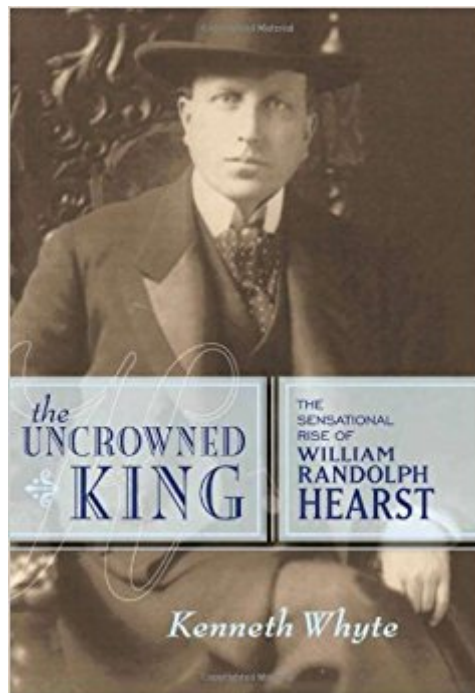




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The Uncrowned King: The Sensational Rise Of William Randolph Hearst



Synopsis

A lively, unexpected, and impeccably researched piece of popular history, *The Uncrowned King* reveals how an unheralded young newspaperman from San Francisco arrived in New York and created the most successful daily of his time, pushing the medium to an unprecedented level of influence and excitement, and leading observers to wonder if newspapers might be "the greatest force in civilization, more powerful even than kings and popes and presidents." Featuring an eight-page insert of black and white photographs, *The Uncrowned King* offers a window onto the media world at the turn of the 19th century, as seen by its most successful and controversial figure, William Randolph Hearst. Kenneth Whyte's anecdotal, narrative style chronicles Hearst's rivalry with Joseph Pulitzer, the undisputed king of New York journalism, in the most spectacular newspaper war of all time. They battled head-to-head for three years, through the thrilling presidential election campaign of 1896 and the Spanish-American War—a conflict that Hearst was accused of fomenting and that he covered in person. By 1898, Hearst had supplanted Pulitzer as the dominant force in New York publishing, and was well on his way to becoming one of the most powerful and fascinating private citizens in 20th-century America.

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Customer Reviews

Like many people, what I know about William Randolph Hearst I got mostly from the movie *Citizen Kane*. That's not at all fair; even though Pauline Kael said that the movie did better than most biographical pictures in portraying its subject (there's faint praise), Charles Foster Kane was a

fictionalized character, dreamed up by Orson Welles and Herman J. Mankiewicz, even though largely based on Hearst's life. Kane's upbringing and his eventual corruption were disastrous, but these were not really part of Hearst's story. *The Uncrowned King: The Sensational Rise of William Randolph Hearst* (Counterpoint) by Kenneth Whyte barely covers Hearst's upbringing, and ends around the time of Hearst's marriage, concentrating on Hearst's astonishing early success in the newspaper business. Whyte barely mentions Kane, but fans of the movie will be impressed; Kane as a young man is shown as a vivacious showman and sensationalist, which Hearst certainly was, but also as having sincere concern for the welfare of the public, which Hearst certainly did. And Kane's words that infuriate his financial custodian, "I think it would be fun to run a newspaper," certainly apply. Whyte prompts a reexamination of Hearst, not just as inspiration for Kane, but also a reexamination of his reputation as being the king of yellow journalism; seen in context, Hearst's newspapers' sensationalism was simply the way newspapers in general were conducting themselves, but Hearst's were good at the job, and produced useful insights for their times. Hearst, like Kane, surely entered the newspaper business with money. He spent some time shopping around for a New York paper to buy, settling on the *Journal* in 1895.

William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951) is the most famous newspaper owner in American history. Willie's father was a United States Senator from California and his mother was a society matron who was smart and formidable. Hearst was a millionaire at birth; his father gave him the family owned San Francisco paper to operate and his horizons were limitless! The young Hearst spent a year at Harvard before dropping out; he toured Europe wooing and winning several fair maidens. He was eclectic in his female tastes enjoying the company of showgirls and ladies from the working classes. He married Millicent who came from show business; later in life he would have a long affair with Hollywood star Marion Davies. Hearst did not smoke, drink or spend his days in slothful ease. He was a workaholic who loved nothing more than operating a newspaper! This fine book by Canadian journalist Kenneth Whyte is a scholarly and sober look at how Hearst brilliantly steered the New York Journal to the top of the Yellow Press heap in the wild days of Gilded Age newspaper wars. Hearst had to duel with Joseph Pulitzer's *World* and several other New York Paper in the battle to win subscribers in a competitive field. We forget that in those turn of the century days there was no radio or tv. Most people got their news from the daily newspapers. Often there would be several editions published in a single day. Hearst's New York Newspapers sold over one million copies a day. Hearst would later own a large newspaper syndicate owning papers from coast to coast. Most of the pages in Whyte's biography are devoted to Hearst's paper's coverage of the

Spanish American War.

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