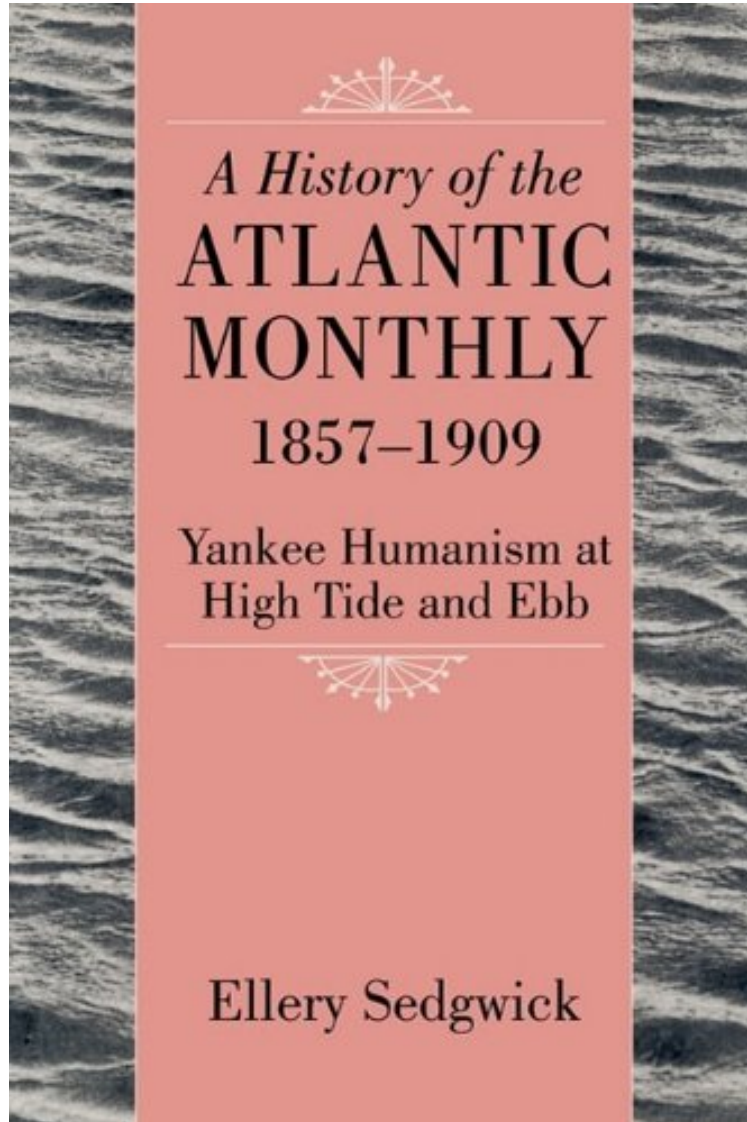


(Mobile book) A History of the "Atlantic Monthly," 1857-1909: Yankee Humanism at High Tide and Ebb

A History of the "Atlantic Monthly," 1857-1909: Yankee Humanism at High Tide and Ebb

Ellery Sedgwick

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How the most respected literary periodical of its time balanced "high" culture with moderate liberalism

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The Atlantic Monthly was launched by the New England Olympians Emerson, Holmes, et al., to elevate the aesthetics of the masses, to develop the intellectual and moral character of the individual, to civilize America. Progressive, the magazine was abolitionist, pro-Darwin and for opportunities for women. Culturally evangelistic, radiating from the country's literary capitals--Boston, Cambridge and Concord, with Beacon Hill the hub of the Hub--the Atlantic was yet often under the direction of self-educated provincials. Virtually from the first issue of November 1857, the magazine's editors were ever mindful of the mandate to balance culture and commerce, elitism and democracy, respect for their contributors' works and corporate self-interest. Their contributors have passed into the canon--Hawthorne, Henry James, Jack London, etc.--and the corporate names met here resound even into our own day. Ticknor Fields purchased the Atlantic in 1860; on James Fields's retirement, his shares were bought by one James Osgood, and in turn gobbled up by Henry Houghton in 1873. The magazine remained under Houghton Mifflin's aegis until 1908, when Ellery Sedgwick became the independent white knight-editor. T F and HM both used the Atlantic to recruit authors to write books and at the same time to publicize their own lists; towards these dual ends, the seven editors of this period--among them, James Russell Lowell, W.D. Howells and Thomas Bailey Aldrich--served simultaneously as editors of the magazine and of the publishing house. Sedgwick, who teaches English at Longwood College in Virginia and is named for his grandfather who owned the Atlantic, superbly accomplishes the prodigious feat of critical analysis, personality profiles and literary history. And along the way we're reminded that in publishing, plus ca change, plus c'est meme chose. Photos. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal
The Atlantic Monthly, more than any other magazine, has been closely associated with the founding and preservation of a high American literature. The main focus of this scholarly but engaging history of the magazine's first 50 years is the continuing tension between the magazine's elite tradition and the mass market's growing demand for popular content. Sedgwick (English, Longwood Coll.) divides the story of this influential journal into chapters dealing with its first seven editors, among them poet James Russell Lowell and novelist William Dean Howells. Along the way, he considers Atlantic and its editors in the dynamic context of 19th-century America and its rapidly changing worlds of journalism and literature. The book gives fascinating glimpses of countless authors, journalists, academics, and politicians and their dealings with the magazine. Recommended for large public and academic collections.- Paul D'Alessandro, Portland P.L., Me. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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