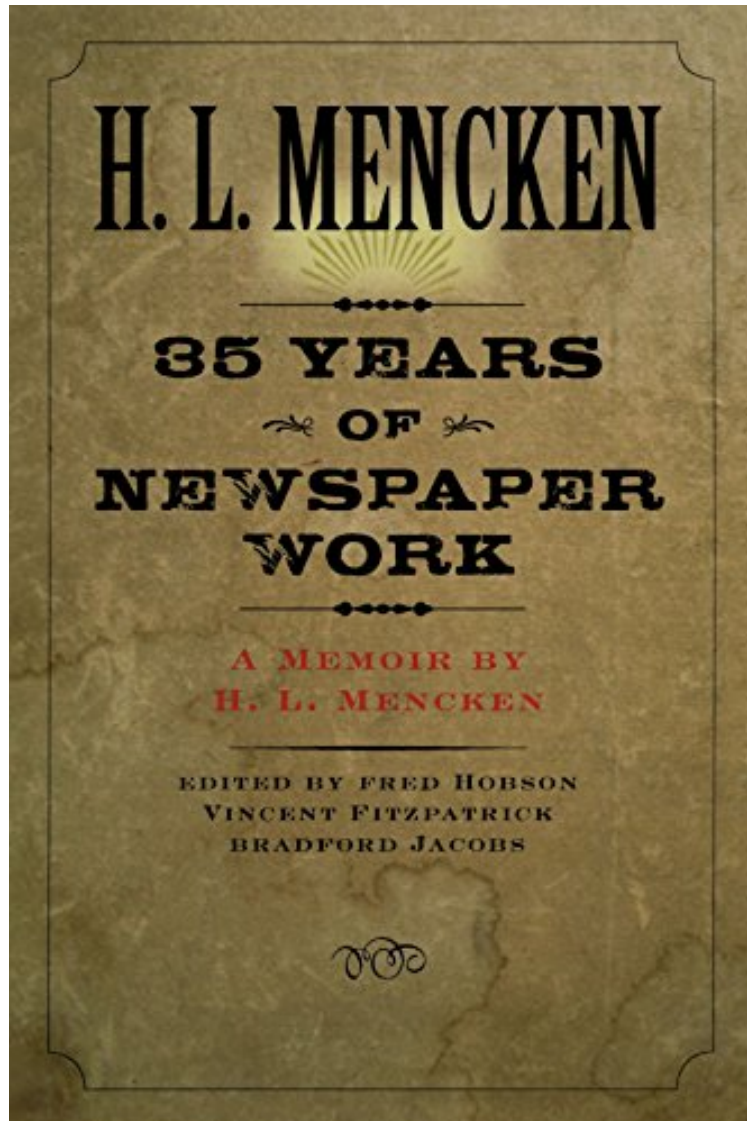


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H. L. Mencken

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H. L. Mencken : Thirty-five Years of Newspaper Work: A Memoir by H. L. Mencken (Maryland Paperback Bookshelf) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Thirty-five Years of Newspaper Work: A Memoir by H. L. Mencken (Maryland Paperback Bookshelf):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper WorkBy Carol BrowningI have

been on an H. L. Mencken kick lately, and this is probably my favorite book so far. I enjoy history, and here is a contemporary account from someone who was on the scene at national conventions, etc. I take a lot of it with a grain of salt, so to speak, since by his own admission he looked at his role as a newspaperman to be part of a permanent opposition. The book was highly entertaining. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. An engaging look at a bygone era

By John Rush "This, after all, is MY story, and so I do not apologize for its pervasive subjectivity." So said Mencken in the preface, and good for him. While his usual verbal pyrotechnics give way to straight reporting here, you always know exactly where he stood. The book's focus is Mencken's association with the Baltimore Sunpapers. His Free Lance column established his iconoclastic reputation locally. He helped draft the White Paper ("the doctrine that public officials, under democracy, were predominantly frauds, and hence did not deserve to be taken seriously") that became the basis for the company's success during the Roaring Twenties. He represented the paper in its dispute with Baltimore's Catholic archbishop over a reporter's questionable judgment. Despite outside commitments (he wrote and co-wrote more than 20 books, edited two magazines, and wrote hundreds of articles for other newspapers and magazines during this period), he remained a columnist for decades, and eventually joined the board of directors. Mencken occasionally had a problem with years; he later placed the 1925 Scopes trial and Bryan's death in 1926, and refers back to the 1928 conventions as having happened in 1924. He finished this account before writing *Heathen Days*; parts of each book overlap, but, save for several Scopes trial passages and a few other adventures, aren't repeated. Even to his Scopes notes, he added many previously unpublished details. Interesting details abound. In addition to his job, Mencken remembers peers in his field, oppressive censorship and anti-German discrimination during World War I, acquiring liquor during Prohibition, the establishment of *Time* magazine ("I was surprised by its immense success, for it was marked at the start, as it still is today, by a pretentious and puerile style of writing and a pervasive ignorance and inaccuracy"), several of his trips abroad, and the transient self-aggrandizing government timeservers who became "as completely forgotten as the politicians of the Polk administration". Then there are the humorous moments, such as his lodging arrangements at the 1920 Republican convention: "I roomed with Kent, and had two disconcerting surprises the first night. The first came when he got down on his knees beside his bed and began to pray audibly and volubly, clad in an old-fashioned nightshirt. The second followed soon afterward, as he fell asleep. Never in my life have I heard more appalling snoring. All the ordinary sounds were there, but in addition there were others - for example, a series of crescendo gurgles ending in what seemed to be strangulation, with both the performer and me leaping up in our beds. The next night I managed to have Kent bunked with Adams, and so got some sleep." The book is also a window into a transitional era. Cars and airplanes increased in popularity, but passenger trains remained the main mode of transportation for long distances: some of Mencken's fonder memories occurred on and near trains. Wireless telegraphy evolved into commercial radio. The telephone helped facilitate the reporter's job as it became more common. Above all, this is Mencken as only Mencken could write; clear, opinionated, and quotable. This thoroughly enjoyable reading experience makes me glad he lived when he did: if his like were to come along again, he'd be barred from today's dumbed-down mainstream media.

With a style that combined biting sarcasm with the "language of the free lunch counter," Henry Louis Mencken shook politics and politicians for nearly half a century. Now, fifty years after Mencken's death, the Johns Hopkins University Press announces *The Buncombe Collection*, newly packaged editions of nine Mencken classics: *Happy Days*, *Heathen Days*, *Newspaper Days*, *Prejudices*, *Treatise on the Gods*, *On Politics*, *Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper Work*, *Minority Report*, and *A Second Mencken Chrestomathy*. Written in 1941-42, these highlights capture the excitement of newspaper life in the heyday of print journalism.

"No greater prose stylist ever wrote for an American newspaper. It is always useful and enjoyable to be reminded of this, as *Thirty-five Years of Newspaper Work* most certainly does... Should be required reading not merely for all newspaper people but for all those who labor in what we now call 'the media.'" -- Jonathan Yardley, *Washington Post Book World*

From the Back Cover In January 1991 the Enoch Pratt Free Library opened the sealed manuscript of H. L. Mencken's "Thirty-five Years of Newspaper Work". Written in 1941-42 and bequeathed to the library under time-lock upon Mencken's death in 1956, it is among the very last of his papers opened to the public. *Thirty-five Years of Newspaper Work*, a one-volume abridgement of Mencken's much longer memoir, vividly pictures the excitement of newspaper life in the heyday of print journalism. Here Mencken colorfully recalls his years - mostly with the *Baltimore Evening Sun* - as a reporter and a writer of editorials that always caused a stir among the public and uproars of indignation among his enemies. The volume includes important new material on his coverage of presidential candidates from 1912 to 1940 (Mencken on Harding's inaugural address: "a string of wet sponges") and the 1925 trial of the man he called the "infidel Scopes". Mencken also describes his brief stint as a war correspondent on Germany's subzero Eastern Front in 1917 and the perilous voyage back, which took him through Havana just as a revolution was breaking out. (He stayed to cover it.) He writes, with curious detachment, about the "inevitable" war and likely fate of Germany's Jews during a final visit to his ancestral homeland in summer 1938. And he describes colorful Baltimore personalities, shares local gossip, and offers candid - usually unflattering - portraits of the politicians and clerics he

mostly despised. About the Author Henry Louis Mencken was born in Baltimore in 1880 and remained a lifelong resident. Opinionated and controversial, he wrote columns for the Baltimore Evening Sun that earned him a national reputation. He died in 1956.