

## Topic 1.5. Hearst and the Growth of US Journalism

### Exercise 1. Read the text.

One of the most famous American members of the press was William Randolph Hearst. He was born in San Francisco, California in 1863. His father, George Hearst, was a miner who became a millionaire because of some wise choices he made in the stock market. George Hearst was given the *San Francisco Examiner*, a newspaper, as payment for a gambling debt. At that time, William Randolph Hearst had just been expelled from, or forced to leave, Harvard University. While he was studying at Harvard, he fell in love with print journalism. He admired Joseph Pulitzer and read Pulitzer's newspaper, *The New York World* as often as he could. When his father gave him control of the *San Francisco Examiner*, he was thrilled.

In those first 8 years of running the paper, he spent millions of dollars hiring famous journalists. The paper was very successful. In 1895, Hearst bought *New York Morning Journal*, a newspaper which competed with Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*. Continuing into the 1920, Hearst opened or bought 26 more newspapers in every part of the country. At one point in American history, one out of every four Americans read the news in a newspaper that Hearst owned. His newspapers were written for working people who mostly lived in cities. He openly supported political issues that they cared about, for example, labor unions. While his newspaper empire grew, he started publishing several magazines, some of which are still in circulation today: *Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Town and Country*.

One of the things that Hearst is most known for is a type of newspaper called "yellow journalism." It all started while Hearst and Pulitzer were competing for readers in New York. Pulitzer owned *New York World*, and Hearst owned *New York Morning Journal*. Each newspaper wanted to be more successful than the other. They wanted to sell more newspapers than the other. Both Pulitzer and Hearst started to change the way they gathered information and wrote news stories. For example, they failed to verify sources or even made up stories if they would interest readers, almost like changing the news to seem more like an interesting book or movie. Headlines and news stories used scare tactics, or pictures and topics that made the readers

afraid, and it got them talking to their friends and family about what they read. Some of it was true, but a lot of it was not true. In yellow journalism, entertainment became more important than the truth.

This time in American history helped to guide the principles of journalism that newspapers and television news use today. Today, journalists still struggle with balancing advertising money and the number of readers they have, with telling the truth objectively, not dramatically. Nowadays, yellow journalism is viewed as unprofessional.

In the 1930s, the U.S. hit its worst economic crisis in history. Unfortunately, Hearst was forced to sell off many of the papers it controlled. Papers in those days rarely made money, costing only a penny or two to the reader. Despite the economic hardship and William Randolph Hearst's death in 1951, the Hearst Corporation is still around today.

The corporation owns about 50 newspapers, 300 magazines, and 30 television stations.

---

## References

*History.com Staff. (2009). William Randolph Hearst. Retrieved February 12, 2018, from <http://www.history.com/topics/william-randolph-hearst>*

*Maranzani, B. (2013, April 29). Beyond Citizen Kane: The Worlds First Media Mogul. Retrieved February 12, 2018, from <http://www.history.com/news/beyond-citizen-kane-the-worlds-first-media-mogul>*

## **Exercise 2. Check Your Understanding: Hearst and the Growth of US Journalism**

**Instructions:** All questions in this quiz refer to the reading, "Hearst and the Growth of US Journalism." You are allowed to refer to this reading as you answer these questions.

Choose the best answer (or answers) for each question.

4 points possible

1. Did William Randolph Hearst graduate from Harvard University?

yes

no

2. True or False: Joseph Pulitzer bought The New York World after William Randolph Hearst bought the New York Morning Journal.

true

false

3. Which of these did William Randolph Hearst NOT own?

television channels

recording studios

magazines

newspapers

4. True or false: People probably began to lose trust in newspapers because of yellow journalism.

true

false