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THE PHILADELPHIA STORY

By Philip Barry

Study Guide



**Compiled and Edited by Peter Davis and Valleri Hohman
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Biography: Philip Barry



Philip Barry (1896-1949)

Philip Barry, one of the most prolific American playwrights of his era, firmly established his popularity as a writer of high comedy and secured his fame and wealth with the success of *The Philadelphia Story* in 1939. Twenty-one of Barry's plays appeared on Broadway between 1919 and 1949. Though most of his serious, philosophical plays received little critical or commercial success, many of his comedies, including *You and I*, *Holiday*, and *Paris Bound* were immediate hits. Barry was most celebrated for his ability to write stylish, polished comedies about America's wealthiest class.

Barry drew upon his own experiences with members of the upper class, though he himself was something of an outsider. He was born in Rochester, NY, to an Irish Catholic family. Though his mother's family, the Quinns, had been established in Philadelphia for several generations, his father immigrated to Philadelphia from Ireland and worked as a stone cutter. James Corbett Barry later established his own business in Rochester, and was reportedly on his way to wealth, when he suddenly died a year after the birth of Philip, his fourth child. Philip's eldest brother, Edmund, quit school help to his mother, Mary Agnes, manage the family business. Their success enabled the younger Barry boys to attend Yale.

While attending Yale (1913-1919), Barry honed his skills as a writer and developed his interest in drama. He also established his associations with prominent, well-established American families during these years. The most significant step, however, in his development as a playwright occurred when he enrolled in George Pierce Baker's Workshop 47 at Harvard, which influenced many important American theatre artists of the era, including Eugene O'Neill.

In 1922, Barry married Ellen Semple, a New York debutante, who brought him closer to the high society he so often depicted in his plays. His first major play, *You and I*, is based on their relationship. Barry wrote the comedy while still struggling to support

himself and his wife on \$65/week. The play was a huge success, bringing Barry \$700/week in royalties. It ran for 174 performances in New York and received a successful London production. The success enabled him to focus on playwriting full time. However, he would not have another major success until 1927, with *Paris Bound*.

The comedy, *Paris Bound*, is an unconventional and irreverent exploration of the conventions of marriage. Significantly, it was with this comedy that he introduced a character type that he would re-visit in many of his later works: "The Barry Girl." One scholar described the Barry girl as "the crisp, levelheaded, no-nonsense, usually rich girl who rejects family conventions and eschews traditions" (Eisen). The play ran for over 200 performances and brought Barry \$17,500 for the film rights. Equally successful was his next play, *Holiday*, presented in 1928. The play, which satirizes American materialism and careerism, features another Barry girl, Linda. Katharine Hepburn played Linda in the 1938 film version of the play.

A tragic event in Barry's life marked a swift change in his dramaturgy and popularity. In 1934, Barry and Ellen's one-year-old daughter died. Barry wrote a series of spiritual, mystical, and obscure plays following her death, and each were critical as well as financial failures in production. Barry began to explore the relationship between fathers and daughters at this point in his career. Barry scholar Brendan Gill noted that Barry was "haunted" by the idea of a perfect daughter. "In his notes for possible plays, a constant subject is the father saved from loneliness and death by a daughter's love." A similar interest in a daughter's salvation of her father appears in *The Philadelphia Story*.

After several years of disappointment, Barry produced his greatest success, *The Philadelphia Story*, in 1939. Starring Katharine Hepburn, for whom it had been written, the play ran for 417 performances in New York and grossed more than 2 million dollars. It revived his own career, Hepburn's career, and the struggling Theatre Guild, which produced the play.

Following *The Philadelphia Story*, Barry had a few moderate successes before his death in 1949. Despite a decline in interest in Barry's work in the 1950s and 1960s, his major comedies have enjoyed major revivals in recent years.

Eisen, Kurt. "Philip Barry." *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Volume 228: Twentieth Century American Dramatists, Second Series. Gale Group, 2000.

Gill, Brendan. *States of Grace: Eight Plays by Philip Barry*. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975: 44.

List of Plays by Philip Barry

Autonomy, New Haven, Yale Dramatic Club, 1919.

A Punch for Judy, Cambridge, Harvard Workshop, 1921; New York, Morosco Theatre, 18 April 1921.

You and I, New York, Belmont Theatre, 19 February 1923.

The Youngest, New York, Gaiety Theatre, 22 December 1924.

In a Garden, New York, Plymouth Theatre, 16 November 1925.

White Wings, New York, Booth Theatre, 15 October 1926.

John, New York, Klaw Theatre, 4 November 1927.

Paris Bound, New York, Music Box Theatre, 27 December 1927.

Cock Robin, by Barry and Elmer Rice, New York, Forty-eighth Street Theatre, 12 January 1928.

Holiday, New York, Plymouth Theatre, 26 November 1928.

Hotel Universe, New York, Martin Beck Theatre, 14 April 1930.

Tomorrow and Tomorrow, New York, Henry Miller's Theatre, 13 January 1931.

The Animal Kingdom, New York, Broadhurst Theatre, 12 January 1932.

The Joyous Season, New York, Belasco Theatre, 29 January 1934.

Bright Star, New York, Empire Theatre, 15 October 1935.

Spring Dance, adapted from Eleanor Golden and Eloise Barrangon's play, New York, Empire Theatre, 25 August 1936.

Here Come the Clowns, New York, Booth Theatre, 7 December 1938.

The Philadelphia Story, New York, Shubert Theatre, 28 March 1939.

Liberty Jones, New York, Shubert Theatre, 5 February 1941.

Without Love, New York, Saint James Theatre, 10 November 1942.

Foolish Notion, New York, Martin Beck Theatre, 13 March 1945.

My Name is Aquilon, adapted from Jean Pierre Aumont's play, New York, Lyceum Theatre, 9 February 1949.

Second Threshold, revised by Robert E. Sherwood, New York, Morosco Theatre, 2 January 1951.

From: Eisen, Kurt. "Philip Barry." *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 228: Twentieth Century American Dramatists*. Ed. By Christopher Wheatley. The Gale Group, 2000: 22-34.

Production History: *The Philadelphia Story*

1938 Philip Barry tells Katharine Hepburn that he is working on a couple of plays that might interest her. Hepburn expresses interest in the comedy about a Main Line heiress, initially based on the socialite Helen Hope Montgomery Scott.

Barry visits Hepburn's family home in Fenwick, CT, and works with Hepburn to develop the script. His observations of her mannerisms, language, and interactions with her family, help shape the play specifically for the actress. Her brother, Richard, writes a play called *Sea-Air*, based on the collaboration between Barry and Hepburn to revive her career with *The Philadelphia Story*.

Barry and Hepburn take the unfinished script to Lawrence Langner at the Theatre Guild. He agrees to produce it, but with the Theatre Guild approaching bankruptcy, Hepburn and Barry agree to finance 50% of the production. Hepburn's current boyfriend, Howard Hughes provides a quarter of the production costs. (Investors were difficult to find due to Barry's recent failures and Hepburn's reputation as "box-office poison.")

Advised and financed by Hughes, Hepburn purchases the film rights before the theatre production is staged.

1939 Despite a weak third act, the play receives mostly positive reviews in try-outs in New Haven and Philadelphia.

Barry reluctantly revises the third act before the opening in Washington, D.C.

The play opens on Broadway on March 28, 1939. It is enthusiastically received by the audience and most critics. The play continues to play for full houses for 417 performances in New York before going on tour. The play grosses over \$1,500,000.

1940 MGM releases a film version of the play starring Hepburn, Cary Grant, and Jimmy Stewart, who wins an Oscar for his portrayal of Mike Connor.

1956 Musical film adaptation of *The Philadelphia Story*, entitled *High Society* with music and lyrics by Cole Porter, stars Grace Kelly, Bing Crosby, and Frank Sinatra.

1980 Revival of *The Philadelphia Story* at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre at Lincoln Center.

1985 Revival at the Hartman Theatre in Connecticut.

1987 London premiere of the stage adaptation of the film musical, *High Society*.

- 1998 Broadway premiere of *High Society*.
- 2005 Successful revival of *The Philadelphia Story* at the Old Vic in London starring Kevin Spacey and Jennifer Ehle.
- 2007 *The Philadelphia Story* is presented at the renowned Pitlochry Theatre Festival in Scotland. It is listed in *The Times* (London) as one of the top five theatre events of the summer.

Reviews of the 1939 Production

Considerable, sustained purring ought to be audible around town this morning. For the Theatre Guild, Katharine Hepburn, and Philip Barry have all come together in a gay and sagacious comedy entitled, *The Philadelphia Story*, put on at the Shubert last evening....

Although Mr. Barry always keeps within safe distance of the drawing room, he has a moral that saves his comedy from pure frivolity. He is looking for the human being beneath the cool, arrogant virtue of a daughter of the upper classes. . . . Mr. Barry's style is buoyant; his dialogue is silken and comic and his characters are witty, worldly folks with a reticent feeling about solemn topics.

Brooks Atkinson, *The New York Times*, 1939

[*The Philadelphia Story*] bristles with amusing lines. It has scenes which indicate Mr. Barry's surety as a comic dramatist. It makes clear what a gay and intuitive mind is his and how polished can be his gift for dialogue. . . . Mr. Barry may be turning Congreve into a cardinal, and advancing his old argument that a single transgression is no justification for divorce between two people who really love one another. But to this he adds a welcome and timely plea to the effect that people, not classes, are what matter; that poverty does not spell virtue anymore than riches necessarily spell meanness.

John Mason Brown, *Broadway in Review*, 1940.

Skeptics who have questioned Katharine Hepburn's right to serious consideration as an actress of the legitimate stage may now retire in confusion. In *The Philadelphia Story*, admittedly tailored to her exact measure by the adroit Philip Barry, Miss Hepburn has a chance to unfold her talents, one by one, until proven beyond argument their considerable scope and urgency.

In an age of less restrained play titles than the present, Mr. Barry might have called his comedy "The Understanding Heart" or "Tracy's Awakening." For its argument, embellished in many flourishes of urbane and civilized wit and humor, presents the metamorphosis of one Tracy Lord, of the well born suburban Philadelphia Lords, from an intelligent icicle into an impulsive, outgoing human being.

Cecil Smith, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1940.

The Real Philadelphia Story

by IAN IRVINE

Sunday Telegraph, April 16, 1995, page 1

The glamorous East Coast heiress whose story was to rekindle Katharine Hepburn's career and, in 'High Society', provide Grace Kelly with her most famous role, died earlier this year, aged 90. Ian Irvine examines the legacy of the original Tracy Lord

Helen Hope Montgomery Scott died, aged 90, on January 9 this year at her estate, Ardrossan, near Philadelphia. Her obituaries were long and respectful, as befitted someone who had been prominent in wealthy Philadelphia society for more than 70 years. They emphasised her career as a highly eligible heiress and party girl in the Twenties, and as a lavish hostess after her marriage. They mentioned her doing the Charleston with Josephine Baker in Paris, dancing a foxtrot with the Duke of Windsor at El Morocco ("He was pretty good") and lunching with Sir Winston Churchill on Aristotle Onassis's yacht. But all the obituaries opened with the element in her life which had had some curious consequences far from the ordinary life of a wealthy socialite - and which made her indirectly responsible for James Stewart's only Oscar, the establishment of Katharine Hepburn as a major film star and, later, the popularity of the Christian name Tracy. For Hope Montgomery Scott was the inspiration for Tracy Lord, heroine of *The Philadelphia Story*.

In 1940 the film was "socko boffo" in Variety-speak: winning Oscars and breaking box-office records. But since then it has retained its popularity, regularly featuring in lists of favourite films. The charm of this screwball comedy is obvious: a rich girl has doubts on the eve of her second marriage and, after an episode of self-discovery, remarries her first husband. Cary Grant as the husband and James Stewart as an intrusive reporter both give excellent performances. The humour is sophisticated, witty and bracingly anti-romantic. But it is the personality of Tracy Lord, incarnated by Katharine Hepburn, that compels: a character compounded of beauty, brains, wit, wealth, pedigree, position and, eventually, vulnerability.

It had begun as a stage play. Philip Barry, a leading Broadway playwright, first had the idea early in 1938. His initial thought was of the dramatic potential of a wealthy family in the process of being studied for an article in Fortune magazine. He wrote well and amusingly about the lives of the rich because that was the world in which the Yale-educated, drawling, cocktail-drinking Barry moved. When he mentioned his play idea to his wife, she suggested the Main Line area of Philadelphia, the city's most fashionable address, as a setting. Barry agreed and began writing using Hope Montgomery Scott, the Main Line's most famous socialite, as a model for his heroine.

Philadelphia society then exhibited an extreme type of class-consciousness. The flood of wealth that created American family fortunes in the late 19th century settled around a handful of cities and was expressed in different forms of conspicuous consumption and elaborate social behaviour - as chronicled by Edith Wharton in novels such as *The Age of*

Innocence. In dynamic New York and Chicago, Vanderbilts and Astors, Fields and McCormicks vied with each other in glitter and the acquisition of European titles through their marriageable daughters, but mere wealth usually provided a sufficient entree to their society.

In more traditional Boston and Philadelphia, however, society turned almost feudal, almost English in its attitudes - "old" money and "old" families counted for everything. The very term WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) was coined to describe members of Philadelphia society - its most characteristic institution was the Philadelphia Assemblies Ball. This is the oldest and most exclusive social gathering in the United States. Held every year since 1748, it is strictly reserved for members of the city's Social Register - no amount of money will allow entry; blood is everything. It was here, down the staircase to the great ballroom of the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, that Hope Montgomery, in ballgown and elbow-length white kid gloves, made her entrance as a debutante in 1922.

The daughter of Colonel Robert Montgomery, head of a wealthy and ancient Philadelphia family, she immediately made an impact. That evening she received four marriage proposals - none of which she accepted. The following year she met "an older man" at a Main Line dinner party, the 24-year-old Edgar Scott, heir to the Pennsylvania Railroad fortune (and an old classmate of Philip Barry). After a dozen dates they decided to marry, but her parents insisted they wait nine months. "I always knew what I wanted, and so did Edgar. We both had the idea from the start that marriage should be something that lasts forever. And it did." It was inevitably described as the Society Wedding of the Year, and exhaustively chronicled by the press down to the orange blossoms that banked the church.

The couple moved into Orchard Lodge, a 1720 fieldstone house which her father had given her as a wedding present. It lies on the Montgomerys' 750-acre Ardrossan estate on the Main Line, only a mile across an enormous lawn from "the big house", the 45-room Georgian mansion where Hope had grown up. As a young wife, Hope Scott began to feature on the New York Couture Group's annual list of best-dressed women, and patronised the salons of many famous names, both in New York and Paris, such as Mainbocher, Falkenstein and Piguet. Her beauty and her slim, angular figure (size eight throughout her life) was much photographed and painted. Cecil Beaton took several portraits of her, and Augustus John painted her twice during her visit to Ireland in 1930. "Though I was sitting for Augustus John, I did not lack exercise. Most of his models found themselves doing a good bit of sprinting round the studio," she later recalled. One night John was prevented from climbing into her bed by the presence of a bolster beside her, which he angrily mistook for a fellow painter staying in the house.

The Scotts entertained, and were entertained, in a grand manner. "Everybody had so much money - there were so few taxes. People gave grand dinner parties and dances: women wore wonderful dresses and men came in fine evening clothes," she remembered. "It's a way of life that's completely gone now. It was really an imitation of Edwardian days in England. It was all quite artificial.

"When Phil told me he had written this new play, and that Katharine Hepburn would play me, I thought it was great fun, but I really didn't pay that much attention. I don't really think Tracy Lord was like me, except that she was very energetic and motivated." Barry took his idea for a comedy, based on the glamorous figure of Hope Scott, to Katharine Hepburn - who had made a great success of the society girl with brains and beauty in the film version of his play *Holiday*. His proposal came at just the right moment for Hepburn: her career as an actress both on Broadway and in Hollywood was at a turning point. Her films, including some which we now consider among her finest, *Bringing Up Baby* and *Holiday*, were not commercial successes, and the studios considered Hepburn too independent and unconventional.

Shortly after *Bringing Up Baby's* release, Harry Brandt, president of the Independent Theatre Owners of America, published as an advertisement a list of stars who were "box-office poison"; Hepburn's name was at the top. She was in good company, with Fred Astaire, Joan Crawford, Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo, but the publicity damaged Hepburn in the eyes of both studios and public, and after being offered a very B-movie project, she bought her way out of her contract with RKO, vowing to return only on her own terms.

Hepburn liked the idea for *The Philadelphia Story*, and after she had been rejected for the role of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With The Wind* (the part for an actress in 1938) she threw herself into assisting both the writing and production. Barry developed the play as a vehicle for Hepburn. The focus moved from the family under threat from the press on the eve of Tracy Lord's second wedding, to its heroine's transformation from priggish "ice goddess" to vulnerable and compassionate "real woman".

Hepburn, like Hope Scott, was of wealthy East Coast patrician stock, but of an entirely different stamp. Her mother was a Houghton, a member of one of the leading business dynasties in the United States: Hepburn and her cousins today share a family fortune of around \$500 million. Kit Houghton Hepburn, a strong-minded and independent woman, chose a husband against her family's wishes. He was Tom Hepburn, a surgeon, the son of an Episcopalian preacher - impoverished but of good family. Their first child, Katharine, grew up in Hartford, Connecticut, as sporty and outdoorsy as Hope Scott, but also in a household that was filled with books and radical ideas - campaigns for female suffrage, family planning, prevention of venereal disease. Educated at the Ivy League college Bryn Mawr, Hepburn also took pride in belonging to the breed of Connecticut Yankees - clever, principled, disciplined, and smart as a whip.

Barry turned the part of Tracy Lord into a showcase for Hepburn's character, wit and intelligence. The critic David Thomson wrote: "Like Jane Austen's Emma Woodhouse, she was a moral being, sometimes at odds with herself, deluded or mistaken, but able to correct herself out of a grave and resilient honesty. Nobody on the screen could be so funny and so moving in making a fool of herself, or so touching in reclaiming her dignity."

There were difficulties raising money for the Broadway production, but eventually half the costs were met by Howard Hughes, at the time the richest and most eligible bachelor in the United States. He and Hepburn had had a summer affair in 1937, which, after much

speculation about marriage, had dwindled into good friendship. Presciently, Hughes suggested that Hepburn should obtain the film rights to the play, and eventually bought them for her.

The Philadelphia Story opened at the Shubert Theatre in New York on March 29, 1939. The audience loved it, and the critics complied with rave reviews. Hope Scott commented after the first night: "We were thrilled. But I was amazed because I didn't think we were all that interesting to write about." The public disagreed. Its final takings (for 415 performances) were over \$ 1,500,000 - which was good news for Hepburn, since she had foregone any salary in return for 10 per cent of the gross.

Within weeks of the opening, offers were arriving from Hollywood for the screen rights. Hepburn finally accepted \$250,000 from MGM, not the highest bid, but MGM would give her approval of her leading men and director. She naturally chose George Cukor to direct (he was a key supporter of Hepburn's film career and had directed her in *Bill of Divorcement* and *Holiday*). For leading men she wanted Spencer Tracy and Clark Gable, but neither was available. She settled for Cary Grant, who insisted on top billing (which he got), and James Stewart. The Bristol-born Grant eventually gave his entire fee of \$ 150,000 to the British war effort.

The film opened to enormous critical acclaim and broke box-office records around the country. Among its Oscar nominations in 1940 were Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress. In the end only James Stewart (Best Actor) and Donald Ogden Stewart (Best Screenplay) won. Hepburn lost to Ginger Rogers, but there was no doubt that it was her picture. The slur of "box-office poison" had finally been refuted. Hepburn had made the part of Tracy Lord so much her own that it might have seemed hubris for anyone to try to compete.

But when MGM decided to add Cole Porter to *The Philadelphia Story*, and make a musical called *High Society*, Grace Kelly had just become engaged to Prince Rainier of Monaco and thus become the most famous Philadelphian in the world. In her short film career between 1951 and 1956, Grace Kelly became Hollywood's own princess. As with Hepburn, anything she did reeked of class. In fact, although she came from a prominent and wealthy family in Philadelphia, Grace Kelly was not part of the city's exclusive society. How could she be - an Irish-American Catholic, whose brilliantly successful but self-made father had begun his career as a bricklayer?

Kelly later revealed to her friend Judy Kanter that it had been one of her dreams to "come out" as a debutante at the Philadelphia Assemblies Ball in a white dress and elbow-length white kid gloves, as Hope Montgomery had. But that had been an impossible fantasy. As her biographer, Robert Lacey, observes, she "was an outsider, an excluded observer of a world that was held to be the ultimate in terms of class and privilege - which may be one reason why she made such a good job of mimicking the style and customs of that world in her later life".

Kelly, also, was famously described as a "snow-covered volcano" by Alfred Hitchcock. The director knew so well how to hint on the screen at the passion beneath the pure

exterior, just as the besotted Spy journalist Macaulay Connor delightedly discovers the "fires banked down, hearthfires and holocausts" in the champagne-fuelled Tracy Lord.

In the event, Cole Porter's music filled the gap between Kelly's creditable performance and the memory of Hepburn's virtuoso one, and the 1956 film of *High Society* was a huge success. Such was the glamour of Kelly's Tracy Lord, that in Britain, a generation of now-thirtysomethings were named after her. The critic and star-worshipper Kenneth Tynan had already named his daughter Tracy in 1952 - and had taken care to have Katharine Hepburn as the godmother. For him, of the three versions, Tracy Lord would always be Hepburn: "the keeper of the flame, the woman of the year, Adam's rib, and the star-spangled girl".

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House so grand, even Tinseltown had to tone it down

by DAVID O'REILLY
Inquirer Staff Writer
Philadelphia Inquirer
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A woman with a history (and some of it true), Hope Montgomery Scott... was the star of Philadelphia society for most of the 20th century.

We will not see the likes of Hope Scott, or Ardrossan, again.

Tall and thin, aristocratic but free-spirited, Scott was the star of Philadelphia's high society for most of the 20th century.

And Ardrossan - her family's vast Radnor estate, with its 50-room manor house - was her playground.

She and her husband, Edgar, rode horses; hunted foxes; dined with dukes, millionaires and movie stars; and threw some of the swankiest parties on the Main Line.

So fairy-tale glamorous was Scott that playwright Philip Barry used her as the model for Tracy Lord, the central character of his 1939 Broadway hit, *The Philadelphia Story*, played by Katharine Hepburn.

But when MGM went to turn the show into a movie in 1940, the producers took one look at Ardrossan - and froze.

Moviegoers, MGM realized, would never believe that an American socialite, even fictional, lived on so grand a scale. So the sets were modeled instead on an upper-middle-class home on Merion Avenue in Merion.

"I've had the most wonderful life," Scott marveled in April 1994, shortly before her 90th birthday. She had lost some of her vision, though not because of age. "I hit myself in the eye with a champagne cork last year," she said with a laugh. "Can you believe it?"

Scott, who died the next year, grew up Helen Hope Montgomery, one of four children of socially ambitious investment banker Robert L. Montgomery.

As a teenager he had resolved to restore the once-prosperous Montgomerys to prominence. By 30, he was acquiring land in Villanova and Radnor. He named his tract for the town in Scotland from which his family hailed: Ardrossan (accent on the *dross*).

In 1910, the elegant height of the Edwardian Age, Montgomery turned to architect Horace Trumbauer for an appropriately majestic manor house.

Trumbauer, who later designed the Philadelphia Museum of Art, created a Georgian-style brick edifice with marble staircases, balustraded terraces, and a main floor of foyers, dining rooms and a ballroom that all opened onto one another.

"It was a big, friendly house," Scott recalled 12 years ago.

Although shy as a child, she blossomed in her teens, and had to fend off four offers of marriage at her debutante ball. At age 19, in 1923, she married Edgar Scott, heir to the Pennsylvania Railroad fortune, in what the newspapers called the "society wedding of the year."

Edgar was soon a partner at his father-in-law's brokerage firm, renamed Montgomery & Scott. The couple made their home in one of Ardrossan's 35 buildings: a handsome 1720 stone farmhouse called Orchard Lodge.

Although modest compared with the manor house, it had six bedrooms, staff quarters, a drawing room with a massive fireplace, and a dining room lined with some of her many riding trophies and a painting by Edouard Manet.

It was there, during a now-legendary dinner party, that one of the staff whispered to Scott that the butler had just committed suicide.

"Has everyone been served?" she whispered back. Informed that everyone had, she politely excused herself from the table to attend to the matter downstairs.

For big parties, though, her family turned to the "big house," and after her father's death in 1949, she became its chatelaine.

It was costly to run, and the family eventually put some of the acreage in a trust to help with taxes. She and Edgar later sold off a Mary Cassatt drawing for \$50,000 to pay for repaving the nearly half-mile driveway.

Still, they held on to Ardrossan, flinging open its doors most often for her charities, including black-tie dinner fund-raisers for the Devon Horse Show (she was its longtime president and director) and Bryn Mawr Hospital.

Scott, who stood ramrod straight even into her 90s, played hostess at the head of the receiving line, greeting the guests so warmly ("divine" and "marvelous" were among her favorite adjectives) that each was left feeling that, without his or her presence, the party would have been a flop.

Traversing Persian rugs once trod by the likes of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, W. Averill Harriman and Hepburn, guests passed through paneled rooms illuminated by the glow of great art. In pleasant weather, drinks were served on a terrace surveying hills rolling to the horizon.

A visitor might have expected to hear a voice shout "Cut!" and see this dream scene end.

But it didn't.

Until now.

How the World Really Works

Author: Okrent, Daniel **Source:** Fortune 152, no. 6 (Sep 19, 2005): p. 48-54 **ISSN:** 0015-8259 **Number:** 896827681 **Copyright:** Copyright Time Incorporated Sep 19, 2005

In 1930 Henry Luce created an entirely new kind of magazine ...

Its mission was simple, but absurdly ambitious: to explain...

Only one man could have written the sentence that appeared in that long-ago prospectus for a new magazine: "Accurately, vividly and concretely to describe Modern business is the greatest journalistic assignment in history."

The inverted syntax, the cadenced march of adverbs, the unembarrassed superlative offered without the slightest hiccup of qualification (not to mention the weird capital in "Modern")-each betrayed the hand of the 31-year-old Henry Robinson Luce. Six years had passed since Luce and his business partner, Briton Hadden, had sent Time out into a world that had evidently been waiting for it. Their corporate treasury was full; the U.S. economy had been rocketing forward for nearly a decade; their confidence was ripe. "We will not be over-optimistic," read a cautious-for Luce-memo to the Time Inc. board of directors about the new business magazine he wanted to launch. "We will recognize that this business slump may last as long as an entire year."

That memo was written in November 1929. If it seemed an unpropitious time to start a magazine about business-much less a magazine priced at a staggering \$1 an issue, when you could buy the Sunday New York Times for a nickel-you wouldn't have known it from the way Luce and company proceeded. Only four months passed between the initial investigation of the idea and the Time Inc. board of directors' 8-2 vote to proceed; the first issue, clad in its own cardboard box, appeared just eight months later. There were no focus groups, no trial issues. Luce's research, such as it was, seemed to consist of a flock of letters he sent out to a long roster of plutocrats, describing a magazine that existed only in his head. The first issue, like those that followed for more than a decade, was like no magazine anyone had ever seen-an expansive 11 inches by 14 inches, its pages decorated by the great photographers and illustrators of the time, the paper itself so thick and creamy you could almost taste it.

It read like no other magazine as well. Partly that was due to a roster of writers who were just starting out: James Agee, not yet the master he would become of virtually every known form of prose; Archibald MacLeish, not yet the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and playwright; Dwight Macdonald, probably already a Trotskyite (which made no difference to Luce, who valued talent over ideology) but not yet one of the outstanding cultural critics of the age. It was really Luce's conception that made the magazine distinctive, however. As an early promotional document promised, FORTUNE contained no inspirational essays, no "defending" of business, no "ghost-written banalities by Big Names"-none of the thin, wan Babbitry that characterized the business press of the day.

In fact, Luce wrote, "If Babbitt doesn't like literature he doesn't have to read it." What he and his editors sought to do was nothing less than explain the way the world worked.

FORTUNE stories took many forms: personality profiles, dynastic sagas, chronicles of scientific advances. But the primary engine for explaining how the world works was a mighty vehicle known in the office as the "company story"-a long, vivid portrait of one of the major businesses of the day, vast in sweep and intimate in detail, encompassing everything you could possibly want to know about AT&T or RCA, the Pennsylvania Railroad or Coca-Cola. Articles like those were the magazine's "pièce de resistance," said managing editor (1931-35) Ralph Ingersoll. "Our racket is telling how people make money, make fortunes." The very first one, on Swift & Co., included a full-page illustration of a hog, detailing how each inch and ounce of it would be used for various commercial, industrial, and nutritional purposes (thereby enhancing the Swiftian fortunes). "The reason we put that pig there," Luce said later, "was that we wanted to establish that we were not talking about abstractions but real things, like 'here's a damn pig.'"

Great magazines had been built on visions much less clear than that one.

Like American business itself, FORTUNE evolved over the next three-quarters of a century. Wartime paper shortages reduced its size and its lavishness. Luce's postwar agenda led him to reposition it as a magazine on "a mission ... to assist in the successful development of American business enterprise at home and abroad." Subsequent editors accommodated (or led) their readers as they became more interested in the intersection of business and government, or the democratization of the capital markets, or the transformative power of technology.

But even as FORTUNE has changed and prospered, it's hard to imagine any modern public company, including Time Inc., executing a similar launch today. These days most publishers approach investment in a new magazine not as the manifestation of a noble idea-"the greatest journalistic assignment in history"-but as the product of cold-eyed market testing. As bizarre as it may seem, the worst depression in American history provided a more congenial atmosphere for an ambitious new magazine than it would probably find today.

Still, genetics is destiny, and this magazine's current generation of writers, photographers, editors, and designers inescapably bear the DNA of that original FORTUNE. They still believe in the craft of storytelling; they still see virtue in the fine art of deconstructing complexity; they demonstrate, even more than their predecessors, a dedication to relentless reporting unencumbered by partisan agenda, uncolored by any mission other than pure journalism.

I'm fairly certain that Henry Luce wouldn't recognize the world of business that FORTUNE covers today. His American Century has given way to a Global Century, his all too heroic tycoons have been replaced all too often by CEOs whose feet are made of basest clay. But I do think he'd recognize his original vision in the magazine you hold in your hands. If we can no longer be charmed by a detailed map of the parts of a hog, we're compensated instead with a vastly more knowing and more sharp-edged approach to the

world of business—a fortnightly acknowledgment of the sophistication of the magazine's readers; the expertise of its journalists; and a 75-year tradition of looking at the world through the lens of business every bit as "accurately, vividly, and concretely" as its founder would have hoped.

The Art of Covering Business

Author: Okrent, Daniel; Spencer, Theodore **Source:** Fortune 141, no. 5 (Mar 6, 2000): p. F90-F99 **ISSN:** 0015-8259 **Number:** 50682524 **Copyright:** Copyright Time Incorporated Mar 6, 2000

Henry Luce wanted FORTUNE to be more than a great business magazine. He wanted it to be beautiful.

There had never been a magazine like it.

From the very first issue-actually, from the moment the notion popped into Henry Luce's head-FORTUNE was going to be different. And in February 1929, when Luce submitted the idea for his new magazine to the Time Inc. board of directors, he quoted Leonardo da Vinci. "The eye," he wrote, "giveth to man a more perfect knowledge than doth the ear. That which is seen is more authentic than that which is heard."

"Consequently," Luce added, "the new magazine will be as beautiful a magazine as exists in the United States. If possible, the undisputed most beautiful."

And so it would.

The designer recruited for the project, Thomas Maitland Cleland, was one of America's foremost authorities on both type and design. While drinking with managing editor Parker LloydSmith one night at Bruno's, a speakeasy on East 12th Street, Cleland sketched on the tablecloth his vision of the first cover, right down to the serifs on the logotype. The illustration was remarkably close to the cover that would appear on the inaugural issue in February 1930 (seen here). What the fragment of linen doesn't show is that Cleland drew it upside down-so that Lloyd-Smith, sitting across the table, wouldn't have to turn his head or rise from his chair to appreciate it.

It was Luce's good fortune that Cleland had absolutely no interest in staying on to be art director of the magazine once he had completed the design template for the first issue. That task fell to his protegee Eleanor Treacy, the woman who comprised the magazine's entire art staff for much of the first two years. As it turned out, she was an art director of genius.

What ran on FORTUNE's cover during Treacy's nine-year tenure was several galleries' worth of terrific representational art, as often as not unrelated to the issue's contents. Treacy's faith in talent was catholic: She could get fine work from the famous (Diego Rivera, A.M. Cassandre), or she could discover and nurture the unknown, like Antonio Petruccelli, a designer of pajamas who would become one of the magazine's most prolific cover contributors.

Treacy's successor was Francis Brennan, who moved the magazine in a somewhat modernist direction. He encouraged a more documentary style, commissioned the

magazine's first cover photograph, and worked with the editors to begin to tie cover subjects to a story-often the most important story-featured inside.

The magazine changed completely after World War II. There was still handsome art on the cover, but FORTUNE had to jettison the formula that had shaped its beginning: the one of sheer, indulgent luxury.

Margaret Bourke-White's Early Works

USA Today Magazine, 01617389, Apr2003, Vol. 131, Issue 2695

Margaret Bourke-White's early development led to her emergence as one of the 20th century's best-known female photographers. She strode brazenly into a field dominated by men to become not only a famous photojournalist, but a celebrity personality. Trained in modernist compositional techniques, Bourke-White photographed with an artist's eye, discovering beauty in the raw aesthetic of American industry and its factories. She romanticized the power of machines through close-ups, dramatic cross-lighting, and unusual perspectives, presenting industrial environments as artful compositions. These images revealed her grasp of modern design and aesthetics, catching the eye of corporate executives and magazine publishers, ultimately landing her the position of Life magazine's first cover photographer.

While many photographers in the 1910s and 1920s, including Paul Strand and Lewis Hine, were drawn to the subject of American industry, Bourke-White alone celebrated the graphic power of its raw machinery over the human element that drove it. Her 1929 photograph "Chrysler, Gears" emphasizes the immensity of the gear--the worker, placed barely inside the frame, there only to provide a sense of scale.

By 1928, Bourke-White's photographs were appearing in newspapers and magazines across the country. From 1928 until 1936, she supported herself through corporate and magazine assignments and advertising shoots. Her magazine assignments, though less lucrative than the corporate ones, allowed for abstraction and compositional freedom. In these forceful works, it is apparent that she understood the drama of the diagonal and the curve. She framed many of her photographs so that similarly shaped forms appeared repeatedly on a diagonal across the field of view and seemed to continue into infinite space beyond. In "Oliver Chilled Plow: Plow Blades," a close-up of the shiny steel surfaces verges on complete abstraction.

In 1929, Bourke-White was invited to become the "star photographer" for the new Luce publication, Fortune magazine. Henry Luce's plan was to use photography to document all aspects of business and industry, an idea that had never been tried before. Bourke-White's career is unimaginable without her relationship with Luce's media empire. Her swashbuckling style, ingenious and relentless self-promotion in an age that admired self-made men and their fortunes, reverence for industry itself, and photographic homages to capitalism and technology made her the perfect lens for Luce's vision.

Eager to combine her skills in photography with a growing social conscience, her partnership with Luce in 1936 provided just the outlet, and Bourke-White became one of four photographers on the staff of Life. The magazine took a human-interest angle, and Bourke-White's first assignment, in October, 1936, was to photograph the construction of the Fort Peck Dam in New Deal, Mont. The inaugural issue used her image, "New Deal, Montana: Fort Peck Dam," on the cover, and devoted the nine-page lead story, "Franklin Roosevelt's Wild West," to her images of life in the town of New Deal. Released on Nov. 23, 1936, the initial issue of Life and its use of Bourke-White's photographs set the tone for the magazine for years to come.

Glossary

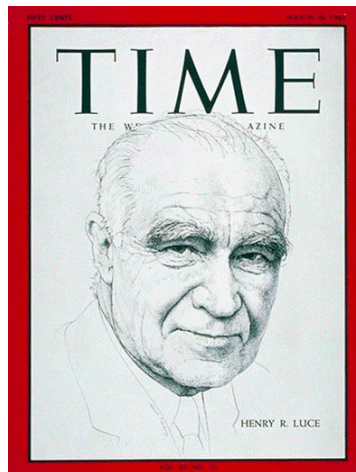
Act I

Cadwalader: A prominent Philadelphia family tied to John Cadwalader, Brigadier-General for the Pennsylvania militia during the American Revolution. The Cadwaladers were significant members of Pennsylvania’s governmental, educational, medical and financial institutions. Barry jokes about the large family size, but he also establishes the Lord family as important by having so many Cadwaladers on the guest list.

Old Dutch Muffin Ear, Circa 1810: Popular during the Victorian era, these sugar shakers came in a variety of styles. This would have been a very traditional, expensive wedding gift.

Sidney Kidd: Barry’s fictionalized Henry Luce, who founded *Time* magazine in 1923, *Fortune* in 1930, and *Life* in 1936. A fierce anti-communist, he fought the democratic party and often fired or suppressed the work of dissenters on his staff. Intellectuals and artists often mocked the style of journalism, both the writing and content of the articles, in Luce publications. One parodist wrote, “Backward ran sentences until reeled the mind.” Luce popularized compound words like “sexational” and “socialite” and foreign words such as “tycoon” and “pundit.” (*Capstone Encyclopaedia of Business*) Luce married the playwright, Clare Boothe (author of *The Women*), in 1935.

Dime, also Spy: Thinly veiled references to *Time* and *Life* magazines.



Drexels, Biddles, Cassats: Tracy refers to important, long-established families in Philadelphia, when she wonders why her family was chosen instead of one of these famous, wealthy families. The Drexels are often associated with Anthony Joseph Drexel (1826-1893), one of the most influential financiers of the 19th century and founder of Drexel University. The Philadelphia Biddles are descendents of the Quakers William Biddle and Sarah Kemp, who immigrated to the United States in 1681. The Biddles were

connected to many Pennsylvania governmental, military, and financial institutions. The most prominent member of this family, (actually spelled Cassatt), was Alexander Cassatt, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad from 1899-1906.

Destiny Magazine: Modeled on *Fortune* magazine, an important business magazine established by Henry Luce in 1930. The magazine was very expensive, one dollar compared to the fifteen cent price tag on *Time*. It was aimed at presenting the entrepreneurial class with Luce's view of moral leadership and national purpose. At this time, the magazine was noted for its lengthy articles on finance and industry and was distinguished for its elaborate photography and artwork. Though it was considered more serious than *Time* or *Life*, it included articles on the contemporary elite with such titles as "Café Society" and "Debutante Budgets." By 1939, *Fortune* had a circulation of 120,000, a number comprised of business executives and members of the *Social Register*.



George Lorimer and the *Post*: Lorimer, editor of *The Saturday Evening Post* from 1898-1936. Under his direction, the magazine reached a readership of three million.



***The Saturday Evening Post*:** The weekly publication was generally conservative in outlook. It primarily published fiction and current event stories for mainstream American audiences. The magazine popularized the work of Normal Rockwell, whose wholesome covers and illustrations appeared between 1916-1963.

Jeffersonian democrat: A person who feared that unlimited growth of industry would lead to a large working class that could be easily manipulated or subjugated by the wealthy. Jeffersonian democrats also believed in the expansion of liberty and education.

Monticello: Jefferson's home on his 500-acre Virginia plantation.



Contax camera: A high grade 35mm rangefinder camera first introduced by the German optical firm, Zeiss-Ikon, in 1932. This was a quick, easy-to-use camera with a broad range of shutter speeds, ideal for photojournalism. Basic improvements in the 1936 version, the Contax II, positioned this camera above its competitor, Leica, for nearly 20 years.

Macaulay: When Mike explains, “My father taught English history,” he means that his namesake was Thomas Babington Macaulay, the author of *History of England*, published in the 1850s.

“The scrapples eat Biddle”: Tracy is making a joke about the famous conservative Biddle family. Scrapples are scraps of pork mixed with cornmeal, formed into a loaf, sliced and fried. It is a regional food of New England.

Guffey Coal Act: The Bituminous Coal Act of 1935, later revised in 1937, sought to stabilize the troubled coal industry and regulate the industry with price controls and labor protections. Due to the complexities of administration, the act was largely ineffective in regulating the industry. Congress allowed the act to expire in 1943.

The Main Line: The collection of fashionable Philadelphia suburbs named after the Main Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad.



Suburban development along the Main Line increased substantially in the 1870s. The Pennsylvania Railroad “bought up a large tract of land near the present Bryn Mawr station, marked off streets, planted inevitable suburban saplings, and set up its own private zoning regulations which included minimum set-back and house value limits” from E. Digby Baltzell’s *An American Business Aristocracy* (1962).

Bryn Mawr: A private, elite women’s college in the suburbs of Philadelphia. Barry inserted a joke about Hepburn when, in the play, Mrs. Lord mentions that Tracy attended the college. Dinah retorts, “until she got bounced out.” While Hepburn was at Bryn Mawr, she was suspended for 8 days for smoking cigarettes in her room. She did, however, graduate from the college.

Act II

The Red General: This is a reference to Stalin. The play makes several references to communism, usually in connection with Mike and his distaste for the upper class. The language of communism was popular at the time, as American communism reached its height in the 1930s. See Harvey Klehr’s *The Heyday of American Communism: the Depression Decade* (1984) for a good discussion.

Dime lingo: Sandy refers to the distinctive journalistic style encouraged by *Time* magazine editors. It relied on the use of compound adjectives and unnecessary adverbs, unusual ordering, and lengthy sentences. An example: “Student Mumford’s long correspondence and friendship with Geddes did not end until 1932, when the great-bearded, great-craniumed and voluble Scot died in France with a knighthood fresh upon him.” The style was often parodied.

Corona: One of the best selling typewriters from 1912-1941, it folded easily for travel. It was becoming outmoded at the time the play was written.

“Seventy Times Seven Fat Kine Has He”: From Genesis 40:21 -- And the lean and the ill favored kine did eat up the first seven fat kine.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832): German poet, novelist, dramatist, philosopher, and scientist. One of the greatest and most prolific writers of the Romantic age.

Lèse majesté: French expression, from the Latin *Laesa maiestas* or *Laesae maiestatis* (*crimen*), (crime of) *injury to the Majesty*; in English, also *lese majesty* or *leze majesty*. The crime of violating majesty, an offense against the dignity of a reigning sovereign or against a state.

Act III

Wilkes-Barre: City in northeast Pennsylvania, founded in 1769. In the mid-nineteenth century, large deposits of anthracite coal were discovered in and around the town, leading to a major revitalization of the city and region. Anthracite was highly valued and used almost exclusively for home heating, due to its high carbon content and low smoke residue. By the 1930s, Wilkes-Barre had become one of the great centers of coal production in the U.S.

Stinger: A cocktail composed of a 2 to 1 ratio of brandy to white or green crème de menthe.

Miss Pommery '26: Pommery, founded in 1856, is one of the world's premiere champagne producers.

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