

*To Print the News and Raise Hell! A Biography of Wilbur F. Storey.* By Justin E. Walsh. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968. Pp. ix, 303. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$7.50.)

If we may believe Professor Walsh, men like Wilbur Storey modernized the American press. As editor of the Jackson *Patriot*, the Detroit *Free Press*, and finally the Chicago *Times*, Storey pioneered in newsgathering. No expense was too great in setting up news bureaus in foreign capitals, in utilizing the telegraph, and in sending out reporters. Storey, unlike many of his contemporaries, was a news competitor and introduced yellow journalism before Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst.

Storey began his career as a typesetter and forever remained a master of the printer's craft, even after he had raised himself to the status of editor. The *Free Press* and *Times* were perfect examples of typographical excellence. But if Storey satisfied the highest technical standards, his news vending plumbed the lowest depths. He often constructed news stories out of whole cloth. The worst example is the case of the minister's daughter whom Storey declared promiscuous. Then finding his charge untrue, he attempted to bribe a man to implicate himself as the girl's lover to avoid a libel suit.

Even the ladies of the burlesque, the butt of his vituperation, publicly whipped Storey on the streets of Chicago. Storey campaigned against vice and immorality. Such things were a news staple, but his own life was hardly a model. He was a thorough debauchee, and his hotel room was the scene of many orgies. He finally contracted syphilis, which softened his brain. Consequently, the Chicago *Times* was edited by an insane man in its later years, though the reader of Walsh's book finds it hard to know just when Storey became so.

Walsh aims to correct a common impression held about Storey: that he was guilty of treason during the Civil War. Storey wrote his famous "fire in the rear" editorial in February, 1861, while still in Detroit, to express his unalterable opposition to a war. He was violently anti-Negro and turned virulently against Lincoln when he adopted emancipation. Finally, after the most inflammatory language, General Ambrose Burnside suppressed the paper, a policy which only made Storey a martyr to freedom of the press. Walsh defends Storey from the accusation of treason. He may have been guilty of extreme language, says Walsh, but not disloyalty.

This is a well written book, about a bizarre man who was always a good copy. It received the Award of the American Association for State and Local History for 1967. To Storey, news was not merely novelty; it was also the big lie. To Walsh, Storey's news reporting was "fascinating malice," and the editor made more than a million dollars from it. Storey may not have changed American journalism as much as Walsh claims, but his place there is large enough to cause troublesome thoughts to the editorial fraternity.