

The new generation of black women playwrights represented in this anthology is no longer bound by the restrictions of theatrical realism and cultural inhibitions. They stretch the arts of the theatre to fulfill the demands of their consciousness, their recognition of the self as an integral part of the world, both shaped by, and shaping the forces of society.

— Opal Palmer Adisa
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Roland E. Wolsey. *The Black Press, U.S.A.* 2nd Edition. (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1990) 478 pp., \$39.95.

The Black Press, U.S.A. is an interesting book written about black publications in the United States from a historical perspective. The author, a white professor emeritus of Journalism at the Newhouse School of Public Communication at Syracuse University, is to be commended on his ability to organize the history of the black press in such an organized and interesting manner.

The Black Press, U.S.A. includes a three-page foreword by Robert E. Johnson and a five-page informative preface by the author, Roland E. Wolsey. The text is divided into sixteen chapters that cover a variety of issues relative to journalism in general and to black journalism in particular.

The first chapter discusses the definition of the “black press,” why it came into being and why the need for the black press continues. For example, the author states that the primary purpose of the black press, “160 years ago and for many years thereafter, was to campaign for freedom of slaves. After the Civil War it was for more fair treatment of black citizens in many areas of their lives, such as access to public eating places, attendance at white colleges, and use of public beaches.” He further states that the “black newspapers now exist primarily to report the news of the black population and the particular local community, to give space to their own and others’ opinion on many radically oriented matters, to promote the activities of the society in which they exist, to present advertisers with a billboard or a spoken message, and to be the advocate for the black population.” The black press also serves as a source of income for its owners.

The second chapter is very important because it deals with the history of the “beginnings” of the black press. The author gives a rather detailed history of the development of the black press. He compares the beginning of black press (1827) to that of the white press that had already existed 137 years. The author discusses the early publications and the founders of these publications. He is also careful to include the names of early black journalists, both male and female.

A variety of other important issues are covered in the remaining fourteen chapters: Black Journalism Enters the Twentieth Century; World War II and After; Today’s Major Newspapers; Local Newspaper Voices; The Black

Magazines—the Front-runners; The Black Magazines—the Specialists; What Is in the Black Press?; The Modern Black Journalist; Journalism Education and Training; Publishers and Their Problems; The Business Operations, Auxiliaries and Competitors; Pro and Con on the Black Press; and The Future. From the above issues covered in this book, it can be seen that the book covers most if not all the important issues related to the black press.

“Pro and Con on the Black Press” is interesting and appropriate because it discusses in some detail the strengths and weaknesses of the black press and, to a certain extent, some methods of overcoming the weaknesses and also some methods of maintaining and adding to the strengths of the black press. Chapter 16, “The Future,” raises as an important issue “where is the Black Press heading?” The responses appear to fall into three categories: “the press will disappear, it will diminish but survive, or it will be a strong element in communication in the country. Rationales for these beliefs are also discussed.

I do not find any particular weaknesses in this book. At times certain issues might be slightly repetitious, but this cannot be avoided due to the nature of the book. The author is to be commended for the inclusion of pictures of individuals important to the black press. I would recommend this book for general reading as well as for those who are interested in journalism in general and to those who are interested in black journalism. I would strongly recommend this book to students of journalism.

— Allene Jones
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Jade Snow Wong. *Fifth Chinese Daughter*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989, orig. pub. 1945) 262 pp., \$10.95 paper.

I am personally delighted to see the re-issue of Jade Snow Wong’s autobiographical novel, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*. Shortly after I arrived in the U.S. in 1959 as a rather bewildered young girl immigrant of twelve, it was my good fortune to have stumbled onto—in the local public library—Jade Snow Wong’s wonderful story of growing up Chinese and female in America, in both the ethnic enclave of Chinatown and the San Francisco Bay Area’s white college and working worlds. It helped me better understand the experience of being an “American-Chinese,” the term used in those days. The re-issue has allowed me to introduce the book to my American-born daughters, 15 and 12, who not only enjoyed immensely the story itself, but have gained invaluable insights into their Chinese and Chinese American heritage.

Originally published in 1945, well before the onset of Asian American consciousness and the creation of Asian American studies and ethnic studies, it should be accorded a special place in the “canon” of ethnic studies