

The American History Videodisc. 1992. Order from Instructional Resources Corp., 1819 Bay Ridge Ave., Annapolis, MD 21403. \$595.00, incl. shipping. Discounts available on multiple copies.

Constance B. Schulz. *Master Guide*. 1992. Pp. xi, 329. \$35.00. Discounts available on multiple copies.

Technological supplements for classroom use are becoming increasingly common. *The American History Videodisc (AHV)* is one of the most recent and attractive. It consists of 2490 still images and 68 motion sequences, organized into ten sections chronologically. The stills cover the sweep of United States history from prehistory to 1992. The motion sequences begin in the Progressive and World War I eras and go to the Gulf War.

Schulz, Professor of History at the University of South Carolina, has produced an excellent guide to the program. Here are instructions for using the disc, suggestion on ways to use the images, and barcodes and frame numbers for each still and motion segment. A still is retrieved by entering the frame number on the viewing screen or scanning the barcode with a pen reader. The system is easy to use; it takes only a couple of seconds to pull up a desired still, and moving back or ahead one still at a time is done at the push of a button. If you can operate your television by remote control, you can use this system. Schulz has also written a short narrative of 40-100 words for each of the 2490 images, a huge task. Each narrative identifies the image and usually gives a little background information as well. Instructors can use these narratives in class or give their own explanations. The publisher also provides free optional computer software (for IBM or Macintosh) that can be used to edit and arrange narratives and create pre-timed shows.

A two to four-minute Overview introduces each of the ten sections. These are quite superficial and hurried—for example, how can one adequately introduce or summarize the years 1865-1900 in three minutes? The soporific voice of the narrator is also a detraction. These Overviews can easily be skipped in class with no loss of content.

As for the 2490 stills themselves, there is indeed a cornucopia here. Some are old standards that instructors will be familiar with or that have appeared in textbooks, but certainly many will be new and unfamiliar. As a supplement to a class lecture, as the basis for an entire class presentation, or as a resource for individual or group reports by students, the *AHV* is a rich resource for junior high through college undergraduate classes.

But how well does this collection represent the vastness and richness of U.S. history? Here there are problems. The disc is very heavy on the "standard stuff"—whites, males, war, politics, government. In the section on the Civil War and Reconstruction, for example, 41% of the stills are strictly military and combat scenes; 22% portray the non-combat life of soldiers and civilian life behind the lines. Women in the war get a scant ten images.

For that matter, the entire disc's coverage of women is inadequate; overall, only 6.4% of the stills deal with women in history. Why should Eleanor Roosevelt, considered by many to be the most important woman of the twentieth century, get just three images? Why should Mary Boykin Chesnut and Abigail Adams rate none? Abigail's husband rates five, and the era of his presidency (hardly one of our most distinguished administrations) gets eleven. None of the motion sequences deal with women's issues.

There are 187 stills—7.5%—which deal with Afro-Americans. Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, and W. E. B. DuBois, three of the most important blacks in American history, each have one image, as does Rosa Parks. Four of the 68 video sequences deal with black history. Hispanics rate 70 images—2.8%—and no videos. Coverage of religion is very skewed; of the 90 images, only seven deal with the period since the Civil War. How could Billy Graham be ignored? Why should Ralph Nader, one of the most influential Americans of the modern

era, rate not a single image, while William Penn rates six? The subject of AIDS gets a single image.

Admittedly all of this could be seen as nit-picking and criticizing the producers of the disc for not creating something else, rather like attacking the author of a book for not writing a different one. Certainly a huge amount of work went into producing the *AHV*, and what the disc does it does well—but it could have been much richer. As a supplementary tool in a survey course it has a lot to offer, as long as the instructor or students are not delving very deeply into women's history, minorities, social, economic, or religious subjects.

The 68 motion sequences average two to five minutes each: 42 of them deal with political and military affairs, 13 with science and space, five with social themes, four with Afro-Americans, three with economic matters, and one with sports. Many cover fairly familiar terrain that students and instructors have seen before, such as World War II footage, the JFK assassination, King's "I Have a Dream" speech, and the Beatles. Others, from the 1920s and New Deal era, will be less familiar to students.

Instructors familiar with the *American History Slide Collection*, also a production of Instructional Resources, will recognize much of the same material on the *AHV*. The disc's value is that it has more stills and of course the 68 motion sequences. If instructors are willing to live with the limitations discussed above, the *AHV* is certainly a worthy and useful addition to a history department.

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David Cannadine. *G. M. Trevelyan: A Life in History*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1993. Pp. xvi, 288. \$32.95.

David Cannadine's *G. M. Trevelyan: A Life in History* is magisterial. As an essay in English historiography it is superb; as a study of English life and letters in the twentieth century it is masterly; and as a model for writing a scholarly life it is without peer. Written with elegance and wit, and an unmistakable patrician air worthy of its subject, Cannadine's biography has rescued Trevelyan and his work from the limbo of yesterday's scholarship. Neither nostalgic nor pietistic, Cannadine has made the life of this monumental British historian a key to understanding the development of historical writing in England between 1880 and 1960 as well as the profound transformation that took place in English life during those years.

George Macaulay Trevelyan was born into the English governing class at a time when the convergence of intellectual, social, and political connections made possible a career that historians of a later day could look back upon only with envy. A younger son of Sir George Otto Trevelyan, the distinguished later Victorian historian, "GMT" was a nephew of the great Victorian litterateur Thomas Babington Macaulay. Emerging from the potentially crippling shadows of these illustrious forebears, and provided with sufficient private means to forgo employment, Trevelyan devoted his attention, almost from the start, to research and writing. With his powerful friends and relations there was hardly a country house or foreign ministry that he could not enter. Only once, when he and Winston Churchill were interested in the same papers, did he find himself bested.

Trevelyan's books, as Cannadine makes admirably clear, beautifully capture and reflect not only the *geist* of the years in which they were written but also record their author's subtle yet significant transformation from an optimistic late Victorian liberal to a humane but sadly disillusioned mid-twentieth-century conservative. Consequently they can be read as a guide to the shifting intellectual climate of the twentieth century. *England Under the Stuarts*, the three volumes on Garibaldi, and the biography of John Bright, Trevelyan's early works, reflect the almost uncritical optimism of the decade before 1914. In many ways they are a paean to the