

WALLACE FISHER STOVALL AS PUBLISHER
OF THE TAMPA TRIBUNE, 1893-1925

by

William R. Bobbitt

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of Mass Communications
at the University of South Florida

August 1989

Major Professor: George Michael Killenberg, Ph.D.

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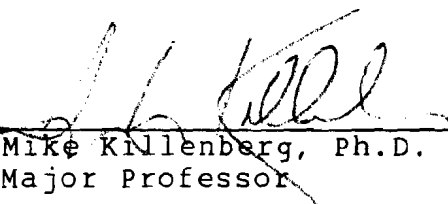
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The purpose of this research was to chronicle the life of Wallace Fisher Stovall (1869-1950) with an emphasis on his 32-year career as publisher of the Tampa Tribune (1893-1925). While biographical in nature, it was designed to 1) examine how he used the newspaper to promote his own beliefs and causes, 2) examine the role that he played in the history of Tampa and 3) examine the role he played in the journalism history of the United States. The first objective was accomplished by analyzing the content of his writings; the second by summarizing the qualitative comments of Tampa historians; the third by comparing him to other journalism figures and exploring the reasons behind his relative anonymity.

Stovall used the newspaper to promote causes of personal interest, but such promotion benefited the community as well. He contributed to the social, political and economic enhancement of the community, through both his ownership of the Tribune and his post-journalism career as a commercial real estate developer. While acknowledged to be responsible for much of Tampa's early economic growth, he has not received the credit due him in accounts of Tampa history. On a national scale, he is neglected in literature about journalism history, due partially to his location in a city considered small (by comparison) to the major metropoli-

tan areas in which the "giants" of journalism worked, the fact that the role he played in his community and his political philosophy were so similar to other publishers in the South that he did not warrant separate mention and his concern for the bottom line over journalistic principles (i.e. he was a businessman rather than a journalist).

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