

As with all current texts, the publisher provides the usual platter of extras: Instructor's manual, study guides, test item file (in hard copy or on computer disc), transparencies, documents, a booklet free to students on answering essay questions, and a joint program with the *New York Times* providing *Times* articles relevant to classroom study.

In short, *Out of Many* is a comprehensive and mature survey many teachers will find attractive. Its size will limit the amount of collateral reading that can be assigned but there is much here to appeal to students and instructors alike.

Floyd College

William F. Mugleston

Donald W. Whisenhunt, ed. *American Portraits: History Through Biography*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1993. Volume I: To 1877. Pp. x, 339. Volume II: From 1865. Pp. x, 335. Paper, \$23.95 each volume.

Professor Whisenhunt has assembled two excellent collections of biographical essays designed primarily for introductory history courses at the college level. In addition to their sound scholarship, the sixty essays in the two volumes are extremely interesting and provocative.

Each of the essays was written especially for the project, and does not appear in any other source. With two essays per chapter, each of the chapters focuses on a major theme or historical period, with a short introduction to each chapter. Chapters are organized to correspond to the format usually found in standard history texts, an important consideration when designing a course syllabus. Both volumes contain the same chapter on the Reconstruction period, with essays on Thaddeus Stevens and Hamilton Fish. Most of the subjects chosen for inclusion are significant but not dominant figures of their time (e.g., Benjamin Rush, Dred Scott, Margaret Sanger, and William Douglas). Only a minority of the essays deal with really dominant characters (e.g., Alexander Hamilton, William Jennings Bryan, and Dwight Eisenhower), and likewise, a minority of the chosen people are relatively obscure to most Americans (e.g., Jason Lee, Susan Picotte, Henry McCowen, and Jack Kerouac).

Inevitably, most historians will question whether in some cases the selection of historical figures might have been improved upon, and those who emphasize military affairs probably will be disappointed. Although I would have recommended a number of different subjects, I do think that Whisenhunt's choices represent a good balance, and that each of the sixty essays is relevant to an important theme or movement. From the perspective of gender and racial diversity, twelve of the essays—or 20% of the total—deal with women, five treat African Americans, four are devoted to American Indians, one essay deals with an individual of Hispanic background, and forty essays—about two-thirds of the total—are written about males of European ancestry. Even in the last category, however, there is a good mixture of people of various professions, class backgrounds, and ideological persuasions. Some feminists concerned about gender equity might object to the fact that only seven—slightly more than 10%—of the contributing authors are women.

Each essay is ten to twelve pages in length—ideal for pedagogical purposes. Without being so long as to be intimidating to undergraduate students, the essays are long enough to include more than the basic facts of an encyclopedia article. A student with average reading speed will be able to finish an essay in one sitting of thirty or forty minutes. In keeping with the purposes of the volume, there are no notes for scholarly documentation, but each of the essays is followed by a concise discussion of the bibliographical materials available on the subject, including a consideration of interpretative disagreements. Perhaps teachers more than students will be interested in the bibliographical component, but since the readings tend to stimulate

curiosity, at least a minority of the students should be encouraged to seek additional materials for research papers or for general readings.

To me, the two volumes were a joy to read. Of the subjects about whom I have some competence, I found that the essays are factually accurate, based on good research, and filed with perceptive observations and anecdotes. Like most historians, I have only limited knowledge about some of the people included in the essays (William Patterson and Alice Paul, for example), and I completed the readings with the feeling that I had learned a great deal about a number of fascinating characters of history. I would expect that teachers who use the volumes will enjoy their class preparations more than is the case when using most anthologies.

One of the fundamental historical controversies involves the role of individuals in human affairs—whether individuals have shaped history, whether they have been shaped by it, or a combination of the two. In contemporary historiography, of course, there is a tendency to minimize the role of individual people, and to emphasize general movements, economic forces, and major categories of people. Whatever one's views on the role of the individual in history, Whisenhunt presents three strong reasons to include the study of individuals in a history course: (1) It is difficult to deny that some persons have been "important to and instrumental in the shaping of events in their own time;" (2) It is generally accepted that individuals are often "representative of certain categories of people and of the times in which they lived;" and (3) Experience shows that "by adding individuals into the study of history, the past is personalized and may be more interesting because of it."

Unquestionably, there are historians who will react negatively to the idea of a reader limited to biographical portraits, with the argument that such a reader tends to promote an inordinate concern for individual people—even encouraging the discredited "great man" school of history. Many historians will like the idea of some use of biography, but will prefer to choose a reader that also includes other essays that concentrate on historical problems, broad movements, or groups of people. For the teacher with such a preference, there already exist a number of excellent alternatives edited by John Garraty, Stephen Oates, and others. For the teacher who wishes to emphasize the biographical approach, however, I think that the Whisenhunt volumes represent the most useful alternative available at the present time.

While most teachers find that textbooks are indispensable to introductory courses in history, all textbooks tend to present a somewhat simplified impression of the way that events and movements occur, and their summary nature tends to obscure the humanistic drama of complex persons formulating goals and making decisions in conformity with their chosen values. Whisenhunt's two volumes, used as a supplement, should go a long way toward ameliorating these limitations; thus, they should contribute to the stated goal of making "the learning of American history a richer experience."

Mount Senario College

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David M. Reimers and Frederick M. Binder. *The Way We Lived: Essays and Documents in American Social History*. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath & Co., 1992. 2nd edition. Volume I: 1607-1877. Pp. x, 321. Paper, \$16.00. Volume II: 1865-Present. Pp. x, 326. Paper, \$16.00.

As a social studies specialist who trains Advanced Placement teachers, I am constantly barraged by pre-collegiate educators with the inquiry, "What readings book do I recommend for the survey American History course?" As a part-time instructor at the local community college, I have often asked myself the same question. Many supplemental primary source books include excerpts from the standard documents: e.g., the Constitution, Seneca Falls Declaration,