

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Bruce A. Lesh.** *“Why Won’t You Just Tell Us the Answer?” Teaching Historical Thinking in Grades 7-12.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2011. Pp. 240. Paper \$22.00; ISBN 978-157110-812-8.

Remember David Rubenstein? He’s a billionaire philanthropist, a venture capitalist who co-founded the Carlyle Group, gave \$7.5 million to repair the Washington Monument, \$13.5 million to the National Archives, and paid out more than \$21 million for a rare copy of the *Magna Carta*. But why? “I am very involved in historic kinds of things,” he explained. He must have had someone like Bruce Lesh as a teacher.

In his new book, *Why Don’t You Just Tell Us the Answer?*, Lesh aims to help us understand the process of teaching historical thinking skills in grades 7-12. In it, he outlines his “approach to teaching history in hopes of promoting discussion and prompting classroom teachers to reconsider how they teach the past.”

To do this, Lesh insists that teachers “must do the following:

See history as a discipline driven by questions

Understand the nature of historical evidence and be able to analyze a variety of sources and apply them to historical questions, and

Develop and defend evidence-based interpretations of the past.”

From this beginning, Lesh then uses a variety of events and documents to teach historical skills and thinking. They vary from Nat Turner’s 1831 rebellion to Custer’s last stand and include topics from evaluating evidence to teaching chronological thinking and causality. Yet does he succeed?

The key to Lesh’s approach lies in the title to his book, *“Why Don’t You Just Tell Us the Answer?”* He really doesn’t believe in answers in history, only ways to examine evidence, offer multiple perspectives, and look at such things as continuity and change over time. It’s a bit like maintaining that everyone has an opinion, only this is that of a skilled student in history. To that end, Lesh does not look at things like the burden or level of proof necessary to sustain an argument, at footnotes for that proof, or at having students formulate a hypothesis that offers fresh insights into a problem like Turner’s rebellion.

Students delight in the critical thinking and writing skills that go beyond interpretations and perspectives. Yes, even students in grades 7-12 can do that, something I learned decades ago when I taught in public schools. Indeed, having multiple perspectives drawn from an interaction with original documents only teaches a student to mention them while answering questions like “What caused the Civil War?” Inevitably, they will respond, “It was caused by many things” and then proceed to list them paragraph-by-paragraph as if all were equal. While an essential and even advanced skill, it assuredly is not an insightful one.

Lesh’s work should be taken as a passionate appeal to teach students through a critical examination of documents and perspectives, as an appeal to go away from

history as lecture, note writing, and memory. Frankly, some of the best teachers I recall inspired me through those same methods while one of the worst just let the class “interpret” documents endlessly while, like Socrates, he encouraged our discussion.

Lastly, while Lesh’s work assuredly is worth reading, I would suggest Conal Furay and Michael J. Salevouri’s *The Methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide* or their *Learning American History: Critical Skills for the Survey Course* as better classroom guides.

The University of North Carolina at Asheville

Milton Ready

**George P. Taylor, ed. *Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Research*. Third ed. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010. Pp. 246. Paper \$34.50; ISBN 978-0-7618-5361-9.**

Research and research papers at the undergraduate level in history often consist of one 15-20 page paper written in a capstone course. When students enter graduate school, then, they know little about research design. George P. Taylor’s *Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Research* can be a good first step for beginning history graduate students. The book is divided into three parts: the research process, quantitative and qualitative resource methods, and differences between quantitative and qualitative research.

One of the book’s strengths is to explain to students that all research has certain components. Too often students assume that there is a major difference between quantitative and qualitative methods. While I personally do not like these labels since all research must be “quality” work, a distinction is important for budding scholars to understand. The difference, as Taylor explains, is not in the steps but rather in the content. Quantitative research includes “the gathering and manipulation of numerical data” whereas qualitative research involves “the analysis of complex data collected by observations, interviews, or actual participation by the research.” Taylor makes his point in several chapters, especially in Part III, and even includes a chart (p. 55) to list the research methods for quantitative and qualitative research side by side. A second strength is his list of dos and don’ts as he discusses each aspect of research design and analysis.

On the downside, Taylor’s book is less useful for historians than for other social scientists. His discussion of how to establish validity is less clear than his discussion of documenting reliability. This is perhaps because it is difficult for historians doing qualitative research to establish reliability. The major goal of qualitative research is to do in-depth research such as interviews and let the findings help determine the next steps in the research design. Taylor defines qualitative research as “deliberative, integrative, and historical.” Yet quantitative research can also be historical. His distinction between primary and secondary sources is confusing at best, probably

wrong-headed. He links newspapers with reference books as “secondary” sources when newspapers also can be primary. He suggests that a research project in history can be to distinguish between primary and secondary sources whereas he provides actual projects to consider for the other disciplines. He tells his readers, “Caution should be exercised in using secondary data sources because of frequent errors and mistakes made when information is changed or is passed from one person to another. Consequently, historical documents must be examined to validate their authenticity and accuracy before they can become reliable data sources.” In fact, historians must validate both primary and secondary sources and there is room for errors in both. However, secondary sources also include monographs by historians who already have assessed the reliability of many primary sources. His section on the need for and how to conduct a review of the literature, which includes how to use databases, is helpful. However, it does not include some key history data bases such as JSTOR and government databases such as those maintained by the Library of Congress and National Archives. Therefore, faculty and graduate students in history will have to consult additional “how to” books if they begin by learning the basics from Taylor.

Culver-Stockton College

D’Ann Campbell

**Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin, and Chauncey Monte-Sano. *Reading Like a Historian: Teaching Literacy in Middle and High School History Classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2011. Pp. 160. Paper \$27.95; ISBN 978-0-8077-5213-5.**

Sam Wineburg has been leading a multi-tiered revolution in the world of not only teaching but, more importantly, student learning in history and social studies. This book does not just provide the context for what Wineburg and his able team have been doing for the last several years, it provides practical examples of a variety of learning tools along with specific historical examples to demonstrate those innovative approaches for true historical inquiry. These hands-on activities integrating primary sources expand well beyond the boundaries of the “fact and date” approach often necessitated by the breadth of state standards most teachers must cover.

Most importantly, this work offers teachers at ALL levels a flexible interface to engage in this type of approach to student learning. As Wineburg asserts, he wants students to develop their historical thinking skills so that they are educated consumers and citizens. Too often, those of us in the ivory tower have tried to get our students to read and interpret history just like we do. With the exception of our best students, that just isn’t realistic or even possible. In fact, our best students often do it on their own because they arrive on our doorstep with their toolkits already in hand. Wineburg and his co-authors, fellow researchers Daisy Martin and Chauncey Monte-Sano, provide the

connections, or bridges, between cutting-edge research in how students learn history and the real world of how students learn in most of our classrooms.

Unlike other previous approaches to primary sources, the authors do not throw the baby out with the bathwater. Instead, they demonstrate for teachers and students how to use a textbook as one of many sources. No matter your individual opinions about textbooks, they are a fact of life for most classroom teachers engaging their students in the study of history, and school administrators, school boards, and parents expect them to be used. This book gives already overburdened teachers the opportunity to utilize more effectively these extant classroom materials as well as enhance their teaching toolkits.

Wineburg's *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (2001) laid the foundation for what Wineburg and his team at the Stanford History Education Group and, later, the National History Education Clearinghouse that he co-founded, do with this text and is also well worth consulting. As he has discussed in his earlier books and articles, Wineburg asserts that "facts isolated from the questions that give them meaning no more constitute historical understanding than bands of roving teenagers with AK-47s slung around their necks constitute an army." Furthermore, today's students are overwhelmed with information and need to develop the skill set to "make sense of it all." This is where the approaches outlined in his book offer teachers a multitude of ways to help students do exactly that.

Even if you have little or no background in historical literacy, you can easily pick up this book and understand the approaches identified by the authors. Their experience in a variety of diverse classrooms along with their ability to do heavy-duty research worthy of funding from the National Science Foundation is clearly illustrated here. This is what research dissemination is all about if we ever want to make a positive difference in students' lives and our own futures.

Pittsburg State University

Kelly A. Woestman

**John P. McKay, et al. *Western Society: A Brief History*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. Pp. 1080. Paper \$73.95; ISBN-13: 978-0-312-57455-X.**

Derived from the longer *A History of Western Society, Understanding Western Society* has 31 chapters that treat the achievements of humans from about 400,000 years ago to the present in the West. Each chapter begins with an introduction. The large subheadings frame questions that students might keep in mind while reading the textbook. Each chapter includes a chronology, key terms, and a conclusion that both summarizes the chapter and previews the next chapter. Other features attend to daily life, geography, and primary sources and illustrations. The text treats the large topics central to Western civilization: the rise of civilization in the Near East and Egypt, the Golden Age of Greece, the rise and fall of Rome, the ubiquity of religion in the Middle

Ages, the Hundred Years War, the Black Death, the Renaissance, the discovery of the Americas, the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, imperialism, the World Wars, the Cold War, and globalism. Particularly welcome is the emphasis on social history. Women and men, in their roles as lovers, parents, slaves, laborers, merchants, and intellectuals, receive treatment. The family emerges as the unit of social organization. The importance of sex, including prostitution and gay and lesbian relations, is a central concern of *Understanding Western Society*.

In their quest to describe daily life, McKay and colleagues devote space to agriculture. The topic is important, but at least one assertion is questionable. The authors rightly state that agriculture made possible a larger population than hunting and gathering had allowed. But the claim that farmers were healthier than hunter-gatherers deserves scrutiny. The first farmers were less robust than the anatomically modern hunter-gatherers who predated them. A diet too reliant on corn causes pellagra. People who consume polished rice to the exclusion of other foods risk blindness because of vitamin A deficiency. *Claviceps* tainted grain, notably rye, causes ergotism. By the authors' own account, in the agrarian Early Middle Ages half of all children died before age five and those who reached age forty were exceptional.

Particularly impressive is the authors' treatment of science. They note its origin in Greece, making clear that not all Greek thinkers believed the earth to be the center of the universe. This error, perpetuated by Aristotle and Ptolemy, was ascendant in antiquity and the Middle Ages. Nicholas Copernicus overturned this theory, though the authors credit him merely with speculating about the relationship among the sun, earth, and the other planets. In their estimation, Johannes Kepler proved heliocentrism. Descriptions of race and science, Darwinism, and modern physics follow in later chapters.

The primary classroom use of *Understanding Western Society* is as a textbook in a Western civilization course. The instructor might assign another textbook for students to read, deriving lecture notes on politics, warfare, religion, science, medicine, literature, art, and social history from *Understanding Western Society*. The wealth of information on social history makes it particularly desirable as a source of lecture notes. The questions that preface the large sections of each chapter are suitable for discussion. The two-page miniatures that detail the lives of significant and lesser-known individuals as well as the primary sources might likewise stimulate discussion. The study guide at the end of each chapter should help students organize and retain information.

**Roberta Seret.** *World Affairs in Foreign Films: Getting the Global Picture.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company. Pp. 268. Paper \$35.00; ISBN 978-0786464722.

For several years now Roberta Seret has used foreign films in a United Nations global classroom program for high school students, aimed at enlarging their knowledge of different countries and cultures. This has given her sound experience on which to base suggestions for assignments and put together background information on films and countries. But this particular institutional setting is perhaps also responsible for the many multiple overlapping categories into which material is organized. No constituency will feel slighted here! This book, though, certainly is a labor of love and knowledge.

The films are grouped by continent, and all six are represented (even Antarctica). Except for one film from the late 1990s, the films are only about a decade old. The list: *Osama* (Afghanistan), *Persepolis* (Iran), *Water* (India), *Beijing Bicycle* (China), *Tokyo Sonata* (Japan), *Tsoti* (South Africa), *Hotel Rwanda* (Rwanda), *War Dance* (Uganda), *Central Station* (Brazil), *March of the Penguins* (Antarctica), *Sophie Scholl: The Final Days* (Germany), *The Counterfeiters* (Austria), *Pearl* (USA, Chickasaw Nation).

It's certainly a fine list. I've seen many of these films and used several with high school seniors over recent years. One problem with doing this project in print (as opposed to online) is that newer films that could cover some topics more currently (e.g. children's rights) appear each year. And websites devoted to teaching history through film with lots of history film resources are available online in general. Also, events can quickly outrun the focus of films and material. A question here for one film about American plans for rebuilding Afghanistan's economy already seems outrun by events. On the other hand, the assignments and ideas here are varied and thoughtful enough so teachers could adapt them easily to different films.

Each film chapter runs 15-20 pages, with historical background information (usually solid and concise) and a variety of assignments organized by categories. First, we get Post Screening Questions: History and Social Science, then Post Screening Questions: Literature and Visual Arts. Under Curricular Themes, we get Cinema as a Reflection of Culture and Cinema as a Reflection of Politics. The range of assignments is enormous: from researching Afghani carpets to creating a talk show to interview the group about their experience with violence, or suggesting a report on Brazil's role in the Portuguese mercantilist system. There are advantages to having such a wide range of options, but sometimes the global humanitarian nature of the curriculum overshadows the particular film at hand. Some topics seem included to cover an exhaustive bureaucratic checklist (racism: check, child slavery: check) and focus too exclusively on the director's "message." The films sometimes seem primarily a launch point for broader discussion. Teachers interested in deep knowledge of these films will want to look elsewhere.

Questions can certainly be asked about the list: With just thirteen films, do too many of them focus primarily on young children? Why are both European films on the Nazi era? Would it be better to have separate lists for features and documentaries? But that just goes back to the whole focus and *raison d'être* of this book. It should prove useful to anyone using film in a history classroom, but sometimes become frustrating in its scope and focus.

Thayer Academy

Dan Levinson

**Erik R. Seeman.** *The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead: Indian-European Encounters in Early North America.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011. Pp. 176. Paper \$50.00; ISBN 978-0-8018-9855-6.

This book has much to recommend it, beginning with the concept itself: Take the fundamental ritual of one particular tribe, in this case the Huron-Wendat “Feast of the Dead,” and use it as “a metaphor for Indian-European encounters in North America.” Because the French and the Wendat shared a belief in both the omnipresence of the dead and the supernatural power of human bones, mortuary rituals provided a footing for intercultural understanding and even the possibility of peaceful coexistence, according to Erik R. Seeman. The author forces the reader to jettison simplistic notions of Indian vs. white conflict and to acknowledge that Native Americans and Europeans in colonial North America shared more than we usually care to realize. Wendat religion and Catholicism, despite their differences, converged in striking ways, especially in their focus on the role of the dead, who “could intercede on behalf of the living,” and the powerful role that blood and bones played in mediating between the visible world and the spirit world. If you’re looking to disabuse your undergraduate students of what I call the “short version of American Indian history”—that of greedy European conquerors and hapless Indian victims—then Seeman gets you there quickly.

The author introduces students to many of the core themes in American Indian history while at the same time making an intriguing case for the importance of religion on the European-Indian frontier. Seeman argues that religion drove European colonization and framed Wendat behavior, in contrast to the conventional view that the fur trade was motivated by the rational material desires of Indians who wanted iron and guns to make their lives easier. Seeman persistently contends that the Wendat sought trade goods as much for the dead (to be used in mortuary rituals) as for the living. Unfortunately, the author’s conclusions are drawn entirely from European sources, mostly the *Jesuit Relations*, so the Wendat perspective is gained primarily through intelligent speculation.

The book is well-conceived and, for the most part, it works, but not without some problems. One problem is complexity. Native American history is already hopelessly complex—over five hundred distinct peoples speaking distinct languages, living

different lifeways, and practicing different “deathways,” as the author refers to them. But the small Wendat tribe, an Iroquoian people who resettled on the Huron frontier before European contact, might boast one of the most complex lineages of intermixture, migration, dislocation, relocation, syncretism, and *métissage*. Complexity is wonderful. Unfortunately, Seeman does not adequately disentangle the complexity of Wendat-French relations for undergraduate readers. Instead, the author often complicates his narrative unnecessarily, as when he strikes off on an extended tangent about the archaeologists who uncovered the site of the 1636 Feast of the Dead ceremony that Father Jean de Brébeuf had witnessed; or in the epilogue, when the reader gets dragged through the thickets of the Wendat diaspora (all four branches of it) and then gets a cursory introduction to NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 1990) and modern day conflicts over the repatriation of Wendat remains. It is all potentially relevant and revealing material, but Seeman does not wrap it up in a neat enough package for most undergraduate readers.

Although designed for undergraduates, the book concedes surprisingly little to the demands of pedagogy. The problems that I describe above would have been diminished by some helpful teaching tools: charts that compare and contrast Wendat and Catholic religion and ritual, study questions, and, perhaps most importantly, some primary documents drawn from the *Jesuit Relations* and from Wendat oral traditions.

Teachers and students might also question some of the author’s main contentions. Are mortuary rituals, or “deathways,” truly the most revealing lens through which to examine Wendat-French relations? Did the Feast of the Dead really create “harmony” and “increased understanding” between the French and Wendat? Was the use of European trade goods in Wendat funerary rituals really evidence that spiritual desires were the primary object of the fur trade or simply the consequences of a society that was now infused with European goods?

So many questions—but all good questions, and fodder for constructive student debate. With some guidance, this book could be a useful supplementary text for an upper-division course in American Indian history. My recommendation, however, would be to have students watch the movie *Black Robe*, which is loosely based on the Jean de Brébeuf story mentioned here, and then use this fine book as background for a lecture or discussion on French and Indian relations in colonial North America.

Columbia Basin College

David Arnold

**Gary R. Hess.** *The United States at War, 1941-1945.* Third ed. The American History Series. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2011. Pp. 171. Paper \$19.95; ISBN 978-0882952819.

On December 7, 1941, a calm, peaceful Sunday in Hawaii changed dramatically when almost two hundred Japanese bombers and fighter planes set their sights on



“Battleship Row.” By 7:55 a.m., the surprise attack on the United States waxed heavily on Pearl Harbor. Washington, D.C. received a message simply stating, AIR RAID PEARL HARBOR. THIS IS NOT DRILL. American citizens learned of the attack by radio and the following day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt hailed December 7 as “a date which will live in infamy.”

*The United States at War, 1941-1945*, by Gary Hess presents a concise narrative of the events beginning with the attack on Pearl Harbor to ending the war in Europe and Japan. The purpose of this brief description of World War II is to recapture major events of this important time in American history. Not only does Hess successfully describe the importance of American mobilization, the Allied powers, and the beginning of the atomic era, but he broadens his explanation of the Bataan Death March, the Battle of the Bulge, women in the military, and the Holocaust. Significantly, the text discusses more “deeply . . . the war’s moral dimension, especially ways the policy and actions of the principal Allied powers seems inconsistent with the idealism of their cause.” The third edition adds two moral issues based on new research by Hess. This research discusses German and Soviet actions against “people caught between them” when waging war. Between the two powers, fourteen million lives were lost. Secondly, he describes Winston Churchill’s “secret war” on the Indian peoples during World War II. Churchill’s suppression of Indian independence and deliberate disregard to famine cost three million lives. With the evidence above, did the Allied power’s actions parallel those of the Axis powers concerning innocent people? Hess argues no. He concludes that Allied “shortcomings” do not equate to the atrocities committed by Japan and Germany. However, he reminds the reader that the Allies did not wage a “perfect war.” In the conclusion, Hess revisits the ideology of an “unconditional surrender” by the Allied powers and details four major reasons why the Allies won the war.

*The United States at War, 1941-1945*, is a perfect companion to either high school social studies classes or college-level courses. The information Hess presents is concise and to the point. It would give the students a more detailed study of World War II than just the textbook. I would use this text as a supplemental reading for college students and especially advanced placement United States History students. Students get a deeper understanding of World War II from the reading, especially a balanced explanation of both theaters. One major point students need to discuss from *The United States at War* is the moral issues concerning Axis and Allied powers. Addressing the moral dilemmas in a discussion might allow students to see wars as complicated topics and not just good versus evil. The text gives the students a great foundation on World War II and using it as supplemental reading would enhance their understanding of this major event in American history.

**Donald Teruo Hata and Nadine Ishitani Hata.** *Japanese Americans and World War II*. Fourth ed. Wheeling, IL: Harland Davidson, Inc., 2011. Pp. 102. Paper \$10.95; ISBN 978-0-88295-279-6.

In *Japanese Americans and World War II*, Donald Hata and the late Nadine Hata provide a broad overview of the Japanese-American experience in the internment camps. The book is intended primarily for students at both the high school and college level. The authors set up the context for the internment by explaining the anti-Japanese attitude that permeated much of American society during the first four decades of the twentieth century. The focus of the book, however, is on the causes of the internment and the effect internment had on Japanese-Americans. This fourth edition of the book also brings the story up through the end of the twentieth century by including discussions of the ways in which both Japanese-Americans and the United States government have attempted to come to terms with this tragic moment in American history. This edition also includes important primary documents and illuminating photographs.

The authors do a nice job of highlighting the many issues Japanese-Americans had to deal with during WWII. References to the role of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), for example, reveal that some Japanese-Americans collaborated with civilian and military authorities. When discussing life in the internment camps, the authors show both the horrific conditions the Japanese-Americans lived in but also the way in which they resisted their conditions. Significantly, the authors spend an entire section devoted to the "Loyalty Questionnaire" that asked Japanese-Americans, among other things, to swear allegiance to the United States and forswear allegiance to the Japanese emperor. Many Japanese-Americans did not know how to answer, because a "yes" could mean they had been loyal previously to the Japanese emperor or it could make them stateless. Another section is devoted to Japanese-American soldiers who fought in the U.S. military during WWII. The authors show that the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team demonstrated enormous bravery, evidenced by the 18,000 individual medals they received.

On the politics of internment, however, the book is less than satisfying. In discussing war hysteria after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and President Roosevelt's decision to issue Executive Order 9066, the reader gets too much narrative and too little analysis. It is unclear, for example, why Roosevelt made his decision. The authors mention those that asked Roosevelt to issue the order, but some discussion would have been helpful about why FDR thought the request was reasonable. Students often have serious questions about why Japanese-Americans were interned, but the authors fail to provide any sort of comprehensive answer to this question. While the historical context they set up at the beginning can help students understand the extent of the racism involved, more depth is required to provide an understanding of the political issues at hand during the winter of 1941-42. Equally, while the authors discuss some of the important wartime Supreme Court cases related to Japanese internment, analysis of

what these cases reveal is lacking. The authors quote from both the majority and minority opinion on *Korematsu v. United States*, for instance, without commenting on why the Court divided on the case or exploring why the Court ultimately ruled in favor of the government based on the “military necessity” argument.

These criticisms notwithstanding, *Japanese Americans and World War II* can work well as a supplementary text to help students peer into the struggles Japanese-Americans faced during the Second World War.

Medaille College

Daniel Kotzin

**Stephen G. Fritz. *Ostkrieg: Hitler’s War of Extermination in the East*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2011. Pp. 640. Cloth \$39.95; ISBN 978-0-8131-3416-1.**

The 1941-45 German invasion of the USSR during the Second World War became the largest military conflict in human history with unparalleled ruin from fighting, disease, starvation, and other maltreatment amid combat operations and genocide. Though German forces initially advanced deep into Russia, capturing territory and prisoners, followed soon after by mass killings of Eastern European Jews, the assumed lightning victory over Soviet armies never materialized. The steady drumming of Nazi ideology made little distinction between the Bolshevik and Jewish menace and drove Germans to seek victory in this race war at any cost. Rather than securing living space for Germany, however, the contest resulted in the total defeat and ultimate death of the Nazi Empire.

Stephen G. Fritz’s *Ostkrieg* is his third book about World War II published by the University Press of Kentucky. The author comfortably navigates this terrain and deftly narrates events on the battlefield as well as the ideas that influenced many of those who commanded and fought in the conflict. Fritz emphasizes the centrality of Hitler’s racist worldview in the conception and execution of the invasion to explain the brutal temperament of hostilities that followed. While military events get the bulk of attention, the author also carefully attends to the intentional destruction of European Jews, Soviet prisoners of war, and disabled adults and children as the logical outgrowths of Hitler’s vision of a global struggle for survival. Whether or not by design, Fritz’s examination of the economic dimensions of the war reverberates familiarly in our time, particularly his point that the invasion was fundamentally a “war for oil.” Though written primarily from the German perspective, the author exhibits a wealth of knowledge about Soviet attitudes, strategy, and industrial capacity as they related to waging the war.

By Fritz’s own admission, he brings no new discoveries to these topics, but his thorough exposition nonetheless provides a comprehensive synthesis of others’ classic and recent studies for English-language audiences. The book includes: useful maps of

advances, fronts, and other significant locations; photographs depicting people and equipment against an expansive landscape of devastation and deprivation; a list of abbreviations and foreign phrases found in the text; and an appendix with statistical data enumerating the human and material toll of the war on Germany and Russia. A 52-page bibliography is an invaluable compendium of important works in English and German relevant to the Eastern War, the Holocaust, and their related contexts.

The book is perfect for instructors and students working in upper-level undergraduate courses on World War II. Teaching the Holocaust would also benefit from Fritz's expertise on military developments, which could be fruitfully interwoven with events surrounding the planning and implementation of the Final Solution. I caution its use in a graduate seminar, because of its length, and in introductory survey courses, due to its advanced discussion of battlefield operations, but a creative instructor will naturally make any text work for whatever purposes she or he deems appropriate for a class. It is available in print or electronic format and is also recommended to anyone curious about the means by which Hitler made his megalomaniacal dreams manifest as a nightmare in Eastern Europe. Thanks to the myriad sacrifices of Russians, their Allies, and others, the world was spared a fate even bleaker than that recounted in *Ostkrieg*.

University of Washington

Nathaniel P. Weston

**William T. Bowers and John T. Greenwood, eds. *Passing the Test: Combat in Korea, April-June, 1951*. Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2011. Pp. 423. Cloth \$40.00; ISBN 978-0-8131-3432-9.**

It is usual nowadays for social historians to refer to their particular genre as history from the ground up. Military historians, on the other hand, seem to concentrate on strategy, tactics, and the actions and decisions of the officers in command. *Passing the Test*, however, in its discussion of the fifth Chinese Communist offensive of April-June 1951, provides us with a series of vivid, personal accounts of the actions that took place by participants in the battle themselves. In this, the second part of a three-volume work, the main actors are the troops who are doing the fighting and coping with the enemy's movements and plans.

The book is episodic in nature, dealing with actions that include infantry, artillery, and tank operations. One receives a very real depiction of what the war was like to the men who were living through it. One thing comes clear to the reader: While there are grand movements and plans, war is a series of small actions taken by soldiers that make up the totality of the battle. War is also shock, death, retreat, and more, frequently taking place in an atmosphere of chaos. Therefore, one gets a true sense of immediacy as the troops give their reports in the aftermath of the action. It is almost as if one has a window into the war itself.

In some ways, this monograph is a confusing set of first-hand accounts of actions, making it difficult for readers to keep up with and completely understand what is going on. Yet, the result is, at the same time, that one is impressed by the intelligence and quality of writing both of officers and enlisted men when they describe the events that they experienced. They are real primary sources that can be an excellent resource for future scholars of the Korean War.

This book is also a tribute to the work of U.S. army military historians who compiled the interviews and statements of those who were involved in these encounters. By their efforts, the record of the Korean War is much fuller than it might be otherwise. Often, too little consideration is given to nonacademic historians whose work has advanced the profession in many ways. Moreover it suggests that there are opportunities for the historian outside the university setting.

It should be noted that this volume includes helpful maps and a list of abbreviations, as well as extensive notes. It is clearly a work of scholarship that will be a valuable document for understanding the war, more important in some ways than the story of battles and army movements. It is also particularly helpful in bringing the “forgotten” Korean War into the focus it deserves.

University of New Hampshire

Marc Schwarz

**Steven L. Danver, ed. *Popular Controversies in World History: Investigating History's Intriguing Questions*. 4 vols. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011. Pp. 1424. Hardcover \$380.00; ISBN 978-1-59884-077-3.**

This four-volume set, edited by Steven L. Danver, is arranged chronologically. Volume I, “Prehistory and Early Civilizations,” is followed by “The Ancient World to the Early Middle Ages.” Volume III tracks the “High Middle Ages to the Modern World,” while the final volume goes from “The Twentieth Century to the Present.” Each volume is comprised of approximately fifteen chapters whose topics—ranging from familiar and sometimes trivial to the specialized and esoteric—are presented as propositions to be debated by two scholars, one pro, the other con. For instance, a chapter on the existence of Atlantis (common fodder for the History Channel) is followed by a discussion of Martin Bernal’s *Black Athena*, supported on the one hand by Talaat Shehata and opposed by Harald Haarmann, the former a cultural historian, the latter a historian of archaeomythology. Each chapter is followed by a short bibliography.

In a brief “Introduction,” Danver states that his objective is to provoke critical thinking and cites Bloom’s taxonomy to demonstrate that history, if it is to be useful to students, should be less a subject and more an activity. The set’s pro-and-con format is designed to push students beyond simple knowledge and comprehension to the higher reasoning skills of application and analysis. In addition, this format hopes to

demonstrate how historical problems resonate within each generation as new questions are posed to old issues. Chosen topics have "generated controversy either within the historical profession or in society as a whole." Problems are presented by this method of selection and organization as topics of popular history are tossed together with lesser known academic concerns. This haphazard approach to topics is made worse by the cost of the four volumes. At a prohibitive \$380.00 per set, it is the library requisition staff and not students who will be potential buyers.

Costs aside, the omissions and prejudices displayed throughout these volumes often overturn any good they might accomplish. The title portends problems. First, those instructors trained in world history will look in vain for the traditional themes of regional connections, cultural borrowing, world-system analysis, patterns of development, ecological transformations, and interplay among major religions. The short index contains no mention of William McNeill, Andre Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein, Patrick Manning, Janet Abu-Lughod, or any other prominent figures in the field of World History. The broad context and larger unit of analysis common to World History are missing here, as are the comparative approach and interdisciplinary methodology. These volumes are not *world history* texts; they are, instead, random collections of historical events that occurred *somewhere* in the *world*. The use of "popular" in the title is also confusing. It is inappropriate if used in the sense of something that is generally known among students as many of the topics tackled here are familiar only to professional historians. "Popular" used in any other sense is absurd as historical controversies are not beauty contests.

The second volume in this series covers a number of historical controversies from the Ancient World to the Early Middle Ages. Some of the articles here address issues that potentially are relevant in World History courses. For instance, Cenap Cakmak and John Lee's debate over the nature of democracy in the Greek city-states or Heather Buchanan and Laszlo Kocsis' pair of articles on the primary reasons for the collapse of the Roman Empire. Likewise, Harald Haarmann and Claire Brennan present differing accounts of Polynesian migration in Oceania that students might find interesting. However, many of the topics debated in the second volume are simply too trivial or esoteric to be of any use in a World History course. Indeed, it is unlikely that most instructors of World History will find the location of the Holy Grail, the particular linguistic origins of Native American languages, or the exact dates of the historical Buddha's birth appropriate topics for lecture, discussions, or assignments.

Volume III is similarly uneven. While some of the chapters provide a rich foundation for critical discussions of history as an interpretive activity, others seem to serve more illustrative purposes. And other selections are destined for non-academic audiences.

Some topics such as the profitability of slavery ("Slavery was unprofitable for slave owners," chapter 14) offer rich fodder for class discussions. It is easy to envision a class session that pairs the two essays in this chapter with primary sources such as those offered by David Eltis's *Voyages* database, the slave narratives recorded by the

WPA, and the paternalistic writings of slave owners in order to open a critical discussion about the economic and non-economic roots of slavery. Too often students are satisfied with the belief that slavery was "a necessary evil," and this chapter provides a useful way to challenge that assumption. A wealth of primary sources is available to help students assess the two positions.

Other chapters in the third volume seem less useful for critical student engagement, but might serve an important function in the pedagogical process. Consider, for example, the section on France's mysterious "Man in the Iron Mask." The essays here provide the foundation for an instructor-led explanation of how rumor, gossip, and scandal played an important role in both the rise and fall of French absolutism, but they rely so much on supposition (and a dearth of sources) that critical engagement and assessment at the undergraduate level seem unlikely.

Finally, there is a third category of articles whose pedagogical value is more difficult to assess. Chapters such as the one on Shakespeare ("Shakespeare's plays were written by someone other than William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon," chapter 9) are, in many ways, either too inconsequential or too specialized for deep student engagement. As the author himself notes, "Among the academic establishment ... the Shakespeare authorship debate is almost entirely frowned upon." Though the essays are well written and interesting, the topic lacks the rigor that is necessary for developing critical faculties of students in history.

Volume IV concentrates on the twentieth century. Eleven of the fifteen chapter debates are concerned with typical U.S. topics such as Sacco and Vanzetti's innocence, Alger Hiss's conviction, and John F. Kennedy's assassination. While this volume can hardly count as a contributor to popular controversies in "world history" when eleven of the fifteen chapters are concerned with typical U.S. topics, one of the more valid world history chapters does succeed in matching Danver's stated introductory objectives. Any volume covering popular debates of the twentieth century to the present would be remiss not to include some sort of discussion on genocide, and Volume IV fulfills this expectation with a dynamic debate concerning an early twentieth-century episode of genocide. James Frusetta presents a compelling "pro" argument that Armenian deaths were due to a Turkish government policy of genocide by clearly mapping out his arguments in reference to opposing issues concerning technology, contextual dating, and evidence. Cenap Cakmak manages the "con" argument with an interesting debate zeroing in on the rhetorical technicalities of the use of the term "genocide" to refute such claims while connecting his discussion to the tragedy in Darfur. Students will be intrigued by this exploration into this highly politicized and explosive topic of the past and unfortunately our continued present.

Finally, it is difficult to determine the readership for these volumes. Certainly those trained in world history will studiously avoid it as it ignores themes common to larger units of analysis: problems with western periodization, factors of unity across time and space, giving voice to the subaltern, and the impact of migrations, both human and disease. World historians are less interested in the number of skulls left by Genghis

Khan's warriors than in the plague-ridden fleas that accompanied his nomadic riders from China to Europe sowing demographic disaster. This wider context, central to world history, is largely ignored here.

On the other hand, creative college instructors might be able to use some of these essays as launching points for class discussion, especially if these pro-and-con arguments are augmented by readings in primary sources. As stated earlier, the costs of this set will likely reduce its dissemination to those college libraries where requisition funds are plentiful.

Recommended (with reservations) for college libraries.

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**Errata:** In the book reviews published in *Teaching History*, 36 (Fall 2011), p. 103, we listed David W. Aldridge III as the author of **Becoming American: The African American Quest for Civil Rights, 1861-1976**. The correct name is Daniel W. Aldridge III. We regret this error and apologize to the author and to Harlan Davidson, the book's publisher, for our mistake.



## DVD Review

***Let Freedom Swing: Conversations on Jazz and Democracy: A Resource for Teachers Featuring Sandra Day O'Connor and Wynton Marsalis.* DVD. New York: Teacher's College Press, 2010.**

Gerald Early suggests that the greatest contributions of the United States to the world are baseball, jazz, and the Constitution. Concentrating upon jazz and democracy, the teaching resource *Let Freedom Swing* does a superb job of introducing two of these three American innovations to middle and high school classes in government, history, and music.

*Let Freedom Swing* focuses upon what initially appears to an odd pairing of former Supreme Court Justice and jazz fan Sandra Day O'Connor with jazz trumpeter and composer Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center. The O'Connor-Marsalis pairing comes from a 2009 concert at the Kennedy Center on the eve of President Barack Obama's historic inauguration. The DVD features short five-to-six minute conversations between O'Connor and Marsalis concentrating upon three major themes essential to understanding the American democratic experience: we the people, *E Pluribus Unum* (out of many, one), and a more perfect union.

Supported by historians as well as both professional and school-age jazz musicians, O'Connor and Marsalis assert that jazz and democracy share many common attributes. For example, jazz is a music form that encourages improvisation and individual expression, but the end product of brief solo performances needs to be a harmonious piece of swing music in which the sum is greater than its parts. Jazz, thus, becomes a metaphor for democracy in which there needs to be a sense of balance between the interests of the individual and the common good. As with an excellent jazz band, democracy offers infinite possibilities based upon the harmonious resolution of differences among competing interests.

Examining the history of jazz, *Let Freedom Swing* supports the conclusions of the Ken Burns documentary *Jazz: A Film* (2000) that the black experience in America is essential to understanding this form of musical expression. Recognizing that jazz evolved from slavery and the yearning of African Americans to be free, O'Connor and Marsalis emphasize that American democracy is based upon a "breathing" document in the Constitution that has been amended over time to provide the promise of American life to all its citizens. However, the concept of a "living document" often comes into conflict with individuals such as Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia who insist that re-interpreting the Constitution is a dangerous business and that we should adhere to the original intent of the Founders. This reading of the Constitution, of course, fails to fit with the metaphor of jazz. But if we are to have a healthy democracy, we must be able to debate such issues without personal rancor clouding our visions. Unfortunately, as a nation we no longer seem to practice the type of civil dialogue exemplified by O'Connor and Marsalis. Perhaps *Let Freedom Swing* will

provide a better democratic model for students than the contemporary bitter Congressional partisanship.

In addition to a short video, *Let Freedom Swing* provides a website and study guide with an excellent bibliography to help teachers who lack the jazz expertise of O'Connor and Marsalis. In this era of national assessment, the study guide links the *Let Freedom Swing* curriculum with learning standards for the National Council for the Social Studies and National Association for Music Education. In addition, the study guide and suggested teaching activities are focused upon such big ideas as freedom, personal expression, harmony, and the American form of government.

*Let Freedom Swing* offers an innovative approach to teaching about American democracy by suggesting that jazz "is an art form that values innovation and infinite possibility, can serve as a metaphor for the democratic system and the values embedded in the Constitution." Nevertheless, as a veteran classroom teacher who enjoys listening to jazz and incorporating music into the history curriculum, I should point out that jazz will be a tough sell for some young people who perceive the music as old-fashioned and do not share the musical tastes of O'Connor and Marsalis. Yet, *Let Freedom Swing* is a curriculum package worthy of a serious consideration as young people are passionate about music. Perhaps they could add a few jazz selections to their iPods.

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