

History of Photojournalism

History of Photojournalism – Study Notes

1. Foundations (mid-19th-century)

Year / Period	Milestone	Significance
1839	Invention of the daguerreotype (Louis Daguerre)	First practical photographic process; makes visual recording possible.
1840s–1850s	Wet-collodion plate (Frederick Scott Archer, 1851)	Faster exposure, higher quality & easier field work.
1860s	Crimean War (1853–1856) & American Civil War (1861–1865)	Early war photography (e.g., Roger Fenton, Mathew Brady). Images used for news reports, though printed as engravings.
1880s	Development of the halftone printing technique	Allows photographs to be reproduced directly in newspapers and magazines.

2. The Birth of Modern Photojournalism (late 19th– early 20th-century)

Date	Event / Publication	Key Figures	Impact
1880	<i>The Illustrated London News</i> (first illustrated weekly)	William Luson Thomas	Sets template for picture-driven news.
1905	<i>The New York World</i> launches “ photographic supplement ”	Joseph Pulitzer	Shows American appetite for visual news.
1909	Moscow “Moscow Gazette” publishes first photo-essay	—	Early example of narrative sequencing of images.
1912	The New York Times publishes first front-page photograph (Harold H. “Hal” B. ...)	—	Validates photographs as headline news.
1915	World War I – first large-scale use of battlefield photography (e.g., Ernest Brooks, British Army).	—	Shows power of images to shape public opinion.

History of Photojournalism

3. The Golden Age (1920s-1940s)

3.1 Magazine Dominance

Publication	Year founded	Photojournalistic style
Life (U.S.)	1936	Large-format, glossy, "photo-essay" narrative.
Paris-Match (France)	1949 (roots in 1938)	Human-interest and cultural reportage.
Picture Post (UK)	1938	Tabloid-size, "photo-journalism for the masses".
Der Spiegel (Germany)	1947	Integrated photo-reportage with investigative text.

3.2 Iconic Photographers & Works

- **Dorothea Lange** – *Migrant Mother* (1936) ? symbol of the Great Depression.
- **Henri Cartier-Bresson** – "The Decisive Moment" (1932) ? candid street photography.
- **Robert Capa** – *The Falling Soldier* (1936) & D-Day coverage (1944) ? war photojournalism.
- **Margaret Bourke-White** – First female staff photographer for *Life*; industrial and wartime images.

3.3 Technological Advances

- **35mm Leica camera (1925)** – portable, fast, enabling candid shots.
 - **Flash powder ? flashbulb (1930s)** – better low-light capability.
 - **Improved halftone and rotogravure printing** – higher image fidelity in mass-circulation papers.
-

4. Post-War