The AJHA Margaret A. Blanchard Doctoral Dissertation Prize, established in 1997 and named in 2003, is awarded annually for the best doctoral dissertation on media history. Named in honor of the late Professor Margaret A. Blanchard of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill—superb scholar and the source of guidance and inspiration for generations of doctoral students of journalism history—the prize is accompanied by an honorarium of five hundred dollars. A two-hundred-dollar honorarium is awarded to each honorable mention.

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Goaded provides insight into changes American celebrity culture have argued, “celebrity” is a journalistic invention developed in press reporting as well as with uncovering those individuals who were considered “news-

African Americans their basic civil rights, Matthews was posing a question about the nature of journalism itself, a question that also guides this inquiry into Black press content: What does an

In the June 27, 1931 edition of the Baltimore Afro-American, one of the leading Black press and Critical Citizenship in Early Twentieth Century America, 1895-1935”; Director: Carolyn Kitch, Temple University

Sid Bedingfield, “Beating Down the Fear: The Civil Sphere and Political Change in South Carolina, 1940-1962”
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This dissertation contends that print culture—newspapers in particular—played a decisive role in promoting black political activism and shaping the white response to it during the middle of the twentieth century. Focusing on South Carolina, this study is the first to use civil sphere theory and frame analysis together to explore the role of cultural expression in the political struggle over black equality in the years immediately before and after World War II. It shows how African-American editors and other activists made strategic use of the society’s symbolic codes concerning justice, freedom, and liberty to elicit empathy from potential allies and break down opposition to political and social acceptance. At the same time, this study examines the equally powerful discourse used by some whites to limit black gains and help launch the modern conservative movement in the South. By placing cultural symbolism and interpretive communication at the heart of civic life, this study emphasizes the inextricable link between mass media, public opinion, and formal political power. In doing so, it raises new questions about the received historical narrative of a fully emerged professionalized, independent, and nonpartisan daily press in the United States by the second half of the twentieth century.

This dissertation tells the history of [MORE], a journalism review founded and run by a group of journalists who found themselves constrained by the professional norms of their employers and their profession. It tells a part of the story of the organized press in America in the 1970s, and its interactions with that decade’s cultural convulsions. It tells [MORE]’s story through the use of the magazine itself as primary text; oral history interviews with surviving editors, contributors and participants in the journalism review’s six “Counter-Conventions”; primary documents, including archival material from the organization and individuals involved with [MORE]; and audio recordings. A body of secondary literature including news reports and academic studies of press criticism and the history of the 1970s supplements these. The study of [MORE] provides insight into changes in journalistic professionalism in the 1970s; it investigates the role of press criticism in the functioning of the press and the effects that press criticism has on mainstream publications; it traces some of the roots of the professional press’s increasing self-awareness in response to anti-intellectualism among its members; and, using the ideas of these self-aware journalists as a guide, it begins to outline the intellectual history of the 1970s.

This dissertation examines 376 English almanacs printed from 1595 to 1640 for the extent to which they provided basic, everyday information that ordinary people sought to increase their agency and place in the world. These almanacs, appearing annually, had highly conventional content features repeated in many different editions. Analysis of twenty of these components shows patterns that reveal the information needs and appetites of many people who may not have been represented in the written record. Because these almanacs were inexpensive and printed in large numbers, they are estimated to have been in one of every three households in England in this period, making them the most common print product of the day. That Stationers’ Company monopoly on printing almanacs 1603-1625 strengthened the relationship between almanacs and public appetite; the trade was critical to company profitability. The almanac component features analyzed show a consistent genre-wide pattern of information provision as individual almanac brands came and went 1595-1640. This analysis explicates the value of these component features to the almanacs’ users and contends it enhanced the agency of the ordinary people who played a significant role in the civil wars period (1641-60). The almanacs, establishing regular, expectable information, enabled and prepared ordinary people in England to be receptive to what came to be called journalism.