

The Historical Value of *Newspaper Directory of China*

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As a prominent journalist and entrepreneur living in Shanghai from 1911 to 1937, the “China Hand” Carl Crow (1884-1945) wrote a lot of works on Chinese newspapers, business, religion and culture. His advertising agency Carl Crow, Inc. published four editions of *Newspaper Directory of China* in the year of 1921, 1931, 1932 and 1935 respectively, and the most popular was the edition of 1935, which had a positive impact on the commercialization and development of the China’s newspaper industry.

Keywords: Carl Crow, historical value of *Newspaper Directory of China*, circulation

Introduction

From the end of the 19th century to the 1920s and 1930s, China’s newspaper industry developed very rapidly, and the foreign newspapers published in China also penetrated into all walks of Chinese life, exerting a profound influence on Chinese politics, education, science, commerce, diplomacy and religion. “The start of the blending of Chinese culture and Western culture broke new ground that had never been seen before. If we trace back to the origin, who could be counted as the pioneer of the cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries? It would be the books and newspapers published by foreigners” (Ge, 1955, p. 112). *Newspaper Directory of China*, compiled and published by Carl Crow and his advertising agency—Carl Crow, inc., enjoyed a high reputation in Chinese journalism during the period of the Republic of China. Independent of government and interest groups, the newspaper directory was the main reference for most advertising companies at that time, playing an active role in promoting the commercial development of China’s newspaper industry.

Carl Crow and His Major Works

Born in Missouri, Carl Crow (1884-1945) was a famous newspaperman and entrepreneur who was actively engaged in Chinese media during the period of the Republic of China. From 1911 to 1937, Carl Crow lived in Shanghai, witnessing many important historical events in China. During the Revolution of 1911, Carl Crow participated in the negotiations between the revolutionaries and the Qing Government, which led to the abdication of the Qing Emperor and the fall of the Qing Dynasty. During the World War I, he got the scoop on

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Japan's invasion of China. And he joined the negotiations for the release of the western hostages after the carjacking happened in the Lincheng City. During the World War II, Carl Crow was one of the first Western journalists crossing the Burma Road to report news on the war. What's more, Carl Crow interviewed political leaders of the time in China, including Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, Zhou Enlai and so on. He was an ardent supporter of the American military and China's resistance against Japan during the World War II. Anti-Japanese and pro-Chinese, Carl Crow left Shanghai in 1937 for fear of retribution from Japan, and in 1945 he passed away in Manhattan.

Carl Crow devoted all his life to the newspaper and the advertising industry. He established Carl Crow, Inc., the first Western advertising agency in Shanghai, which he ran for as long as 19 years. He was also the founder of *China Girl Poster* in Shanghai, and once served as the editor of *Shanghai Evening Post*¹. In the 1930s and 1940s, as we can see from table 1, Carl Crow wrote a large number of works on Chinese newspapers, business, religion and culture, and many of his manuscripts remained unedited and unpublished when he departed this life.

Table 1

Main Works of Carl Crow

Year of publication	Title	Place of publication	Publisher	Other information
1913	<i>The Travelers Handbook for China</i>	Shanghai	Hwa-Mei Book Concern	
1914	<i>America and the Philippines</i>	New York	Doubleday, Page & Company	
1916	<i>Japan and America: A Contrast</i>	New York	Robert M McBride & Company	
1937	<i>I Speak for the Chinese</i>	New York	Harper & Brothers	This book was translated by Zong Ji into Chinese with the title “我为中国人说话”. The Chinese version was published by Xinxing Bookstore in 1938.
1937	<i>Four Hundred Million Customers</i>	New York	Harper & Brothers	
1938	<i>The Chinese Are Like That</i>	New York	Harper & Brothers	This book was also published with the title of <i>My Friends the Chinese</i> by Hamish Hamilton in London in 1938.
1939	<i>He Opened the Door of Japan</i>	New York	Harper & Brothers	
1940	<i>Foreign Devils in the Flowery Kingdom</i>	New York	Harper & Brothers	
1940	<i>Meet the South Americans</i>	New York	Harper & Brothers	
1940	<i>Master Kung: The Story of Confucius</i>	New York	Harper & Brothers	

¹ *Shanghai Evening Post* was founded in 1929, and in 1930, it was merged with *Shanghai Mercury* into *Shanghai Evening Post & Mercur*.

1942	<i>Japan's Dream of World Empire: The Tanaka Memorial</i>	New York	Harper & Brothers	
1943	<i>The Great American Customer</i>	New York	Harper & Brothers	
1944	<i>China Takes Her Place</i>	New York	Harper & Brothers	
1945	<i>The City of Flint Grows Up</i>	New York	Harper & Brothers	
2009	<i>The Long Road Back to China: The Burma Road Wartime Diaries</i>			This book was written in 1939 and was edited by Paul French.

Carl Crow's *Newspaper Directory of China*

Carl Crow made great contributions to the China's newspaper industry and Chinese culture. His advertising agency Carl Crow, inc. compiled and published four editions of *Newspaper Directory of China* in 1921, 1931, 1932 and 1935, which gained a high reputation in the Chinese newspaper industry during the period of the Republic of China. When the directory was first published, it attracted widespread attention from China's press and publication industry, and was regarded as an annual publication of "enough interest and value" (Crow, 1935, preface).

In 1935, the third revised edition of *Newspaper Directory of China* published in Shanghai became a best-seller in China. Then it was often referred to by many contemporary works on journalism. Besides, it worked as the reference standard for major advertising agencies of the world, and was found in the libraries of many universities.

In *The Chinese Periodical Press*, a book written by American sinologist Roswell S. Britton (1897-1951) published in 1933, several references were made to Carl Crow's *Newspaper Directory of China* (the 1935 edition). For example, by referring to *Newspaper Directory of China* (the 1935 edition), Roswell S. Britton (1966, p.121) mentioned that in 1903, the Commercial Press commenced *The Eastern Miscellany* (a periodical changing from a monthly into a semimonthly), which was a popular and mass-market magazine, with its circulation of 45,000 in 1931. When Lin Yutang (1936, pp. 147-149), a well-known interpreter of China to the occident, discussed the regional circulation of Chinese newspapers in his book *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China*, he also quoted the data from the 1935 edition of *Newspaper Directory of China*.

Arranged in the alphabetical order of the English names of Chinese towns and cities such as Amoy, Anking, Antung, Canton, and etc., *Newspaper Directory of China*, in detail and with accuracy, recorded the population and the geographical features of Chinese towns of that time, as well as the publication time, publisher, specifications and circulation of each newspaper. It is estimated that *Newspaper Directory of China* included 467 Chinese dailies, 4 Chinese tabloids, 21 Chinese semi-weeklies, 50 Chinese weeklies, 13 Chinese semi-monthlies, 77 Chinese monthlies, 4 Chinese quarterlies, 1 Chinese yearbook, 18 English dailies, 27 English weeklies, 3 English monthlies, 4 English quarterlies (including 1 bilingual Chinese-English magazine), 3 English yearbooks, 6 Japanese dailies, 1 French daily, 3 Russian dailies and 2 German dailies.

Newspaper Directory of China published in 1935 had detailed and accurate records of the population and the geographical features and of Chinese towns. And these records, combined with "Newspapers circulated

daily” and “Newspapers circulated per 10,000 population” as is shown in Table 2, clearly illustrate the regional distribution of newspapers and periodicals in China back then.

Table 2

*Distribution of Newspapers in China*²

Area	Newspapers circulated daily	Population of area	Newspapers circulated per 10,000 population	Circulation of <i>Shun Pao</i>
Anhwui	23,532	19,832,665	11	12,400
Chekiang	103, 242	22, 043, 300	46	14, 300
Dairen	120, 050	300, 000	4, 000	—
Fukien	50, 395	13, 157, 791	45	3, 050
Honan	36, 120	30, 831, 909	11	6, 800
Hongkong	276, 700	513, 000	5, 393	—
Hopei	520, 400	34, 186, 711	152	1, 550
Hunan	52, 300	28, 443, 279	18	1, 450
Hupeh	114, 600	27, 167, 244	41	6, 050
Kansu	2, 945	5, 927, 997	4	160
Kiangse	37, 000	24, 466, 800	15	8, 650
Kiangsu	1, 139, 080	33, 786, 064	337	91, 000
Kwangsi	14, 100	12, 258, 335	11	400
Kwangtung	260, 800	37, 167, 701	70	2, 100
Kweichow	3, 400	11, 114, 951	3	100
Macao	11, 200	78, 000	140	—
Manchuria	118, 100	20, 000, 000	95	—
Shansi	23, 100	11, 030, 827	20	300
Shantung	122, 500	30, 803, 245	39	6, 250
Shensi	27, 700	9, 465, 558	29	220
Suiyuan	5, 600	1, 900, 000	29	75
Szechuen	97, 700	49, 782, 810	19	260
Yunnan	82, 200	9, 839, 180	84	200
Total	3, 242, 764	434, 987,000	70	—
				Chahar 80
				Xikang 65
				Ningxia42
				Xinjiang38
				Qinghai 24
				Tibet 16
				Mongolia 10
				Overseas 310
				Total 155, 900

² Table 2 is quoted from the table on the distribution of newspapers in China in the preface to *Newspaper Directory of China*, and the last column was added according to the table on page 148 of Lin Yutang's *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China* (the English edition published in 1936).

Remarks on *Newspaper Directory of China* (the 1935 edition)

Newspaper Directory of China (the 1935 edition) was the continuation and development of the directories of newspapers and periodicals in China in modern times. Accurate and complete investigation of the circulation of publications, and independence from the government and interest groups became necessary requirements for running modern newspapers. Compared with several representative directories of Chinese newspapers and periodicals of the same age, *Newspaper Directory of China* (the 1935 edition) had obvious advantages as follows:

(1) A full range of newspapers and periodicals were included.

Newspaper Directory of China (the 1935 edition) published by Carl Crow, inc. contained a full range of newspapers and periodicals, including those that were newly published and omitted from the first edition and those of different political backgrounds, publishing cycles and languages. Different from other directories of Chinese newspapers and periodicals published by Western missionaries and religious organizations at the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China, *Newspaper Directory of China* (the 1935 edition) was compiled entirely from the standpoint of advertisers as a “third party”, with the contents including not only Chinese business newspapers, official newspapers and newspapers focusing on political comments, but also newspapers founded by traditional missionaries and burgeoning business newspapers in Chinese and foreign languages.

In 1867, the American Presbyterian Mission Press published Alexander Wylie’s *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese: giving a list of their publications, and obituary notices of the deceased with copious indexes*, which was the earliest directory of newspapers and periodicals (or publications) published in China. It included 10 Chinese newspapers, and 29 Chinese publications with titles that were uncertain. But at the same time, it still left out some publications.

In *The Chinese Periodical Press (1800-1912)*, Roswell S. Britton listed six directories of newspapers and periodicals in China (Britton, 1966, p. 127), namely, the statistical data on the newspapers and periodicals in China in 1890, 1898, 1913, 1921, 1923 and 1925, the compilers of which were respectively John Marshall Willoughby Farnham, who was a missionary of the Northern Presbyterian Church of the United States, Ernest Box, who was a missionary of London Missionary Society, S. A. Polevoy, who was a Russian sinologist, H. G. W. Woodhead, who was an English journalist, and *China Year Book*.

In May 1890, John Marshall Willoughby Farnham presented *Essay on Periodical Literature, and List of Periodicals in the Chinese Language* at the Fifth Conference of Christian Missionaries in China held in Shanghai. According to the research of Professor Ning Shufan (1992, p. 66), during the period from 1815 to 1890, a total of 126 Chinese newspapers and periodicals (except *Peking Gazette*) were published in China and overseas, but Farnham’s *List of Periodicals in the Chinese Language* included only 75 newspapers, missing 51 newspapers.

As was pointed out by Roswell S. Britton in *The Chinese Periodical Press (1800-1912)*, the officially published *China Year Book* omitted many newspapers that were published by brokers or newspapers that were peddled on the streets without any registration or offering postal fees. And *Shun Pao* showed that the number of newspapers and periodicals in 1921 was 1134, while in *China Year Book*, the number was only 840 (Britton, 1966, pp. 127-128).

It should also be noted that in addition to *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese: giving a list of their publications, and obituary notices of the deceased with copious indexes* by Alexander Wylie, *List of Periodicals in the Chinese Language* by John Marshall Willoughby Farnham and *Newspaper Directory of China* (the 1935 edition) by Carl Crow, there existed other different versions of directory of newspapers and periodicals in China. For example, according to *Ta-Kung Daily* published in Tianjin in May 1905, about 240 newspapers and periodicals were launched in China (including Hong Kong and Macao), among which 119 were published in Shanghai, 25 in Beijing and 11 in Tianjin (Wang, 2008, p. 12). The data collected by these newspaper directories were different from each other in some aspects.

(2) The data on newspapers and periodicals were accurate and reliable.

Most of the data published in Carl Crow's *Newspaper Directory of China* (the 1935 edition) were offered by publishers of newspapers. Because the data on the distribution of the major newspapers were verified by checking years of advertising revenue and by thousands of regular newspaper sellers, so the data collected were basically accurate.

But it still cannot be denied that there existed some deficiencies which were caused by objective reasons. For instance, the readership of newspapers and periodicals published in China, as is shown in table 2, was greatly exaggerated, because the circulation of newspapers and periodicals in China was repeatedly counted. In China, it's rarely seen that the individual subscribed to more than one newspaper, but each copy printed in China has more readers than in any other country. After reading the papers, the original subscribers tended to send the newspapers to others to read. And the number of readers of every newspaper was estimated to range from 5 to 10 so that the readership of daily newspapers was roughly between 9 million and 18 million (Crow, 1935, preface).

As was noted by Lin Yutang in *A History of the Press and Public Opinion in China*, many people who had written works on the Chinese newspaper industry all once pointed out that we should realize that, in most cases, the same newspaper was usually read by ten more people in China than in the west. And this, according to Lin (1936, pp. 148-149), leads to the conclusion that there were 700 newspaper readers per 10,000 people in China and 30 billion people, or 7% of China's population, read newspapers. Given the fact that the figures released by publishers might be exaggerated, Lin Yutang conjectured that in China, there must be 500 readers of newspapers per 10,000 people, or in other words, 5% of the country's population read newspapers at that time.

(3) The distribution of newspapers and periodicals was clearly shown.

Although the data published in *Newspaper Directory of China* on the distribution of newspapers were provided by publishers, the percentage of the circulation each region took up was not affected. Some major newspapers were also issued outside the provinces where they were published. For example, approximately 64% of the circulation of the major Shanghai papers were attained in Kiangsu Province (now Jiangsu Province, China), while the remaining 36% were obtained in other provinces of China (Crow, 1935, preface).

Conclusion

Newspaper Directory of China published in Shanghai by Carl Crow, Inc. collected statistics and information on newspapers and periodicals according to the reference standard of world advertising agencies. The third edition published in 1935 was known as an annual publication of great value, for it opposed the exaggeration of the circulation of newspapers and periodicals and it contained various types of newspapers and

periodicals, including not only little-known folk tabloids but also publications that were newly founded or omitted in the first edition.

Carl Crow's works on Chinese newspapers, commerce, religion and culture are receiving more and more attention and are being republished or translated into Chinese one after another. *Newspaper Directory of China* is bound to provide significant reference for the compilation of directories of newspapers in China and will be of great help to the development of newspaper industry.

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