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Every Week Essays

Associated Sunday Magazines and the Origins of *Every Week*

by Melissa Homestead

In December 1903, publishing entrepreneur Joseph Palmer Knapp launched the Associated Sunday Magazines (ASM) to produce a Sunday supplement magazine for nine newspapers in major metropolitan centers that were not part of the Hearst or Pulitzer syndicates (these syndicates published their Sunday magazines for distribution by their affiliates). [\[note 1\]](#) Knapp printed a supplement for each independent newspaper, altering only the title page so that each newspaper could market the content as its own (e.g. *The Washington Sunday Star Magazine*). In 1906, with several other investors, Knapp acquired the Crowell Publishing Company, becoming a majority shareholder. Although the affiliates in the ASM syndicate changed over time, distribution was primarily in the Northeast, Midatlantic, and Midwest. In 1914, the ASM boasted to potential advertisers that its “cooperatively and simultaneously published Sunday Editions” of twelve Sunday papers in Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Washington, Minneapolis, Buffalo, Detroit, Baltimore, Cleveland, and Cincinnati was “1,500,000 in round numbers.” [\[note 2\]](#)

Despite this boast, by 1914, ASM was in trouble. World War I began in Europe in 1914, and the cooperative began losing affiliates as a result of the economic and material pressures of the war. Many affiliated papers canceled, and more were planning to exit the syndicate. In response, Knapp “conceived the idea of saving national circulation and the character of the ASM” [\[note 3\]](#) by launching a new weekly, *Every Week Magazine*, which would duplicate the contents of the ASM but be distributed through other channels. In 1914, the Crowell Publishing Company hired Bruce Barton, an ambitious 27-year-old Amherst College graduate with experience in publishing, sales, and advertising, to carry out Knapp’s plan. [\[note 4\]](#) When *Every Week* finally launched in 1915, the Every Week Corporation, a separate entity, controlled it; in addition to being editor in chief of the magazine, Barton was an officer of the corporation (secretary).

As ASM explained to advertisers in April 1915, despite the loss of traditional affiliates and concomitant decrease in circulation, the launch of *Every Week* would restore and even increase aggregate circulation. Supplementing ASM’s distribution with Sunday newspapers, *Every Week* would be distributed: “1. As an independent weekly whose local sale will be supervised and published by important newspapers in various sections of the country....2. By direct sales from news-stands at 3¢ per copy. 3. By carriers direct to the

homes...4. By direct subscription, 52 numbers at \$1.00 per year.” The ASM and *Every Week*, advertisers were assured, “combined will give a complete and thorough national distribution.” [\[note 5\]](#) Advertisers were given the option of buying space in one or both versions of the magazine. [\[note 6\]](#) As a result, ASM magazines and *Every Week* are very similar, but not identical—they sometimes carried different advertisements, necessitating shifts of editorial content within or between issues as space considerations dictated. [\[note 7\]](#)

This digital edition presents the *Every Week* face of the magazine, the first issue of which appeared on May 3, 1915. By the time of its demise, *Every Week* claimed circulation of more than 600,000, making it a significant magazine phenomenon of its day. ASM, however, continued to lose affiliates, and by early 1918, the ASM face of the magazine had all but vanished. [\[note 8\]](#)

1 Associated Sunday Magazines, “Five Years Old” (advertisement), *McClure’s Magazine* 1 January 1909: 118. John Arberry Haney, “A History of the Nationally Syndicated Sunday Magazine Supplements” (PhD diss Univ. of Missouri, 1953), 169. [\[back\]](#)

2 Associated Sunday Magazines, Advertisement, *Printers’ Ink*, 1 Oct. 1914, 22. [\[back\]](#)

3 Bruce Barton to Charles H. Brower, 1953, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI. [\[back\]](#)

4 “Bruce Barton Now with Crowell Pub. Co.,” *Printers’ Ink*, 22 Oct. 1914, 85. [\[back\]](#)

5 Associated Sunday Magazines, Advertisement, *Printers’ Ink*, 8 Apr. 1915, 40-41. [\[back\]](#)

6 Ibid. [\[back\]](#)

7 This observation is based on a comparison of the *Washington Sunday Star Magazine* with *Every Week* and a review of “Volume of Advertising” information published every month in *Printers’ Ink*, a trade publication. Early in *Every Week*’s run, *Printers’ Ink* published information only for ASM. By early 1916, *Printers’ Ink* listed a combined figure for “Every Week and Associated,” and then finally listed separate statistics for each beginning in April 1916, making visible the difference in the quantity of advertising published in each. [\[back\]](#)

8 By early 1918, *Printers' Ink* listed advertising volume only for *Every Week*, with no statistic for ASM. [\[back\]](#)