

EXPLAINING HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL

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Introduction

This essay offers an approach that introduces undergraduate students to the nature of historical inquiry. Samuel Wineburg and Janice Fournier have shown that merely taking a number of history courses will not automatically mean that students will think historically.¹ Many high school and college history courses and the textbooks they use are information-driven,² and unless they are specifically designed to immerse students in the mindset and methodology of the discipline, thinking historically will remain out of reach.

This approach can also be used in classes with future secondary history teachers, many of whom have little or no background in history and yet will have the responsibility of teaching the subject. A disturbing 53.9 percent of seventh- to twelfth-grade students who take courses in United States history and world history have teachers who have not majored or even minored in history.³

The idea of attempting to explain history "in a nutshell" came to me as a result of the limited class time available to discuss issues of historical process. Some might take issue with this attempt. Wineburg and Gaea Leinhardt have demonstrated that the historical frame of mind involves such a complex process that a deep understanding of the historical endeavor is nearly impossible given just a couple of hours.⁴ Because thinking historically is an "epistemic activity,"⁵ one can know a lot of historical facts and

¹Samuel S. Wineburg and Janice Fournier, "Contextualized Thinking in History," in Mario Carretero and James F. Voss, eds., *Cognitive and Instructional Processes in History and the Social Sciences* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), 285–308.

²Richard J. Paxton, "A Deafening Silence: History Textbooks and the Students Who Read Them," *Review of Educational Research* 69:1 (1999), 315–39.

³Diane Ravitch, "The Educational Backgrounds of History Teachers," in Peter N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg, eds., *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 143–55.

⁴Sam Wineburg, "Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts," *Phi Delta Kappan* 80:7 (1999), 488–99; Gaea Leinhardt, "Lessons on Teaching and Learning in History from Paul's Pen," in Stearns, Seixas, and Wineburg, eds., *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History*, 223–45.

⁵Robert B. Bain, "Into the Breach: Using Research and Theory to Shape History Instruction," in Stearns, Seixas, and Wineburg, eds., *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History*, 332.

yet not think historically.⁶ Despite these hurdles, I proceeded with the principle that "understanding is never all or nothing."⁷

As a historian who is responsible for history education, I have used this approach in two-hour sessions with pre-service and in-service teachers, sometimes as a guest speaker and at other times in my own classes. I first elicit students' notions of history, and then move to a presentation and discussion of historical concepts such as context, world views, change over time, and continuities between past and present. Next students confer in small groups, charged with the task of selecting a topic and generating questions for historical inquiry. Finally we discuss the nature of historical research.

What is History?

I begin by asking students to take a moment to jot down responses to two questions: "What is history?" and "What do you like and dislike about history?" I then ask them to share their responses, which I record on overhead sheets. Recording their responses for all to see not only allows for visual representation of their thoughts, but also gives me time to think about what they say and to respond as thoughtfully as I can to each comment. Responses to "What is history?" reveal different levels of understanding that reflect the degree of the students' involvement with and interest in history. Many respond with the idea of history as the past itself: "the past," "events of the past," "chronology," "sequence of events," and "events and people and places that shaped our world." Others bring in the role of humans in studying the past: "an account of past events," "records of the past," "a study of past civilizations and events that impact our world presently," "stories," and "remembrances." Some include popular notions of history as "progress," as "repeating itself," and as moving in "cycles." A few who have read a number of historical works respond that history is "interpretation" from a person's "perspective." My comments to their responses are aimed at encouraging their participation. While I note that the discussion will return to ideas such as history repeating itself, and history as progress, I do not dwell on these statements. Later in the session we discuss these popular notions as too simplistic, given the complexity of historical events.⁸ But for this introductory portion of the session, I choose not to delve

⁶Sam Wineburg, "Historical Problem Solving: A Study of the Cognitive Processes Used in the Evaluation of Documentary and Pictorial Evidence," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 83:1 (1991), 73-87.

⁷Peter Lee and Rosalyn Ashby, "Progression in Historical Understanding among Students Ages 7-14," in Stearns, Seixas, and Wineburg, eds., *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History*, 200.

⁸David H. Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 139, 150-51; and Peter Novick, *The Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 13.

into a critique of what they say because I do not want to silence them. My intent is to get the class to participate as openly as possible in the discussion.

Their responses to "What do you like and dislike about history?" further illuminate their notions of history. Their likes include comments such as "learning about the lives of others living in another time," "broadens my view of the world," "learning about who we are," "stories that transport me to another place and time." The most frequent dislike is their having to memorize "names, dates, and other facts." Related to this dislike are comments that history is "boring" and has "no relevance to my life."

As illustrated by the responses that I receive—that history is the past itself—the popular view of history is that it tells us *what* happened and *when* it happened. For example: In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court issued its first ruling on *Brown v. Board of Education*. Another example: In 1933 the legislature of the Territory of Hawai'i passed a law that required all high school students to pay a tuition of ten dollars. Related to issues of *what* and *when* are other questions such as *where* it happened and *who* was involved. Such facts are important to help us establish a chronology of events, and when used selectively, can serve as anchors-in-time, around which other events might be seen in relationship to them. (One might delve into a discussion of the "truth" of so-called facts, but I leave this task for another class session.⁹)

But while facts are necessary, they are insufficient to an understanding of history. Kathryn Spoehr and Luther Spoehr put it well: "History is about facts in much the same way that reading is about the alphabet: Facts (and letters) are essential building blocks; without them you cannot do history (or read.)"¹⁰ Unfortunately, history-as-facts is often the only idea many people have of history.

Going beyond the Facts

Context

While acknowledging the role of particular facts and the value of chronology, I quickly move the discussion beyond what-when-where-who questions to the notion of context. The historian examines events and people in light of their context—of time, place, and society. What is happening at that time, in that place, and with that community? What is the larger society like at that time? As students consider questions of context, they should note Wineburg's warning to disabuse themselves of the idea of "placing" a person "into context" as if that person is a piece of a jigsaw puzzle that is to

⁹See, for example, Keith Jenkins, *Rethinking History* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Keith Jenkins, ed., *The Postmodern History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1997); and Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994).

¹⁰Kathryn T. Spoehr and Luther W. Spoehr, "Learning to Think Historically," *Educational Psychologist* 29:2 (1994), 71.

be “slotted into preexisting frames.” Instead, we should think about context as weaving together and “connecting things in a pattern.”¹¹

Because the students I work with attend the University of Hawai‘i, the illustrations I use are on Hawai‘i. In discussing the idea of context, for example, I note that in order to examine school life at a particular high school at a particular time, in this instance McKinley High School on the island of Oahu in the 1930s, we should learn about what was happening on Oahu as well as in the rest of the territory during the decades before World War II. We should also learn about what was happening in other high schools on Oahu and in the rest of the territory. In this way we can make connections, discern patterns, and more fully appreciate what was happening at McKinley High School.

With the idea that a first step in historical inquiry is “the development of appropriate, penetrating questions,”¹² I ask students to explore the notion of context by posing questions that might be asked in order to come to a better understanding of the statement that I had given them previously: In 1933, the territorial legislature passed a law that required each public high school student to pay a tuition of ten dollars. In this and other exercises I use, I ask students first to respond individually in writing, then to discuss their responses in pairs and sometimes in groups of three or four, and finally to share their groups’ responses with the rest of the class.

In general, the questions they pose demonstrate an understanding of context: In 1933, what was the high school student population like? What was the financial condition of the families of these students? Were there fees charged in addition to tuition? Did students have to purchase their own books? Did rural students have to go to school in town and thus have room and board expenses? What socio-economic groups constitute the population of the territory? What reasons did the legislature give for imposing tuition? What were the statements of educational, business, and political leaders concerning the importance of a high school education? What did these leaders say about the tuition fee? What was the economy of Hawai‘i like during this time? Many students know that this was the period of the Great Depression, and many also know that in the 1930s most of the adult population of Hawai‘i worked on sugar plantations. But the point is not to answer these questions at this time, only to *raise* the *types* of questions that need to be answered in order to have a better sense of content.

World Views

Besides context, historians seek to understand the world views of a people at a particular time in the past, that is, to understand people on their own terms—their perspectives and their ways of thinking. A related line of questioning is to inquire into

¹¹Wineburg, “Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts,” 497.

¹²Paul L. Ward, *Studying History: An Introduction to Methods and Structure*, revised and expanded (Washington DC: American Historical Association, 1985), 23.

the ways in which people's thinking evolved over time. In examining world views, historians eschew the pitfalls of presentism—interpreting the past through present-day lens and judging past actions with present standards.¹³

While students seem to understand the concept of world views in this preliminary discussion, some misinterpret it in a later exercise. Instead of offering illustrations of people's mindsets, a few give examples of how the world viewed a particular group of people. This error at first led me to consider avoiding the term world view altogether, but, upon further reflection, I decided to continue to use it, since it is used among academics as well as in popular discourse. Rather than avoiding the term, I remind myself to be more cognizant of possible misinterpretation and to spend more time discussing this concept carefully and thoroughly.

In an exercise at applying this concept, I ask the class to consider Hawai'i's high school students of the 1930s, and pose questions that would help to illuminate their world views. I give students a few minutes to jot down ideas and then share them with another person sitting nearby. The questions students pose include the following: What fads were popular? What were the students' socio-economic levels? What social and economic pressures and concerns were they facing? What ethnic groups are we looking at? What generations are we looking at—for example, immigrants, children of immigrants, Native Hawaiians? What types of technologies did students have access to? What values did they have? Who were their heroes? What were their parents' and their own attitudes toward schooling?

Change Over Time

Another element of historical study is the examination of change over time: political, economic, social, and cultural. The idea of change involves the recognition of gradual change as well as radical shifts. As part of the notion of change, historians investigate the interactions between humans and their social, cultural, and physical environments, and the processes involved in these interactions, including conflict, cooperation, and adaptation.

I ask students to think of instances of gradual as well as radical changes in the history of Hawai'i. As students note, gradual and almost imperceptible changes occurred in the cultural and social lives of Native Hawaiians during the 500-year-long period of isolation, after waves of Polynesians had arrived from the Marquesas and Society Islands in the South Pacific. Students also note a later period of relatively gradual change, when Hawai'i's economic base moved from agriculture in the mid-nineteenth century to the military in the mid-twentieth century, to tourism in the late twentieth century. In contrast, dramatic change came to the islands beginning in the eighteenth century with the arrival of Western explorers, adventurers, and missionaries, ending the *kapu* system, introducing Christianity and a system of writing, and bringing an influx of foreign

¹³Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies*, 135–40.

diseases. Westerners also initiated radical changes in the population. From 1850 to 1925, the population increased substantially as plantation agents recruited laborers worldwide, especially from Asia, to work in the islands' sugarcane fields and mills. As a result of these recruiting efforts, the composition of Hawai'i's population shifted dramatically. While Native Hawaiians constituted 97.1 percent of the population in 1853, their population decreased by 13.8 percent by 1930. In contrast, while Asians constituted 0.5 percent of the population in 1853, their proportion (immigrants and their Asian American children) grew to 64.2 percent by 1930.¹⁴ Still another trigger of dramatic changes came in 1959 with the advent of statehood.

Continuities

While historians examine change, they also look for continuities between past and present, to see how the past can inform our understanding of the present. I ask students to identify examples of continuities in Hawai'i's history. One example they give is the islands' single public school system, first established in 1840 by the kingdom of Hawai'i, later becoming the territorial public school system in 1900 after Hawai'i was annexed to the United States, and continuing as one public school system in 1959 when Hawai'i became a state. Another continuity is the control since 1954 of island politics by the Democratic Party.

Small Group Activity

Having spent the first thirty minutes discussing major aspects of historical thinking, the class then divides into small groups. I find that for this activity, groups of five to seven work best. Normally I prefer to have students discuss in pairs or in groups of three or four, so that all have opportunities to participate actively. But in this particular instance, I find that larger groups generate better ideas because more people allow for a more productive exchange of ideas and serve as a check on errors in thinking.

I give the groups about twenty minutes to accomplish four tasks, to be done in the order I list them. (1) First of all, they are to select a *place* and an *event* that occurred there. I tell them that in order to do this activity, they have to know a little (but not a lot) about the event. (2) Next they are to answer this question: What questions would the historian need to answer in order to place the event within a larger *context*? I emphasize to students that I am not interested in their knowing the answers to the questions. Instead, I want them to pose the questions. (3) Then they are to ask themselves, What questions would the historian need to answer in order to understand the *world views* of the people involved in this event? Once again, I want them to generate questions for investigation, not the answers. (4) Their final task is to ask themselves: What questions would get at issues of change and continuity?

¹⁴Andrew W. Lind, *Hawaii's People*, 3rd ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1967), 20.

Each group chooses a facilitator whose role is to make sure that all members contribute actively to the discussion and a recorder whose job is to report on the group's discussion. Groups have selected a wide variety of topics. What follow are three samples that took students beyond the confines of Hawai'i's local history.

Sample 1: The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima

Context—Questions Generated: What was happening in Japan at the time the decision was made to drop the bomb? What was happening with the United States and its allies? What events led up to the bombing? Who was living in Hiroshima at the time? How does the bombing of Hiroshima fit within the overall bombing of the rest of Japan? Within the context of the bombing of Europe?

World Views—Questions Generated: Who were in favor of dropping the bomb and why? Who were opposed and why? What were the reactions of the Japanese? of the Americans? of the rest of the world? What was the thinking of the U.S. military? of President Harry Truman and his advisors? What was the purpose of the bombing? How did the Japanese people view the war before and after the bombing? the Japanese military?

Changes and Continuities—Questions Generated: How did life in Japan change or remain the same after the bombing? How were the lives of the bomb victims affected, physically, economically, and socially? What social stigma came to the families of the bomb victims? How did the dropping of the bomb affect the nature of warfare?

Sample 2: The Assassination in 1963 of John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Texas

Context—Questions Generated: Why was Kennedy in Dallas? Who was he with in Dallas? Where was he and what was happening around him when he was assassinated? Who witnessed the assassination? What was the domestic political situation like in 1963? Where did Kennedy fit in the political spectrum? What was the state of world affairs during this time?

World Views—Questions Generated: Why did the assassin pull the trigger? Why did Jack Ruby shoot Lee Harvey Oswald? How did Americans view President Kennedy? How did people of other countries view him? How did Americans and people of other countries react to the assassination?

Changes and Continuities—Questions Generated: What was the transition like when Lyndon B. Johnson became president? In what ways did Johnson change Kennedy's policies and programs? In what ways did he continue them? How were issues of civil rights and Vietnam affected by the change in presidency?

Sample 3: The Return in 1997 of Hong Kong to China

Context—Questions Generated: Why and how did Great Britain have control of Hong Kong in the first place? Why was Hong Kong returned to China? What type of government was Hong Kong expected to have under the People's Republic of China (PRC)?

World Views—Questions Generated: What did the government of the PRC think about this return? the government of Great Britain? the Chinese living in the PRC? the Chinese and non-Chinese living in Hong Kong? What was life like for the residents of Hong Kong just before its return to China?

Changes and Continuities—Questions Generated: Was the change in governmental systems radical or gradual? How was international trade in Hong Kong affected? In what ways did the daily lives of Hong Kong residents change? remain the same?

How Historians Answer Their Questions

With the preceding exercise, I take students beyond popular notions of history as being primarily interested in factual information. I want them to consider the types of questions that historians ask themselves in the process of their research. By digging beneath the surface, students gain a sense of how the historical perspective can help them reach an understanding of how events occurred and why things happened the way they did. (One aspect of historical inquiry that I plan to include the next time I do this exercise with students is the question of causation, which will encourage them to generate even more questions of how and why.)

Having posed the questions, how then do historians answer them? In *Historians' Fallacies*, David Hackett Fischer describes the evidence available to the researcher: "Take a Jackson Pollock painting and cut it into a jigsaw puzzle with a hundred thousand parts. Throw away all the corner pieces, two-thirds of the edge pieces, and one-half of the rest."¹⁵ The remaining pieces can be likened to what is available to the historian. The historian Michael Katz also discusses the issue of evidence in his study of a nineteenth-century Canadian city: "On an average day in 1851 about 14,000 people awoke in Hamilton, Canada West. Most of them were quite unremarkable and thoroughly ordinary. In fact, there is no reason why the historian reading books, pamphlets, newspaper, or even diaries and letters should ever encounter more than 700 of them. The rest, at least 95 out of every 100, remain invisible. Insofar as most written history is concerned, they might just as well never have lived."¹⁶

Thus historians attempt to make sense of the past by using the limited sources available to them. The historian Gerda Lerner noted, "History making, then, is a creative enterprise, by means of which we fashion out fragments of human memory and selected evidence of the past a mental construct of a coherent past world that makes sense to the

¹⁵Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies*, 135n.

¹⁶Michael B. Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 16.

present.”¹⁷ In the same vein, the historian William McNeill wrote that in order to make sense of the clutter of information available, historians pay “selective attention” to the data before them, leaving some things out, “relegating them to the status of background noise” and discerning “an intelligible pattern” from the facts before them. McNeill went on to write that “absolute, eternal truth in history is unattainable” because historians themselves shape the information that they amass, and historians are influenced by their own experiences and the intellectual “climate of opinion” of their time.¹⁸

Since the 1960s, the positivist idea of knowing the past as-it-really-was has collapsed. Yet even a decade ago, the profession was still grappling with the question of objectivity, as evidenced by the controversy surrounding *That Noble Dream*, a historical study of the historical profession, in which Peter Novick demonstrated the ways in which historians compromised their ideal of objectivity.¹⁹

Since the advent of postmodernism, the assumption of objectivity has fallen apart. The nineteenth-century notion of so-called scientific history has been replaced with an emphasis on interpretation as being at the heart of history.²⁰ Yet well before the onslaught of postmodernism, as early as 1910 and later again in his now classic essay, “Everyman His Own Historian,” the noted historian Carl Becker wrote of the relativity of historical “myths.”²¹

More recently, the historian Nancy Schrom Dye encapsulated the historical process eloquently:

History ... is an interpretation, not a reconstruction, of past reality; it is the result of a process designed to impose order on the vast and chaotic accumulation of ... material handed down from the past. To construct a coherent narrative of some aspect of the past, historians formulate questions and methodologies, sift through documents and statistical data, and finally, expand some of their materials and delete others. What historians ignore and what they stress depend upon their notions of historical significance. In turn, historians' judgments concerning significance depend upon their personal, political, and social values, their social status, their personal

¹⁷Gerda Lerner, “The Necessity of History and the Professional Historian,” *National Forum*, 62:3 (1982), 37.

¹⁸William H. McNeill, *Mythistory and Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 5–6, 162–63.

¹⁹Novick, *That Noble Dream*.

²⁰Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*.

²¹Carl L. Becker, “Everyman His Own Historian,” *American Historical Review*, 37:1 (1932), 231; Carl L. Becker, “Detachment and the Writing of History,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 106 (October 1910), 524–36.

experience, and the cultural milieu in which they work. Not surprisingly, historians' notions of significance have changed a good deal over the past hundred years: what has been important to one generation of scholars has seldom been compelling to the next. Writing history, then, is a continuous process, not so much because historians uncover new sources or develop new methodologies as because our view of the past and our evaluations of what is important about it are constantly changing.²²

With each generation interpreting the past anew and drawing insights that are relevant to its own time, one can understand why there are thousands of books on Abraham Lincoln, arguably the world's most written-about person.

But the danger of taking the postmodernist stance to its extreme is to deny any judgment that accepts one historical account over another, to hold forth an unreflective cynicism toward all accounts, resulting in the view that any opinion is just as good as any other. To counteract the threat of falling into the trap of this "relativist nihilism,"²³ I stress to students that there is a profound difference between superficial opinion and valid interpretation. The historian engages in extensive research—reading widely on the varying interpretations made by others, evaluating sources, seeking solid evidence, making connections, and producing sound argumentation.²⁴

A number of studies have made systematic and detailed inquiries into the nature of historical research. Wineburg investigated the ways in which historians examine and evaluate primary and secondary sources, seeing both as "rhetorical artifacts"²⁵ created by humans for various purposes. Historians compare multiple pieces of evidence, analyze relationships among them, and use them to build their arguments. And they situate the evidence in the context of time and place. Stuart Greene examined how historians develop their arguments, "making connections among different issues" and

²²Nancy Schrom Dye, "Clio's American Daughters: Male History, Female Reality," in Julia A. Sherman and Evelyn T. Beck, eds., *The Prism of Sex: Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 9.

²³David Lowenthal, "Dilemmas and Delights of Learning History," in Stearns, Seixas, and Wineburg, Eds., *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History*, 71.

²⁴Ward, *Studying History*.

²⁵Sam Wineburg, "The Cognitive Representation of Historical Texts," in Gaea Leinhardt, Isabel L. Beck, and Catherine Stainton, eds., *Teaching and Learning in History* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), 115.

"playing issues off one another."²⁶ In these ways, historians seek to understand the past to the fullest extent possible.

After discussing the preceding ideas, and as the session comes to a close, I ask students to discuss whether or not their ideas about history changed as a result of this session. I ask them to respond in writing without identifying themselves. While a few say that they see little or no change in their understanding of history, most report new or renewed interest in the subject. One student wrote, "I always thought that history was boring when I was in high school; then it was the dreaded class in college. I always had a hard time focusing and staying interested. It must have been the way it was presented. At today's session, the way we picked a topic in history and analyzed it made it interesting and fun. We had to look into detail about the event." Another wrote, "History was never my strong point, mainly because I didn't enjoy the date and fact cramming that most classes required I really enjoyed your presentation and really identified with the concept of world views and how the people involved felt and what they were thinking. You showed us new ways to look at historical events that I can identify with and find interest in." One student felt motivated to learn more about his family's history: "After tonight's session, my appreciation for history increased. This is because I started to reflect back to my childhood and that of my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Before my parents pass away, I should get a complete oral history of their struggles as son and daughter to immigrants. What sacrifices, values, cultural adjustments and triumphs did they experience?"

A number of students noted that they came to see history as "complex," "comprehensive," and "multi-faceted," "not just a list of facts in chronological order." Some said that they would be more cautious when talking about "facts." To my surprise, many liked the idea of history as interpretation, allaying my concern that the issue of relativism might lead them to reject history altogether. One referred to history's relativism as "a dynamic process."

One student discussed the importance of knowing "about the background of the historians because their perspectives will be in the histories they write." Another generalized this awareness to other works by noting, "I am now more prone to think about who wrote what I am reading." Another put it this way, "I need to be more aware of the author of the source I am using."

Most enjoy the group activity. One student explained, "[It] helped me to see how to ask questions." Another reported, "While trying to come up with questions on our

²⁶Stuart Greene, "The Problems of Learning to Think Like a Historian: Writing History in the Culture of the Classroom," *Educational Psychologist*, 29:2 (1994), 92-93. See also Gaea Leinhardt, Catherine Stainton, and Salim M. Virji, "A Sense of History," *Educational Psychologist*, 29:2 (1994), 79-88; and G. Williamson McDiarmid, "Understanding History for Teaching: A Study of the Historical Understanding of Prospective Teachers," in Mario Carretero and James F. Voss, ed., *Cognitive and Instructional Processes in History and the Social Sciences* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), 159-85.

chosen event, I was able to see history from various perspectives." One noted, "The group activity was like looking into a magnifying glass."

What can be accomplished in a short session of two hours is understandably just the tip of the iceberg. Such exercises in "doing history"—as examining sources, gathering, analyzing, and finding relationships among pieces of evidence, developing cause and effect hypotheses, interrogating the complexity of causation, developing sound arguments, contending with contradictory evidence and opposing arguments—all of which provide greater insights into the discipline, would have to be left to other sessions. Practicing historians develop these skills over time and with experience, and one should not expect transformative results in just one session or one workshop, or even one course. And yet, while the ability to think historically takes time and practice, touching the tip of the iceberg of history is important as the first step in understanding the historian's craft.