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Finneman, Teri, and Erika Pribanic-Smith, eds., with Cami Koons and Bella Koscal, 2023. *Social Justice, Activism and Diversity in U.S. Media History*. New York: Routledge, 234 pp., \$48.95 (paperback). ISBN 9781032266558. Reviewed by Pam Parry, professor, Department of Mass Media, Southeast Missouri State University.

Inspiring students to embrace media history requires strategy, creativity, and passion. Teri Finneman and Erika Pribanic-Smith utilized this recipe in their new book, *Social Justice, Activism and Diversity in U.S. Media History*.

Their work presents media history to Generation Z students in a new way: “This book aims for a more inclusive and interactive approach to historical storytelling, bringing in stories of disability and mental health, for example, which are far too often neglected” (1). Too much history in this field focuses on men as heroes, and this book adds to the historiography, including sections on generations, race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality, disability/mental health, religion, and class.

The edited volume has twenty-two short chapters with twenty-three authors whose chapters have been adapted with permission from other sources, such as *Journalism History*, the nation’s oldest peer-reviewed journal on the subject. The editors execute this book well, including the selected pieces and the corresponding authors. A quick examination of the Table of Contents reveals a veritable who’s who among media historians, with some of the best scholars in the field contributing chapters. Finneman and Pribanic-Smith selected the articles through the lens of intersectionality and then edited them to provide a more realistic view of media history.

The editors’ creativity is reflected in their use of special features. For instance, a QR code at the end of chapters allows students to listen to audio files/podcasts on the same topic. So, students can read the brief chapter and then

hear an expert expound on the material. The chapters also feature “Suggested Activities” and “Additional Readings.” The activities are written for the student, but faculty could easily adopt these as activities on their Canvas/Blackboard pages as forums or other assignments. The activities are thought-provoking, relevant, and engaging.

For example, one activity in Chapter 2 prods students to think about the influencers they “follow who are your age” and compare them to women from the 1930s who were represented in the chapter (15). This comparison forces them to see the media they know today and think about their counterparts from a different era. These questions help students see history differently, which is the point of the book. Even the “Additional Readings” section is novel in that the chapters provide just a couple of suggestions, rather than the exhaustive list provided in many books. Students who grow curious from the podcast and activities might pursue the few books listed at the end of each chapter. But it does not overload them with a daunting list that might cause them to skip over other sources. In other words, the book beautifully anticipates how Gen Z students think and work.

Another nod to this generation of students is its visual nature, with the book sporting eighteen photos or figures in 220 pages. Students today like books with photos, as they help bring history to life. In fact, the genius behind the book seems to be that the editors understand their audience, and they hit their mark.

One reason the book achieves its goals is the chemistry between the two editors who are

friends and frequent collaborators on projects. Finneman and Pribanic-Smith are leaders in the AEJMC History Division and the American Journalism Historians Association, and the fact they have worked together so long and so well accounts for why the book works.

This new volume expands the historiography to include oft-ignored groups, while making the material more accessible through digestible chapters, interactive features, and further readings to provide a deeper, richer framework. Additionally, the editors brought together a diverse group of authors to talk about a diverse number of topics, so the structure of the book itself underscores the unusual lens through which Gen Z students would seek out media history.

This title is significant because it fills several gaps left in the historiography, and it does so in a way that appeals to Gen Z students. It provides college professors with activities and readings that would enrich their classrooms and/or course pages; it would fit several classes

from Media History, Media Diversity, Mass Media & Society, and Social Justice to name a few. It would be appropriate for both graduate and undergraduate students.

In short, educators who read this book will wish they had written it, or at the very least, they may consider adopting it for their classes. If they do, their students (and maybe the field of media history) will be the better for it.