

Tribune Tour No. 1—Seeing the News Room

How Editorial Staff of the World's Greatest Newspaper Works

YOU TRIBUNE readers have been visiting Tribune Tower at the rate of some 35,000 a year. Since the number is something less than that, we may consider the total in eighteen years as being about 600,000. Well, 600,000 of you readers have been seeing something of newspaper making.

Yet, ladies and gentlemen, the whole 600,000 of you (and children included) make up only part of the nearly 1,000,000 daily readers; and, to make the comparison just a little more important, a smaller part of the 1,200,000 Sunday readers.

What of it? Just this: Even if you have visited the Tower and the plant you may have been curious about some of the things you saw; and if you haven't been a visitor you ought to know what you are going to see when you do come.

So here it is!

The principal editorial workshop of The Tribune is called the news room. There are smaller editorial workshops in various parts of the Tower and the plant. Some of these are the offices of editorial writers and special writers on a host of subjects; and then there are the Sunday department and the Metropolitan Section. But the big movement of news, the daily articulating of thousands of words of information from all over the world, is in the news room.

The news room is 97 feet long and 58 feet wide. It is two stories high. It is flanked on one side by the photographic work-rooms. In these rooms are employed 35 cameramen. On the other flank are the telegraph offices—Postal, Western Union, the Chicago Tribune News Bureau, the Tribune leased wires, and other special wires to New York and Los Angeles.

It will be interesting, Mr. and Mrs. Tribune Reader, as well as all you little readers, if you will



The Tribune's news room, the principal editorial workshop, as pictured by a Tribune artist.

lation. In the evening more steps may be taken. Later in the night more steps. And all of these steps must be followed. The story as it happened in the afternoon has become an entirely different thing at night. All of this requires the most incessant attention.

Consider a crime. In the morning the crime may be reported. In the afternoon the police have caught a criminal. At night another criminal has been arrested, and in the early morning that second criminal

families, we think, and we try to keep out the mistakes. The editor must eliminate all libelous statements, all overstatements, all bad taste. Sometimes a story has a historical significance. This means that an editor must develop an article which will supply the historical and informative background.

Well, we could run on at this rate for a long time. The point we are trying to make is that editorial training on The Tribune is a long process. The principal news editors have been in training from fifteen to more than twenty years.

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Now let's take one more glance at that square desk in the center of the news room. It is the most important machine in a room full of machinery. It is interesting because the men you see there have been through most of the battles incident to newspaper life. You will be reading farther on of the day city editor and the telegraph editor, sports editor, and all the other department editors. These are the editors in charge of the first stages of production.

The managing editor has been through them all. He has been a reporter, a copy reader, and city editor. This same thing is true of the city editor, who began as a City Press reporter and went through the labors of day city editor. The news editor has been a reporter, a copy reader, sports editor, the night editor, too; and his assistant has touched many of the rungs in the ladder reaching to his post.

It is necessary to understand these things in order to know how it is that news, after it originates, flows through channels which are perfectly known to all the men who handle it. News start with a reporter and ends with a managing editor.

And now that you have seen the last sieve, let's stop and begin where we ought to begin—with the production of news as

it happens and as it is assembled and written and edited and sent to the printers.

The Tribune is a continuous operation. Its processes are active twenty-four hours a day. Yet we must begin somewhere, so we take up at the point which seems the most normal to normal folks. Normal folks begin work in the morning. And since this is as good a place as any, we shall begin with the work of the day city editor at 8:30 a. m.

Now, you have been looking at two sides of the news room—photography and telegraphy. On the third side you will find the day city editor. He is one of the oldest traditions on a morning newspaper.

You must quickly distinguish between the city editor and the day city editor. The city editor, who arrives at 2 p. m., is the master mind, if we may be permitted this pat on the back, of the Chicago news gathering force. The day city editor is the right hand of the city editor.

The day city editor is the man who gets the machinery started and has it all oiled and running so that when the city editor arrives he can be relieved of a thousand details and be free to take over the main movement of the Chicago news.

When the day city editor arrives at 8:30 a. m. he does not find an empty room. This is because, as has been said before, The Tribune is a twenty-four-hour process. So the day city editor sees the departure of the late editor and his staff. We shall not go into that now. It is sufficient for you to remember that the late city editor and his staff are going home to sleep as the day city editor enters the room.

Chief among the troops of the day city editor, if we may use a military simile, are a background of more than 200 editorial people immediately attached to the staff of The Tribune, the communication systems (telephone, wireless, radio, and tele-

graph), a background of correspondents in hundreds of cities and towns, the morgue, and the future file.

Morgue first: Morgue is the news room argot for reference files. In the steel cabinets of this department are thousands upon thousands of envelopes containing mountains of clippings, memoranda, and photographs, and all accurately filed and cross-indexed. Almost never a name in the news which is not pursued through the morgue for a record of that name's past history and the light it may throw upon the news of today.

The future file: Just a card indexing system into which is placed every future possibility for tomorrow, for next week, next month, next year. Every letter and notation and scrap of information which may have any possible future bearing on any possible event in the future is put in the future file. But future file also means The Tribune every day.

It is high time we get back to the day city editor. The first thing he does is to examine that day and date in the future file. A stack of possibilities emerges. These he unscrambles with the expertness of long experience. He is helped to do this by his immediate staff. This staff is made up of an assistant who registers and keeps informed on assignments to reporters; an assistant who registers and is informed on assignments to cameramen; an assistant who keeps a general eye on office boys, the telephones, the sorting of City Press bulletins and telegraphic material; and a varying number of rewriters.

The reporters begin arriving. They do not come in one regiment. They come trickling by ones and twos. When they have finished their eight hours they go home. But all through the day and night they are coming and going. This is why it is necessary to have a day city editor and a staff of assistants whose business it is to keep scrupulous records of every reporter, every assignment, the whereabouts of every reporter and cameraman at every moment of the day. Reporters may be scattered all over the city.

An important event may occur with the suddenness of an explosion. The day city editor must know how to reach those reporters and cameramen on the moment and collect them at a given point. He must not only know this, but he must know the capabilities of each man, so that each may be assigned to the kind of news he is best equipped to cover. It wouldn't be very good journalism to have

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(Continued on page nine.)

Locating a particular picture among thousands filed in the reference room—called "morgue" in newspaper argot.

keep in mind the picture of this big room. Remember, if you will, the cameramen on one side and the telegraphers on the other; do this because you are going to see a great deal of movement as photographs begin pouring from one side, telegraphic and cable dispatches from the other.

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Let us get back into the middle of the news room. You should be in the middle, since everything is directed from the middle. Here you will see a square desk. Four men are seated at this desk, one on each side. They are the managing editor and his immediate staff. Count them again—1, managing editor; 2, city editor; 3, news editor; 4, night editor. You will always see four men, even though holidays and sick leaves may intervene. This is because there is an assistant night editor who takes the place of the absent one.

This desk and its occupants see every printed word before it goes into The Tribune. You may think of this desk as a kind of sieve through which everything passes. Indeed, every process of a newspaper office is a sieve. The news is shaken through this



In marked contrast to The Tribune's news room of today is the reporters' room of forty-one years ago.

succession of sieves until finally it is considered suitable for publication.

Now, let's see what these sieves are. You must keep in mind first of all that what is news in one place may not be news in another. You, living in Chicagoland, would not be interested in a heavy rainstorm in Tombstone, Ariz. But you would be interested if it happened in Chicagoland. So the Tombstone storm is sifted out. You must also remember that news keeps on happening—that is, keeps changing. Therefore the sieves must keep up with the changing news. In the afternoon congress may take certain steps in legis-

has made a complete confession! See what that involves. Every district of the city is covered throughout the twenty-four hours by police reporters. Every one of those reporters must keep on the alert for every possible change in the story. In the news room the editors must be constantly advised of these changes. And the story, which began as a relatively simple event in the morning, has developed a multiplicity of changes by late night.

Remember also, ladies and gentlemen, that story changes are not the only siftings. Mistakes happen. You have heard of them in the best of families. Well, The Tribune is the best of

families, we think, and we try to keep out the mistakes. The editor must eliminate all libelous statements, all overstatements, all bad taste. Sometimes a story has a historical significance. This means that an editor must develop an article which will supply the historical and informative background.

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