

is also “profusely illustrated,” as they said in the nineteenth century, with more than seventy images. My favorite shows Longfellow’s obstreperous older son, Charlie, bearing a tattoo of a Japanese carp that covers his entire back. He was evidently “inked” elsewhere too. (See Christine M. E. Guth, *Longfellow’s Tattoos*, as reviewed by Hisayo Ogushi in *NEQ*, September 2005). The overall book design, by Cassandra J. Pappas, features grey paper covers as close to cloth as paper can get; a deckled outer edge; sewn gatherings of quality stock; two different pictorial pastedowns, the front one in color, the rear one in a green tint; and a colophon, which identifies the body type as Adobe Garamond, an electronic rendering of a very early face.

In this respect, it might be said, *Cross of Snow* is a tribute from the Electronic Age to the Gutenberg Age. The reverse may also be true: a tribute from the passing age to the ascendant one. Consider Longfellow’s title of his poem for the fiftieth reunion of his Bowdoin class. “Morituri Salutamus”—the words pronounced by Roman gladiators before their fatal combat: *We who are about to die salute you.*

John W. Crowley’s *scholarly career was launched half a century ago when he was a graduate student at Indiana University. His first article and first book review were published in the same issue (March 1970) of THE NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY, to which this is his twenty-fifth contribution.*

Crying the News: A History of America’s Newsboys. By Vincent DiGirolamo. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. 712. \$35.00 cloth.)

“I sell the morning paper, sir/My name is Jimmy Brown.” One of my earliest memories is hearing my father plink out this stanza on an old guitar. Popularized by Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs, and other artists, “Jimmy Brown, The Newsboy” came at the end of a century-long story that finally gets its due in Vincent DiGirolamo’s fulsome exploration of America’s youthful news hawkers. To say the book is a comprehensive, definitive account of the subject would be a grotesque understatement. DiGirolamo has spent more than two decades researching this subject, and the results are breathtaking. The author resurrects countless historical characters, telling their stories with ingenuity and grace. At the same time, he provides a

comprehensive history of American newspaper publishing and supplies one of the best contributions to the history of youth yet to appear.

The author's account proceeds largely chronologically, broken into three broad eras. The first begins with the rise of the modern newspaper in the Antebellum Era and runs through the end of the Civil War. It highlights the rise of the newsboy profession and lays out many of the book's central themes, especially the idea that news sellers helped shape the contours of major national events such as the war. The second section narrates the tumultuous years between Reconstruction and the turn of the twentieth century. Here, newsies are at the center of class conflict, both as emblems of free enterprise and as resisters to capitalism's spread. The final part investigates newsies as "Children of the State" between 1900 and 1940 as the struggle over child labor and reform in general comes to the forefront.

Many common themes run throughout the book, none more important than the tension between individual freedom and collective action. On one hand, newsboys appear as the quintessential American entrepreneur, both in popular culture and in reality. The classic newsboy bought low and sold higher, kept his wages, and spent them on what he liked. On the other hand, this story of youthful independence and indulgence is set against two countervailing forces of mutualism and cooperation. For one, most newsboys (and girls) lived in families and, like most working youth, they contributed to family economies, if only by supplying some of their own needs. Perhaps more important, newsies formed unions, formal and informal, to protect and advance their interests. DiGirolamo has unearthed scores of such organizations, spanning the century-long story at the center of the book. As with other working-class organizations, newsboy unions provided mutual assistance, but they also fought, often militantly, for labor rights. In fact, DiGirolamo's narrative suggests that newsboy unions were in the vanguard of labor militancy for decades. Given that most newsboys eventually graduated to other forms of work, labor historians would do well to consider how newsboy unions built and sustained the labor movement.

Much of the focus of the book is rightfully on newsies themselves, but DiGirolamo also outlines how others saw them. This element comes in two flavors. Reformers from Charles Loring Brace to Florence Kelley sought to improve, alter, or squelch newsboys and newsboy culture. Reform efforts waxed and waned, often with the fortunes of the economy. At the same time, popular writers, songsters,

photographers, and painters depicted newsies and their folkways for an avid reading, listening, and viewing public. Newsboy narratives could serve as political propaganda, a rags-to-riches everyman story that could launch a political career or stanch class-based enmity. DiGirolamo has recovered a huge cache of such cultural products, enlivening the book with an astonishing 178 illustrations, including thirty-two color plates. Specialists and casual readers alike get to “see” newsies in action on a great many of the book’s pages.

The classic depiction of the newsboy is a young, white fellow in ragged dress, but the author does an excellent job of broadening our view of the demographics of newspaper selling. News girls and women appear throughout the book as sources allow, and African American newsies get their due. As might be expected, racially based conflict occurred but so, too, did cooperation. Immigrant youngsters naturally feature prominently in the story, especially in the later years. As such, the book is a premier example of how to meld class analysis with race, gender, and other categories of historical investigation.

These classic social history categories necessarily evoke questions about “agency,” and this inquiry permeates DiGirolamo’s account as well. To what extent can young workers be seen as the authors of their own destinies? Many classic stories of youth employment follow the lead of reformers and reduce a complex story to the trope of “child labor.” Not so here. While DiGirolamo rightfully conveys the hardships and oppression that newsies endured, he also delves deeply into their social and cultural worlds. Newsboys are not the pawns of parents, publishers, or reformers. They take action on their own. More important, they literally “make history,” especially when they hawk sensational news that leads to war. The cries of these children ring out to the adult world and change what happens there. More practitioners of the history of children and youth would do well to follow the model set forth in this book.

At first glance, a history of news hawkers might seem like a limited subject, but *Crying the News* is social history at its best. For anyone looking for a comprehensive social history of the (really) long nineteenth century, this book would be an excellent place to start. In its narrower fields of inquiry, scholars of many stripes will need to engage its insights and its complex analytical lenses.

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