

Journalism Milestones

—Arnold Cheyney

Emily Price Post

Post was born October 27, 1872. Her father, Bruce Price, was an architect. Post often traveled with him to building sites all over the world.

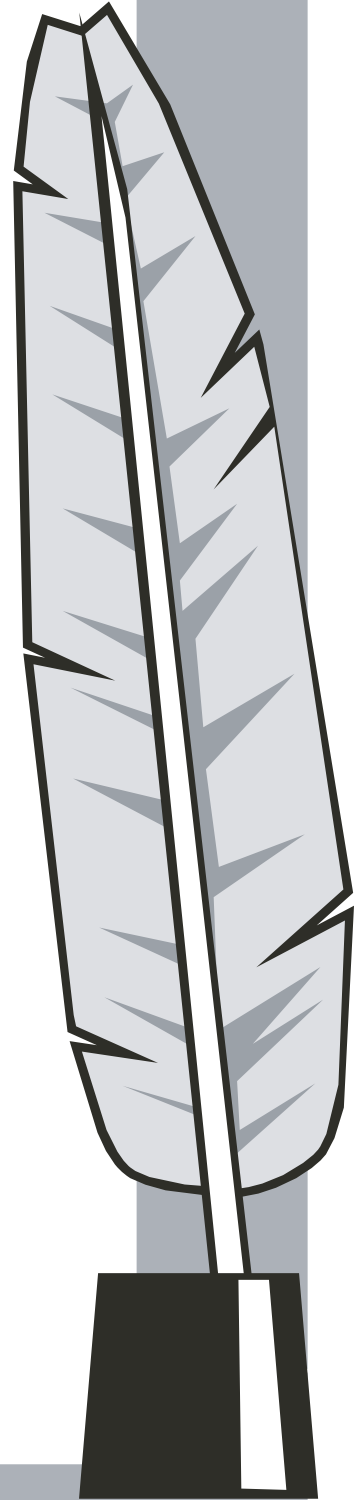
Post was not a scholar in school, as her poor grades and behavior indicated. But traveling with her father to other countries such as Canada, France, and Italy opened her mind to other cultures and ways of life.

In 1892, Post married businessman Edwin M. Post and had two sons. They later divorced. Post's friends encouraged her to write for publication because of the interesting letters she had sent while she was in Europe. Her letters were turned into a series for a magazine and then into a fictional publication about life in the early 1900s among people of the upper class. It was titled *The Flight of a Moth* (1904). Post's background and experience helped her write about people of wealth in fashionable society and about those in European nobility.

Post had an adventurous streak. In 1918, she drove across the U.S. from New York to California with her son Edwin before the interstate highways were built. She wrote about it in a book, *By Motor to the Golden Gate* (1916). She was then asked to write a book, *Etiquette: The Blue Book of Social Usage*. It sold 650,000 copies! An etiquette column she wrote for a magazine became a syndicated newspaper column in 150 papers. She also hosted a weekly radio show.

Post wrote about using polite manners and told readers how to do things like set a table, create invitations, conduct an afternoon tea, and behave in a restaurant or theater. She advised about travel, telephone manners, and even how to eat corn on the cob, "with as little ferocity as possible."

Many women sought her advice, especially about weddings. She got as many as 250,000 letters a year. She tried to answer all of the ones that contained return postage. She died in 1960.



Learning Activities

Language Arts

1. Make a list of five words that best describe Emily Post. Use a thesaurus for help. Create a class list of all of the words on the board and alphabetize them.
2. With two classmates, make a list of eight rules for cell phone behavior.
3. Find at least one columnist who gives advice on civil behavior.
(hint: take a look at advice columnists.)

Social Studies

Check an encyclopedia to find out about some of the places that Post traveled. Are any of those countries in today's news? Why?

Math

Find out the average daily circulation of your local newspaper. If $\frac{1}{8}$ of the readers wrote to an advice columnist, how many letters would that be? If half of those folks mailed their letters and a postage stamp costs 41 cents, how much would the total cost of postage be?

Reference

Post, Edwin. *Truly Emily Post*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1961.

