



The African American Newspaper: Voice of Freedom (Medill School of Journalism Visions of the American Press)

Patrick S. Washburn

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Winner, 2007 Tankard Award

In March of 1827 the nation's first black newspaper appeared in New York City--to counter attacks on blacks by the city's other papers. From this signal event, *The African American Newspaper* traces the evolution of the black newspaper--and its ultimate decline--for more than 160 years until the end of the twentieth century.

The book chronicles the growth of the black press into a powerful and effective national voice for African Americans during the period from 1910 to 1950--a period that proved critical to the formation and gathering strength of the civil rights movement that emerged so forcefully in the following decades. In particular, author Patrick S. Washburn explores how the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender* led the way as the two most influential black newspapers in U.S. history, effectively setting the stage for the civil rights movement's successes. Washburn also examines the numerous reasons for the enormous decline of black newspapers in influence and circulation in the decades immediately following World War II. His book documents as never before how the press's singular accomplishments provide a unique record of all areas of black history and a significant and shaping affect on the black experience in America.

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