

# Harper's Weekly 1857 - 1912

*Its vast circulation, deservedly secured and maintained by the excellence and variety of its illustrations of the scenes and events of the war, as well as by the spirit and tone of its editorials, has carried it far and wide. It has been read in city parlors, in the log hut of the pioneer, by every camp-fire of our armies, in the wards of our hospitals, in the trenches before St. Petersburg, and in the ruins of Charleston; and wherever it has gone, it has kindled the warmer glow of patriotism, it has nerved the hearts and strengthened the arms of the people, and it has done its full part in the furtherance of the great cause of the Union, Freedom and the Law.*

—North American Review, April 1865

*Harper's Weekly* was the definitive newspaper of record for the latter part of the nineteenth century and early twentieth. It had broad national distribution and some international, a circulation that exceeded 100,000 and peaked at 300,000, and effective readership of at least half a million people. *Harper's Weekly 1857-1912* from Alexander Street Press is the definitive version of the newspaper in electronic form.

## RELEVANCE TO HISTORICAL RESEARCH

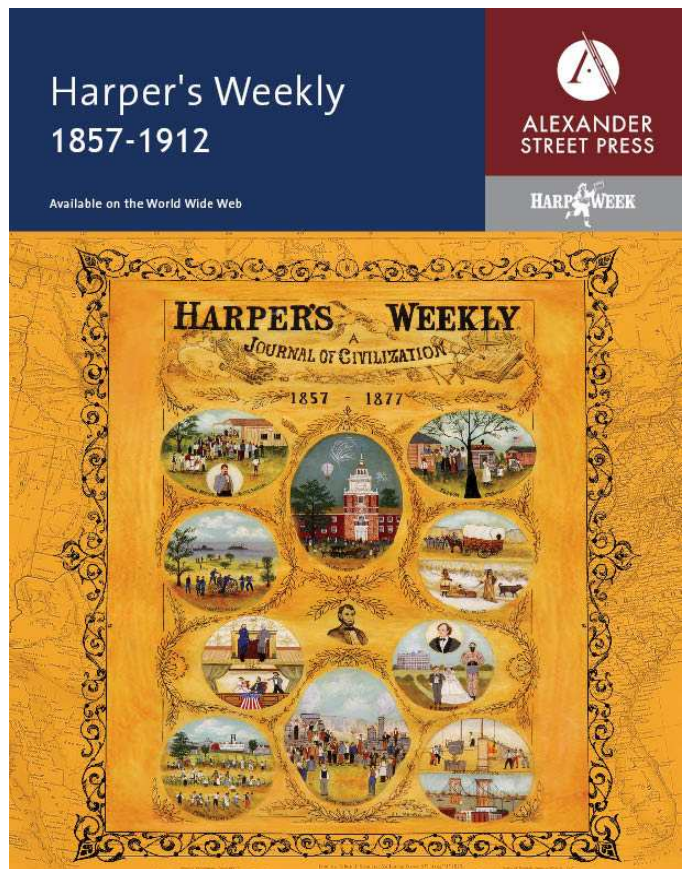
*Harper's Weekly 1857-1912* is compelling for a number of reasons:

- **Visual impact:** 75,000 illustrations, cartoons, maps, and portraits – drawn by Winslow Homer, Frederic Remington, Thomas Nast, and others – are the images that defined the period.
- **Shaping of public opinion:** *Harper's Weekly* played an influential role in five presidential elections. George William Curtis, the paper's influential political editor, provided national leadership with 8,000 consistent, reasoned editorials over a period of 30 years.
- **International coverage:** The newspaper included cultural reviews as well as the major news stories. *Harper's Weekly* had more foreign correspondents and illustrated stories than any of its contemporaries.
- **Literature:** Approximately a third of the material consisted of literature and verse, both American and English, providing entertainment in its time and significant insight for today's readers.

## DEFINITIVE ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION

*Harper's Weekly 1857-1912* sets the gold standard for electronic newspaper publishing. No other digitization project has the same quality of images, re-keying accuracy, indexing, or contextual material:

- **Quality of images:** Each image has been scanned at 600 dpi in grayscale or better. This results in crystal clear prints that are orders of magnitude superior to those derived from bi-tonal 100 dpi scans of old microfilm.



- **Depth of indexing:** Alexander Street indexes concepts and topics that are not part of the original text, terms such as *Women's Rights*, *Confederate Ships*, *Diplomats*, and *Chinese-Americans*. Editorials are indexed by terms such as *taxes*, *civil service*, and *women's education*. Many of these simply cannot be found using keyword searching. Dedicated thesauri let you search geographical, occupational, literary genre, and topical terms. Illustrations are indexed for topics, places, portraits and visual content. Cartoons can be search by subject or character. More than 100,000 advertisements are indexed topically (*jewelry*, *cough remedies*, *political campaign merchandise*) and by manufacturer or retailer. Additional detail provides insight into everyday living in ways that keyword searching cannot – e.g., *health remedies by symptom* – so that users can learn what was advertised to cure cancer or treat “female maladies.” Literature is classified by genre, making it possible to locate all *political verse*, *humorous tales*, or *female narratives*. Each piece of literary prose has a HarpWeek-prepared, word-searchable synopsis. Names, spellings, and terminology are corrected, completed, and standardized to overcome search obstacles.
- **Accuracy of re-keying:** Many microfilm-based historical newspapers rely on optical character recognition (OCR) to build their keyword indexes. This technology is notoriously imprecise on older, small-font newspaper content, resulting in error rates as high as twenty percent. *Harper's Weekly 1857-1912*, instead, has been double-keyed to achieve an accuracy rate of 99.995%
- **Contextual essays, Web sites and related materials:** *Harper's Weekly 1857-1912* has more than 10,000 pages of annotations, essays, and notes that provide detailed explications of materials in the database. Examples include *The Presidential Elections, 1860-1884, as Depicted in Political Cartoons and Prints*, which provides a comprehensive overview of the role of political cartoons in presidential elections from Abraham Lincoln to Grover Cleveland. The essays include rare and difficult-to-find original materials.
- **Retrieval engine:** Each page image is retrieved in three sizes (plus thumbnail), allowing users to browse with speed or view greater detail. Images can be printed, using HarpWeek's special print application, or downloaded. Unique features include the ability to browse an issue as the original readers did, reading through the pages in chronological sequence.



*Harper's Weekly 1857-1912* is available through one-time purchase of perpetual rights. Libraries may acquire the segments, *Civil War*, *Reconstruction*, and *The Gilded Age*, either separately or together as a unit. For complete coverage of the history of the period, also see *Illustrated Civil War Newspapers and Magazines*, which contains content from 49 periodicals of the time, including the 1857-1865 issues of *Harper's Weekly*. Contact [sales@alexanderstreet.com](mailto:sales@alexanderstreet.com) or your sales representative for more information and to learn about the other collections in our *Social and Cultural History* series.

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