student Nonviolent
Coordinating Committee and the Use of Public Relations, 1960-1968"
Director: David R. Davies, University of Southern Mississippi

ABSTRACTS

Mark Feldstein, "Watergate's Forgotten Investigative Reporter: The Battle Between Columnist Jack Anderson and President Richard Nixon."

This dissertation describes and analyzes the Watergate scandal's "forgotten" investigative reporter, syndicated columnist Jack Anderson. While other journalists and the media often have been credited for bringing down President Richard Nixon, Anderson arguably did more than any other reporter to uncover Watergate in its broadest sense: the political abuse of power by the Nixon White House that preceded as well as followed the Watergate break-in. From the beginning of his rise to national prominence, Nixon believed that the press was out to get him, and in Anderson he found confirmation for his deepest fears. The columnist had a hand in virtually every slash-and-burn attack on Nixon both before and after he entered the White House. In turn, the president personally ordered aides to smear Anderson as a homosexual, and his aides unleashed illegal CIA and FBI spying on the muckraker and even plotted to assassinate him. In this sense, Anderson was the authentic embodiment of the Watergate folklore of a lonely reporter who risked genuine peril to uncover wrongdoing at the highest levels of government. Although this media mythology was exaggerated, it had deep roots in the American muckraking tradition and

became an important part of Watergate's historical legacy, one that would cast a shadow over politics and the press long after Nixon's resignation. Using oral history interviews and primary research materials from a variety of archival collections, the author uses Anderson as a case study to examine the columnist's true role, which, like that of journalism as a whole, was an amalgam of Watergate folklore: aggressor and victim, hero and villain, catalyst and bystander.

Naeemah Clark, "These Dames are Bananas: The History of Action for Children's Television, 1969-1992"

This dissertation uses oral history, archival research, and popular and trade publications from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s to tell a story about Action for Children's Television (ACT). An advocacy group started by mothers in Newton, Massachusetts, ACT changed the way the broadcast industry and the federal government approached programming for children. This dissertation is a historical analysis of ACT, its dynamic leadership, and its evolving agenda toward the industry and its regulators. ACT was organized to reduce commercial content and increase educational substance on children's television. The founders laid the groundwork for children's television by presenting their case to the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, the Consumer Safety Product Commission, the United States Congress, and U.S. presidents from Nixon to Clinton. Further, ACT forced broadcasters and advertisers to alter their work as a reaction to the threat of impending regulation. Policy-makers credit ACT with shaping present-day children's television programming and advertising regulations. These regulations, found in the Children's Television Act of 1990, require broadcasters to serve the information and education needs of children and limit commercial content on programs specifically designed for a child audience. Although the group's leadership changed over time, the organization always maintained the aims it set in the first few months of existence. With these consistent goals, ACT exemplifies the impact advocacy can have on government and the television industry.

Margot Opdycke Lamme, "The Campaign Against the Second Edition of Hell: An Examination of the Messages and Methods of the Anti-Saloon League of America Through a Framework of Public Relations History, 1893-1933"

The Anti-Saloon League of America (ASLA) was a church-based social reform movement that became nationally prominent during its drive toward Prohibition between 1893 and 1933. The ASLA was a mid-western organization that established its messages and methods long before public relations pioneers such as New York-based Edward Bernays and John Hill hung out their shingles. The purpose of this dissertation is to expand the current literature of public relations history by examining these efforts, many of which conformed to what is considered today to be modern public relations principles. Although scholars have studied the ASLA as a political pressure group and in the broader context of the Progressive Movement, the League's communication efforts have not been examined to determine whether they reflected the Movement's use of "moral suasion to excellent effect." Thus, to gain insight into its communications and how external supporters and critics perceived them, this study examines communication artifacts produced by the League and its leadership over forty years as well as contemporary news articles, brewer publications, and congressional investigative records. Modern public relations is often depicted as a descendent of press agency and publicity that rose with American business in the World War I era. This dissertation, however, focuses on strategies and tactics rather than terminology. As a result, it provides evidence that "modern" public relations existed well before World War I.

Vanessa Murphree, "The Selling of Civil Rights: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Use of Public Relations, 1960-1968"

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) formed in 1960 to encourage one of the most important movements in American history - civil rights. Initially, the group was made of young men and women who possessed an intense desire to liberate, educate, and empower Southern blacks. With a tremendous human rights mission facing them, the founding SNCC members included communication and publicity as part of their initial purpose. The communications section and the committee's newsletter, The Student Voice, were two of the first SNCC programs. These coordinating activities expanded into a revitalization of the student movement. And all the while, the initial communication efforts served as a foundational agent for propelling civil rights. This paper examines SNCC's public relations activities throughout the organization's existence, which represent a determining and essential component American public relations historiography. The organization combined community organizing with the use of traditional communications and public relations tactics and strategies to change the racial character of the country and to empower black Americans. SNCC's relatively short life propelled extraordinary change. Beginning with four North Carolina students sitting in at a Woolworth's lunch counter in 196 and ending with H. Rap Brown's calls for violence against the county, the organization used both public relations and communications strategies to help erase the fear and terror that had been an undeniable element in the lives of American blacks.