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| **B** | **[Salutation]** | Sarah | [Middle name] | Childress |
| [Enter your biography] | | | |
| Bowdoin College | | | |

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| **Your article** |
| Grierson, John (1898-1972) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| John Grierson was an influential British film theorist who famously defined documentary practice as the ‘creative treatment of actuality.’ Grierson provided the genre of documentary with an institutional base by promoting state support, cultivating a community of practitioners, and championing specific conventions. Grierson helped establish the Empire Marketing Board Film Production Unit (1928-1933) and the General Post Office Film Unit (1933-1940). These government departments practically served as film schools in themselves, and expanded his influence, thereby initiating the British Documentary Movement — the first clearly defined group of filmmakers working toward common ends with a common leader.  Advocating purposive filmmaking, Grierson insisted films should educate, uplift, and raise political consciousness. Inspired by Soviet filmmakers and documentary filmmaker Robert Flaherty, Grierson established his key tenets of documentary filmmaking in ‘First Principles of Documentary’ (1934-1936). For Grierson, documentaries were creative works drawn from the raw material of life, with stories developing from spontaneous on-location events involving real people. Like Flaherty, Grierson believed the innate drama of such events could reveal insights into the state of the world, but he believed Flaherty’s ‘Neo-Rousseauism’ was inadequate for exploring modern issues. Instead, Grierson wanted to examine the mass co-operative nature of society by exploring national industries, resources, and systems. |
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| Further reading:  (Hardy)  (Swann) |