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McNeil, Mary Llewellyn. *Century's Witness: The Extraordinary Life of Journalist Wallace Carroll*. Buena Vista, VA: Whaler Books, 2022, 388 pp., \$22.95 (Paperback). Reviewed by Kaylene Armstrong, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, kdarmstrong@nwsu.edu.

Most people today have probably never heard of journalist Wallace Carroll, whose life spanned most of the 20th century. But if they were alive during World War II, they no doubt read many of his stories produced for United Press that appeared in newspapers all over the country. Carroll found himself in the unique position of being in some key places during the war, which enabled him to report firsthand experiences such as the German bombing campaign of London where he was stationed with his wife. Later he was one of the first group of foreign correspondents allowed to report from the Russian front. He went on to work in public relations with the Office of War Information, write books, have a respected career as a daily newspaper editor and bureau deputy chief, and later teach at the university level.

This book may focus on Carroll (born in 1906), but the reader gets insights into the lives of almost everyone with whom Carroll associated, from his journalism professor at Marquette University to the various government officials he cultivated as sources for stories and other journalists with whom he worked. One such journalist was Scotty Reston, who established the U.S. Office of War Information during World War II and pulled Carroll into public relations work with that office for about three years. McNeil doesn't just mention these people; she provides excellent context, sometimes giving short life or work histories to help the reader understand the importance of these individuals.

McNeil provides the same context with various events Carroll covered as a foreign correspondent, even before the war began. This context helps the reader understand, for instance, the role that the Stavisky Scandal had in bringing down the socialist government of France and the impetus for the major demonstration, which Carroll reported, that occurred after Stavisky's death. Later, the reader stands with

Carroll on the roof in London while the German bombs fall during one of the worst air raids and then walks with Prime Minister Winston Churchill the next day as he surveys the damage. It is equally enthralling to learn about the day-to-day life of a journalist trying to survive during the war, working 16-hour days and still taking his turn on the roof as part of the apartment building fire brigade.

Carroll also needs to take his rightful place as one of the journalists who pointed out the dangers of pure objectivity in news writing. McNeil explores how he developed the "tyranny of objectivity" theory, which he presented in a 1955 *Nieman* paper (210). He said trying to be strictly objective in reporting using only facts leads to half-truths. To combat this, Carroll said reporters have a responsibility to dig deeper than just facts and provide background, interpretation, and analysis. He maintained that journalists being objective and not digging deeper into what officials said led to the rise of Senator McCarthy's power. This example supports McNeil's position that Carroll was the epitome of a moral journalist who cherished an independent press and practiced what he preached to those who worked with and for him throughout his career.

Carroll spent more than 15 years in Europe, most of it as a correspondent or bureau chief. He returned to the United States and took the helm of the *Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel* on two separate occasions for about 17 years and worked eight years with the *New York Times* Washington Bureau. He ended his career by teaching at Wake Forest University for 10 years, retiring in 1984. He died in 2002.

Those who read other media history books may be confused by McNeil's citation style, which is unconventional and not usually used in media history. No citations appear throughout the chapters, yet unnumbered endnotes do appear at the end of the book. They are listed only by page number, followed

by a couple of bold-faced words that one must search for throughout the page to find the statement to which it refers. However, this book, for its content, would be

an appropriate addition to a reading list for any media history class or general American history class.