

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Forgotten Histories: Another Road Not Taken—The Charles Merriam-Walter Lippmann Correspondence

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As part of the recent recovery of forgotten histories of early media research in the United States, this article examines a correspondence between Chicago political scientist and Social Science Research Council (SSRC) founder, Charles E. Merriam, and journalist Walter Lippmann. The correspondence indicates that media and communication research was a significant constituent of Merriam's original vision for the SSRC. The 1921–1927 correspondence describes this vision; it also suggests that the formative idea for the SSRC was profoundly influenced by Lippmann's Public Opinion (1922), especially the final chapter on "Organized Intelligence."

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Disciplinary origin stories matter: They are “the myths we live by,” whether we care about history or not (Midgley, 2003). They define a field's boundaries, legitimate its authority, identify its problems, and influence its paradigmatic assumptions. They provide points of departure for theory and method. Exploring alternative roads not taken may therefore open up new vistas for thinking about media and communication.

The history of media research has recently become a site of controversy and contest, as widely accepted origin stories of the field's development are subjected to the methods of critical social science historiography (Pooley & Park, 2008). Most famously, Wilbur Schramm's (1954) “four founders” narrative, which proved so useful in establishing institutional footholds for communication research in U.S. universities after World War II, is now understood for what it was: A strategic vision for developing media research rather than a faithful rendering of its history. Indeed, Schramm himself is now widely regarded as the founder of the field: The institution builder responsible for establishing the first graduate departments in mass communication research at Iowa and Illinois, who later directed Stanford's Institute for Communication Research (Rogers, 1994; Schramm, 1997).

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Archival evidence indicates that university-supported mass communication research began much earlier than is generally assumed and that its genealogy is far more diverse than the tale of the four founding fathers suggests (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2004). Karin Wahl-Jorgensen argues persuasively that earlier communication research, which does not fit into the established narrative of the field's origins, has been largely forgotten. She supports her claim by recovering and examining one branch of that genealogy: Early but short-lived communication programs that were fostered by interdisciplinary committees at the University of Chicago, including the Committee on Communication and Public Opinion, 1942–1945, and the Committee on Communication, 1947–1960. Wahl-Jorgensen's rich account of the communication committees leads her to conclude that "it is important to examine a wide array of the roots of communication study" (p. 560).

A number of those roots are located in Chicago. Even one of Schramm's four founders, Harold Lasswell, is part of the Chicago story. Lasswell, who received a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, was hired by its political science department in 1927, the same year his book, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, was published. Drawing upon different Chicago roots, Daniel J. Czitrom (1982) and James W. Carey (1989) provide accounts of the early communication-related theories of University of Chicago scholars, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, and Robert Park. Carey frames his cultural or "ritual" interpretation of this Chicago story as a promising road not taken by mainstream communication research.

The Chicago story that I tell here represents yet another road not taken by communication research. It casts Lasswell's dissertation advisor, Charles E. Merriam (1874–1953), in a leading role along with journalist and public philosopher Walter Lippmann (1889–1974). More specifically, it examines a correspondence between the two men that took place between 1921 and 1927. In the exchange, Merriam seeks Lippmann's guidance and active involvement in developing a research agenda for the nascent Social Science Research Council (SSRC). If Merriam's overtures can be trusted, media and communication studies were central to his early vision for the SSRC.

Lippmann is, of course, well known to communication scholars. Schramm (1949) included the first chapter of Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922) in the field's first textbook, *Mass Communications*. Carey (1989, p. 75) describes Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922) as "the founding book in American media studies"; and McCombs and Reynolds (2002, p. 2) characterize Lippmann as "the intellectual father of agenda setting."

Charles E. Merriam and the Chicago School of Political Science

Because the disciplinary lines separating the social sciences are much more tightly drawn today than they were in the early 20th century, many communication scholars are probably unfamiliar with Merriam. He is, however, a towering figure in the history of American political science: An advisor to the U.S. presidential administrations of

both Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt, and an academic entrepreneur par excellence.

Cutting his political teeth as a Progressive reformer in Chicago politics, Merriam served as an alderman and ran for mayor twice; after he gave up active office-seeking in 1919, he turned his political skills to academic administration and discipline building. Under his leadership (1923–1940), the Chicago School of Political Science became the preeminent political science department in the United States; moreover, Merriam's students, Lasswell, V. O. Key, David Truman, Herbert Simon, and Gabriel Almond, were leading lights of postwar political science.

The author of more than 30 books, Merriam was the driving force behind the “behavioralist” revolt in political science.¹ Prior to the publication of his manifesto, *The Present State of the Study of Politics* (1921a), the field drew primarily on humanistic resources in history and jurisprudence. Too often, Merriam (1921b, p. 215), complained, what political scientists have done is “to meditate and then elaborate in literary form an idea, without verification or with very inadequate verification.” Impressed by advances in social science methodologies, Merriam urged political scientists to study the sociological and psychological constituents of political behavior. He strongly advocated scientific study of politics, re: Systematic, hypothesis-driven, empirical research, based upon a value-free epistemological stance, quantitative methods, replication, and the search for recurrent patterns in human behavior. He also advocated applying the results of behavioralist research to public administration (scientific management) and to the development of social policy.

Merriam's Presidential Address (1926, p. 1) to the American Political Science Association (APSA) envisioned a “new synthesis of knowledge” based upon integration of the findings of all of the social sciences. Taking inspiration, at least in part, from Lippmann's discussion of “organized intelligence” in *Public Opinion*, Merriam was an early advocate of the unity of sciences movement. His charismatic leadership and organizational skills transformed political science; Merriam's efforts also had a substantial impact on the future development of all of the social sciences in America. He was the idea man as well as the organizational and entrepreneurial force behind what would become the SSRC (Worcester, 2001). Working closely with his collaborator, Wesley Clair Mitchell, a Chicago economist, and his younger friend, Beardsley Rumel, who held a Ph.D. in psychology from Chicago and served as Director of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund, Merriam had unusual access to the human talents and material resources needed to bring his vision to fruition.

The Rockefeller family had its own agendas in supporting development of the SSRC. Historian Donald Fisher (1993, p. 45) contends, “Rockefeller philanthropy wanted to create the SSRC to fulfill some of its own policy objectives as well as have the Council act as a front organization” for Rockefeller family interests. Rumel, working closely with Rockefeller lawyers, channeled substantial amounts of the Spelman fund into social science research in general and the SSRC specifically. Moreover, Merriam's brother, John C. Merriam, was President of the Carnegie Institution in Washington and Chairman of the National Research Council; John provided Charles with access

to national philanthropic networks and resources. In its first decade alone, the SSRC provided more than \$4,000,000 in grants for research in social science (Karl, 1974, p. 136; Worcester, 2001).

To the 21st-century reader, Merriam is a creature of contradiction: An evangelist of quantification who never practiced what he preached, a theorist who denied the utility of theory, a consummate politician who claimed social scientists should be apolitical, and a champion of individual freedom and creativity who sought to master techniques of social control (Karl, 1974). Today liberals tend to romanticize the Progressive era: To view “the age of reform” (Hofstadter, 1955) through the lens of our own concerns. From this perspective, the conundrums in Merriam’s thought are hard to fathom. Yet, to Merriam and his forward-looking contemporaries, they made sense.

Stephen Toulmin (1992, p. 2) reminds us that the “horizons of expectations”—the intellectual posture that any generation adopts toward the future—is always a product of the way it experiences the present and view the past. To the generations born during or shortly after the Civil War, the conviction that America could break apart again was palpable. What Jackson Lears (2009, p. 12) calls “the Long Shadow of Appomattox” hung heavily over the first decades of the 20th century. The bitter aftermath of reconstruction, the “long depression” of 1873–1896, the assassinations of three presidents in 66 years, the social dislocations of urbanization, industrialization, great waves of immigration, the Ludlow Massacre, the Haymarket Riot, the Pullman Strike, the Chicago race riots, the bombing of Wall Street, and then the devastation of the Great War and the Red Scare all contributed to a Progressive ideology that viewed the embrace of reason, order, expertise, and social control as means of preserving democracy, not undermining it. As John Dewey (1925, 1984, p. 214) described it at the time, the Progressive revision of the democratic covenant was “a reasonable conception of (how) democracy can be made to work, not absolutely, but at least better than democracy works under an exaggerated and undisciplined notion of the public and its power.” To be “workable,” Dewey maintained, “democracy demands allayed passions and clarified understanding.” Merriam’s ability to reconcile passionate commitments to freedom and social control made him very much a man of his time.

Young Walter Lippmann

Dubbed the “Dean” of American journalism in later life, Lippmann is primarily remembered today for his contributions to journalism. The accomplishments of young Lippmann—the public intellectual, Greenwich Village bohemian, pragmatist, Progressive thinker, and activist—have faded from public awareness. It is not possible to adequately convey in a few paragraphs the impressive resume and public stature of the young man who engaged in the correspondence with Merriam in the 1920s. A few highlights must suffice.

Born in New York City, Lippmann’s prodigious intellectual gifts were recognized early. He attended Harvard, where he was befriended by the recently

retired philosopher, William James. Completing his degree requirements in 3 years, Lippmann stayed on for an extra year to pursue graduate studies in philosophy. He served as George Santayana's assistant, and was expected to pursue a career as a philosopher. But Lippmann decided the academic life was not for him (Steel, 1980).²

Muckraker Lincoln Steffens hired the 20-year-old Lippmann, who helped the older man muckrake the town government of Greenwich, Connecticut. Lippmann also collected and analyzed data that exposed the "anatomy" of big business, showing that it possessed its own political organization and functioned as a kind of "invisible government" (Kaplan, 1974; Steffens, 1931).³ Within a short time, Lippmann was made an editor of Steffens's *Everybody's* magazine. He then served briefly as secretary to the socialist mayor of Schenectady, New York.

He published his first book at 22; and when he was 25, President Theodore Roosevelt declared Lippmann the "most brilliant young man of his age in all of the United States" (Steel, 1980, p. xv). In 1913, he became a founding editor (with Herbert Croly and Walter Weyl) of *The New Republic*, which became the semiofficial organ of the Progressive Movement. In 1914, he published his influential *Drift and Mastery*, a book that historian David Hollinger (1977, p. 464) claims "multitudes of educated Americans responded to . . . with instant enthusiasm." *Drift and Mastery* captured the spirit of the younger generation of Progressives, who rejected traditional values in favor of cosmopolitanism, secularism, science, and individual freedom (including the liberation of women); but they also sought to build a new, unified national culture so that human intelligence could channel the new freedom in constructive ways—rescue it from "Drift." That is, they embraced "the revolt against formalism" (White, 1949) as well as "the search for order" (Weibe, 1967): The two concurrent and, to us, conflicting drives that Progressive historians have imputed to the era (Hollinger, 1977, p. 475).

During World War I, Lippmann served first as an assistant to Secretary of War, Newton Baker; he was then commissioned as a captain in army intelligence and appointed to President Wilson's secret group, The Inquiry, which was charged with developing terms for the peace agreement that would end the war. In this capacity, he helped craft Wilson's 14 Points. He also briefly wrote propaganda leaflets for the army urging German soldiers to surrender.

Disillusioned by the success of the Committee on Public Information (the Creel Commission) in propagandizing the American public, the poor performance of the press at Versailles, and the terms of the peace treaty (which he correctly believed created the preconditions for another war), Lippmann identified with the "lost generation" of the 1920s.⁴ His major critical studies of media and democracy were written during that period: *Liberty and the News* (1919, 1920), "A Test of the News," with Charles Merz (1920), *Public Opinion* (1922), and *The Phantom Public* (1925). He became a regular columnist for *Vanity Fair* in 1920; joined the editorial staff of the *New York World* in 1922; and became the director of the *World's* editorial page in 1924.

Lippmann was 15 years younger than Merriam, but by the time he was 30, he was already a formidable public figure: An advisor to presidents, an acclaimed author, and well on his way to becoming America's most influential political commentator.

Merriam's courtship of Lippmann

Fortunately for posterity, Lippmann kept copies of most of the letters that he sent as well as received; his correspondence is preserved in Walter Lippmann Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, at Yale University Library. Lippmann was a prolific correspondent, who seems to have tried to respond to all letters, whether from angry readers, young people seeking career advice, college students writing term papers, or famous public figures. The correspondence reviewed here is selective, consisting of letters exchanged between 1921 and 1927 that relate primarily to Merriam's attempts to incorporate Lippmann's analyses of news, citizenship, and organized intelligence into the emerging agenda of the SSRC; a few letters that set the stage for the exchange and mark its conclusion are also considered. The correspondence, which continues sporadically after 1927, generally consists of information on public issues, and announcements of various initiatives or events. The relevant sample consists of 20 Merriam letters and 8 Lippmann letters. There are some gaps in the correspondence, with at least 3 letters missing. Merriam initiated the correspondence, and restarted it whenever it lapsed; his letters are fairly long (2–3 typewritten pages) and detailed and often include enclosures, minutes of meetings, and copies of his articles. Lippmann's responses are brief, sometimes only a paragraph, but gracious. All the letters use formal salutations, "Dear Mr. Merriam" or "My dear Mr. Lippmann," as was the custom of the time; first name salutations were reserved for close friends and family.

Merriam opens the correspondence (August 10, 1921) stating that he has taken "the liberty" of giving his graduate student (Harold Gosnell) a letter of introduction to Lippmann. Merriam expresses regret that Lippmann was leaving *The New Republic* for the *World*, and encloses a reprint of one of his own articles noting that it may be of "academic interest." There is no record of a response from Lippmann in the archive. Merriam writes again (May 15, 1922) to report that the APSA has appointed a Committee on Organizing Political Research (COPR), which he (Merriam) is chairing. The letter is highly solicitous, asking for Lippmann's "especially valued counsel" regarding the "most useful fields of political research, or the most effective methods of research." Merriam also seeks guidance in making the work of political scientists "genuinely scientific or most useful practically." Merriam offers to send Lippmann an outline of "our tentative suggestions for your criticism." Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, which Merriam (1923) subsequently reviewed, had appeared earlier in the year; in the final pages, Lippmann severely criticized the state of political knowledge generally and of political science research in particular.

Lippmann responds (May 23, 1922) expressing interest and asking for more information. Merriam's next letter (May 27, 1922) notes the committee's limited finances but "broad powers." He includes a copy of the minutes of COPR's first

meeting, and expresses eagerness to meet with Lippmann in New York during the summer to discuss the project. The minutes contain the kernel of the idea for the SSRC, “some central clearing house for research projects” promoting a “closer organization of the social sciences.” Lippmann’s reply (June 7, 1922) thanks Merriam for the letter and enclosure, and expresses “anticipation” at seeing Merriam in New York.

Merriam writes Lippmann (June 19, 1922) congratulating him on the success of *Public Opinion* and expresses special interest in discussing the section on “Organized Intelligence.” He includes the minutes of the June meeting of COPR, which identify research topics members are interested in exploring: Political propaganda, political statistics, and the qualities of effective citizenship—all topics that resonate closely with ideas developed in *Public Opinion*. Lippmann responds (June 28, 1922) confirming that he will be available in New York after July 10.

Whether they actually met in New York is unclear; there is no further correspondence in the file that year. Merriam writes again (January 18, 1923) indicating that he had been in New York the previous week and left the manuscript of his “Observations on Practical Politics” with an unidentified Mr. Brace in the hope that Lippmann might “go over it” and offer suggestions. Merriam indicates that progress had been made in creating interest among the professional associations of the economists, sociologists, and political scientists in the idea of a “Social Research Council.” He closes the letter with the following: “If you have any suggestions as to the scope and nature of the work that might be undertaken by such a council, we should be delighted to have them. Perhaps some day in the remote future, we might be able to put into practice some of the suggestions in the last part of your ‘Public Opinion.’” Merriam includes the most recent minutes of the COPR; they now refer to the nascent organization as a “SSRC.” The concluding sentence of the minutes urges cooperation among all of the social sciences as well as “psychology, anthropology, geography, biological sciences and engineering, to the end that the new political science may avail itself of all of the results of modern thought in an attempt to work out scientific methods of political control.”

Fisher (1993) believes that Rumml may have suggested adding “science” to the name of the organization to diminish Rockefeller family concerns about controversial topics associated with “social” inquiry. In America in the 1920s, as in Margaret Thatcher’s Britain in the 1980s, the word “social” was often conflated with socialism (Bottom, n.d.).⁵

There is no evidence that Lippmann responded to this letter, but Merriam wrote again (February 9, 1923) referring to “our recent conference in New York.” It is not clear whether Merriam is referring to a personal meeting or a professional conference since he begins the letter with a defense of Professor Yerkes, who Lippmann apparently criticized during this “conference.” Yerkes was a prominent psychologist who administered the first intelligence tests to army recruits and was associated with a eugenics project supported by John C. Merriam (Fisher, 1993). At the time, Lippmann was engaged in a heated controversy with psychologists about

I.Q. testing. He maintained that it is impossible to define innate intelligence, let alone separate it from environmental influences and accurately measure it. Lippmann vehemently opposed introducing I.Q. tests into the schools on democratic grounds, contending that it would lead to an intellectual caste system. Lippmann's primary adversary in the controversy was Louis Terman, but many psychologists apparently regarded Lippmann's position as an attack on psychometrics in general. Merriam was caught in the middle of the controversy as he tried to forge cooperative relations between political science and psychology as well as entice Lippmann into more direct participation in the work of the SSRC. In this letter, Merriam once again solicits Lippmann's guidance regarding the organization and scope of the SSRC.

Lippmann responds (February 17, 1923) reporting that he has had a "good talk" with Yerkes, but indicates that he remains puzzled why it is "necessary to confuse criticism of interpretation with opposition to method?" Regarding projects for SSRC, Lippmann indicates "development of a project for what you have called political reporting would be an immense service" and he indicates that a "sound project could easily be funded." Lippmann also expresses passing interest in "an examination of the relation between political science and the sciences which are now attempting to supply us with our premises"—it is clear from a later letter that this is an ironic reference to Terman and psychology. Lippmann closes by saying it is impossible to develop this idea very far in a letter and suggests saving it for Merriam's next trip to New York.

Two months later (April 15, 1923), Merriam sends Lippmann a book from a series he is editing in hopes of "getting the material widely circulated." Merriam writes again (May 8, 1923) expressing appreciation of a recent article Lippmann published in *The Century*, and reports that COPR is undertaking the study that Lippmann suggested in his (February 17, 1923) letter: A survey of the relation of psychology to political science. Lippmann responds (May 15, 1923) indicating that he is interested in the survey and that he is now engaged in a controversy with another psychologist (McDougall). Merriam writes (May 17, 1923) enclosing a copy of the psychology survey: "Some Practical Applications of Psychology to Government" prepared by Gosnell. He also reports that the survey had been published in the May issue of the *America Political Science Review*. Merriam writes again on May 28, 1923, sending Lippmann a copy of the report referred to in the previous letter, and asks for his "critical comment or suggestion," and adds "the committee will very greatly appreciate your cooperation." There is no record in the Lippmann archive of a response to this request. Undeterred, Merriam writes again (August 15, 1923) inviting Lippmann to a conference, the Round Table on Psychology and Politics, to be held in Wisconsin in September. Merriam reminds Lippmann that it was his (Lippmann's) idea to explore relations between psychology and politics. Merriam encloses the program for the Round Table, which includes a session on the Lippmann–Terman controversy. Lippmann responds (August 23, 1923) with regrets. The following year, Merriam (1924) published a report of the psychology Round Table.

The international news research project controversy

Merriam plays what may have been intended as his trump card the following year. Resuming the one-sided correspondence, Merriam reports (March 26, 1924) that the SSRC approved “a thoroughly scientific and objective investigation of the instrumentalities involved in the world wide gathering and dissemination of current news and opinion of international concern, and of the underlying related problems of the formation, expression and significance of attitudes on international affairs.” He indicates that SSRC is sponsoring a related conference in Washington, funded by the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, and invites Lippmann to attend, assuring him that all of his expenses will be paid. Merriam encloses a rough draft of the scope of the study, which includes international electrical communication, cable, radio, telephone; press associations; postal agencies; government collection and distribution of news, distribution of and collection of news by other agencies, including economic analysis; daily and periodical press; legal and governmental issues such as censorship and secret treaties; financial control; and the formation of international attitudes. Although there is no mention of them in Merriam’s letter, two sociologists, Jerome Davis and H. A. Miller, actually proposed that SSRC study of international news (Fisher, 1993).

Lippmann and Merz had pioneered such work in “A Test of the News.” If any carrot would be likely to tempt Lippmann, Merriam’s latest proposal would probably be it. Once again (March 31, 1924), however, Lippmann declines to participate, saying there is “no point” in his attending and suggests that the investigation might be compromised if it was associated with a particular newspaper. He does, however, indicate he will “be glad to help.” Perhaps to prove it, Lippmann reports that E. A. Filene’s 20th Century Fund is considering a study of newspapers; and that he (Lippmann) advised Filene to get in touch with Merriam before proceeding. Undeterred, Merriam (n.d.) writes again urging Lippmann to attend the conference “to give us the benefit of your scientific attitude.” Merriam also indicates that when the plan for the study of international news is drawn up, “we shall take the liberty of communicating with you again.”

The conference was held, and SSRC approved the creation of a Committee on International News and Communication with Walter S. Rogers, a resident of Chicago, as chairman. Rogers had been the director of the Division of Wireless and Cable Services of the Committee on Public Information (the Creel Commission) during World War I (Creel, 1920). In that capacity, he developed a worldwide network for the distribution of American news, which may have served as a prototype for the development of the *Voice of America* in World War II. He also served as the communications expert of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace at Versailles, where he prepared documents on the U.S. position on electronic communications (Rogers, 1922a, 1922b). The United States had a strategic interest in breaking the British cable monopoly; Rogers served as America’s point man on this issue (*New York Times*, August 16, 1922), arguing for open public access to international cable,

modeled after the international postal service, rather than control by private or national (re: British or French) interests. When the Rogers/U.S. argument failed to gain international support, America militarized its approach to international communication by putting the Navy in charge of cable interests and access. The Navy, in turn, helped launch AT&T and RCA (Dizard, 2001). Given what we now know about the later involvement of the U.S. government in secret communication research (Glander, 2000; Simpson, 1994), it is difficult to believe that the selection of Washington as the host city for the conference on international news research and the choice of Rogers as director of the news project were serendipitous.⁶

Since the SSRC project proposed to study the gathering and dissemination of news, it is not surprising that it attracted the attention of journalists. Although Merriam was usually able to turn publicity to his advantage, in this instance it backfired. The September 6, 1925 issue of *Editor & Publisher* carried an article about the international news project by Dr. William T. Ellis on its front page with the provocative header, “Rockefeller Fortune Backs Investigation of Newspapers.”

Although publicist Ivy Lee had made considerable progress in laundering the once notorious Rockefeller name, Ida Tarbell’s 1904 muckraking expose of Standard Oil, the 1914 Ludlow Massacre, and the subsequent investigation by the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations still remained fresh enough in the minds of some people to cause an uproar. Edward Filene, who had apparently followed Lippmann’s suggestion, was outraged when he discovered the Rockefellers were also involved in the project and immediately withdrew his support (Karl, 1974).

In order to protect the reputation of the Rockefeller family, the international news project was quickly abandoned and SSRC revised both its structure and mission to save the Rockefellers from further embarrassments (Fisher, 1993). With an endowment from businessman Charles R. Crane (Crane Plumbing), Rogers then created the independent Institute of Current World Affairs; and the SSRC launched an Advisory Committee on International Relations (1926–1930). Filene would later (1937) create the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, with Kirley Mather and Clyde R. Miller, which was designed to help citizens to recognize and defend themselves against propaganda.

Interestingly, however, the program for the meeting in New York of the American Sociological Society (ASS) later that year (December 1925) indicates that sociologists had established a Division of Communication and that the two scheduled speakers were Walter Lippmann on “Public Opinion and Foreign Relations” and Walter S. Rogers on “The Organization of International News.” Moreover, Merriam was also present at the meeting delivering his famous APSA Presidential Address at a joint session of the two associations (American Sociological Society [ASS], 1925, p. 250). Lippmann seems, however, to have slipped out of Merriam’s net once again, as the follow-up report (ASS, 1926, p. 669) on the meeting indicates that Rogers did indeed deliver his address to the Communication Division, but Merriam’s protégé, Harold Lasswell, had replaced Lippmann on the program, delivering an address on “The Status of Research on International Propaganda and Opinion.”

We can only speculate why Lasswell replaced Lippmann. Was Lippmann, always protective of his reputation, distancing himself from association with the international news study and the Rockefeller interests? Was he trying to make peace with Filene, a Progressive businessman, who promoted industrial democracy, profit sharing, and credit unions? Or was there a more mundane explanation for his absence? We will probably never know.

The correspondence between the two men continued through this period. Lippmann or his publisher sent Merriam a copy of the newly published *The Phantom Public*. Merriam responds with a handwritten “thank you” letter (September 14, 1925). Much of the handwriting is difficult to decipher: However, Merriam does report that he has read *The Phantom Public*, and referred it to the Round Table on Psychology in hopes that they can devise some tests based on it. Merriam also indicates that he is sending Lippmann a copy of his own book, *New Aspects of Politics* (1921b). Lippmann responds (September 16, 1925), thanking Merriam for sending the book, which was apparently lost in transit. Merriam writes (October 8, 1925) expressing his regret that Lippmann had not yet received the promised copy of the book. Merriam reports that he hopes that the Christmas meeting of the Round Table will be able to report progress in studying some of the problems Lippmann identified in *The Phantom Public* though he acknowledges that it is “merely a hope.” Lippmann responds the next day (October 9, 1925) indicating he would be interested in what the Round Table does with *The Phantom Public*. Although the next letter from Merriam is missing, it is clear that he has sent Lippmann a copy of his Presidential Address to the APSA, which contains a positive reference to Lippmann. The journalist responds briefly (March 17, 1926) thanking Merriam for it and reports, without elaboration, that he “likes it.”

By 1927, Merriam’s courtship of Lippmann is essentially over. With Merriam serving as its first president, the SSRC had incorporated in 1924; received its first grant that year; and began offering postdoctoral fellowships in 1925. By 1927, it had established headquarters in New York; attracted a \$750,000 grant from the Spelman Memorial Fund; and hired its first full-time staff member, sociologist Robert S. Lynd (Worcester, 2001).

The story behind Lynd’s appointment reveals how far the Rockefeller interests were willing to go to contain and co-opt critics. There are conflicting reports about how Lynd came to be hired by SSRC; however, the account of Staughton Lynd, Robert’s son, is persuasive.⁷ He reports that as a young divinity student in the early 1920s, his father was given a summer preaching assignment in Elk Basin, Wyoming, which turned out to be a Rockefeller oil camp. Lynd not only preached on Sunday nights, he spent the rest of the week working as a laborer on one of the Rockefeller crews. He made a minor nuisance out of himself by criticizing Rockefeller’s industrial practices and writing to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. asking him to contribute to building a community center in Elk Basin. Rockefeller reportedly responded that the company had a bad year and could not contribute (Lynd, n.d.). Lynd also published two accounts of the experience, one in the September 1922 issue of *Harpers* and the

other in *The Survey* (49, 2, 1922). *The Survey* article, “Done in Oil,” is an expose of the working conditions at Elk Basin. Standard Oil officials tried to force Lynd to withdraw the article from publication; when he refused, the article was published with a response from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who claimed conditions at Elk Basin were atypical, but agreed working hours (12-hour days, 7-day working weeks) were too long (Keen, 2004). Staughton Lynd compared what happened next to the power move of “an employer offering a foreman’s job to an outspoken shop steward. ‘This guy has a big mouth, he’s attracting some attention, let’s hire him’” (Lynd, n.d., p. 2). John D. Rockefeller’s Institute of Social and Religious Research hired Lynd to conduct a small city study of religious life in America. The sociological classic, *Middletown* (1929), was the result; coauthored with Helen Merrell Lynd, it was a far more ambitious ethnographic study than the Rockefeller interests had originally envisioned. Based on fieldwork conducted in Muncie, Indiana, in 1924, the results of the study also displeased the Rockefeller Foundation, which refused to publish it. Yet, Lynd was hired as SSRC’s secretary in 1927 and then as its executive director, a position he held until he completed his Ph.D. and secured an appointment at Columbia University. While at the SSRC, Lynd was a frequent internal critic of its funding priorities; that criticism formed the basis for his later classic, *Knowledge for What: The Place of Social Science in American Culture* (1939).

In response to the negative publicity generated by the volcanic *Editor & Publisher* headline, which implied that SSRC was a Rockefeller agency intent on intimidating the press, the SSRC radically altered its operating structure. Instead of undertaking investigations directly, except for preliminary feasibility studies, it would function as a funding and coordinating agency (Fisher, 1993).⁸ Merriam’s early efforts to place the study of news and communication technologies on the agenda of the SSRC were superseded by more immediately fundable projects: By 1927, the SSRC was supporting a wide range of scholars and research topics with committees on agriculture, crime, prohibition, human migration, and international relations—all topics of interest to the Rockefeller family (Fisher, 1993).

By 1927, Merriam had surely realized, after repeated rejections, that Lippmann was not going to become an active participant in SSRC or the development of the political science program at the University of Chicago. Merriam may also have been personally burned by Filene’s response to the Rockefeller involvement in the news project, which once more positioned him in the uncomfortable middle with competing loyalties and interests—In this instance, to Ruml and Lippmann. Establishing contact with Filene was after all the one concrete suggestion Lippmann had offered Merriam. In any case, Merriam no longer needed Lippmann to leverage his vision for the SSRC.

Lippmann would continue to comment on press issues throughout his life and even become an early advocate for public television, but his cycle of studies directly focusing on media and democracy were complete by the mid-1920s. The last set of letters the two men exchanged during our time period suggests that both had moved on: They do not relate to either SSRC or media research, but rather to a censorship

scandal in Chicago. As usual, Merriam revived the correspondence; however, the four letters that are exchanged in rapid succession in December 1927 revolve around a topic that Lippmann is researching, a controversy over censorship of textbooks, involving Chicago Mayor, Wild Bill Thompson, Merriam's opponent in the 1919 mayoral election. It was one of the cases, along with the Scopes Trial, that Lippmann would explore in a series of lectures at the University of Virginia on "the predicament of the modern teacher under popular government during the conflict over religious fundamentalism and over patriotic tradition"; the lectures would be published as *American Inquisitors: A Commentary on Dayton and Chicago* (Lippmann, 1928, p. v).⁹

Media and method

The very idea that the head of a prestigious committee of a national social science association would seek guidance in developing a research agenda from a journalist—let alone methodological guidance—seems implausible today. Surely, we might assume, this was just Merriam, the "virtuoso of nonspectacular promotion," trying to grease the wheels of publicity to promote his enterprise (Lasswell quoted by Ross, 1992, p. 401). No doubt, Merriam recognized the potential value of Lippmann's coattails, but there is every reason to believe that his courtship of Lippmann was sincere. Merriam (1923, pp. 211–212) concluded his enthusiastic review of *Public Opinion* as follows: "This brilliant study is indispensable to any serious student of politics and of great value to the citizen without special interest in scholarship. It points the way toward the new politics and the new social science that are now slowly taking shape." Both *Drift and Mastery* and *Public Opinion* provide eloquent and in the case of the former even lyrical testimony to the promises of reason, method, and expertise as well as realistic assessments of the irrational forces that threaten their ascent. Moreover, Lippmann's did not just rhapsodize about the promise of methodological rigor, he demonstrated it in collaboration with journalist Charles Merz in "A Test of the News," a study of the *New York Times* coverage of the Russian Revolution, which remains a rigorous, if largely neglected, early example of content analysis (Lippmann & Merz, 1920; see also Hardt, 2002). Both epistemologically and methodologically, Lippmann's thinking was far ahead of political science in the early 1920s; and political scientists acknowledged this. For example, the 1924 Report of the Round Table on Political Statistics drew upon four authors (Lippmann, Dewey, J. H. Robinson, and A. B. Wolfe) in its effort to develop standardized methods for empirical inquiry; of these authors, only Lippmann's work offered a concrete, empirical exemplar for analyzing political discourse (Barth, 1924).

As we have seen, Lippmann was generally supportive of Merriam's efforts, but he offered few suggestions. In the rare instances when he did, his comments seem casual, even offhand—for example, Lippmann's ironic suggestion that SSRC study the relation of psychology to political science. Yet, Merriam took this idea very seriously, organizing and securing funding for a conference, the Round Table on Psychology and Political Science, and publishing a summary of its proceedings in *The American*

Political Science Review (Merriam, 1924). Merriam frequently cited Lippmann in his own work, including his Presidential Address to the APSA. Barry Karl, Merriam's biographer, maintains that Merriam was profoundly influenced by Lippmann's work; he points out that Merriam repeatedly cited Lippmann "as the student of (Graham) Wallas most likely to advance and systematize the work of his teacher" (Karl, 1974, p. 119). Wallas, a British Fabian socialist, who spent a visiting year at Harvard, was so impressed by Lippmann's critical intelligence that he dedicated the book he was writing when Lippmann was in his class to his former student, *The Great Society* (1917). Business scholar, William P. Bottom (n.d.) affirms the claim that Merriam was profoundly influenced by Lippmann's work, contending that: "The connections and resources provided by the SSRC gave Merriam leverage to build the political science department at the University of Chicago around Lippmann's agenda" (Bottom, n.d., p. 17).¹⁰ In sum, the evidence appears compelling: Merriam was actually seeking guidance from Lippmann and hoped to actively involve him in the realization of his "synthesis of knowledge."

We will never know if the genesis of academic communication study would have been different if Merriam had been able to persuade Lippmann to take an active role in the development of SSRC. Perhaps media and communication research would have developed as a fully articulated subfield of political science? Or maybe it would have expanded and transformed the disciplinary boundaries of political science. Conversely, the sociologists who originally conceived the news project might have reclaimed it. The Communication Division of the ASS could then have developed as a continuous and robust arm of the ASS.¹¹ Or, conversely, perhaps the kind of secret government-sponsored communication research reported by Simpson (1994) and Glander (2000) might have (or perhaps actually did) begun much earlier than has been previously documented.

What we can conclude, with confidence, is that the SSRC Committee on International News and Communication conceived a very ambitious project, which would have been well funded; and that Walter S. Rogers, its director, was very well connected in both politics and international communication networks. Had the study been completed, it would have commanded significant attention. If the project had not been abandoned in response to the controversy created by the provocative *Editor & Publisher* headline, the SSRC would have had a different structure, for better or worse, during its formative years. The academic study of communication might have been established much earlier in the United States with a significantly different origin story.

Instead of the "four founders" narrative, which placed primary emphasis on the study of media "effects," the alternative would have been more pluralistic: Recognizing the importance of the analysis of institutions, policies, international communications, the political economy of communications, and censorship, as well as media effects. International in scope, it could not have ignored the role of culture and cultural differences in communication processes and audience reception. Perhaps

then Merriam, Rogers, or Lippmann, rather than Schramm, would now be regarded founder/s of the field.

But this too is speculation. What we do know is that Merriam was a tireless academic entrepreneur, who believed that young Walter Lippmann was profoundly important to the development of the social sciences. Though Lippmann's work has not yet been fully appreciated by media and communication scholars, during his lifetime, he was widely respected by the academic establishment. His books were reviewed regularly in academic journals; and he occasionally published in them. He not only received many honorary degrees, but was also offered endowed chairs at Harvard and Chicago. He was even offered the presidency of the University of North Carolina, which was the center of social science research in the South.

We also know that Lippmann's concept of science was quite different from both the positivistic/behavioralist method that Merriam cultivated in political science and the behaviorist approach that the "four-founders" mythology propagated in communication. Lippmann's concepts of science and scientific method were more humanistic than positivistic; his understanding of the nature and limits of scientific inquiry, articulated most fully in *Drift and Mastery* (1914), is antithetical to the reductive, ahistorical, and atheoretical empiricism and scientism that is associated with behaviorism in political science and the effects tradition in mass communication research. A pragmatist, influenced by James, Peirce, and Dewey, young Lippmann saw science—at its best—as a systematic, communal pursuit of truth, fallible but self-correcting. While imperfect, he regarded it as the most reliable means humans have yet devised to distinguish between truth, with a small "t," and superstition. In this regard, historian John Patrick Diggins (1991) correctly claims that Lippmann anticipated postmodernism: He recognized the limits of human knowledge but never abandoned his commitment to its pursuit.¹²

My Chicago story, like Wahl-Jorgensen's, has long been ignored. Ironically, however, the road not taken by Merriam, Lippmann, Rogers, Lynd, Filene, and the SSRC in the 1920s is now being rediscovered and redeveloped by the SSRC's Media Research Hub, part of its larger project on Necessary Knowledge for a Democratic Public Sphere. The two initiatives differ substantially; each is responding to the challenges, material conditions, and horizons of expectations of their respective times. Yet, they both seek to make collaborative social science research matter, and recognize that media and communication are crucial constituents of a democratic public sphere. Both initiatives are committed to reform, but where Merriam sought a synthesis of knowledge to enhance social control, his 21st-century counterparts seek "necessary knowledge for a democratic sphere (by) bridging media research, media reform, and media justice" (Social Science Research Council, 2009).

Notes

- 1 Despite the similar term, Merriam's behaviorism was not associated with behaviorist psychology; to the contrary, Merriam was an ardent believer in the democratic ethos and rejected determinism.

- 2 Beil (1992) reports that there was a broad exodus by talented young scholars from the universities in the early part of the 20th century. The universities were perceived as increasingly isolated from and irrelevant to the great transformations that were taking place in the broader culture. Young intellectuals were rejecting universities to reach the entire literate public, its “inchoate student body” (p. 57). William James had savaged the “Ph.D. octopus” and Santayana urged philosophers to quit the universities and get closer to reality (p. 20). Dewey was, of course, also disaffected with academic philosophy, and sought to reach beyond the university to confront the problems of democracy.
- 3 Lippmann used this phrase repeatedly throughout his life. In the muckraking of Wall Street influence, his primary objection was to the invisibility, the lack of transparency and accountability of the power of financiers, rather than to their power, per se.
- 4 In the communication literature, Lippmann is sometimes identified as a member of the Committee on Public Information (CPI); this appears to be incorrect. Lippmann wrote a steaming critique of George Creel, head of the CPI; and according to Lippmann’s biographer, Ronald Steel (1980), army propaganda work behind enemy lines was under the direct authority of the army, not the CPI.
- 5 Right-wing critics of U.S. President Barack Obama also conflate these terms.
- 6 Despite his obvious prominence, I could locate little biographical information about Rogers. Creel (1920, p. 250) describes him as “the only living man whose hobby is ‘news transmission’ who had ‘just returned from a world tour devoted to a study of cable rates, press agencies, distributing machinery, etc.’” He was apparently an employee of Charles R. Crane, of Crane Plumbing, who financed the world tour; his mission was to “investigate the possibilities of building a chain of American-owned newspapers there (in the Far East), to gather news for the American market and distribute news in that part of the world” (American Universities Field Service, n.d.). In addition to his service on the CPI and the Paris peace negotiations, Rogers was appointed by President Wilson as one of three U.S. representatives to an international conference on world electrical communications. (Rogers had recommended such a conference in his memorandum to Wilson and peace commission.) Congress approved a requisition of \$75,000 to cover the cost of the conference, which was to be held in Washington (*Chicago Daily News Almanac and Year Book* for 1921); however, the British and French were not interested in the American approach to communications, and apparently the conference was not convened. In 1925, when the International News Study was aborted, Crane provided funding for the Institute of Current World Affairs, which continues to exist today as the Crane–Rogers Foundation with a mission of sponsoring young people doing independent study in another country. Rogers also published articles on “International Electrical Communications” during the time period under consideration, including one in a very early issue of *Foreign Affairs* 1, 2 (December 15, 1922), a publication of the Council of Foreign Affairs, which Lippmann cofounded. Lippmann and Rogers were also both members of the Institute of Pacific Relations.
- 7 Fisher claims Lynd was hired because of anthropologist Clark Wissler’s praise for Lynd’s fieldwork in Muncie. Straughton Lynd’s account, based on family stories, of his father’s earlier contentious association with the Rockefellers is, however, confirmed by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) records. The FBI had Lynd and many other prominent sociologists under surveillance as possible subversives (Keen, 2004). Turner and Turner (1990, p. 58) also cite Wissler’s support, but add that Lynd was well connected in New York networks and was viewed as “socially acceptable and trustworthy.” Yet, Fisher

makes clear in his detailed account of SSRC that Lynd remained an independent critical force within the Council.

- 8 Fisher (1993) reports that the operation of the SSRC was reorganized as a result of the controversy to render the Rockefeller philanthropy's control of SSRC less visible, but no less real. The timing is right, consistent with Merriam's (1926) report that SSRC would not conduct studies, but function as a clearing house for research. The restructuring of SSRC may have had the unintended consequence of encouraging more specialization within and firmer boundaries between the disciplines, thereby rendering Merriam's dream of a synthesis of knowledge moot.
- 9 An anonymous reviewer for this journal suggested that it would be interesting to know what Merriam's relationship was with his Chicago colleague, sociologist Robert E. Park. Both Everett Rogers and James W. Carey cast Park in a prominent role in generating early scholarly interest in media as communication. Throughout this research, I have been on the lookout for information linking the two. To date, I have found no evidence of significant intersection of their respective interests in media. Volume III of Park's collected papers, *Society: Collective Behavior, News and Opinion, Sociology and Modern Society* (1955), would be a logical repository for such information. There are no references to Merriam in a lengthy name index, although there are numerous entries for Lippmann (10) and his mentor, Graham Wallas (6), as well as textual discussions of their work. Merriam's *Chicago: A More Intimate View of Urban Politics* (1929) provides an expansive analysis of the press's role in urban centers; a paragraph on the foreign press does carry a footnote to Park's *The Immigrant Press* (1922). I have, however, found numerous linked references to Merriam and Park in secondary sources, but not related to communication. The two scholars are frequently paired in discussions of the Chicago School's emphasis on localism, field studies, and the city as a laboratory for social science research, as well as in relation to their common interests in race and ethnicity. Bulmer (1984) also singles out Merriam and Park as supporters of W. I. Thomas after the latter was arrested and dismissed from the university for a violation of the Mann Act. While communication scholars emphasize Park's interest in communication, sociologists, including Bulmer, pay relatively little attention to that aspect of his work, which constitutes only a small part of Park's corpus. Within histories of sociology, Park is remembered primarily for his contributions to ecology, urbanism, and race relations as well as coauthor, with Ernest Burgess, of "the green bible," *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (1921), the primary textbook in the field for a number of years. My search is far from conclusive, but at this point, I am inclined to support Pooley's conclusion the communication field's recovery of the "buried treasure" of a Chicago School of Communication requires a "heavily edited" rereading of the past. Still, I'd be delighted to discover otherwise.
- 10 Lasswell's dissertation, prepared under Merriam's supervision and published immediately upon completion, was directly influenced by Lippmann though Lasswell is less than forthcoming in his acknowledgment of that influence; and where Lippmann critiqued propaganda, Lasswell sought to perfect its strategic use (Jansen, 2008; Simpson, 1994). Bottom (n.d., p. 18) maintains that Herbert Simon's dissertation, also supervised by Merriam, "formalized Lippmann's concept of the limits on rationality, extending it to explain complex problems of public administration."
- 11 Wahl-Jorgensen does report that the Communication Committees at the University of Chicago were abolished in part because the Sociology Department complained that they

were impinging upon its turf. I refer to the ASS throughout this article; however, it should be noted that the organization changed its name to the American Sociological Association (ASA) in the 1960s.

- 12 My account of Lippmann's conception of science bears little resemblance to James W. Carey's interpretation of it in *Communication and Culture* (1989). Elsewhere (Jansen, 2008), I directly address those differences and defend my interpretation. For Lippmann's own reflections on science, see *Drift and Mastery* (1914), Chapter 16: "Fact and Fancy."

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被遗忘的历史：另一条新路——查尔斯·梅里亚姆和沃尔特·李普曼之间的通信

Sue Curry Jansen

Muhlenberg大学媒介与传播系

【摘要】

作·近期·的美国早期媒体研究中被·忘的·史的一部分，本文研究了芝加哥政治学家和社会科学研究·会（SSRC）的·始人·斯·梅里·姆和·者沃·特·李普曼之·的通信。他·之·的函件表明，媒体和·播研究是梅里·姆社会科学研究·会最初的·想中重要的·成部分。1921年至1927年的函件描述了·一·想。·些信函也表明，社会科学研究·会的重要思想深受李普曼的《公众·》（1922）所影响，尤其是最后一章“集体智慧”。

Des histoires oubliées : Une autre voie ignorée—la correspondance entre Charles Merriam et Walter Lippmann
Sue Curry Jansen

Cet article s'inscrit dans le cadre des récentes découvertes d'histoires oubliées à propos des débuts de la recherche sur les médias aux États-Unis. Il examine la correspondance entre le politologue de Chicago (et fondateur du Social Science Research Council, SSRC), Charles E. Merriam, avec le journaliste Walter Lippmann. Ces échanges indiquent que la recherche sur les médias et la communication prenait une place importante dans la vision initiale qu'avait Merriam pour le SSRC. La correspondance, qui date de 1921 à 1927, décrit cette vision. Elle suggère également que les idées formatrices pour la création du SSRC furent profondément influencées par l'ouvrage *Public Opinion* (1922) de Lippmann, en particulier son dernier chapitre, « *Organized Intelligence* ».

Vergessene Vergangenheit: Ein anderer nicht beschrittener Weg – Die Korrespondenz zwischen Charles Merriam und Walter Lippmann

Sue Curry Jansen

Im Rahmen der aktuellen Aufarbeitung der in Vergessenheit geratenen Anfänge der Medienforschung in den USA, untersucht dieser Artikel die Korrespondenz zwischen dem Politikwissenschaftler und Gründer des Social Science Research Council (SSRC) aus Chicago, Charles E. Merriam, und dem Journalisten Walter Lippmann. Die Korrespondenz zeigt, dass die Medien- und Kommunikationsforschung ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der ursprünglichen Vorstellung Merriams für das SSRC war. Die Korrespondenz zwischen 1921 und 1927 beschreibt diese Vorstellung. Sie zeigt auch, dass die prägende Idee für das SSRC wesentlich von Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922) beeinflusst wurde, insbesondere durch das Schlusskapitel über „Organisierte Intelligenz“.

잊혀진 역사들: 선택되지 않은 또 하나의 길: 찰스메리엄과 월터 리프먼의 교신

Sue Curry Jansen

잊혀져 있던 미국의 초기 미디어 연구를 회복해 가는 과정의 하나로서, 본 연구는 시카고 정치학자이자 SSRC설립자인 찰스 메리엄과 저널리스트였던 월터 리프먼간의 교신을 연구하였다. 교신은 미디어와 커뮤니케이션 연구가 메리엄의 SSRC설립의 최초안에서 주요한 요소이었다는 것을 보여주고 있다. 1921년부터 1927년까지의 교신은 이러한 비전을 보여주고 있으며, 이는 또한 SSRC설립에 있어 중요한 아이디어들이 월터 리프먼의 저서인 공공여론 (1922), 특히 조직적 지식에 대한 마지막 챕터에 의해 영향을 받았다는 것을 보여주고 있다

Las Historias Olvidadas: Otro Camino No
Tomado—La Correspondencia entre Charles Merriam y Walter
Lippmann

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Resumen

Como parte de una recuperación reciente de las historias olvidadas en la investigación inicial de los medios en los Estados Unidos, este artículo examina la correspondencia entre el científico político de Chicago y fundador del Consejo para la Investigación de las Ciencias Sociales (SSRC), Charles E. Merriam, y el periodista Walter Lippmann. La correspondencia indica que los medios y la investigación en comunicación tuvieron un significado constitutivo en la visión original de Merriam para el SSRC. La correspondencia de 1921–1927 describe esta visión; también sugiere que la idea formativa del SSRC fue influida profundamente por la Opinión Pública de Lippmann (1922), especialmente el capítulo final sobre ‘‘La Inteligencia Organizada.’’