Every Week Essays: Every Week’s Editorial Staff

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**Every Week Essays**

**Every Week's Editorial Staff**

by Melissa Homestead

Bruce Barton was the only member of the magazine’s editorial staff whose name regularly appeared in the magazine, appended to his editorials inside the front cover. There was no masthead listing other editorial staff and their titles. However, the names and details of the lives of the ever-changing cast of characters who labored anonymously behind the scenes can be traced in the personal papers and published writings of Barton and staff members Brenda Ueland, Freda Kirchwey, and Lella Secor.

Barton, like many of the staff editors and writers who toiled anonymously behind the scenes at *Every Week*, was a Midwesterner transplanted to New York City, then as now the publishing center of the nation. Three staff members worked as journalists in Minneapolis before joining *Every Week*, and one in Michigan and Seattle. From his editorial bully pulpit in New York City, Barton became a prominent voice of Middle American values and the capitalist ethos.

Unlike Barton, however, most *Every Week* staff members became Greenwich Village bohemians, whose lives sometimes contradicted the magazine’s politics and values. They lived in Greenwich Village, wrote plays staged in its little theaters, violated norms of sexual behavior, organized pacifist demonstrations in Washington Square against U.S. involvement in World War I, and joined the feminist luncheon club Heterodoxy. They were also personally connected before they began work on the magazine (they had known each other in college and worked for the same newspapers), and developed additional social connections while working at *Every Week* that outlasted the magazine.

**Editors**

**Bruce Barton (Editor in Chief):** Born on August 4, 1886 in Robbins, Tennessee, Barton moved as a child to Oak Park, Illinois, when his father was called as a minister of the First Congregational Church of Oak Park. Barton attended Berea College in Kentucky for a year before transferring to Amherst College, graduating with the class of 1907. After jobs with several short-lived periodicals, he was hired by P. F. Collier & Son, New York publishers, to supervise their national door-to-door sales force. As part of his work there, he devised promotional strategies and wrote advertising copy for the books his salesman peddled. In his free time, he wrote extensively for national magazines, a practice he would continue for the rest of his life. In 1914, the Crowell Publishing Co. hired him to launch *Every Week* Magazine. When *Every Week* ceased publication in 1918, Barton supervised publicity for the United War Work
Committee. After the Armistice, he and two colleagues from the United War Work Committee, Roy Durstine and Alex Osborn, founded the advertising agency Barton, Durstine, and Osborn, which would later merge with George Batten Company to become Batten, Barton, Durstine, and Osborn (BBDO). Barton authored the phenomenal bestseller *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925), which portrayed Jesus Christ as a modern business executive and advertising man. He served two terms as a Republican in the U.S. House of Representatives (1937 to 1941), but his 1940 campaign for the U.S. Senate was unsuccessful. He died in New York City in 1967. [note 1]

**Edith Lewis (Managing Editor):** Born in Lincoln, Nebraska, on December 22, 1881, to a transplanted Dartmouth College graduate and lawyer from New Hampshire and an Iowa-born mother from a Rhode Island Quaker family, Lewis earned a year of college credit at the University of Nebraska before transferring to Smith College, in Northampton, Massachusetts, from which she graduated in 1902, with a degree in English. She returned to Nebraska for a year to teach elementary school, but in 1903, she moved to New York City, determined to find a position in publishing. After working several years for the Century Publishing Company, she became an editorial proofreader at *McClure’s Magazine* in 1906, when her friend Willa Cather became an editor there. [note 2] In 1908, Cather and Lewis established their first shared residence, an apartment off Washington Square in Greenwich Village. By the time Lewis left *McClure’s* to take a position at *Every Week* and Associated Sunday Magazines in 1915, she was acting managing editor of *McClure’s*. Her first position at *Every Week* was as assistant managing editor, but by early 1916, she had been promoted to managing editor, the position she held until the magazine’s demise. In 1919, she became an advertising copywriter at the J. Walter Thompson Company, where she worked until her retirement in 1945. [note 3] She remained an important friend and mentor to younger *Every Week* staff members, especially Brenda Ueland and John Chapin Mosher. She died August 11, 1972, in New York City in the Park Avenue apartment she and Cather had shared, having survived Cather by twenty-five years and serving as her literary executor.

**Other Editorial Staff**

**John Colton:** Born in Minnesota on December 31, 1889, his father’s business took the family to Japan. Around 1911, Colton returned to Minnesota to work as a journalist and drama critic at the *Minneapolis Daily News*, [note 4] where Anne Herendeen later became his colleague. He met Brenda Ueland and her family while covering a fundraising party for women’s suffrage held at the Ueland home in August 1912. [note 5] By early 1916, he moved to New York to join the staff of *Every Week*. His stint as full-time staff member at *Every Week* was brief, however. In mid-1916, his National Guard cavalry regiment, Squadron A, was called up during the so-called “Punitive Expedition” against Mexico, and he spent nine months on the border under the command of General John J. Pershing. [note 6] On his return to New York, Colton became a
free-lance contributor to *Every Week*, publishing two short stories in the magazine, but did not return to a full-time staff position. His poor eyesight exempted him from the draft instituted on the U.S. entry into World War I. In the 1920s, he co-authored the sensational and successful Broadway melodrama *Rain* (1922) and singly authored another, *The Shanghai Gesture* (1925) (adapted as a film in 1941). He moved to Hollywood in 1929, where he worked as a screenwriter. [note 7] He died in Gainesville, Texas, on December 28, 1946.

**Anne Herendeen:** Born in Geneva, New York, on April 22, 1888, to a wealthy and socially prominent family, Herendeen graduated from Wells College in Aurora, New York, in 1910. [note 8] Brenda Ueland’s sister Anne was Herendeen’s roommate at Wells, and with the encouragement and support of the Ueland family, Herendeen moved to Minneapolis after college. She cut her teeth as a journalist as a general reporter for the *Minneapolis Daily News*, where John Colton was the drama critic. [note 9] When she moved to New York City in 1914, she quickly became involved in feminist social and political circles, joining the famous Greenwich Village feminist luncheon club Heterodoxy [note 10] and the New York Chapter of the Women’s Peace Party (NYWPP). With Freda Kirchwey, she served as part of the editorial collective for the NYWPP’s short-lived magazine *The Four Lights: An Adventure in Internationalism*. [note 11] Herendeen worked at *Every Week* for its entire three-year run. After *Every Week* ceased publication, she took a paid position at *Everybody’s Magazine* for a year. On the side and with aid of Brenda Ueland, Betty Shannon, and others, she produced a short-lived independent feminist magazine, *Judy*. She married journalist and theater critic Hiram Kelley Moderwell (later spelled Motherwell) on November 15, 1915. [note 12] In late 1919, she moved to Europe with him when he became a foreign correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*. Her two children were born in Europe, and she occasionally contributed to U.S. magazines and newspapers while abroad. The family did not return to live in the United States until 1927. On her return to New York, she worked as at temporary employee at the *J. Walter Thompson Co.* under Edith Lewis, [note 13] but she struggled to re-establish herself professionally, especially after she and Motherwell divorced in 1936. [note 14] She remained friends with and corresponded regularly with Brenda Ueland, Freda Kirchwey, Ruth Pickering, and Lella Secor, ghost-writing a book for Pickering’s brother-in-law, Gifford Pinchot, [note 15] and editing Secor’s book on birth control.[note 16] Her voluminous correspondence with Bruce Barton, which extends into the 1960s, is an important source of information about the operations and staff of *Every Week*. Her death date is not known.

**Freda Kirchwey:** Born in Lake Placid, New York, on September 26, 1893, to a prominent New York City progressive family (her father served as Dean of the Columbia University Law School), Kirchwey graduated from Barnard College, the women’s coordinate college of Columbia, in 1915. [note 17] She and Brenda Ueland were classmates there. [note 18] For a year after graduation, she was employed as a journalist by the New York *Morning Telegraph*. Her quiet
civil “marriage by contract” to Evans Clark in 1915, with their agreement specifying that she would maintain her surname rather than take his, became a minor cause célèbre in New York. When Clark lost his faculty position at Princeton because of his socialist leanings and when their first child died in infancy, they took an apartment in Greenwich Village, and Clark became research director and legislative secretary for the Socialist members of the New York City Board of Alderman. During this period, Kirchwey was active in the New York Chapter of the Women’s Peace Party and served, with Anne Herendeen, on the editorial collective of the chapter’s short-lived magazine, The Four Lights: An Adventure in Internationalism.[note 19] Kirchwey began working at Every Week in late 1917. When it ceased publication, she took a position at the Nation magazine, rising to editor by 1932, a position she held until her retirement in 1955. She died on January 3, 1976, in St. Petersburg, Florida.

**Loren Palmer:** Born in Chateauguay, New York, on March 15, 1881, to a Protestant minister and his wife, Palmer graduated from Wesleyan University in Connecticut in 1903. He began working as a reporter for the New York Sun shortly after graduation and served as assistant city editor and Sunday editor from 1914 to 1917. In 1917, he became an associate editor at Every Week. After Every Week’s demise, he became managing editor of Popular Science Monthly, leaving for a position as associate editor of Collier’s Weekly. He left Collier’s after becoming full editor, then held a series of editorial positions at Everybody’s, The Delineator, Designer, and Liberty magazines. When he died in 1930, he had been editor of Liberty for two years. [note 20]

**John Chapin Mosher:** Born in Ogdensburg, New York, on June 2, 1892, to a doctor and his wife, Mosher graduated from Williams College in Massachusetts in 1914. [note 21] He moved to New York in 1915 to take a staff position at Every Week. He quickly became involved in the avant-garde theater community centered in Greenwich Village. During the first New York season of the Provincetown Players in late 1916 and early 1917, the company staged his one-act plays Sauce for the Emperor and Bored, with Bored sharing a bill with plays by Floyd Dell and Eugene O’Neill. [note 22] In November 1917, Mosher enlisted as a Private in the Medical Corps at the U.S. Base Hospital in Albany. After training at Camp Merritt in New Jersey, he sailed to Liverpool on May 1, 1918, and served in the shell shock ward at the U.S. Base Hospital at Portsmouth England, until February 1919. [note 23] Mosher spent several years of his life aimlessly as a member of the post-war “lost generation.” He placed fiction and essays in magazines and traveled, including to Europe. In 1922, he was living in Paris and socializing with his fellow young American creative artists, composer Virgil Thomson and painter Eugene Chown. [note 24] From 1923 to 1925, he was an English instructor at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. [note 25] By 1926, he had landed back in New York and had joined the staff of a new magazine, The New Yorker. He became the magazine’s first regular film critic in 1928, and he also served for years as the editor responsible for reading the “slush pile”
He contributed short stories to the magazine about community life on Fire Island, where he and his partner Philip Claflin were the first gay property owners in the emerging gay vacation colony at Cherry Grove. His New Yorker short stories about Fire Island were published in book form in 1940 as Celibate at Twilight. He and Edith Lewis remained close friends until his early death from heart disease. He died September 3, 1942, in New York City.

**Ruth Pickering:** Born June 23, 1893, in Elmira, New York, Pickering graduated from Vassar College in 1914. She was a childhood friend of iconic Greenwich Village radicals, brother and sister Max and Crystal Eastman, living for a time in their loosely organized cooperative house on Washington Place. A member of the Greenwich Village feminist luncheon club Heterodoxy with Anne Herendeen, Pickering was a regular free-lance contributor to Every Week and other magazines. She served briefly as dance critic at The Nation, where Freda Kirchwey later worked. In 1919, she married Clifford Pinchot, and she became an associate editor of Arts and Decoration in 1930. She died December 24, 1984.

**Lella Faye Secor:** Born on January 13, 1887, in Battle Creek, Michigan, Secor's family, struggled economically after her father drifted away and left her mother as the family's sole support. While still a teenager, Secor persuaded the Battle Creek Journal to hire her as a reporter. She left journalism long enough to prove up a homestead claim by herself in Washington state, before becoming a reporter for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Secor came to New York in early 1916, fresh off Henry Ford's “Peace Ship” to Europe. She initially signed on to the Peace Ship as a non-partisan journalist. However, she became disillusioned by the scandal-mongering of her fellow journalists and, converted to the pacifist cause, became an official member of the peace delegation. At the end of the trip, armed with letters of introduction from “prominent publishers and literary people” she had met on the expedition, she resolved to stay and work in New York. Sharing Anne Herendeen's feminist and pacifist convictions, Secor and Herendeen began a lifelong friendship when Secor joined the staff of Every Week. Like many other staff members at Every Week, Secor first contributed free-lance and then became a full-time employee. John Colton's mid-1916 National Guard deployment opened up a full-time staff position for the pacifist Secor. In her spare time while employed at Every Week, she worked to organize the American Neutral Conference Committee, which advocated for continuous neutral mediation between the warring nations in Europe. She resigned her position at Every Week in December 1916 to devote herself to peace work full time. She married Philip Florence, a British economist, and moved with him to England in 1921. Deeply involved in promoting access to birth control, she published Birth Control on Trial (1930), which Anne Herendeen edited. She died in England in January 1966.
Betty Shannon: Not much is known about the nature and length of Shannon’s work for Every Week. [note 37] After Every Week’s demise, she was on the editorial staff of the short-lived feminist magazine Judy with Anne Herendeen and Brenda Ueland. She appears to have contributed to a variety of magazines in the late teens and the 1920s and 1930s, particularly profiles of celebrities.

Brenda Ueland: Born on October 24, 1891, into a large and progressive Minneapolis family (her father was a judge, and her mother a prominent suffrage organizer), Ueland’s sister Anne had been Anne Herendeen’s Wells College classmate. [note 38] Brenda Ueland began her college career at Wells but transferred to Barnard College, the women’s coordinate college of Columbia University, from which she graduated in 1913. [note 39] After graduation, she returned to Minneapolis and worked as a reporter, first for the Minneapolis Tribune and then for the St. Paul Daily News. [note 40] She returned to New York in 1914 to study art, sharing a tiny apartment in Greenwich Village with Herendeen. Their hair cropped and wearing fashions of their own creation, they frequented Village bohemian haunts together. [note 41] Through the influence of her friend, who was already on the staff of Every Week, Ueland began working at the magazine as a free-lance contributor, paid by the piece, in September 1915; she eventually became a full-time staff member. In 1916, Ueland married Wallace Benedict, with whom she had been carrying on an affair for some time while he was married to Crystal Eastman.[note 42] In the summer of 1917, Ueland followed her husband to Philadelphia, but continued to contribute to Every Week in a free-lance capacity. [note 43] Her husband was notably unsuccessful in all of his jobs and business ventures, and they separated and ultimately divorced, leaving Ueland struggling to support herself and her daughter through free-lance writing and magazine staff work, including a position at Liberty Magazine in New York in the 1920s. She returned to Minnesota after her mother’s death in 1930 to care for her aging father, and lived there for the rest of her life, teaching and writing, including a memoir Me (1939) (which is a key source of information about Every Week Magazine) and If You Want to Write (1938), an advice book for writers. In her later years, she became an important influence on three young people who grew up near her home on Lake Calhoun and went on to become university-based writers, Alice Kaplan, [note 44] Patricia Hampl, [note 45] and Charles Baxter. [note 46] She died in Minneapolis on March 5, 1985.


2 For Lewis’s early career, see Melissa J. Homestead and Anne L. Kaufman, “Nebraska, New England, New York: Mapping the Foreground of Willa Cather and Edith Lewis’s Creative
For her employment record in advertising, see Edith Lewis, Personnel File, J. Walter Thompson Co. Archive, Hartman Center for Advertising and Marketing History, Duke University, Durham, NC.

Colton is a tricky figure to pin down biographically. Reference books in film and theater usually characterize him as the son of a British diplomat born in Japan. See, e.g. Who Was Who in the Theatre, 1912-1976 (Detroit: Gale, 1978), and Gerald Martin Bordman and Thomas S. Hishack, Oxford Companion to American Theatre (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004). On a variety of government documents (census records, passport applications, ship’s passenger lists, draft registration applications), he sometimes claimed to have been born in Japan, and other times Minnesota. However, he did consistently identify his parents as American-born, the “British diplomat” claim apparently a colorful self-invention. The most plausible biographical source is “Mr. Colton of Rain,” New York Times, 7 Feb. 1926, the facts in which official documents largely corroborate. This article was adapted and republished in a Minnesota newspaper (without acknowledging the Times), later the same year. “Author of ‘Rain’ Former Reporter in Minneapolis. John Colton Covered Police and Later Became Dramatic Critic—Play Here Next Week,” clipping from unnamed paper, George Arthur Barton Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.


Colton was clearly gay, but there is reason to doubt the reliability of the accounts of his behavior in the memoir of his friend, Mercedes de Acosta, Here Lies the Heart (1960), in which she describes a non-stop bacchanal at his rented house in Hollywood. However, 1930 census records show that his elderly parents and younger siblings were living with him at the time.


13 “Personals.” [back]

14 “Hiram Kelley Motherwell,” 525. [back]

15 Anne Herendeen to Bruce Barton, 29 Mar. [1928?], Bruce Barton Papers. [back]

16 Anne Herendeen to Bruce Barton, 18 Nov. 1956, Bruce Barton Papers. [back]

17 Except as noted otherwise, all biographical details derive from Sara Alpern, Freda Kirchwey: Woman of the Nation (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987), 17. [back]

18 Brenda Ueland, Me: A Memoir (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1939), 103. [back]


21 The Williams College Archives provided me with photocopies of various materials, both print and manuscript, documenting Mosher as an alumnus. [back]


23 These details come the materials provided by the Williams College Archives and from his obituary, “John C. Mosher, 50, Critic of Screen,” *New York Times* 4 Sep. 1942. [back]

24 Tim Page and Vanessa Weeks, eds., *Selected Letters of Virgil Thomson* (New York: Summit), 54. [back]

25 E-mail from Kevin B. Leonard (Northwestern University Archives) to the author, 26 Nov. 2007. [back]


34 Florence’s edition of Secor’s correspondence omits a brief passage from one letter in which Secor explains that if her predecessor returns from Mexico, Barton may expect her to step aside so that he can have his job back. Lella Secor to Loretta Secor, [July 1916], Lella Secor Florence Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA. [back]


36 On Herendeen’s editing of the book, see Anne Herendeen to Bruce Barton, 18 Nov. 1956, Bruce Barton Papers. [back]

37 However, she is repeatedly referenced in Anne Herendeen’s letter to Bruce Barton as an Every Week staff member. See, e.g., Herendeen to Barton, 7 Apr. 1960, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, WI. [back]


39 Donald Glassman, Barnard College Archivist, e-mail to the author, 26 Mar. 2007. [back]

40 Ueland, *Me*, 111-20. [back]

41 Ueland, *Me*, 121-44. [back]

42 In *Me*, Ueland is exceedingly coy about the identities of both Eastman and Benedict, calling her “Minerva Newman” and him “R.” She is more straightforward in her memoir of her mother, left unpublished at her death. Brenda Ueland, *O Clouds, Unfold! Clara Ueland and Her Family* (Minneapolis, MN: Nodin, 2004). [back]


