History

*Journalism's Colorful Firsts*

When most people think about the beginnings of media in the United States, they often look at Europe as the foundation of both the technology and system of media. Journalism history is often told in terms that emphasize the English-speaking traditions of media but ignore the historical past of other people. Although it may be useful to look to Europe to find some of the roots of media in the United States, a scholar looking there and nowhere else will get only a partial view of the media's rich history. Communication is a basic human activity and people of all races and cultures have taken part in it.

Communication Before the Europeans

Journalism historians Edwin Emery and Michael Emery describe some of the earliest forms of communication.

Around 3500 B.C. the Sumerians of the Middle East devised a system of preserving records by inscribing signs and symbols in wet clay tablets using cylinder seals and then baking them in the sun. They also devised a cuneiform system of writing, using bones to mark signs in wet clay.