

Print News and Raise Hell: The “Daily Tar Heel” and the Evolution of a Modern University By Kenneth Joel Zogry. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018. 350 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 978-1-4696-0829-7. [Book review]

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Fischer, Christine. “Print News and Raise Hell: The ‘Daily Tar Heel’ and the Evolution of a Modern University” (review). *North Carolina Libraries*, 76, no. 1 (2018): 46-47.

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Abstract:

This absorbing chronicle of the history of the Daily Tar Heel, the student newspaper of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, captures the cultural, social, political, and historical events that influenced the campus from the newspaper’s start in 1893 as a publication of the Athletic Association through its next 100 years, with an epilogue that briefly brings the story to contemporary times. Zogry, a public historian with two published books on Vermont furniture and the history of the Carolina Inn, presents a striking look at how the Daily Tar Heel reported news and had an impact not simply on campus but also reached out to alumni, the state, and even the nation through its articles and editorials.

Keywords: book review | Daily Tar Heel | student newspaper | North Carolina history | journalism

Article:

This absorbing chronicle of the history of the Daily Tar Heel, the student newspaper of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, captures the cultural, social, political, and historical events that influenced the campus from the newspaper’s start in 1893 as a publication of the Athletic Association through its next 100 years, with an epilogue that briefly brings the story to contemporary times. Zogry, a public historian with two published books on Vermont furniture and the history of the Carolina Inn, presents a striking look at how the Daily Tar Heel reported news and had an impact not simply on campus but also reached out to alumni, the state, and even the nation through its articles and editorials.

The text highlights the perspectives of editors throughout the decades as they responded to events. Themes that run throughout the narrative are freedom of the press and free speech, academic freedom, and the influence of big-time athletics at a public university. The book emphasizes the role of the newspaper as it looked at how students were affected by local issues, such as growth of the campus, sports, and the impact of the university's presidents and chancellors. Zogry's engrossing description of broader statewide factors included the tension between liberal and conservative ideals and how they factored into legislation and funding concerns. Nationwide issues appear in decades of news coverage regarding war, McCarthyism, desegregation, civil rights activism, gender roles and identities, and calling out intolerance. Zogry aptly details the efforts of editors in addressing social and cultural issues in a public forum, and he acknowledges that perspectives varied and were not always consistent. Even knowing the outcome of events, the tension in Zogry's writing makes the stakes feel current, as when he describes the experiences and articles by staff reporters and photographers on site in Birmingham during civil rights protests in 1963. News about sports and the athletics programs is a continuing topic throughout the coverage period with stories on scandals, alumni involvement, amateur status, and the shift from football to basketball as the preeminent sport on campus.

While the book concentrates on events as they unfolded, Zogry makes reference to the later professional lives of the editors, photographers, cartoonists, and staff, many of whom went on to careers with national newspapers and successful businesses, administrative and academic roles in higher education, and public lives as politicians. The influence of the experiences of the students while serving on the paper extended well beyond their years on campus.

Photographs of newspaper content and key figures and events add context to the account of the newspaper.

This title is highly recommended for libraries with readers interested in North Carolina history, journalism, or the history of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.