



Soundbites with Dr. Stan Deaton:  
“Hear it now; see it tonight; read about it tomorrow.”

A resource for the 2024-2025 *Georgia History Festival*.

The Georgia Historical Society has created a collection of resources to investigate the 2024-2025 *Georgia History Festival* theme, [“The Reality of Our Liberty”: The First Amendment and Freedom of the Press.](#)

This discussion guide is an accompaniment to the [Soundbites with Dr. Stan Deaton](#) playlist, accessible on the [Georgia History Festival website](#), under “Resources for Students.” Soundbites can be used independently or as an entire collection. They range from just under two minutes to just over four minutes. The segments below show the set-up question for Dr. Deaton’s response, as well as discussion questions.

**Soundbite 1 – The context for the phrase “the reality of our liberty.”**

Welcome to our conversation with Dr. Stan Deaton, Senior Historian and Dr. Elaine B. Andrews Distinguished Historian, at the Georgia Historical Society. The *Festival* title was inspired by a quote by President Thomas Jefferson.

Dr. Deaton, would you give some background for this statement?

Questions for Discussion:

- What were the two main political parties during Jefferson’s presidency?
- What were the core beliefs of each?

**Soundbite 2 – Why was freedom of the press important to the Founders?**

As Americans, we often take freedom of the press for granted. Would you give us some context around why the Founders considered this so vital for the new nation?

Questions for Discussion:

- What is treason?
- Why is it important to hold leaders accountable?

- Investigate some examples in other parts of the world and/or different times in history in which the press either cooperated with government *against* the people or exposed the government to the *benefit* of the people.

### Soundbite 3 – The context for “Hear it now; see it tonight; read about it tomorrow.”

We’re discussing the phrase, “Hear it now, see it tonight, read about it tomorrow.” Would you provide context around this statement?

Questions for Discussion:

- How do your parents/guardians learn about the news of the day?
- Do you listen to the radio for news?

### Soundbite 4 – The impact of radio news.

In the age of radio, what are some significant stories, to Georgians and Americans?

Questions for Discussion:

- Have you heard a significant story for the first time on radio news? If so, what story?
- Research an important event from the 20th century and find a radio recording. Listen to the story and write about what you imagine happening as you listen.
- Dr. Deaton mentions information might come “over the wire.” What does this mean?

### Soundbite 5 – Hearing news in the 21st century.

How has consuming our information through hearing changed over time?

Questions for Discussion:

- What do AM and FM stand for?
- How has the internet altered the way we consume information?
- What are the pros and cons of choosing our sources of information?

### Soundbite 6 – The impact of television news.

What is the context of “see it tonight”?

Questions to Consider:

- What does “ubiquitous” mean?
- Dr. Deaton mentioned the assassination of President Kennedy. How do you think the visual of the scene impacted people versus hearing about it on the radio?



### Soundbite 7 – From 30 minutes to 24 hours.

How has the evolution from three basic television stations to several 24-hour networks affected the news?

Questions for Consideration:

- What were the three major television stations in the early to mid-1900s?
- What do you consider news?
- What does “salacious” mean? Why do people tune in to hear this kind of content?
- What are the pros and cons of 24-hour news coverage?

### Soundbite 8 – Georgia stories on television.

What are some Georgia stories that have impacted us through television?

Questions to Consider:

- Dr. Deaton mentions the bombing at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. Compare the television coverage from that event to the news coverage of the terrorist attack at the 1972 Olympics in Munich.
- How would you choose what to cover in a 30-minute news broadcast?
- In what ways did communities come together around the television (family, neighborhood, across the state, etc.)?

### Soundbite 9 – The impact of newspapers across the centuries.

Currently, we can read all day long about the events of the day on the internet. However, “read about it tomorrow” refers to an earlier time. What has the role of newspapers been in our history?

Questions to Consider:

- What role did newspapers play in politics? What does “partisan” mean?
- How did the advent of the internet change how newspapers function?
- Compare a story in the paper version and digital version of the same newspaper. How are they the same or different?

### Soundbite 10 – Editorializing vs. Newsgathering

When did our newspapers start to shift from partisan toward the neutrality of “just the facts”?

Questions to Consider:

- Where did the term “yellow press” come from and what was their purpose?
- What does “scurrilous” mean?
- What are the five “w’s” of journalism (and one “h”)?
- Dr. Deaton mentions “editorializing vs. newsgathering.” What is the difference?



## Soundbite II – Investigative journalism and the safeguarding of liberty.

Joseph Pulitzer, owner of *The New York World*, and founder of The Pulitzer Prize for journalism, said:

*“[I]t’s my duty to see that they get the truth; but that’s not enough, I’ve got to put it before them briefly so that they will read it, clearly so that they will understand it, forcibly so that they will appreciate it, picturesquely so that they will remember it, and, above all, accurately so that they may be wisely guided by its light.”*

Under Pulitzer’s leadership investigative journalism, and the career of Nellie Bly was launched. This brings us back to the Founders and their idea that a press free from government control has the responsibility to inform and educate about the public about the actions of elected officials and business leaders so they can be held accountable to the American people.

Questions to consider:

- Dr. Deaton mentions the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Why did the FDA come into being? What are the pros and cons of these types of government agencies?
- Can you think of an investigative journalism example relevant today? What are the details?
- How do newspapers and journalists promote and protect liberty?

### For further investigation:

Select a news story from the 1960s, 1970s, or 1980s and find the coverage across the newspaper, radio, and television. Make sure to find the same date or within a couple of days of each other. Compare and contrast how each outlet presented the story.

