

[Spinelle on Finneman and Hirshon and Ward, 'Journalism History: The Podcast'](#)

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Teri Finneman, Nick Hirshon, Ken Ward. *Journalism History: The Podcast*. Fort Worth: Journalism History (the academic journal), 2018-20. Podcast, <https://www.democracyworkspodcast.com>.

Reviewed by Jenna C. Spinelle (The Pennsylvania State University and Democracy Works Podcast) **Published on** H-Podcast (February, 2021) **Commissioned by** Robert Cassanello (he/him/his) (University of Central Florida)

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Why does journalism history matter? That is the central question addressed in every episode of the [Journalism History podcast](#), a project of the History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) and the AEJMC's *Journalism History* journal. The podcast, like its namesake journal, attempts to place journalism history in a broader context of American history by examining the history of various aspects of the media and the way that the media covered events in history. Teri Finneman, associate professor of journalism at the University of Kansas and vice chair of the AEJMC History Division, serves as the show's main host and interviewer. Nick Hirshon, assistant professor of communication at William Paterson University, and Ken Ward, assistant professor of communication and media at Lamar University, joined as co-hosts for the show's second season.

Episode length varies from fifteen to sixty minutes, with most episodes coming in around thirty minutes. The host discusses the guest's work on a particular topic and how it fits into the broader context of journalism history. As is the case with many podcasts, conversations are typically based around a book the author has written, though the conversations are sometimes based on articles in the *Journalism History* journal. Either way, the conversations are a nice way to bring additional context to the written work or provide someone with the opportunity to understand the main arguments without having to read the entire work. The podcast's website also asks journalism instructors to consider each episode as a potential guest lecture they can use in journalism history courses.

Some episode topics are evergreen in nature, like a conversation about Jimmy Carter and the birth of the modern presidential campaign ([Episode 43: Amber Roessner - Jimmy Carter and the Media](#)) and a look at the history of newsboys in America ([Episode 46: Vince DiGirolamo - A Nation of Newsboys](#)). Other episodes are timely, either around a holiday ([Episode 39: Holiday episode - Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus](#)) or a major event in the news ([Episode 63: Sherry Hall - How Newspapering Shaped a President](#)). The show produced several COVID-19-related episodes in 2020, including one on media coverage of epidemics ([BONUS: Katie Foss - The History of American Epidemics](#)) and one on the history of food journalism ([Episode 59: Kimberly Wilmot Voss: The History of Food Journalism](#)) at a time when many people were suddenly cooking more at home. I found the topic-based shows to be

slightly more engaging, but every episode I listened to was easy to understand and the audio quality was on par with other independently produced podcasts.

The podcast's website lists each episode, along with general information about how to listen to a podcast and what AEJMC is hoping to achieve with the show. Each episode page contains a transcript, which helps with accessibility, giving instructors more options for adding the content to their courses. However, episode pages do not link to the guest's book or article, or any related resources. This seems like a missed opportunity to provide listeners, teachers, and students with source material or other related resources that can build on what's discussed in each episode. Given that the show's hosts are also journalism scholars, it might be interesting to hear more of their reflections on the week's topic, rather than sticking solely to asking questions during the interview.

Whether you are a professional media scholar or an amateur history buff, the *Journalism History* podcast is an interesting and engaging listen. Unlike seemingly every other part of the podcast industry, there are not many shows about journalism, so this one is a valuable resource for anyone looking to learn more about the media and its history through audio.

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