

Proceedings Submission for Hawaii International Conference on Social Sciences

1. Banner Journalists: Women of the American Press--Challenges and Impacts
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6. Newswoman from Nellie Bly to Barbara Walters have faced insurmountable odds in obtaining a place in the American press. It also would take some 300 years to find their place in the nation's mainstream newsrooms. Take Jose Glover of Cambridge, Mass., the first woman to own a printing press in colonial America. Though she was in operation by 1638, it would not be until World War II when America's female reporters would show their stuff. Today's women who cover news 24 hours a day and are preparing for the newest Middle East intervention must bow to their World War II predecessors, some 127 accredited American female war correspondents. Perhaps May Craig, political reporter turned war correspondent, said it best when she boosted at 1944 Women's National Press Club meeting, "The war has given women a chance to show what they can do in the news world, and they have done well." And well they did. Score one for Cosmopolitan's Dorothy Thompson, who in 1931 interviewed up-and-coming Adolph Hitler. Her reports of the fanatic and his National Socialist to world peace were so effective that she was asked to leave Germany when the Furher was appointed chancellor in 1933. She led the way for Margaret Bourke-White, Life's first photojournalist; Marguerite Higgins, the New York Herald Tribune reporter who entered Berlin with allied troops and reported Hitler's demise; and Georgette "Dickey" Chapelle, Look magazine's pilot and photojournalist who not only covered World War II and Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba, but she was on the front lines in Algeria, Lebanon, and Korea before being killed in a mine explosion covering the Vietnam War. They opened the doors for Alice Allison Dunnigan, the first female African American reporter to cover the White House and Congress, Helen Thomas, Jessica Savitch, and Barbara Walters.