

While the collection emphasizes personal correspondence, it also includes the public documents essential in any collection, such as Washington's Farewell Address, which is reprinted in full text. Dunn's selection of public writings only complements and illuminates personal writings of the authors. At times it is as though she wants the readers to recognize the personal path to the public product.

The only fault found in the collection is the absence of writings by Benjamin Franklin. It is hard to understand why Franklin's writings are absent and the author offers no explanation for such a glaring omission. For those educators who are looking for a comprehensive selection of documents in a single volume for the classroom, the lack of Franklin's work and his personal correspondence leaves the reader with the sense that a big part of this personal and public collaboration is absent. Despite this disappointing omission, we can be assured that there are many sources, both online and in print, of Franklin's writings to fill this need.

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Charles W. Calhoun, ed. *The Gilded Age: Perspectives on the Origins of Modern America*. 2nd edition. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007. Pp. 402. Paper, \$26.95; ISBN 0-7425-5038-9.

In this second edition of collected essays on the Gilded Age, editor Charles Calhoun has improved upon an already valuable teaching text. As stated in the preface, this edition includes revised and new essays as well as a list of suggested readings that showcase newer works of related scholarship. Calhoun's synthesis of sixteen lively essays offers an amalgamation of topics that remains extensive in scope. These engaging pieces allow students to consider the numerous political, socio-economic, and cultural factors that moved the United States from a rural, isolated society to an increasingly urban and integrated modern America. Calhoun also shows why understanding the Gilded Age remains crucial to our understanding of America today.

Of particular note are essays by authors Ellen M. Litwicky and W. Bernard Carlson. Litwicky demonstrates how Americans progressively participated as agents within a growing consumer society and also addresses race. Using the Columbian Exposition as a microcosm of larger urban trends, she carefully reveals a myriad of the motives and meanings of commercialized leisure, technology, commerce, and race to show the pervading diversification of a cultural economy. Because entertainment businesses remained dominated by the white middle class, African Americans increasingly found themselves isolated from popular culture. Litwicky's essay opens a valuable, yet largely overlooked, window that lends great insight into the consociation of technology, consumerism, entertainment, and race. W. Bernard Carlson also addresses technology and consumerism from 1870 to 1900. Citing Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, published in 1888, Carlson analyzes Bellamy's utopian vision with

the "gilded" reality that, through consumerism and mass production, American technology would produce goods affordable for all classes of people. Although Carlson recognizes that Bellamy's ideals remained flawed, Carlson recapitulates that "Americans during the Gilded Age used technology to dramatically change daily life and establish the basic contours of America as a consumer society."

Other notable essays address particular groups based on gender, race, and ethnicity. Stacy A. Cordery addresses gender in "Women in Industrializing America," while Leslie H. Fishel, Jr. examines the African American experience. Multiple essays reflect realities for different ethnic groups such as Native Americans, European immigrants in America, and Non-Western groups largely influenced by the intrusion of American imperialism. Regrettably, certain essays are inundated with statistics that leave readers with dry, impersonal representations of important trends. Finally, several essays remain dedicated to political life from both the top down and the bottom up. Two other essays trace the development of third party politics and conflicts within the prevailing two-party system. Worth Robert Miller does an exceptional job showing the influence of the Populist Party as well as the void left after "freeholders and independent workers were proletarianized," leaving no political voice after 1896 for the millions who felt disillusioned by American business and government.

Calhoun's synthesis remains a great tool for teaching. Not only does it allow a glimpse of specialized topics and groups within the Gilded Age, essays are also read with relative ease. Although certain essays pertaining to politics and immigration remain less engaging for class readings and discussion, teachers could easily use this text to divide among students, subsequently allowing students to present findings from each chapter. With Calhoun's second edition of *The Gilded Age*, educators and students alike can gain a better perspective on the origins of modern America.

The Harpeth Hall School

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Gary Donaldson, ed. *Modern America: A Documentary History of the Nation Since 1945*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2007. Pp. 306. Paper, \$29.95; ISBN 978-0-7656-1538-1.

It seems as if there are dozens of documentary histories of post-World War II United States. Most cover the same ground—Cold War, life in the 1950s, civil rights, feminism, protests in the 1960s, and Vietnam. Gary Donaldson's *Modern America: A Documentary History of the Nation Since 1945* differs from the pack with unexpected depth and an unusual choice of documents that might very well prompt undergraduates to read the book.

Donaldson opens his book with a preface that discusses the difficulties of studying and understanding modern history when we are so close to it. In common with the rest of the book, it is a piece that is useful for prompting classroom discussion.