

significant figures in the field. He even offers an alternative list. The historians chosen for this volume, however, need no defense. Each has indeed made major contributions.

In one sense, the content of these essays is not remarkable. Without exception, the authors have provided readers with a clear, generally chronological outline of the major works produced by their subjects. Innovative interpretations--Elton's Tudor revolution and Hill's seventeenth-century class struggle, for instance--are effectively summarized. Methodological debates, such as that caused by Stone's plunge into and retreat from social science, are also given due attention. Since the contributors are all established scholars, competent essays were to be expected, and as far as this aspect of the book goes, it is to be recommended mostly to graduate students preparing for preliminary exams that will cover modern Britain.

What makes the book of interest to a wider audience, however, is that most of the authors have tied their subjects' personal lives into their interpretations of the past. The most dramatic such connection is made by Thomas Heyck, who links E.P. Thompson's love of Romanticism and respect for the common man to a relationship with an older brother. The brother read the romantics with Thompson, and then having parachuted into Bulgaria to fight with the anti-fascist partisans, died at the hands of Nazi torturers. Barrett Beer's association of Elton's childhood experience of fascist dictatorship with his tendency to dismiss the idea of a Tudor dictatorship is also deftly done. Alan O'Day, who does not treat F.S.L. Lyons in quite so personal a fashion, does use Lyons's career as a means to comment on the nature of British academe in the mid-twentieth century.

In only two cases do the authors fail to provide such personal insights. Robert Braddock gives us only a historiographical summary of J. H. Plumb, but given Plumb's relatively traditional approach to his work, the omission does not particularly jar. It does, however, in Cynthia Herrup's discussion of Christopher Hill. She drops occasional hints, such as her remark that Hill's doctrinaire Marxist interpretations became more flexible after his resignation from the Communist Party, but she fails to get to the reasons behind both resignation and flexibility. Although working with living subjects can make the collection of information particularly difficult, it is too bad that Herrup was unable to make the sorts of biographical connections that most of the other contributors did.

The weaving of personalities and scholarship makes this a book that will interest historians quite generally. It will also be useful reading for students, who should be aware of the influence that experience can have on even the diligent scholar's interpretations. I hope that the title, which makes the volume sound a bit pedestrian, will not dissuade those not particularly interested in British history from picking up the book.

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**William Bruce Wheeler and Susan D. Becker.** *Discovering the American Past: A Look at the Evidence.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1990. Second Edition. Volume I: to 1877. Pp. xi, 308. Paper, \$14.97.

This work is offered as a supplemental book for survey courses in American history. In the preface, the authors state that they believe their "doing history" approach effective for "seminars, small classes, and large lecture classes with discussion sections." Eleven episodes are presented for analysis: early explorer-Indian contacts, the religious trial of Anne Hutchinson in Massachusetts Bay (1637), a demographic study of social trends in the Massachusetts Bay colony, eye-witness accounts of the "Boston Massacre," the 1794 congressional election in Philadelphia, debates on manhood suffrage in the New York constitutional convention of 1821, the conditions and attitudes of girl workers in the textile factories of Lowell, Massachusetts, stories and songs of blacks under slavery, U.S. politics and diplomacy leading to the Mexican War, the question of black-soldier enlistment on both sides of the Civil War, and the work of New York cartoonist Thomas Nast. Pictorial or graphic materials are used in the Indian section, the social-trends study, the "Boston Massacre," the Philadelphia election, the "factory girls" study, and the Thomas Nast material. The topics are well



chosen for the authors' stated purpose of presenting American history to students "in a way that they find challenging and stimulating."

In each of the eleven selections, six steps guide analysis. These are "problem," "background," "method," "evidence," "questions to consider," and "epilogue." The "evidence" section of each episode includes relevant letters, political statements, records of interviews, graphs, and drawings or photos. The student is encouraged to look behind conventional interpretations, in search of less obvious influences. An example occurs in the "Boston Massacre," where an unnamed civilian may have come up behind the soldiers and urged them to fire, before their captain gave any order. Other points that will arouse interest are the literacy and critical thinking of the "factory girls," and the prejudices of some Union Army soldiers against the use of black troops. Included in the "method" are techniques of segmenting information in chronological steps, and of grouping facts around a significant person or trend.

The collection really cannot be faulted on quality of material or the proposed method of analysis. There could be quantitative and selective problems on the use of the episodes. This reviewer sees the "factory girls," Mexican War," and "Thomas Nast" sections as demanding considerably more time than the others. Which will be kept, skipped, or condensed? Will there be time for students to gain adequate conventional perceptions of the eras of American history from the main course text and lectures? One obvious answer is that students will develop better perceptions, in the end, from the involvement of the "doing history" approach on which the book is built.

This collection and its approach are highly creative and challenging. However, the course that uses it in conjunction with a full-size narrative text will be a rather high-performance vehicle. It will put a great demand of involvement and versatility on both instructors and students.

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Nancy A. Hewitt, ed. *Women, Families, and Communities: Readings in American History*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown, 1990. Volume I: To 1877. Pp. xxi, 245. Paper, \$11.15. Volume II: From 1865. Pp. xv, 272. Paper, \$11.15.

Nancy A. Hewitt of the University of South Florida has compiled this anthology with the purpose of drawing "a new portrait of our national past," one that examines "how ordinary people both shaped and were shaped by the persons and events traditionally considered central to the nation's development." In other words, this is social history at its best, focusing on the ways that commoners--black, red, white, workers, immigrants, and women--shaped their world and our history. Designed for use in the traditional two-semester survey of American history, these volumes would also be suitable--perhaps even more so--for single term family or women's history courses. Broken at the Civil War, the traditional dividing point in such collections, Hewitt's articles--fourteen in volume one and fifteen in volume two--begin with Suzanne Lebsock's discussion of women in seventeenth-century Virginia and conclude with Jane J. Mansbridge's insights into the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment.

This excellent anthology is praiseworthy on several counts. In the first place, its focus on social history, one of the more exciting developments in historiography over the past twenty-five years, makes it a timely as well as useful supplement to the traditional political and military approach to our past. The scholarship is recent as well, all but six of the selections being drawn from works published in the 1980s or later. In the first volume, contributions by Carroll Smith-Rosenberg on "Sex Roles and Sexual Standards in Jacksonian America;" Theda Purdue's "Southern Indians and the Cult of True Womanhood;" Lori D. Ginzberg's insights into the Sanitary Commission's "Passion for Efficiency;" and Jacqueline Jones's "Freed Woman," an investigation of post-Civil War blacks, deserve special commendation. Articles by Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Hull House in the 1890s;" Joanne Meyerowitz, "Sexuality in the Furnished Room districts of Chicago" during the teens and twenties; Alan Clive, "The Home Front and the Household" in Detroit during World War II; and David J. Garrow, "The