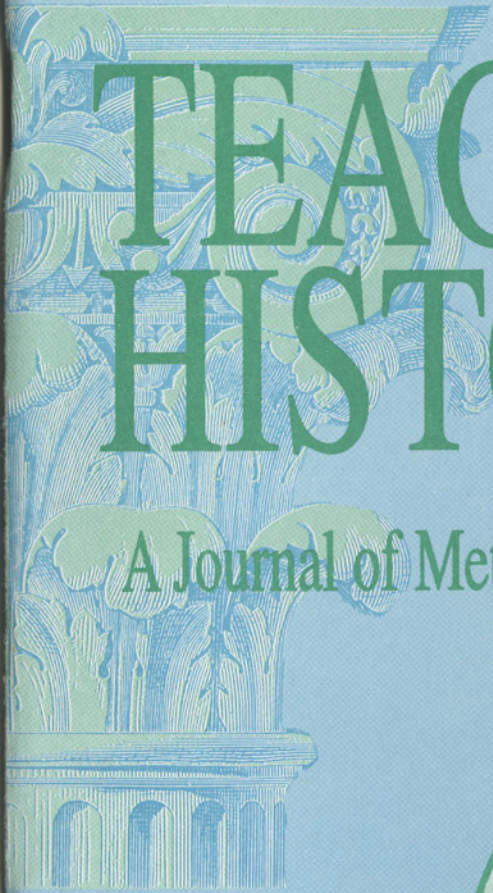
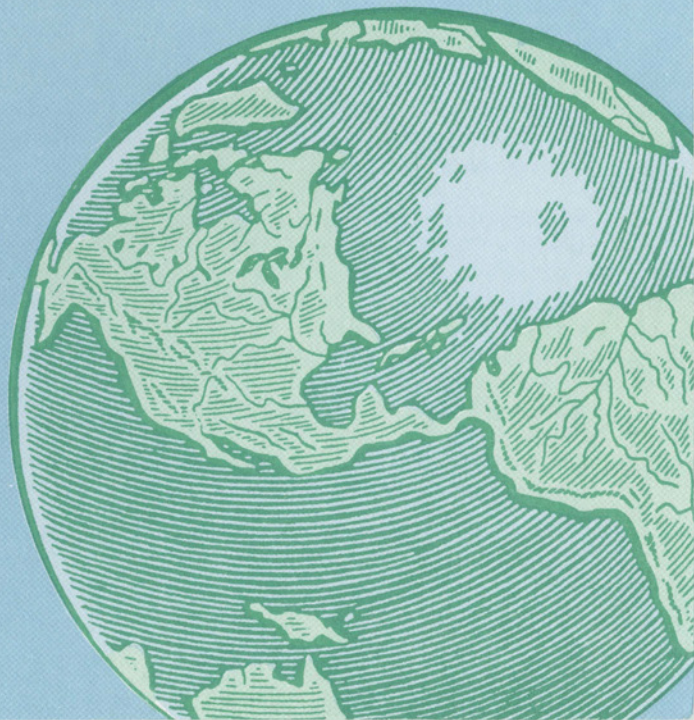


Volume 24 • Number 2 • Fall 1999

# TEACHING HISTORY

A Journal of Methods

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**TEACHING HISTORY**  
**A JOURNAL OF METHODS**

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*Teaching History: A Journal of Methods* is published twice yearly in the Spring and Fall. *Teaching History* receives its chief financial support from the Division of Social Sciences and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences of Emporia State University. It also receives support from the College of the Ozarks. Annual subscriptions in U.S. currency are \$10.00 for individuals and \$12.00 for libraries and institutions. All business communications, including subscriptions, should be sent to Sam Dicks, Campus Box 4032, ESU, Emporia, KS 66801-5087, fax 316/341-5143, e-mail [dickssam@emporia.edu](mailto:dickssam@emporia.edu).

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*Teaching History*, Emporia State University, Emporia, KS 66801-5087.  
ISSN 0730-1383

**TEACHING HISTORY**  
**A JOURNAL OF METHODS**  
Volume XXIV, Number 2, Fall, 1999

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**From the Editor:**

## **SOME THOUGHTS ON AMERICAN EDUCATION AND ON AMERICAN TEACHERS**

Stephen Kneeshaw  
College of the Ozarks

*Editor of Teaching History: A Journal of Methods*

On Memorial Day 1998 the sheriff of Springfield, Oregon, lamented the killing of four people and the wounding of several others by a fifteen-year old student wielding a gun just days before. He expressed the grief that gripped the people of Springfield, the state of Oregon, and the United States. He closed by noting that in his many years in the military and in law enforcement, he had seen the best and the worst in people and in society. What saddened him now, he confessed, was that he was seeing much more of the worst than the best.

Springfield was only one of several American communities that witnessed violent killings of students and teachers by students in schools in 1997, 1998, and 1999. The list reads like a cross-country American geography lesson: Pearl, Mississippi; West Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Springfield, Oregon; Littleton, Colorado; Conyers, Georgia. These towns--all reflecting middle-American values--suffered the worst of the incidents. Parents, teachers, and students fell to bullets fired by students ranging from eleven years into their late teens. Other towns and cities experienced problems with violence (even shootings without deaths), but these were the ones that received the most national attention.

These horrific episodes marked the worst moments during a tough time for American education. Newspapers and television frequently reported on violent incidents in schools. Talk of gang violence in big cities sometimes spread to small towns. Reports of declining literacy levels and falling test scores added another area of concern, with American students often trailing badly in international rankings of student scores in mathematics and science. All of this came with finger-pointing, breast-beating, and lamentations about declining values in homes and diminishing civility in schools. (The latter was a growing topic of interest in colleges and universities as well as at lower academic levels.) And, sad to report, much of this promises to continue into the next century.

I cannot explain why there seems to be a continuing decline in American education, or at least a decline in the abilities of today's students compared to those we saw ten years ago in our classrooms or twenty years ago. Neither can I explain why troubled students seem to turn frequently to violence. Experts from all fields seem to disagree when they discuss these concerns. Some blame a breakdown of "traditional" American values, the disintegration of nuclear families, schools that have grown too large to identify or deal with troubled students, tensions between athletes and other

students, the easy availability of guns and explosives, violence in television, movies, and music, the impact of the Internet and World Wide Web, and the list goes on.

In what for me has become a troubling point, some people are quick to lay the blame on teachers. I cannot pinpoint the causes of problems in American education with any certainty--no one can do that. But I can say with a great deal of personal confidence that the fault does not lay with American teachers. Yes, some teachers have grown tired--a few because their years in education have worn them down and others because they often unjustly catch blame from parents, social critics, and politicians who feel a need to blame someone beyond themselves for society's ills. Teachers are overworked and underpaid, and they often are underappreciated. But they are not the problem in education. If anything, they will become the solution.

As a student, teacher, and administrator, I have been involved with American education in public and private institutions for more than forty years. Today I am a college teacher, but I spend a great deal of time in elementary and secondary classrooms as part of my work in history education. My wife is a second-grade teacher. Our three children have gone through public schools from pre-school through graduate work; our son taught for two years as a TA at the graduate level and our oldest daughter is an elementary teacher. Every day I live with education--at work and at home--at a variety of levels. Recently I brought much of this together in a semester-long sabbatical leave devoted to visiting, observing, and evaluating secondary classroom teachers in several states--from Missouri and Arkansas through the Southwest and along the Pacific coast. I wanted to gather together as many ideas about teaching history and the social studies as I could to enrich my own store of teaching methods and to share with my students who are preparing to become teachers.

Over six months I visited more than fifty schools--public schools, prep schools, private academies, military institutes, Native American schools--and observed more than 100 teachers, some only once, others on several occasions and some for extended observations over a week or more. What I saw was a remarkable mix of men and women who have devoted their lives and their life work to young people, because they know--they know, not just believe--that they can make a difference. What I saw was not a reflection of the ancient and wrongheaded adage that "Those who can do, and those who can't teach." No--this was "Those who can teach!" and they teach their students well. They teach history and government and English and more. But most of all they teach people, and they turn out young men and women who are better for the experience.

I could share many stories to illustrate, but I will settle for two examples. I spent several days in one of the largest public high schools in the state of Washington, on one day observing an experienced teacher who worked with "the lowest achieving juniors in the school" (description from the department chair), teaching three-hour blocks of American history, English, and "careers." During the first hour of the first block, two girls arrived after the tardy bell and almost immediately became mouthy

with their classmates and abusive to the teacher when he intervened. But he stayed the course, to use an old line, and talked them under control. He had acted calmly to defuse what could have become a more troubling confrontation. He took the next fifteen minutes of class to speak with all of the students about the need for respect--for both self-respect and respect for others. He reminded them all of his rules and expectations for the class. Then for the next two and a half hours the class stayed fairly well on task, analyzing *The Grapes of Wrath* as a way to understand the Great Depression. Because one teacher had treated his students with respect--setting a good example for them to follow--he was able to get "low achieving juniors" to engage a difficult novel and to make connections among history, literature, and work, good stuff for even the best students to manage.

I spent parts of several days over a two-month period in a Native American school, also in Washington state, observing different class sections of American history. For me, the most impressive class was what the teacher described as "a laboratory class." In fact, this class was a self-paced, independent study class in American history, with a dozen students ranging in age from fifteen to twenty. All of the students had dropped out of school--for time to work, to give birth, to deal with personal problems--but they had returned, and they returned with the intention of getting through high school. For each student the teacher had prepared individual plans for studying and then passing American history. "If I didn't do it this way," he told me, "they would get lost in the regular class and probably drop out again." These were not "special education" students, by the traditional definition of that term. But for this one teacher each one was "special" and deserving of (as well as needing) individual attention to succeed. Preparing the individual lesson plans for these students--twelve for this one class, besides keeping up with his other classes, demanded an incredible commitment of time and energy every day. But this teacher was determined to get these special students through high school and help them make a better place for themselves as adults.

These are just two "incidents," not the kind that would get attention from the media, but the kind that happen every day in schools across the United States--two teachers who cared enough for their students to give them time, attention, energy, and dedication, knowing that they might make a difference for some of the young men and women under their charge. I saw this sort of commitment from teachers everywhere I traveled on my sabbatical, strengthening my belief in American teachers and reaffirming my own commitment to become a better teacher every day.

Not every college and university teacher has it within his or her daily or weekly routine (or job description) to spend time regularly in elementary and secondary schools. Not everyone wants to commit a sabbatical to visiting classes and evaluating elementary and secondary school teaching. But we all have some time. If you want to understand this generation of students and the one to follow and then the next to come--and if you want to do more than bemoan the diminishing quality of students--

take some time to visit classes and schools in your communities. If you get comfortable with that, take a few more minutes to share yourselves with the students. Talk to a second-grade class about Christopher Columbus or Pearl Harbor or John Kennedy. Share your thoughts on the Vietnam Wall with high school juniors. Share a little bit of your research and interest in the Renaissance or slavery or the Holocaust. You will be welcomed by the teachers and by the students--and you will feel good about what you have done. Maybe in that way we can do a little more to help bring out the best--and see less of the worst--in the students who will be coming to college in the new century.



## STEVEN SPIELBERG'S "AMISTAD": FILM AS HISTORY AND THE TRIVIALIZING OF HISTORY TEACHING

Ronald E. Butchart  
University of Georgia

Enough time has passed now for the ballyhoo and hype surrounding Steven Spielberg's film "Amistad" to have died down. Within the first few months of the film's release, much was written about it and the historical incident that it describes, particularly in the popular press. Most reviews were laudatory. As film, there was much to praise. Historians were more cautious in their responses.

My intention here is to offer a cautionary retrospective, looking at the film from the perspective of the history classroom. There are, in fact, two artifacts to examine: the film itself and a film study guide, *Amistad: A Lasting Legacy*, produced jointly by DreamWorks and a private curriculum writer.<sup>1</sup> Together, those artifacts reveal much about the intentions of DreamWorks.

What do teachers and students need to know to use this film in a history class? Of what value is the study guide? I suspect that the answers to those questions, in more general form, are true for many commercial films on historical subjects, and thus my reflections here may have broader application. I do not intend to reopen the question of whether film has any place in the history classroom. That question has been explored elsewhere<sup>2</sup> and is probably beside the point. Films are being used. The question is, what caveats need to be observed as we use film, particularly "Amistad"?

As entertainment, "Amistad" is good to excellent on most criteria. As history, "Amistad" is deeply flawed. It is not simply inaccurate or incomplete--it is fiction parading as history. In the process of creating dramatic fiction, Spielberg mobilizes

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<sup>1</sup>*Amistad: A Lasting Legacy* (Stamford, CT: Lifetime Learning Systems, 1997). Although created by Lifetime Learning Systems, the entire learning kit is copyrighted by Dreamworks SKG. The study guide includes the expected "program objectives," a synopsis of the movie, explanations to teachers of the four "activities" for students (with "follow-up activities"), separate activity sheets to be photocopied and used in classrooms, and, for no apparent pedagogical reasons, black-and-white photographs taken from the movie. The guide may be obtained from LifeTime Learning Systems, P.O. Box 120023, Stamford, CT 06912-0023; it was distributed free to schools and colleges when the film was released.

<sup>2</sup>Harvey H. Jackson, "Can Movies Teach History," *OAH Newsletter*, 18 (1990): 4-5; Michael T. Isenberg, "The Historian and the Myth of the 'Objective Camera': A Critique of Film Reality," *Teaching History*, 1 (1976): 6-14; Thomas Cripps, "Film: The Historians' Dangerous Friend," *Film & History*, 5 (1975): 6-9; Joseph T. Meda, "Questions Without Answers: Towards a Methodological Discussion of the Uses of Audio-Visual Documentation in the Teaching of History," *Studies in History and Society*, 5 (1974): 57-60. See also Earl F. Mulderink, III, "'Pass the Popcorn, Please': Teaching with Documentary Movies in the Introductory Course," *Teaching History*, 21 (1996): 68-74; and Charles M. Dobbs, "Hollywood Movies from the Golden Age: An Important Resource for the Classroom," *Teaching History*, 12 (1987): 10-16.

popular but problematic ideological tenets that should be interrogated in history classrooms, not merely consumed passively. The evidence sustaining those claims will begin to answer my first question above: What do teachers and students need to know to use this film in a history class?

### "AMISTAD" AS HISTORY

I suppose most history teachers have their favorite "forgotten stories," the historical incidents, movements, and people that do not make it into the textbooks. If we were surveyed regarding those favorite stories, we might learn much about our individual political orientations, for we are probably more exercised by the silencing of the stories that resonate with our deepest commitments. I have long regretted, for example, that my students know nothing of Helen Keller except for the domesticated, depoliticized figure that emerges from *The Miracle Worker* or the pitiable butt of tasteless jokes; I wish the hero-makers would tell the story of the courage and conviction that led Quaker slaveholders to sacrifice their fortunes to free their slaves in the eighteenth century; I spend hours in social history courses correcting the historical damage done by Laura Ingalls Wilder. The *Amistad* incident would have appeared on my list as well, though probably not among the top dozen revisions I would have favored.

Still, it was heartening to hear, a few years ago, that Spielberg was working on a movie about the *Amistad* incident. "Amistad" was one of those many terms that puzzled my undergraduates: What was it, they asked, and why had they never heard of it before? Yet I wondered how the incident would play out in the entertainment medium of commercial film. Certainly kidnaped men and women revolting on the high seas had the making of high drama, and, handled well, could reveal a ferocious will to be free. But, at one level, the incident's importance in United States history lay in far less dramatic events, in tedious and enervating arguments regarding property rights and international law. At another, higher level, its importance lay in issues not likely to be explored by Hollywood.

Spielberg's effort should give history teachers pause. Not inappropriately--he was, after all, not creating history but entertainment, exactly what he is paid to do--Spielberg kept the historical incident's superficial plot-line, but wove that plot into a work of fiction. That is, the movie retains the facts of a ship-board mutiny, the subterfuge of the white sailors taking the ship north to the United States, not east and south to Africa, the involvement of abolitionists in the mutineers' legal case, their eventual vindication in the U.S. Supreme Court, and their repatriation to Africa. But little else here has historical grounding, including the most dramatic scenes. As is too often the case, the real history is more dramatic than the sanitized, entertaining story the film tells. Therein lies the problem for the history teacher.

The fabrications in "Amistad" are not incidental. They become central to the movie. Some result in serious distortion.<sup>3</sup> By now, probably all viewers have learned that the speech delivered by Anthony Hopkins (playing a John Quincy Adams who inexplicably vacillates between curt indifference, virtual senility, and abolitionist eloquence) was never uttered in the Supreme Court of the United States. The real case before the court hinged on dry, technical issues, not emotional appeals to the rights of man, and was delivered by a skillful defense team with assistance from Adams, not by Adams alone. Further, Cinque was not in the court, but languishing in prison. Whatever its dramatic merits, Spielberg's rendering of the Supreme Court ill-served the civic education of the nation's citizens. In neither form nor content was the operation of the Supreme Court accurately portrayed.

The problems with that pivotal Supreme Court scene run deeper. "Amistad" implies that the court opposed slavery, and that the Roger Taney-led Court's decision changed the direction of American history. Spielberg utterly silenced the fact that, over a decade later, Chief Justice Taney delivered the Dred Scott decision. The latter was far more portentous for African Americans, slave or free, than the decision in the *Amistad* case. The Court and much of the American population were not opposed to slavery; they were opposed to Spain's advantage in international markets for slave-produced goods gained through low prices on slave labor.

There were other distortions and omissions that weaken the film as a tool for historical inquiry. We never learn, for example, that Connecticut was still a slave state in 1839, a fact important for context and for countering the comfortable myth that the North was anti-slavery while the South was pro-slavery. Martin Van Buren, the cunning, intelligent and often unscrupulous "Little Magician" who conspired to have the captives kidnapped and returned to their Spanish "owners," is portrayed as largely incompetent. The film's bungling linguist replaces the real Josiah Gibbs from Yale College who came as close as anyone to authentic acts of personal heroism. It was he, not Joadson and Baldwin, who gained a rudimentary understanding of Mendi and traveled to every port between Massachusetts and New York City to seek out black sailors, finally locating the man who would act as interpreter.

Similarly, it is unclear why Spielberg ignored Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., the capable attorney for the *Amistad* defendants, or why he cast Roger Baldwin as a

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<sup>3</sup>I have not attempted to deal with the many distortions of the legal issues involved in the *Amistad* incident, having little expertise in that area. For a good summary of the problems, see Sally Hadden's review at <http://www.eiu.edu/~history/faculty/waldrep/amistad.htm>. Cornell University Law School and the National Archives and Records Administration offer valuable websites for understanding the *Amistad* incident. The Cornell site (<http://www.law.cornell.edu/amistad>) deals with the legal issues of the case and provides links to other sites, while the National Archives Digital Classroom Website (<http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/amistad>) contains both original documents and teaching activities. For a scholarly historical look at the *Amistad* incident, see Howard Jones, *Mutiny on the Amistad* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

sophomorically ambitious property lawyer. Sedgwick was a committed anti-slavery Democrat, and Baldwin was an abolitionist and a successful defense attorney who defended the *Amistad* mutineers without compensation. The film silences abolitionist antecedents in favor of a fictional Baldwin who grows uncertainly from callow immorality to committed compassion, though certainly not to conscientious abolitionism.

Indeed, the general treatment of abolitionists in this movie is derisive. The principled Lewis Tappan is made to hint that the deaths of the Africans would be a boon to abolitionism. Dwight Janes never makes an appearance, though his fortuitous attendance at the first closed hearing on the *Amistad* captives essentially blocked their return to the Spanish traders. Morgan Freeman's character is not only fictional; worse, the screenwriters never decided exactly what a wealthy black abolitionist might do even fictionally, leaving Freeman to flounder on screen, never finding his voice. The only other abolitionists in the film are a sorry, pallid little band kneeling in the snow outside a jail, earning the contempt of the Africans. For all the presumed anti-racist intentions of the movie, the message is that nineteenth-century anti-racists were either venal or ineffective, while the real struggle against slavery was pursued by great white men on the basis of law and compassion rather than principle, economics, and politics.

Likewise, Judge Andrew J. Judson's earlier opposition to abolitionism in the Prudence Crandall case never appears here, though it makes his decision in favor of the captives more dramatic. President Andrew Jackson awarded him a judgeship on the strength of his central role in creating Connecticut's vicious "Black Law," designed intentionally to destroy Crandall's boarding school, on whose board Judson once sat. Judson and others pressed court cases against Crandall, fomented violence against her school, and drove her from Connecticut.

I was disturbed, too, by the film's sanitized version of the horrors of "the middle passage." Only the brutality of chaining together the excess "cargo" and throwing them overboard rang true, and the scene's conclusion, shot from underwater, had a strangely dream-like sense to it. Other shipboard scenes were stylized to the point that they conveyed virtually no sense of the depth of the physical and psychological savagery of slave ships.

Finally, in the worst and most venerable myth-making tradition of Hollywood, "Amistad" reduces a dramatic story of communities and groups engaged in complex, often contradictory struggle, to yet another version of the cowboy western. Two heroes emerge here, though the black hero is ultimately more object than subject. Once again the myth of the individual as hero is affirmed. In historical fact, the *Amistad* incident was not the story of a reluctant Adams fighting for right on behalf of an inarticulate, faceless crowd led by Cinque. It was the story of black men and women with names, many of whom became fluent in English and learned to read and write; one of the women returned to the United States, attended Oberlin College, and sent her son through Yale. It is the story of activist churches raising funds to support

the fugitives and eventually repatriating them to Africa. It is the story of teams of lawyers, not lone Baldwins or Adamses. It is the story of savvy politicians and businessmen scrambling to subvert justice, not a venal Van Buren. It is the story of race and racism and the titanic forces of marketplaces, not white knights fighting injustice.

Spielberg truly believes that "Men like Cinque are always greater than we are" and are "in some fundamental way, perpetually unknowable,"<sup>4</sup> and it is that myth his movies relentlessly promote. In historical fact, it was women and men such as we are, or are capable of becoming, who engaged in this struggle. They are knowable, and their courage arose in communities and associations, not in private, heroic isolation.

The film study guide raises the right questions, though it never hazards an answer: "How do films like 'Amistad' enhance our knowledge of history? How do they aid the historian in making the legacy of our past accessible to us today?"<sup>5</sup> In truth, films like "Amistad" are more likely to distort our knowledge of history than to enhance it, particularly when the point is profit through entertainment, not historical inquiry. For there is no other explanation for the fictions introduced in this film than enhancing its profit potential. Carefully crafted documentaries, such as "Eyes on the Prize" or "Civil War," can powerfully "aid the historian in making the legacy of our past accessible to us today," but in their case, profit and entertainment are secondary to educational ends.

Does that mean that films such as "Amistad" should have no place in classrooms? Not necessarily. It does mean, however, that their use needs to be judicious, and surrounded with efforts to educate students toward critical viewing. To its credit, "Amistad" does bring to viewers one of those neglected historical incidents mentioned above. It does so as entertainment and myth-making, however, not as history. It has the virtue of capturing the attention and imagination of students. Yet, while that makes our work as teachers easier, the movie also makes our work more difficult. Countering the distortions and omissions of such a seductive medium as film is, if anything, more difficult than countering simple ignorance.

I will not describe the many ways history teachers could mobilize this film to teach history except that any such effort must involve students in critical research to correct the omissions and distortions. The issues noted above can serve as starting points toward that end. Instead, I want to turn to the second of the two artifacts available to classroom teachers, the film study guide that accompanies "Amistad."

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<sup>4</sup>Quoted in *Amistad: A Lasting Legacy*, 1.

<sup>5</sup>*Amistad: A Lasting Legacy*, Activity Four.

### "AMISTAD" AS CLASSROOM RESOURCE

None of the objections above would carry much weight if "Amistad" were promoted simply as "historical fiction." However, DreamWorks aggressively promoted the film as history, in part through its film study guide or learning kit.

Many teachers will be tempted to dismiss the kit, *Amistad: A Lasting Legacy*, as simply another piece of DreamWorks' publicity material. Its graphics are typical publicity photos from the movie, illustrative of nothing that the film guide claims to be examining. Every page begins with some variant of "'Amistad,' the new film by director Steven Spielberg ...." Thus, at one level it is little more than a new form of film publicity. Yet we should not merely dismiss it. It is part of the effort to promote fiction as history. Further, because DreamWorks pushed the film guide aggressively, it deserves careful consideration for what it claims to be--a means to "integrate the lessons of this landmark film into your class plans." The guide not only sheds further light on the problematics of film as history, but also reveals the film's trivializing of history teaching.

In contemporary curriculum inquiry, the first question always is, what does the learner already know, or think she knows, about the immediate issue and about issues contingent to the immediate issue? About the *Amistad* incident, the question would be, what does the learner know about not only the *Amistad* incident itself, but also about American slavery, African Americans in United States society, the political and economic history of the period, and particular individuals and groups? Answers to those questions are essential as the primary precondition for determining what needs to be learned, what needs to be unlearned, and what connections already exist that can be built upon.

Significantly, *Amistad: A Lasting Legacy* is innocent of any such questions. The "kit" appears to be predicated on theories of learning that take the learner as a blank slate upon whose consciousness ideas and images might be simply impressed with lasting results. Neither the learner nor the teacher are offered opportunities to explore prior understandings, either of this historical incident, or, more importantly, the larger context into which the learner must integrate this incident. Rather, throughout the exercises prescribed in the guide, it is assumed that the film itself provides all the information needed, and the task is simply to extrapolate certain limited insights from the film. The film's veracity or accuracy is never questioned, though its "authenticity" is asserted.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>*Amistad: A Lasting Legacy*, Activity Four, asserts, "The filmmakers who brought the story of the *Amistad* to the screen took great care to make every detail of this historical drama authentic." It goes on to note that the actors playing the part of the captives learned their dialogue in Mende, costumes and locations were researched, "and scholars were called on to review every aspect of the production."

Nowhere are students challenged to question the film. They are not even asked to query historical motivation, to understand historical dynamics, to probe historical cause and effect, or to ponder contradiction or change, though those sorts of issues lie at the heart of historical study. Rather, students are asked to "profile two American heroes" (in two lines), to explain (in one paragraph) "whether you think Americans are prepared to recognize Cinque as a true hero of our history today," or to consider three episodes selected by the guide's author and "explain how each one marks a step in Cinque's self-discovery of his own unrecognized heroism."<sup>7</sup> Not only the movie, then, but also the learning kit, is pressed into the myth-making task, reasserting the view that history is made by lone heroes.

Historians will differ regarding the significance of the *Amistad* incident. Arguably, however, they would define the significant issues as race, sectional conflict, slavery, the Constitution, or international law. Students working from the film guide will not consider such issues. Race, racism, and racial justice are never mentioned. They are safely transmuted into the trendy discourse of "differences," and then deflected into activities in which students identify differences between youth groups.<sup>8</sup> Sectional conflict and slavery merit a single note in the guide, in the dubious assertion that the Supreme Court's *Amistad* verdict "marked a turning point in the struggle to end slavery."<sup>9</sup> At no point are students or teachers invited to investigate the accuracy of the assertion, or to engage in any activity that would lead to a consideration of slavery or sectional conflict in the context of "Amistad." Legal issues are similarly silenced in the guide. Indeed, even with one full set of activities devoted to "History," the learning kit is astoundingly ahistorical.

The four topics covered in the kit are "Heroes," "Differences," "Justice," and "History." I have indicated briefly how the first two are handled. "Justice," a promising title, is nearly as disappointing as the others. Its primary thrust, as indicated in its introduction, is that "the American system of justice prevails" in "Amistad." Yet the activities themselves do not sustain that claim. Nor do they engage students with questions about the meaning of justice, or the competing theories of justice at the heart of this particular historical episode. Instead, the activities engage students in trivial questions about the fictionalized actions of Roger Baldwin as a lawyer, thereby reducing questions of justice to questions of the work of lawyers.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>*Amistad: A Lasting Legacy*, Activity One.

<sup>8</sup>*Amistad: A Lasting Legacy*, Activity Two, assignment 1.

<sup>9</sup>*Amistad: A Lasting Legacy*, Activity One, introduction.

<sup>10</sup>*Amistad: A Lasting Legacy*, Activity Three, quotation from assignment 3.

The film guide claims to be appropriate "for use with college and senior high school students as a supplement to courses in American history, African American history, history, sociology and law." As one who has been engaged in teacher education for over two decades, I can say confidently that the activities offered in the kit would be appropriate only at the middle-school level, but I would not recommend the kit even there. This is the sort of material that gives American education a bad name. Significantly, it was not created by teachers in American schools, but by an agency in the highly touted "private sector." There are lessons to be learned there, too.

"Amistad" is entertainment, not history. DreamWorks has attempted to cast its product as history, however, and to push it into the history classroom. Its learning kit trivializes history and history teaching. Ironically, the last of the "program objectives" presumably pursued by the learning kit is "to encourage critical thinking about the value of history." There is much to think about critically in the version of "Amistad" that Steven Spielberg presents, but this film guide deflects that critical thinking rather than encouraging it. As is always the case, critical thinking arises in the dialogical encounter between informed teachers, thoughtful students, and multiple texts. Entertainment will never substitute for any of those.

### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

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## GLOBAL HISTORY FROM THE LOCAL PERSPECTIVE: AN INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUE<sup>1</sup>

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As we all know, students learn best when they are connected to the subject matter, whether through a real interest or one inspired by future earnings in the job market. But when a student faces a required course, especially one perceived as irrelevant, often the primary motivation to learn is the grade, and whatever might have been learned in the course disappears once the grade is recorded. Introductory global history courses often fall into this "dreaded but required" category. The typical arguments for the study of global history usually do not convince students of their value. Discussions of our increasingly interconnected and interdependent world are met with a "But how does that affect me" shrug. Explanations of the global economy and its effect upon even the most seemingly insulated areas do little to change this attitude. Attempts to show how massive migration movements have transformed our world are ineffective.

One of the major obstacles in interesting students in global history is their self-absorption and the lack of interest in anything not directly related to them. In an effort to break through student resistance to a global view, I have developed a genealogy/migration assignment in which a student traces the migration of his or her ancestors from the Eastern Hemisphere to the Western one and, within the Western Hemisphere, to the Appalachian region. Rather than fighting against the typical self-orientation of the student, this assignment uses it to advantage. It encourages the student to explore family history and ethnicity within the global picture.

### THE ASSIGNMENT

I introduced this assignment (see Appendix) during my first semester at Appalachian State University. Appalachian State, a member institution of the University of North Carolina system, is a comprehensive university (primarily a four-year institution with a limited number of masters programs and one doctoral program) located in Boone, North Carolina, in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The student population of 12000+ comes from both urban and rural areas. Although most are of European descent, there is a growing minority population.

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<sup>1</sup>An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Southeast World History Association in Asheville, NC, November 1996. I would like to express appreciation to my students who participated in this assignment and to the outstanding resources and personnel of the W.L. Eury Appalachian Collection.

Appalachian State requires two semesters of global history. The first begins with prehistory and goes to 1650; the second one follows from 1650 to the present. Class sizes range from 25 to 40 students, most of whom are freshmen or sophomores, with a scattering of juniors and seniors. I use this genealogy/migration assignment in the second world history course.

In the second half of the world survey, I emphasize the ways in which the world has become increasingly interdependent and interconnected. I also examine the major trends and events of the past. Since migration has had a significant impact in transforming the world, this assignment fits well with the course objectives. Furthermore students find greater relevance in the major global events we study since often they discover that their ancestors migrated in response to these occurrences.

Since the fall of 1994, I have used this assignment for seven semesters in fifteen classes with over 500 students. Through the semesters, I have modified it as I became aware of some difficulties but the basic assignment is the same. Although some students initially were reluctant to begin the project, almost immediately all became interested in their own family's history and migration pattern. By tracing their own ancestors, they saw the individuals in the greater historical movements come alive. Although each experience was unique, the students became aware of general patterns, the motivation for migration, and the circumstances in the home country. Rather than studying an abstract historical movement, distant in time and space, students looked at an individual's accomplishments, hardships, and struggles. Since the individuals were their own ancestors, students were more readily able to connect the past to the present and became more interested in the past.

Some students, of course, were unable to trace their own family history due to lack of information on their family, inadequate resources pertaining to another geographic region (New York or Florida or other areas not covered by the Appalachian Collection at ASU), or emotional difficulty in dealing with their family background. These students had the option of tracing a general migration history for their ethnic group or nationality. In this way they could participate in the project and obtain historical information that pertained to their background. This alternative also proved useful in "personalizing" history for students. Surprisingly, however, very few students (less than 5%) have taken this option. The overwhelming majority have been interested in and able to locate family information. Students who were able to find only sketchy information about their family also had the option of supplementing their family history with a general migration history of their ethnic group.

At the W.L. Eury Appalachian Collection, students started with overviews such as *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy* by Val D. Greenwood (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1978) and *North Carolina Research: Genealogy and Local History*, edited by Helen F.M. Leary (Raleigh: North Carolina Genealogical Society, second edition, 1996), and then moved to more specialized introductions such as *Tracing Your Scottish Ancestry* by Kathleen B. Cory (Baltimore: Genealogical

Publishing Co., 1993) or *African American Genealogical Sourcebook*, edited by Paula K. Byers (New York: Gale Research, 1995). Such works helped students formulate a research strategy and introduced them to potential research tools such as the manuscript census on microfilm, printed and CD-ROM census indices and abstracts, western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee county court house records on microfilm, printed records of deeds, marriages, deaths, cemeteries, military rosters, passenger lists (from ships bringing immigrants to this country), a large collection of published and unpublished family histories (including copies of previous students' genealogy assignments), county, local, and church histories, local newspapers on microfilm, the Church of the Latter Day Saints' compilation, *International Genealogical Index* on microfiche, serial publications of local, state, and national genealogical and historical societies, and increasingly Internet sites (e.g. Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet at <http://www.oz.net/~cyndihow/sites.htm>). Students were also introduced to recent historical research in Appalachia which relied heavily on genealogy such as Altina Waller's well-received *Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

## STUDENT FINDINGS

The student papers varied in quality, but as a whole they offered interesting insights into the Appalachian region's patterns of migration and ethnicity, as well as its connection to the greater world. Traditionally, the Appalachian region has been thought to be more isolated, less affected by national and international forces, than the rest of the country. This myth of the insular "mountaineer" of pure Anglo-Saxon heritage is accepted widely not only in the United States as a whole but also within the region. More recent scholarly research has disproved this myth and demonstrated that there was considerably more ethnic variation, as well as interracial mixing, in the southern Appalachian region than previously believed.<sup>1</sup> The findings in these student papers correspond well with the latest research.

Not unexpectedly, many students traced their families back to the British Borderlands, supporting the generally held view of Anglo-Saxon predominance in the region. Other students were surprised to find evidence of relatives who were not

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<sup>1</sup>For example: Virginia E. DeMarce, "Looking at Legends--Lumbee and Melungeon: Applied Genealogy and the Origins of Tri-Racial Isolate Settlements," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, 81, no. 1 (1993), 24-45; and Darlene Wilson, "The Felicitous Convergence of Mythmaking and Capital Accumulation: John Fox Jr. and the Formation of an (Other) almost-White American Underclass," *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, 1 (1995), 5-44, and Michael H. Logan, "'My Great Grandmother Was a Cherokee Indian Princess': Ethnic Forgery or Darwinian Reality?," *Tennessee Anthropologist*, 15, no. 1 (1990), 34-43.

Anglo-Saxon. As expected, many of these were of German descent. But there were also students of French (especially French Huguenot), Dutch, Italian, Russian, Polish, Chinese, and even Thai ancestry. Although Anglo-Saxons and, to a lesser extent, Germans were the dominant groups, people from other parts of Eurasia also migrated to this region, intermarried, and were absorbed into the culture.

A number of students, both black and white, had family traditions of American Indian ancestry, and many were able to verify these claims. Only students of obvious African descent, however, claimed to have African ancestors. Recent historical scholarship on Appalachia has documented a continuing trend of the "whitening" of the historical and legal record.<sup>2</sup>

Students also discovered a number of interesting global connections. One student traced her ancestry back to the original Siamese twins, Eng and Chang, who toured the United States in the nineteenth century. After visiting the Appalachians, they stopped touring, married sisters, and lived out their lives in the Appalachian region. Another student was descended from the Siamese twins' manager who also settled in the region. The regionally significant Bolick family--including the brothers Bill and Earl Bolick, influential musicians, who recorded as the Blue Sky Boys in the 1930s--migrated from Poland via Germany to the United States and settled in the Appalachian region. Another student traced her family to German settlers brought into Russia by Catherine the Great. After several generations, this family moved from Russia, through Europe, and into the United States, settling in Kansas with the German Mennonite community. They later moved to the Appalachians. An interesting parallel to this movement is that of the German-Russian Mennonites who moved from Kansas to the mountains of western North Carolina where they converted African Americans to the Mennonite Church.<sup>3</sup> Yet another student attributed his grandmother's move from Italy to the United States to Mussolini's infatuation with her.

Many students connected the events that we had studied in class to their families' histories. In many cases their ancestors had migrated as a consequence of these circumstances: forced or recruited labor (African slavery, Chinese "coolie" labor, or European indentured servants); persecution of dissenting religious minorities (Puritans, Quakers, Moravians, Huguenots, or Jews); economic disruptions (the Irish potato famine, the economic chaos following World War I, or the Great Depression); wars throughout history including recent conflicts (Korea, Vietnam, and Bosnia); political

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<sup>2</sup>For example: Martin Crawford, "Re-rooting Appalachia: Preindustrial Ethnicity Reconsidered," paper presented at the Nineteenth Annual Appalachian Studies Conference, Unicoi State Park, GA, March 30, 1996.

<sup>3</sup>See Conrad Ostwal and Phoebe Pollitt, "The Salem School and Orphanage: White Missionaries, Black School," *Appalachian Journal*, 20, no. 3 (Spring 1993), 265-275.

upheavals (the Russian, Chinese, or Cuban Revolutions); as well as other events of global significance.

Students also discovered famous ancestors or ones who had participated in major global events, as well as "peculiar" figures or circumstances in their families' history. A number of students placed their forbearers at the decisive Revolutionary War battle of King's Mountain. These students took pride in being descendants of Revolutionary War heroes and believed their family stories validated by discovering them in the historical record. One student uncovered an interesting coincidence in that the same land that his ancestors had homesteaded was the land that his parents had just purchased without having known its history.

Perhaps the most poignant story came from a student who told me "my family is nothing special--they're just farmers and have been farmers forever. There's nothing interesting about them." This student, after having completed her project, thanked me for the assignment and told me that she had gained new understanding and respect for her family. She continued that, although there were no famous people or major accomplishments in her family, she now understood her family's struggle to survive was in itself heroic.

Overall, students liked the assignment. Many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to learn more about their families. They also told me that the assignment sparked their curiosity about various world events that we studied in class. Confirming this, I noticed students talking to each other, before and after class, not only about their families' experiences but also about global occurrences.

After turning in their papers, the class had a discussion about their findings. Although not required to participate in the discussion, the vast majority of the students eagerly shared their new-found knowledge about their families and their connection to the world. During this discussion period, my class was under observation by two peer reviewers (as mandated by the North Carolina State legislature): Their comments regarding this class discussion included the following observation; "Students seemed very enthusiastic about the project and responded with exceptional and unique information. Dr. Maiewskij-Hay did a good job of pushing students to tie the family experiences to world events."

Students' comments on the end-of-semester teacher evaluations reflected the students' positive view of this assignment:

"The genealogy assignment put aspects of global history that are associated with my family history closer to my mind and propelled me to learn more about the historical events that shaped their lives."

"The geology [sic] project allowed me to know more about my family background, as well as, more info of history covered in the classroom lectures."

"I think the genealogy report was the most relevant because it deals with your family, yet you come to realize your family goes way back to other places. It helps you see how the world changed."

"Even though it was on a very individual level, the genealogy assignment was most directly related to the progressions of global history."

"The genealogy project ... showed me how much the whole world is linked together and that all of everybody's histories affect each other."

"It helped to see what my family has endured and done up to me. Gave me a true picture of how the world had changed."

## CONCLUSION

I think that this genealogy assignment is not only a valuable pedagogical tool for teaching world history, but it is also an example of the way in which local and global history are related. Increasingly, academic historians have come to realize the usefulness of genealogical materials for scholarly research. For example, the British Americanist Martin Crawford (Chair of American Studies program at the University of Keele) said in his presentation to the 1996 Appalachian Studies Conference that to understand the Appalachian region one must study the genealogical records.<sup>4</sup> I believe these local records are also important for the study of global history.

One evening in 1996 I heard the historian Stephen Ambrose say on the NBC network news that Americans need to know who they are and where they came from. They need to gain a better understanding of themselves both as individuals and as a nation. They need to know their family's past as well as their nation's past. And they need to understand their connection with the rest of the world. I agree with Ambrose. Too often, the individual--especially the so called "common person"--has been removed from history, leaving an abstracted past rather than a personal one. This assignment in large measure is my attempt to encourage students to recognize how their individual histories fit into the greater world.

## Appendix Genealogy Assignment

By the twentieth century, no region of the world remained untouched by the social, demographic, economic, and political impact of the globalization of the human community. This is, of course, as true for Southern Appalachia as for the rest of the world. In this assignment, you will examine your own family or ethnic group's movement into our local region to better understand the interconnectedness of all our lives to the rest of humanity past and present.

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<sup>4</sup>See note 2.

WARNING: YOU MUST START THIS ASSIGNMENT EARLY. IF YOU WAIT TOO LONG, THE STAFF OF THE W.L. EURY APPALACHIAN COLLECTION WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU INDIVIDUALIZED ASSISTANCE.

1. Your research will be conducted in the W.L. Eury Appalachian Collection.
2. The Eury Appalachian Collection has extensive holdings of genealogical research material. Using the on-line catalog and other appropriate indices, locate material on your family (father's family or mother's family or other ancestor surname). Trace your family's history to Appalachia from the Eastern Hemisphere. Why did your ancestors make the moves that they did? (In some cases, you will be the first of your family to come to the Appalachian region, so also include your own motivations for coming here). You must cite all your sources whether written or oral interviews. For interviews, cite the name of the person interviewed, name of interviewer, location and date of interview, and relationship of interviewee to interviewer/writer, if any. If the Eury Collection does not have specific information on your family, you may use other sources, but you must include some sources from the Eury Collection even though they might be of a more general nature.
3. If you fail to locate information on your family or if you find the information sketchy, trace a more general migration history for the ethnic group or nationality from which your family came to the Western Hemisphere (be as specific as your knowledge allows, e.g. French Huguenot rather than just French, Yoruban rather than African, etc.). In some cases, specific derivation cannot be determined, but be as precise as available data allows. Why did these people move when and where they moved?
4. In either case, the information for some time periods and some population movements isn't going to be as good as for others. In your paper document those times and areas for which there exists fuller or lesser information.
5. Your paper should be typed, double-spaced and at least three full pages in length. Turn in two copies of your paper. One copy will be graded and returned to you. The other copy will be added to the W.L. Eury Appalachian Collection so that, in the future, other scholars might benefit from your research efforts.

## SOME FOOD FOR HISTORICAL THOUGHT

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First you need to get the students' attention. If the idea is to have students learn, as opposed to doing your "duty" by showing up, giving them information, and leaving at the end of the hour, then you need to get their attention. Because of the experience some students have had all through their educational careers, they have certain expectations about what they will find in a history class. While some students undoubtedly take comfort in knowing pretty much what to expect, in a large number of cases resistance comes with these expectations. Perhaps they have encountered one too many historians who modeled themselves on drill sergeants. The resistant ones have heard and done that before--whatever the "that" might be--and they are not looking forward to listening to it or doing it again. They come to history class prepared to do battle, even if it is only in the form of passive resistance. Without even considering a sense of personal fulfillment, history classes today are often just one of many options students can select, and administrators do like to see courses full.

One way to win over this type of student is to call attention to an aspect of the material that up to this point in their educational careers they have not viewed as "history." One of the great tools in teaching history to college students is the unexpected. While it might not work for everyone, I have had a fair amount of success in using food as a way to get around the defenses of resistant students. By this I mean both the study of food as an academic exercise and the preparation and consumption of food within the classroom.

For those who are interested in using this approach, material is available and indeed a fair amount of it has been for some time. For an historian of early modern Great Britain such as myself, the agricultural revolution in the Low Countries and England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well as the Irish potato famine of the mid-nineteenth century come to mind. Of late, as a result of the river of scholarship that flowed in great volume in and around the theme of Columbus and 1492, a small scale flood of food-related books and articles has rolled into view. A good deal of it is focused on the Columbian exchange. The compilation of articles entitled *Seeds of Change*, edited by H.J. Viola and C. Margolis, is but one example. It has articles about both the impact of food from the Americas on the rest of the world and European food raising practices on agriculture in the Americas.<sup>1</sup> In recent years the volume of material published about the study of food for scholarly purposes seems to have increased and it has become something of an historical subfield. Perhaps using

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<sup>1</sup>Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis, editors, *Seeds of Change* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).



cultural anthropology as a model, the subjects cover all aspects of the topic from where food is grown, to how it is transported, marketed, and prepared, to what individuals ate it, and when it was eaten. Happily this research has not just centered on one or two countries, but has spread to nations in all parts of the world. Nor is it limited to the modern era. There are good sources for both scholarship and recipes going back at least as far as the Middle Ages. An early example is Barbara Norman's *Tales of the Table*. She has menus from contemporary sources going as back as far as ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia.<sup>2</sup>

While food might be a novel area of study for most history students and one that has the potential for stimulating interest, there is no getting around the fact that historical monographs about this subject can be as dull and pedantic as any other. Yet just as is true of other historical topics, with careful selection, the potential for stimulating interest makes it worth the effort to do the necessary sorting. Then the question is how to present the material. While whole history courses can be devoted to the study of food, my approach has been to present the subject within the context of an already existing course, for spice, so to speak. Approaching the subject in this way, one technique is to use it as the basis for a series of problem-solving exercises and another is to use the study of food and its production to help understand both society and politics.

Potatoes are a good place to start. Their migration from South America to Europe and their impact on everything from making vodka in Russia to becoming part of the typical meal in Ireland opens up all sorts of interesting questions. What they did in these countries for drink and food before the potato came along is the most obvious. William McNeill's article "American Food Crops in the Old World" is a good starting point for this investigation.<sup>3</sup> Yet my favorite starting point for problem-solving remains spaghetti with meatballs and tomato sauce. For one thing, virtually everyone in the class will know what it is and will identify the dish as Italian. It is at this point that either the instructor as a lecturer or students in a research assignment can deconstruct the dish and discover when and how it became Italian. Sophie D. Coe's *America's First Cuisines* is a good source for much of this type of information.<sup>4</sup>

From there focusing on the tomato is often useful. A whole series of study areas present themselves by tracing its origins in Aztec culture, its resemblance to the European plant, the deadly nightshade, and the slow acceptance by the Europeans of the idea that tomatoes were more than just decoration. Another key question that

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<sup>2</sup>Barbara Norman, *Tales of the Table* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1972).

<sup>3</sup>Viola and Margolis, *Seeds of Change*, 43-59.

<sup>4</sup>Sophie D. Coe, *America's First Cuisines* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

follows is how could the Europeans watch the Aztecs eat tomatoes without ill effect and then have reservations about the fruit for themselves. Continuing down that path, it is possible to explore European attitudes toward the inhabitants of the Americas. Here it is worth noting that the plants that were used to feed people in the so-called New World, such as maize or corn, often first were used to feed farm animals when the plants were introduced in Europe. Once again Coe's *America's First Cuisines* is a good source of information about a large number of American plants that spread to the rest of the world.

An effective corollary to this discussion concerns the reluctance of most societies to adopt new food over the short term. To return to the potato, even though it was not classed as poisonous by the Europeans, it took over two centuries before it made a regular appearance in European cookbooks. For the Spaniards settling in the Caribbean and the Americas, their tastes in food meant importing European products in the form of plants such as wheat and animals such as cattle. This importation in turn had a profound ecological impact on the newly occupied lands. On the popular reading level Kirkpatrick Sale in *The Conquest of Paradise* explores many of these issues, albeit in a rather polemical fashion.<sup>5</sup> For those who want to continue this type of study, after 1945 the appearance of American-style fast food restaurants and cola drinks in France, even on the Champs Elysees, has potential as a focal point.

It is sometimes useful to present students with a problem that is extremely difficult to solve, and making wheat into bread is one of those problems. Once a society learns how to do it, the process is straightforward enough, but the question is how humans figured out the process. While birds and small rodents no doubt ate wild wheat as they currently do the domestic varieties, it is difficult to comprehend how people went from imitating these animals by eating the raw seeds to grinding and baking. Along those same lines, cassava provides another interesting case study. Here the poison is real and not imagined. The root in its raw form contains a poison that South American Indians traditionally use to tip their arrows and to squeeze from the roots into ponds in order to bring fish to the surface. Once the liquid poison is removed, however, the remaining root material makes a tasty, nutritious, and long-lasting bread. Again, the question is how humans figured out that it was possible to eat the residual material. Fred Olsen's *On the Trail of the Arawaks* looks at this and other problems concerning the study of this tribe.<sup>6</sup>

When it comes to using food to study the development of society and politics, if one extends the definition of food to include condiments, then sugar quickly comes into focus. Even without consideration of obesity and tooth decay, it is possible to

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<sup>5</sup>Kirkpatrick Sale, *The Conquest of Paradise* (New York: Knopf, 1990).

<sup>6</sup>Fred Olsen, *On the Trail of the Arawaks* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974).

argue that sugar has been responsible for as much human misery as opium or cocaine. Here Sidney W. Mintz's book *Sweetness and Power* is particularly useful.<sup>7</sup> The author looks at everything from what makes sugar addictive to its production by slaves to the wars that were fought to gain control of sugar-producing areas.

A related area of interest is the feeding of slaves in the Caribbean. Up until the American Revolution, a large percentage of the food for slaves came from the thirteen mainland colonies. But during and after the war trade between the new United States and the British colonies became illegal. With the possible exception of planters on Jamaica, most of the planters on the other British islands believed they could not afford to assign space for growing food as well as sugar. Their great concern became to develop a food source that was nutritious but did not take up much room. What they wanted was bread that grew on trees—breadfruit trees. Such a plant grew in the Polynesian Islands, and in 1788 the British government decided to give Lieutenant William Bligh command of a ship named the *Bounty* in order to transport the trees to the West Indies. While both Hollywood and the publishing industry have produced much Bligh material, two relatively recent books deal with the breadfruit and its problems: Gavin Kennedy's *Bligh* and my study, *The Fortunate Adversities of William Bligh*.<sup>8</sup>

For those who use biography as part of their classes, Bligh's patron, Sir Joseph Banks, presents interesting possibilities. As a young man Banks traveled with Captain James Cook on his first voyage to the Pacific. Banks then spent the rest of his life sponsoring the collection of useful plants and animals that he housed at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, just up the Thames from London. Besides his adventures with Captain Cook, some of his adventures in sheep rustling make interesting reading. Two useful recent books are H.B. Carter's *Sir Joseph Banks 1743-1820* and C. Lyte's *Sir Joseph Banks*.<sup>9</sup>

While university students can and do respond favorably to written material about food, they respond even better when they can sample the food as well. Over the last twenty years I have organized at least one banquet per year, using historical recipes and menus. The number of people involved have ranged from five to around thirty. For full effect, sometimes I have invited groups specializing in early modern English music and dance to perform at these banquets. However, it is not necessary to pull out all the stops every time. I have tried everything from cooking something as a

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<sup>7</sup>Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power* (New York: Viking/Penguin, 1985).

<sup>8</sup>Gavin Kennedy, *Bligh* (London: Duckworth, 1978), and Roy E. Schreiber, *The Fortunate Adversities of William Bligh* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991).

<sup>9</sup>H.B. Carter, *Sir Joseph Banks* (London: Oak Knoll, 1987), and C. Lyte, *Sir Joseph Banks* (London: David & Charles, 1980).

demonstration, to having the students fix dishes at home and bringing them into class, to finding a kitchen and having them work together to prepare the meal. On the whole, I would say the group preparation is the most effective. Except for those students who are comfortable in the kitchen, there is a certain uneasiness that this meal cannot possibly work. Having them support each other in the undertaking tends to overcome this uneasiness. I should also say that in all this time I have never had a bad meal, and at least one group of students threatened not to take the second half of the course I was teaching unless a banquet was promised in the syllabus.

Despite my enthusiasm, everything has its limitations, including the use of food in a history class. As late as the eighteenth century, even the French and the British were unlikely to put exact quantities in their written recipes. Although modern authors have converted a wide range, including the most ancient of these recipes, into dishes for the modern kitchen, the further back one goes and the less literate the cultural source, the more the dish becomes a matter of educated guesswork. Even so, it is not unfair to say that such a description fits just about any topic of historical study during the pre-modern era.

Regardless of the problems and how the food is prepared, one of the reasons the meal is effective as a teaching device, is that, whatever the limitations and approximations, it gives students a real life example of how the people we study in history are not exactly like us. Their tastes were, literally, tangibly different from ours. All the books and videos I cram into a semester will not get that message across as thoroughly as that one meal.

Along these lines, for my sixteenth-century English history classes I usually include a dish called a spinach-date fritter. The recipe is found in Lorna J. Sass's *To the Queen's Taste*.<sup>10</sup> It is "English" upper-class food that has intriguing ingredients. According to contemporary sources, spinach did not appear in England until the mid-sixteenth century. As for the other principal ingredients and condiments--eggs, salt, bread crumbs, ale, flour, dates, currents, pepper, brown sugar, cinnamon, and ginger--more than half of them did not originate in England. The dish thus becomes an oblique way of getting the students to discuss what the upper-class English of that era meant when they called something "English."

That last comment is exactly the point of this whole undertaking. Food is a way to get students into historical topics and to get them to think about how and why things happened. Any time that happens consistently in a class, I try to keep my whining about students to a minimum.

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<sup>10</sup>Lorna J. Sass, *To the Queen's Taste* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976), 74-75.

## Selected Reading List

In addition to the books mentioned above, the following is a short bibliography of food related books, primarily for the early modern era. The list includes scholarly works, recipe books, and books that combine the two.

- Roz Denny, *The Tudor Kitchens Cookery Book* (Hampton Court, n.d.). This is a modernized series of sixteenth-century English recipes with a brief bibliography.
- Christopher Driver and Michelle Berriedale-Johnson, *Pepys at Table* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). Although there is a short historical introduction, most of this book contains recipes from seventeenth-century England. Both the contemporary and the modern versions are given. A list of contemporary cookbooks is included.
- Henry Hobhouse, *Seeds of Change--Five Plants that Transformed Mankind* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985). Quinine, the potato, sugar cane, cotton, and tea are the five plants discussed.
- Madge Lorwin, *Dining with William Shakespeare* (New York: Atheneum, 1976). Using Shakespeare for inspiration, a series of menus for feasts and recipes are described. Some of the condiments and spices are difficult to obtain, but there are usable recipes, especially the breads.
- Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985). This is a historical study of French and English foods that tries to account for the variations in taste between the two countries.
- Lorna J. Sass, *To the King's Taste - Richard II's Book of Feast and Recipes* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975). Some of the recipes are flavored with spices that make them quite surprising to modern tastes.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Dinner with Tom Jones - Eighteenth Century Cookery* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1977). The recipes are very close to modern British cooking.
- Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Tastes of Paradise* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992). The subtitle is a social history of spices, stimulants, and intoxicants.
- Jennifer Stead, *Food and Cooking in 18th Century Britain* (Birmingham: English Heritage, 1985). This is a very brief historical study coupled with several simple recipes.
- Barbara Ketcham Wheaton, *Savoring the Past--The French Kitchen & Table from 1300 to 1789* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983). While this book is mainly a historical study, it does contain some recipes.

## THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON: A TEACHER'S REMEMBRANCE

William F. Muggleston  
Floyd College

Rarely does a history teacher have the opportunity of relating a historic moment first-hand to his or her students. In the summer of 1963 I was a 22-year-old newly minted college graduate, headed for work on a master's degree that fall. As my home was in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., I had been able for several years to pick up summer jobs in the various federal agencies. That summer I was at the then-Department of Health, Education and Welfare, doing just what, I have long forgotten. In that hot summer of the civil rights movement word had spread that there was to be a massive march on the nation's capital.

Wednesday August 28 dawned clear and muggy, a typical Washington summer day. The neighbors with whom I carpooled were convinced there would be rioting and burning, and so they stayed home. In my youthful idealism I felt confident no such thing would happen (it turned out I was right), so I made my way to work via buses, which were almost empty. The city was indeed strangely silent. Federal agencies and many private businesses had offered workers a day off; Washington was turned over to the marchers, whatever might happen. At work, only my supervisor and one other employee, another college student, were there in my division. After a couple of desultory hours the boss said we both might as well take off too, which was what we wanted to hear. So off we hurried to the Lincoln Memorial, arriving around 11 a.m.

Never have I been in such a large crowd in my life. With no expertise in such things, I estimated it at 100,000; later I learned it was closer to two and a half times that. Was I aware of the historic import of the event? Probably not. As Bruce Catton has reminded us, history doesn't usually make sense until long afterward. But what I recall most vividly was the civility, the orderliness, and above all the indomitable passion and fervor of those masses of people. Many of them obviously were terribly poor and had scraped money together at great sacrifice to ride buses all day and night from the Mississippi Delta, from the ghettos of Chicago and Georgia, from other places that I, as a white boy from a middle-class suburb, had never been or known, to share in an experience that clearly had a profound meaning for them. There was an atmosphere of intensity, of hope, of release, of sheer joy, especially among the older people, who had known a lifetime of privation.

I wish I could say I stayed for Dr. King's speech. In fact, I heard it on someone's radio on the bus going home late that afternoon. But what I remember from August 28, 1963, was less the speaker, important though he was, or his message, historic though it would become, than the people who came to hear it.

## REVIEWS

**Don Nardo.** *The Fall of the Roman Empire.* San Diego: Greenhaven Press, Inc., 1998. Pp. 143. Paper, \$12.96; ISBN 1-56510-738-1.

This short book is one of a series of "Opposing Viewpoints Digests" published by Greenhaven Press. The series aims to present "thought-provoking argument and stimulating debate" on various topics. This example succeeds admirably. It begins with "A Short History of Rome's Fall," which presents the facts and chronology of events with as little interpretation and opinion as possible. Similarly, the appendices to the book provide longer quotations from primary and secondary sources quoted briefly in the text, as well as a timeline of events, the chronology of Roman emperors, and an annotated bibliography. Between these two information sections, four explanations of Rome's fall are presented: changes in population, internal (class and religious) disunity, economic decay, and invasion and military conquest. A fifth chapter proposes that "Rome Did Not Fall in the Fifth Century." Within each chapter, three different views are presented. For example, in Chapter 1, "Changes in Population Caused Rome's Fall," the subdivisions are as follows: "Manpower Shortages Weakened the Empire," "Intermarriage Led to Rome's Fall," and "Intermarriage Played No Part in Rome's Decline and Fall." The viewpoints are summarized by Don Nardo, with ample questions from various historians. Nardo writes clearly and succinctly, and he glosses the vocabulary of his quotations in a way that should make them accessible even for students whose vocabulary is limited.

The book should be useful at a high-school honors level or in a college survey of "western civilization," of Rome, or of the early Middle Ages. It could be used as an introduction to the period, with class discussion of the points raised. Students could use the bibliography to expand one viewpoint or another for an essay. In each section, Nardo has left plenty for students to discuss and question. For example, in Chapter 2, "Christianity Dampened Rome's Martial Spirit" is given as a factor in Rome's fall. Arguments to counter this view are not given, but this seems less a weakness to me than a chance for the instructor to start discussion and encourage students to think about issues not raised: How many Christians were there in the empire? How were they distributed geographically? Do we have any hard evidence of Christians causing military defeats? And so on. One of the great virtues of this book is that it presents all the big issues, but never exhausts their possibilities or answers its own questions.

Every reviewer will have at least one picky point to make. In the aforementioned section on Christianity and martial spirit, Nardo's summary of the pacifism of Christian leaders presents as simple a situation that was in actuality quite complex and contested. He cites Basil the Great, bishop of Caesarea, as an example because Basil "advocated that any soldier who killed someone in the performance of his duty was guilty of murder and must be excommunicated from the church." This is not quite an accurate depiction of Basil's ruling, which anyway was not accepted by most of his

contemporaries. Soldiers in the Roman army of Basil's time (which was, after all, a Christian Roman army) were accompanied by military chaplains and took communion without hindrance. But this is indeed a picky, specialist's criticism of an admirable presentation of the debate about Rome's fall. I highly recommend it for classroom use.

Princeton University

Tia M. Kolbaba

**John Carmi Parsons, ed. *Medieval Queenship*. New York: St. Martin's Pres, 1998. Pp. 264. Paper, \$17.95; ISBN 0-312-17298-2.**

This collection of articles on various subjects concerning Europe's queens, *ca.* eighth century to *ca.* sixteenth century, is a valuable contribution to all students: scholars, teachers, and undergraduates alike. Both new and established scholars present a "palette of images" of medieval queens in their roles as mothers, daughters, wife, consorts, regents, rulers, political "insiders," and foreign "outsiders." The geographic range of the articles is broad. Little-studied areas such as medieval Hungary and Denmark are included, as well as the better-known realms of Capetian France and Angevin and Plantagenet England. In both style and content, this is a remarkably consistent scholarly collection. Each contribution emphasizes the complex relationship between family and power that characterized the roles of prominent women in the Middle Ages. The creativity with which some contributors, in particular Janet Nelson and Lois Honeycutt, used non-traditional sources to reconstruct women's royal roles is impressive.

The book appeals on a number of different levels. For scholars of the medieval family and of women, the articles of Nelson, André Poulet, Elizabeth McCartney, and Pauline Stafford offer new approaches to well-studied areas. They attribute to medieval queens--long regarded merely as pawns in the diplomatic marriage market--a far wider variety of experiences and power. The careers of Elvira of León, Louise of Savoy, and Giovanna of Naples clearly demonstrate that queens could wield significant authority beyond "merely" producing and educating their children. The articles, taken collectively, challenge a traditional interpretation of women's roles--that the emergence of a more patrilineally organized society after 1000 sharply limited the access of women to power. The interpretation of "power" is a central theme in the discussion. Few of the authors directly address the link between the changing status of queens and the evolution of state-like structures in Europe (exceptions include Poulet and Parsons); however, the articles provide ample material for further investigation of such issues.

In the classroom the book could easily serve as an introduction to the issues, vocabulary, and sources of aristocratic women's history. Paron, Poulet, János M. Bak, Inge Skovgaard-Peterson, and Stafford summarize key scholarship on women and



family: public versus private power, Christian and legal "theory" versus actual experience, marriage practices and politics. Students will further benefit from seeing how historians carefully use disparate types of sources (art, chronicles, charters, literature, ecclesiastical treatises) to construct a history of women. The book's illustrations are especially helpful. The articles provide models for the interpretation of primary texts concerning women of all social strata. For undergraduates (probably above the introductory level), *Medieval Queenship* is accessible and readable, yet demonstrates attention to language and detail that enables historians to piece together a portion of medieval experience. As an exercise, students can examine through discussion or in writing the boundaries and controversies that characterize the study of medieval women.

Students of all levels can appreciate the lengthy and current bibliography that accompanies the collection. Teachers preparing their lectures will no doubt benefit from the sometimes poignant, other times startling anecdotes that appear throughout the book. It is a particularly good text for use in an undergraduate course on the aristocracy, family, and/or women.

Colgate University

Joanna H. Drell

**Christopher Haigh. *Elizabeth I*. London & New York: Longman, 1998. Second edition. Pp. viii, 209. Paper, \$16.95; ISBN 0-582-31974-9.**

If Elizabeth I is on your mind, avoid the unfortunate 1998 film bearing her name and direct your attention to this readable assessment of how she exercised power. Haigh's approach is to explore Gloriana's relationship with the people who orbited around her and to key political institutions, including the official Church, the nobility, her Privy Council, the Court, Parliament, the military, and her subjects. In the process, he reveals the means by which Elizabeth survived as a ruler, especially as a female ruler. We also learn about the woman behind the mask of royalty who concentrated her energies not on analyzing and solving national problems but on surviving. Haigh's is an insightful, sometimes critical study of England's greatest icon since King Arthur.

Elizabeth began her existence under tenuous circumstances. She was conceived before her parents wed, while her father was still legally married to his first wife. Before her third birthday, she lost her claim to the throne with the stroke of a pen and her mother to the swing of an ax. Years later, we are told, she certainly reflected upon these events as examples of the power of Tudor monarchy and of the forces and factions capable of manipulating that power. Actually, the word "certainly" is at best educated speculation, but that is a vital ingredient in Haigh's approach and a useful technique for moving the story along effectively. It also presents the teacher with an opportunity to engage students in the nature of the historian's craft. We don't know,

for example, precisely what Elizabeth learned from her mother's fate, her father's actions, or her years as a subject, but we are made privy to myriad intriguing facts and the author's interpretations. That Elizabeth learned her lessons well is a plausible conclusion, but not the only one. In addition, we discover how Elizabeth, before and after her accession, walked a political tightrope, how political spin was used to fashion the image of a golden age, what limitations to her power she labored under, and what it meant to be a woman ruler and to be ruled by a woman--to be caught up in the contradiction that monarchs should rule and women should obey. Haigh's judgments will make for wonderful class discussion.

Haigh is adept at helping us understand Elizabeth: "... fury made her councillors fear her, but by her attentiveness she also made them love her." An ill Burghley, for example, was not only sent the queen's physician, but she personally fed him soup. In the marriage game, "she offered herself to the highest diplomatic bidder, but since no one could afford her price she became a royal tease rather than a royal tart." The queen's well-known vanity was even evident toward the end of her reign when, at age 64, she received the new French ambassador in her dressing gown and then kept opening it until he realized he was expected "to peep admiringly down her front."

The narrative is generously spliced with quotations from documentary sources that lend authenticity without interrupting the flow. In 1564, for example, upon learning that Mary Queen of Scots was taller than she, Elizabeth said: "Then she is too high! I myself am neither too high nor too low!"

The changes in this second edition are relatively minor, consisting primarily of occasional bits of new information and the addition of views from historians who, in the last decade, have contributed something to augment or bolster the author's interpretation. This is reflected, too, in the updated bibliography. This edition, then, refines the qualities that made its earlier incarnation successful: It presents us with a portrait of a ruling queen, warts, wigs, make-up, and all, a great queen with shortcomings and failures.

California State University, San Bernardino

Robert Blackey

**T.C.W. Blanning.** *The French Revolution: Class War or Culture Clash?* St. Martin's Press, 1998. Second edition. Pp. vii, 87. Paper, \$10.95; ISBN 0-312-17521-3.

T.C.W. Blanning's *The French Revolution: Aristocrats versus Bourgeois?* first appeared in 1987. In his second edition, the subtitle has been changed to *Class War or Culture Clash?* The difference shows the dramatic evolution in French Revolution and *Ancien Régime* scholarship over the course of the past decade. Fortunately the

excellence of Blanning's survey has not changed, nor has its usefulness for the college classroom.

Blanning's study, one of a St. Martin's Press series devoted to thorny historical controversies, aims to provide a brief survey of the major historiographical issues of the French Revolution. His point of departure is the Marxist interpretation; he then provides a succinct discussion of the revisionist attacks on that position, as well as the Marxist responses. Blanning focuses primarily on the major arenas in which this argument has been fought: namely, the composition of the elites in eighteenth-century France, as bourgeois *anoblis* sought to join, not overthrow, the nobility; the "pre-revolution" of 1786-1789; the intellectual roots of the revolution in the Enlightenment, a section that includes a discussion of Robert Darnton's "Grub Street" and its recent critics.

While revisionism tore down the old Marxist wall, it was unable to provide any sort of overarching substitute interpretation of similar power: thus the importance of the "post-revisionist," or "cultural" interpretation, to which most of Blanning's new material is devoted. He provides an admirably clear explanation of Jürgen Habermas's concept of the public sphere, to which most recent work is indebted, as well as of the major terms (dangerously approaching jargon) that this particular approach has made familiar but not always comprehensible. Through all of his discussion Blanning gives rather short shrift to issues of gender, which is to be regretted. Nevertheless he has pinpointed the most hotly-debated issue of the "cultural" approach: the meaning of the Terror, and whether it was an aberration born out of the pressures of foreign and civil war or inherent within the revolution from the beginning.

It is the particular merit of this book to provide not only a survey of the literature but also a thoughtful contribution in itself to the history of the French Revolution. His discussion of the events by which monarchical legitimacy was lost during the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI also sheds light on the rather inexplicable part played by Marie Antoinette, both as individual and as symbol. He brings into clear focus the role played by the French army (and noble army officers) in 1789, as well as the significance of the French inability to prevent the Prussian attack on the Dutch Republic in 1787, an often-ignored event that seemed to contemporaries to mark France's eclipse as a great power.

This brief (just under 70 pages) and sophisticated study is well-suited to a college audience, for either general surveys or more specialized courses. It is well-written, with welcome touches of humor and an excellent bibliography, and should become an essential part of any course on the French Revolution.

Colgate University

Jill Harsin

Graeme Gill. *Stalinism*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. Second edition. Pp. xii, 94. Paper, \$17.95; ISBN 0-312-17764-X.

Martin McCauley. *Gorbachev*. London & New York: Longman, 1998. Pp. xvi, 343. Paper, \$17.95; ISBN 0-582-215998-6.

These two books examine the history of the Soviet Union/Russia over the last half-century. Their approach is quite different, however. While Graeme Gill in *Stalinism* attempts to study a phenomenon, Martin McCauley focuses his attention on a personality. Thus, it is difficult to assess the books in a comparative manner.

*Stalinism* appears here in its second edition. The author indicates that he has not changed the arguments that were presented in the earlier volume. In fact, new archival information has been provided to support those arguments. He has added a chapter, however, and updated the bibliography to include material that was not available at the time of the first edition.

The purpose of the book is to address the question of why Stalinism emerged in the Soviet Union. Gill argues that this phenomenon cannot be explained simply as an inevitable result of Russian backwardness, Leninism, or Stalin's personality. While the above factors played a part, none predetermined the emergence of Stalinism. Each contained the seeds of other directions in which the country might have moved. Thus, one has to look elsewhere for an explanation. Gill concludes that there are four "faces" in Stalinism: economic, social, cultural, and political. Since these "faces" appeared at different times, Stalinism did not emerge at a single point in history. The author makes the case that Stalinism was the result of conscious decisions that were made by the Soviet leadership, in particular the "revolution from above" and the terror. While Stalin clearly played an important role in those decisions, they also received support from many others in positions of power. It was the failure to prevent these decisions from being taken that led to the gradual emergence of Stalinism.

Since the purpose of the book is to analyze and explain the development of Stalinism as a philosophy, it does not recount details of the history of the Stalin era. A considerable amount of knowledge is assumed. That understood, the text is clearly written, and the arguments are cogently presented. It is, at times, a bit repetitive as the same information is used to make slightly different points. The analysis, however, is both thoughtful and controversial. One of the most interesting parts of the book is the section that deals with the fate of Stalinism in the post-Stalin era. The argument that the Soviets, and now the Russians, have not come to terms with the Stalinist past is compelling. Gill's conclusion that the attempt at reform under Gorbachev failed because the Stalinist legacy is still too powerful to overcome is disturbing but might well be accurate.

McCauley takes a very different approach in *Gorbachev*. This is neither a history of the Gorbachev era nor an attempt to understand the phenomenon of "Gorbachevism." Rather, as McCauley states in his preface, the history of the period

is used only to "illuminate Gorbachev's journey" through it. Thus, the focus of the book is biographical. The author acknowledges that the information comes primarily from Gorbachev's own writings, supplemented by works by Jack F. Matlock, Jr. and Archie Brown. While these are all credible sources, many other equally valuable voices are included only infrequently or not at all.

Although the book discusses Gorbachev's life prior to becoming General Secretary in some detail, it never really addresses the question of what influences in his early years predisposed Gorbachev toward reform. Likewise, it does little to expand our understanding of why perestroika failed. The only clear reasons given for the failure of reform are that Gorbachev did not really understand economics and that he did not pay sufficient attention to the nationalities question. While these are certainly part of the explanation, other factors surely played a role as well. In fact, Graeme Gill argues that although Gorbachev opened up the Stalinist phenomenon as a subject of discussion, he never helped Russia to come to terms with its past. This is a subject that is not even touched upon by McCauley. Although mention is made of the fact that Gorbachev has remained popular in the West long after his demise in Russia, little attention is given to the reasons for this phenomenon.

In addition to the absence of thoughtful analysis, the McCauley book also suffers from several other defects. The style frequently does not flow smoothly, and ideas are not always logically linked together. In some places the book reads more like a first draft than a finished product. Some topics are examined in considerable detail (the conflict with Lithuania, for example) while others are accorded only passing mention (such as Gorbachev's relations with the media). Glasnost clearly takes a back seat to perestroika.

*Stalinism* would be a useful book to include in the reading list of an upper-level course on Soviet history. The ideas presented are controversial enough to provide good fodder for class discussion. *Gorbachev* provides some useful biographical information. The account of the attempted coup is especially interesting. The last chapter contains a short analysis of why Deng's perestroika in China has succeeded while Gorbachev's failed. This comparison raises some useful points for further examination. Overall, however, McCauley's book contributes little to scholarly debate on Gorbachev's role in history.

Northern Essex Community College

Elizabeth J. Wilcoxson

Brooks D. Simpson, ed. *Think Anew, Act Anew: Abraham Lincoln on Slavery, Freedom, and Union*. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1998. Pp. xiv, 205. Paper, \$13.95; ISBN 0-88295-975-1.

IN THIS TEMPLE  
AS IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE  
FOR WHOM HE SAVED THE UNION  
THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
IS ENSHRINED FOREVER

-Inscription on the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.

Just as the Lincoln Memorial continues to inspire Americans even today, so do the words and writings of the "Great Emancipator" himself. It should be no surprise then that numerous compilations of Abraham Lincoln's writings exist. They range from the famous comprehensive edition of Roy P. Basler and his associates to numerous selections in various editions, most of which offer glimpses into Lincoln's public as well as private life. But this new volume, *Think Anew, Act Anew: Abraham Lincoln on Slavery, Freedom, and Union*, focuses on the interrelated themes of slavery, union, emancipation, and reconstruction, issues that give Lincoln his claim to fame.

Brooks D. Simpson, professor of history and humanities at Arizona State University, is no stranger to the literature of the Civil War and Reconstruction, for he has written several fine books on this period, including *Let Us Have Peace: Ulysses S. Grant and the Politics of War and Reconstruction, 1861-1868* (1991), *The Political Education of Henry Adams* (1996), and *America's Civil War* (1996).

By reading and comparing the documents that Simpson has collected in this volume, including Lincoln's private letters, speeches, debates, state documents, and public letters, one can gain a much better understanding of "Lincoln's thinking about slavery, politics, and the fate of the American republic, as well as on the establishment and justification of war aims, the transformation of the struggle to save the Union to incorporate a quest for freedom, and the problem of reuniting the nation in the aftermath of war and emancipation."

Another merit of this intriguing volume is that it offers an explanation of various issues still being debated today by scholars, students of Lincoln, and the general public: How did Lincoln define equality? How did Lincoln harmonize his rejection of slavery as immoral with the toleration of it where it already existed? How did Lincoln reconcile his celebration of democracy and self-government with his rejection of popular sovereignty and secession? What were Lincoln's views on race, and did they change over time? How did Lincoln justify accepting war as the price of preserving the Union while at first seeking to avoid attacking the institution that he thought caused it? What did freedom mean to Lincoln personally?

*Think Anew, Act Anew* is a volume of exceptional value. It gives readers a chance to "crawl into Lincoln's head," and see how he understood and wrestled with the important political issues of antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction America. Readers of this impressive volume, according to Simpson, might choose to celebrate or to criticize Lincoln's responses, or both, but *Think Anew, Act Anew* provides them with some of the essential material to realize how Lincoln wrestled with the fundamental issues of his time. If his book contributes to a more informed discussion of "Lincoln the man" and the challenges he faced, then Simpson has done his job. In this reviewer's opinion, he has. College students taking U.S. History to 1877 and Civil War and Reconstruction courses, and their instructors, will find it most useful.

Kansas State University

Michael S. Davis

**Louis A. Perez, Jr. *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography*. Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. Pp. xvi, 171. Cloth, \$34.95; Paper, \$16.95.**

*The War of 1898* juxtaposes historical content surrounding the 1898 U.S. war against Spain in Cuba, mistakenly referred to as the Spanish American War, with one hundred years of historiography in a fashion desirable for both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In order to address serious shortcomings in the traditional U.S. account of the Spanish American War story, Louis A. Perez, Jr. incorporates a wide array of primary and secondary sources in each of his five chapters. By carefully weaving each source together, Perez successfully presents a more complete picture of what happened in 1898, as well as a much needed analysis of one hundred years of U.S. historiography.

To begin his book, Perez incorporates into his first chapter, "On Context and Condition," the words of U.S. presidents and politicians from the early part of the nineteenth century to demonstrate U.S. preoccupation with Cuba. While the U.S. preoccupied itself with Cuba, Perez details in chapter two, "Intervention and Intent," how the U.S. responded when Cuba experienced its own preoccupation--ridding the island of Spanish rule. Newspapers, songs, poems, and various secondary interpretations form a persuasive element illustrating the dynamics involved with the U.S. intervention in Cuba. Perez makes it very clear that U.S. officials considered Cuba vital to U.S. interests, and, subsequently, developed the propaganda necessary for American public opinion to support U.S. intervention.

In chapter three, "Meaning of the *Maine*," Perez devotes an entire chapter to the 15 February 1898 explosion of the battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor. This process allows him to highlight one of the specific dynamics of U.S. intervention. Graduate students in particular should find the chapter's combination of primary source

evaluation with various secondary interpretations a model of historical exposition. Following his discussion of the *Maine*, Perez addresses the lacuna of Cuban material in U.S. historiography in chapter four, "Constructing the Cuban Absence." Transcending a simple criticism of U.S. scholars, Perez cites manuscripts and other primary source material to argue persuasively that Cubans played an important role during the U.S. war against Spain.

Perez saves his harshest criticism, however, for his last chapter, "From Memory to Consciousness," as he surveys the place of 1898 in U.S. memory. By analyzing the receptions U.S. historians received over the years upon the publication of their works, Perez convincingly argues that "a vast body of scholarship has been distinguished principally by the persistence of formulations developed at the turn of the century, to which have been added few new insights or significant new information." The failure of U.S. scholars to innovate new approaches or investigate new avenues of research provide all the evidence Perez needs to successfully argue that U.S. scholarship demonstrates a high degree of consensus and conformity. He concludes his text with a well written and descriptive bibliographical essay. Students and teachers alike on any level will find the twenty plus pages a valuable tool that they can refer to time and again. *The War of 1898* belongs in every history classroom on the undergraduate and graduate level and should form a basis of evaluation for U.S. imperialism. Perez provides a great service to historians and deserves a high degree of recognition.

Cabrini College

Michael Edmondson

**Daryl Michael Scott.** *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996.* Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. Pp. xix, 269. Paper, \$14.95; ISBN 0-8078-4635-X.

Societal-generated images and perceptions of a population group invariably exact a price. Even when such images are the handiwork of scholars and experts, a toll results nonetheless, often with social and public policy implications. African-Americans are arguably the most glaring population group example of this scenario. Certainly the scholarly debate continues regarding the historical origins of popular perceptions of and about African-Americans. There is as well an ongoing scholarly debate about the social and public policy ramifications of popular images of African-Americans, both historical and contemporary.

In his recent publication, *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996*, Daryl Scott of Columbia University endeavors to isolate and identify specific bodies of social science scholarship that have given historical currency to notions of pathology in Black life. Indeed, as to his own scholarly intent, Scott leaves little, if any, doubt. It is "to make a contribution to the



study of social science history by combining a study of social science ideas with the making of social policy." Scott provides an engagingly crafted analysis and discussion of the linkage between social science scholarship, Black imagery, and social policy engineering.

In his analysis Scott's thesis is anything but vague and ambiguous. He argues forcefully that social science scholars, theorists, and policy makers of all persuasions, however well intended, have helped to occasion the imagery of the damaged Black psyche. Racial conservatives, neoconservatives, liberals, and radicals have all, Scott insists, shared the view that Blacks were psychologically damaged. Scott believes this to be the case because, as he contends, social scientists create images that mirror in part at least their individual cognitive and motivational biases; hence, the end products generated by social scientists can best be described as "subjective knowledge structures." Such structures, Scott maintains, were abundantly evident across the length and breadth of the nearly 120-year historical time frame he covers, from essentially the fall of Reconstruction to contemporary America.

Certainly such an expansive time frame allows Scott to walk his readers across the historical landscape. In so doing, he is able to dramatize the historical usages of the image of the damaged Black psyche. Racial conservatives initially pioneered the image of the damaged Black psyche in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as part of their justification for segregation and Jim Crow. During the interwar years and until at least 1960, liberals, who had replaced the conservatives as the authorities on African-American life and culture, referenced Black personality damage, albeit from decidedly different premises, to argue for better societal conditions for Blacks. The damaged imagery motif was even invoked to secure a favorable U.S. Supreme Court decision in the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education*. But by the early 1960s a tug-of-war was occurring between liberals and conservatives over the policy implications of Black pathology. Neoconservatives eventually won that encounter and went on to use the presumption of a damaged Black psyche to oppose race-conscious programs and policies on the grounds that American society should be color-blind.

By the late 1960s another group, the radicals as they are dubbed by Scott, had supplanted the reigning neoconservatives as both the principal interpreters of the Black experience and the architects of related social policy. The radicals, many of whom were black professionals who participated in the Civil Rights struggle, "often conceded damage implicitly ... [but] they rarely discussed it at length." Instead they opined that despite the experience of slavery and the travail of Jim Crow, Blacks had developed enduring communities complete with their own cultural ethos, norms, structures, and institutions.

Beginning in the early 1980s and increasing thereafter, the pendulum swung yet again, this time in favor of the neoconservatives who no longer ascribed the origins of Black pathology to slavery and caste. Nor did they continue to blame African-

American culture for perpetuating the imagery of the damaged Black psyche. The principal culprit, the neoconservatives now charged, was the liberal and/or welfare state as best epitomized by the Great Society.

Scott's reading of the historical particulars does not necessarily break new interpretive ground but provides instead one of the few longitudinal assessments of the link between public policy and social science scholarship. On the strength of his own wealth of research, primarily in secondary social science literature, Scott reminds us that the imagery of the damaged Black psyche has been an enduring one. Scott's thesis argument as well as his case for the centrality of social science ideas in public policy formation are compellingly rendered and made all the more plausible by a writing style that is immensely readable and fathomable.

*Contempt and Pity*, because of its extensive inventory of the relevant literature, both printed and manuscript, holds particular pertinency for teachers as a bibliographical reference. Additionally, it has possible classroom application at the undergraduate level in a variety of upper-division courses, including public and social policy, race and race relations, American myth-making and cultural stereotyping, and African-American history. At the graduate level *Contempt and Pity* most assuredly has classroom application for general discussion, review, and debate or possibly as the focus of a carefully posed writing assignment--e.g., position paper. So, depending on the topical and thematic thrust of the particular course, the book has definite classroom application possibilities.

This reviewer recommends *Contempt and Pity* as an informative, engaging, and insightful read for students of African-American history, American civilization, social and public policy formation, and the sociology of ideas. The work should be welcomed by both scholars and interested lay persons who will likely view it as a timely revisit of one of America's most enduringly recurrent racial and sociological images.

Jackson State University

Dernoral Davis

**D. Clayton James and Anne Sharp Wells.** *America and the Great War, 1914-1920.* Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1998. Pp. viii, 120. Paper, \$11.95; ISBN 0-88295-944-1.

In *America and the Great War, 1914-1920*, D. Clayton James and Anne Sharp Wells make a useful contribution to the distinguished American History Series from Harlan Davidson. In the spirit of the other works in the series--such as Paul K. Conkin's *The New Deal* or Arthur Link and Richard L. McCormick's *Progressivism--America and the Great War* offers a comprehensive overview of a pivotal topic in a compact package of 98 pages, well suited for introductory or upper-level

undergraduate courses that require a brief survey of the military and home front history of World War I.

*America and the Great War* packs a tremendous amount of detail into a remarkably tight space. The series editors note that "each of the authors seeks to restore the past as an actual present, to revive it as a living reality," and James and Wells are particularly successful at doing this with respect to the political decision makers and military leaders of the war, along with occasional poignant glimpses into the lives of ordinary Americans both in and out of the military. In four brief chapters, they offer an overview of the conflict, a treatment of the American military experience, a history of the home front, and a description of the war's diplomatic resolution and aftermath.

Military history takes a front seat in this account. In addition to a strong traditional narrative of battles and strategy, the book offers an interesting section on the "Emergence of the Citizen Soldier." The sections on the war itself reflect the military history orientation of the authors (both have taught at the Virginia Military Institute); in fairly uncritical terms they celebrate the Americans' "dash and confidence," "strength and élan," "extraordinary valor," and "daring exploits." The narrative is generally lively and peppered with anecdotes that should hold an undergraduate's attention or provide good material for a lecture.

The chapter on the home front is thorough and vivid, although, surprisingly, the bibliographic essay omits the most useful recent overview of this topic: Neil Wynn's *From Progressivism to Prosperity*. This chapter conscientiously touches on a wide variety of subjects, including the suppression of civil liberties, the conduct of the draft, the employment of women, the expansion of state capacity, the eclipse of progressivism. The positive tone of the chapter title, "Nineteen Months of Progress on the Home Front," encapsulates the authors' view that, despite some black marks on its record, the United States made it through the exigencies of war mobilization "without resorting to a militarist or overly centralized system of controls ... [and] without establishing large permanent central bureaucracies with sweeping powers."

It is inevitable that in a book of this short length, specialists will find gaps or oversimplifications in the discussions of the many topics that can only be treated briefly. This does not negate the utility of having a short, capable synthesis of recent scholarship that provides a solid narrative of the events both at home and overseas in this critical period in American and world history. For a clear account in a short volume that could easily be digested by undergraduates as a weekly reading assignment, *America and the Great War* has few competitors.

Union College

Sarah M. Henry

Patrick J. Maney. *The Roosevelt Presence: The Life and Legacy of FDR*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. Pp. xiv, 255. Paper, \$17.95; ISBN 0-520-21637-7.

I commend Patrick J. Maney's work to the teacher who is looking for a compact yet thorough treatment of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal. *The Roosevelt Presence* is clear, lively, penetrating, and a pleasure to read. It presents a judicious blend of narrative, anecdotes, and analysis, and moves skillfully from personal details to the larger picture and back again. A well-conceived organizational structure and deft transitions--as from the effects of Roosevelt's polio to his resumption of a political career--also show that Maney is a writer of uncommon ability.

Moreover, Maney's book is filled with thought-provoking asides (had the voters foreseen the onset of the Great Depression, they probably would have found Herbert Hoover even more appealing), finely drawn vignettes of key players (Harry Hopkins and Oliver Wendell Holmes), and a recognition that today's readers are far removed from those of Roosevelt's time (identifying Molotov with the "cocktail" that bears his name and noting that the Pan Am Clipper landed on water). More to the point, Maney provides balanced and perceptive analyses of some rather complicated issues, ranging from the nature of Roosevelt's administrative style to the strategic considerations surrounding when and where to open a second front during World War II.

Ten chapters deal with the following topics: Roosevelt's early life, his political career before the governorship, FDR's gubernatorial career and first campaign, the first three years of the New Deal, Roosevelt's "presence" during the same three years, his difficulties during 1937-38, the transition period leading up to Pearl Harbor, the war years (two long chapters), and FDR's reputation and legacies. Two long and meaty chapters on the 1941-45 period convey a sense of slight imbalance that a page count does not bear out, and division into three chapters instead might have avoided this problem.

On the other hand, I wish that Maney had expanded his rather short concluding chapter, for it is full of provocative statements and comparisons with later presidents and presidencies. (The discussion of Roosevelt and Lyndon B. Johnson as legislative leaders is a gem.) Perhaps Maney intended brevity here as a teaching tactic, for this chapter should spark good discussions as students bring the telescope of their more recent perspectives to bear on FDR and the New Deal. There is much more to admire in this book when viewed as a teaching tool. It candidly deals with conflicting evidence (as in the Lucy Mercer affair) and leaves the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. It includes a handy chronology, a good bibliographic essay, and notes that are helpful without being intimidating to the student.

The book is not without a few missteps. The 1924 Democratic National Convention was certainly long, and at times tedious, but I doubt many would call it "dismal." Maney repeats the old canard that Al Smith intended to manage Roosevelt's

governorship from a hotel suite in Albany. He tells us twice that young FDR had been to Europe eight times before he was 15 years old. When the CIO contributed \$800,000 to Roosevelt's campaign in 1936, what did that mean in the context of 1936? (It does not sound like much today!) There is no reference to Roosevelt's failing health in the discussion of the choice of his running mate in 1944, even though FDR's health is the next topic discussed.

More seriously, Maney's evident desire to furnish plausible, middle-of-the-road descriptions and explanations of topics, though very useful for steering students through the shoals of old and ultimately unresolvable arguments, sometimes makes what he has to say a bit bland. The alternative views are there, however, for students who care to pursue them. (A good example is whether or not Roosevelt was an ideologue.) Maney does not always hue to the exact middle of the road, though, and neither is he fully consistent. He states in one instance that Roosevelt had a "coherent philosophy" but in other settings dismisses the same possibility. I found Maney's repeated assertions that Roosevelt was personally religious and interested in providing religious leadership unconvincing, based on my own reading of Roosevelt, but Maney's point of view did make me think about this topic in ways I had not before.

Nor can Maney's book, within its limitations, give the details of legislation or political maneuvering. What *The Roosevelt Presence* does well is present a unified and comprehensive picture of FDR and the New Deal within a manageable framework. Only rarely does Maney make the mistake of referring to details that he was not able to provide. I was very impressed by his grasp of a wide range of subjects, most of which have had a great deal written about them, and by his ability to put into succinct paragraphs the salient points that capture the essence of Roosevelt and the New Deal.

A handsome book with virtually no factual or typographical errors, *The Roosevelt Presence* is recommended wholeheartedly as a text or supplement in survey and more advanced courses in twentieth-century America, the New Deal and World War II, and the presidency.

National Archives & Records Administration

Donn C. Neal

**Waldo E. Martin, Jr.** *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. Pp. xv, 253. Cloth, \$35.00; ISBN 0-312-12811-8. Paper, \$10.95; ISBN 0-312-11152-5.

This is a valuable companion to longer works on the history of the African American experience, especially the less commonly taught but extremely important history of the movement for civil rights in the United States—the struggle for equal access to educational opportunities. The "brief history" is brief enough (40 pages) and the array of documents reproduced here is wide enough to make this reviewer conclude

that Martin has provided a text that students and teachers will consult, and that the general reader will like to keep.

The "brief history" of the *Brown* decision is presented as the "Introduction" to the book. This traces the history from the emergence of Jim Crow in the immediate post-emancipation era to the NAACP's successful legal battles against inequality and discrimination culminating in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954). Martin presents the history as a "legal struggle." It was a struggle that seemed to touch on all aspects of American life, including the legal profession itself. Among the decisions that "nibbled away at *Plessy*" (*Plessy v. Ferguson* [1896]) were *Gaines v. Canada* (1938) and *Sipuel v. Oklahoma State Regents* (1948). According to Martin, these decisions "turned on the issue of the inequality between the reputable all-white state-supported law schools of Missouri and Oklahoma and the makeshift all-black arrangements those states scrambled to provide to avoid admitting blacks to their all-white law schools." These decisions and others like them not only provided the steam for the NAACP legal team to press on, but also prepared the ground for the eventual overturning of *Plessy*. While the *Brown* decision was not inevitable, nor welcome in some quarters, Martin's historical treatment helps to establish the significance of the landmark judgment of 1954.

Martin's treatment of the *Brown* case is very informative. No decision has elicited so much reaction and generated so much debate as *Brown*. Martin cites from the actual decision, comments of contemporaries, and reflections of scholars and observers. He presents these viewpoints, evaluates them, and makes clear what interpretation he favors. He concludes that, on the whole, "*Brown* deserves to be recognized for its enormously liberating impact on America and the world. Post-*Brown* American society was forced to look deep within itself and confront the fundamental problem of white racism and its impact on whites and blacks alike."

Readers will find it interesting that the Black struggle for equal access to education in America is very old indeed. The first document is a 1787 petition for inclusion of Blacks in Boston schools. The petition makes a strong case in the following language: "... we are of the humble opinion that we have the right to enjoy the privileges of free men ... that is of the education of our children ...."

Among the many documents are those associated with the various cases from *Plessy* to *Brown* itself. Readers will find useful the decision of the lower court in *Briggs v. Elliott* (1951), one of the five cases combined and argued in the Supreme Court as *Brown*. It is interesting to read Judge J. Waites Waring's argument that "If segregation is wrong then the place to stop it is in the first grade and not in graduate colleges." Today's undergraduates, especially those born after the 1970s, will find enlightening the appellants' arguments and the Supreme Court's decisions.

Apart from the documents, the book reproduces several photos and political cartoons, and includes a three-page time line, a short bibliography, and a comprehensive index. As a documentary source-book, this is a very successful effort.

Kennesaw State University

Akanmu G. Adebayo

**William Dudley, ed. *The Vietnam War: Opposing Viewpoints*. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, Inc., 1998. Pp. 284. Paper, \$12.96; ISBN 1-56510-700-4.**

Books of "readings" invariably reflect the attitudes of the editors who select and shape the materials to be included in the book. That in itself is a reason to be cautious in using such books as texts, particularly in a course dealing with the complex historical events that make up the American-Vietnamese war of the 1960s and 1970s. William Dudley and his colleagues on the staff of Greenhaven Press have chosen thirty-two selections of varying length, organized them in for-or-against pairings in six chapters, and introduced each chapter with a short preface. Dudley is not a professional historian, but the book, one in a series in the "opposing viewpoints" format, is competently manufactured with an excellent glossary, chronology, and bibliography, the latter including many of the most important books dealing with the Vietnam War.

My problem with this book is its brevity. By comparison, the standard book in this field, edited by Robert J. McMahon, runs 647 pages and includes 105 documents and 36 essays arranged in fifteen chapters. Both Dudley and McMahon have presented their selections accurately, but Dudley excluded material about the way the war was actually fought on both sides. Rather than the chapter on "Protesters and Soldiers," two chapters--one on dissent and its impact and the other on the troops on both sides--would have given a more balanced picture of the conduct of the war. This is particularly relevant because the book is intended for a "young adult audience," one inherently unfamiliar with the issues and the complexities of the Vietnam war.

Because of the format, the brief selections cannot provide sufficient explanations of complicated events. For example, the maneuvering in Geneva that accompanied America's commitment first to France, then to South Vietnam, is touched on in several chapter prefaces and can be found with the help of the index in several viewpoints, but without a substantial knowledge of the period the student will not be able to make the connection or assess importance. Likewise, the important issues of the 1968 Tet offensive and comparative data on the opposing military forces get little attention. Added to this problem is the absence of traditional notes to reveal sources of statistics or information in the chapter and viewpoint prefaces that are presented as facts. Happily, the writing is clear and historically correct in most instances.

With regard to balance, surely the selection "Sending American Troops to Cambodia is Immoral?" is not the only alternative position to the selection "Sending American Troops to Cambodia is Necessary," but the editors suggest as much with their format. Another format problem is that it is not clear where the editorial portion of each viewpoint ends and the selection itself begins because the author of the original document is listed before the editorial remarks. There are some illustrations, short excerpts, and maps that make the book more useful in the classroom. Dudley and his colleagues have retitled selections and have added subtitles to parts of the selections for "clarity."

A knowledgeable teacher could use this book effectively, along with a good text and classroom comment, but I would use the McMahon book of readings along with a short text by Duiker, Hess, or Herring rather than this book. [Robert J. McMahon, ed., *Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam*, 2d ed. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1995, pbk); William J. Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam*, 2d ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996, pbk); Gary R. Hess, *Vietnam and the United States: Origins and Legacy of War* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990, pbk); and George C. Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam: a Different Kind of War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994)].

The First Division Museum at Cantigny

John F. Votaw

James S. Olson and Randy Roberts, eds. *My Lai: A Brief History with Documents*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. Pp. xiv, 222. Cloth, \$35.00; ISBN 0-312-17767-4. Paper, \$7.50; ISBN 0-312-14227-7.

No issue has more divided Americans in recent decades than the Vietnam War, and the painful reminder of the My Lai Massacre stills haunts the nation today. Charlie Company's murder of almost 400 noncombatants shocked a public already polarized by the government's growing credibility gap following the Tet Offensive. When Seymour Hersh's articles first appeared in November 1969, many people refused to believe that American soldiers could perpetrate such a heinous crime on civilians, but others were quick to point out that atrocities routinely had been carried out by both sides in the protracted Southeast Asian war. Ron Haeberle's graphic photographs of the massacre, which were published in *Life* magazine during the following month, further fueled the debate and led to creation of the Peers Commission to conduct a thorough investigation.

This book, a volume in the highly successful Bedford Series in History and Culture, offers the full story of My Lai through a reprinting of key press releases, eyewitness testimonies, and editorial articles. Sixty-eight primary documents describe the background to the massacre, assault on the village, cover-up, testimonies from



Charlie Company, exposure and investigation, public reaction, and culpability for the action. The majority of these selections are drawn from the Peers Commission report and they document the vagueness of military orders for sweeping the village, as well as providing specific accusations against Capt. Ernest Medina and Lt. William Calley. Sworn statements from members of Charlie Company and surviving Vietnamese villagers offer more than a story of frustrated and frightened soldiers overreacting to an ambiguous situation; testimonies reveal organized rapes and calculated murders. Efforts at the highest military levels to conceal the crime tarnished the army's image and made further pursuit of wartime goals even more difficult. The punishment of Lt. Calley exacerbated the debate when critics labeled him a mere scapegoat who was used by superiors to protect their own careers and the reputation of the U.S. Army.

Despite the obvious evil associated with the My Lai Massacre, editors Olson and Roberts do an excellent job of assembling important documents to generate new lines of thoughtful discussion. They especially direct reader attention to issues of culpability and the fundamental question about the "rules of conduct" in a guerrilla war where identities of friends and enemies often blur. The book is user-friendly and is aimed primarily at college students, but it can also be utilized in high school classes and can be read with interest by a broader adult audience. Courses in Recent America, Military History, Ethics, and even American History survey classes serve as a logical forums for adoption. The editors provide a list of twenty-one questions for reader consideration, as well as an authoritative list of suggested readings and a detailed index. Teachers hoping to generate provocative classroom discussions and those who wish to assign short writing assignments on controversial topics should strongly consider this book. It stands as one of the best volumes in the rapidly expanding Bedford Series.

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Michael L. Tate

**William A. Gordon.** *Four Dead in Ohio: Was There a Conspiracy at Kent State?* Laguna Hills, CA: North Ridge Books, 1995. Pp. 301. Paper, \$13.95; ISBN 0-937813-05-2.

The title of William A. Gordon's book about the 1970 tragedy at Kent State University clearly indicates to the reader the author's approach to the topic. Born near Kent, Ohio, Gordon attended Kent State and this obviously sparked his interest in the topic. While it is apparent that he spent much time researching the events of May 1970, his lack of historical expertise presents a clouded view of the tragedy. Gordon's authorship of two Hollywood tour guides are his only other listed credentials. He claims that no history professors at Kent State would even discuss the tragedy with him. As Gordon explains the roadblocks he encountered in writing this book, the

reader only becomes more convinced that the author failed to accurately analyze the evidence and only pursued avenues that would support his belief of a conspiracy. In other words, the lack of evidence to prove the innocence of those involved means that they are all guilty--hardly the conclusion of someone sifting through all the facts and not just the ones that support his hypothesis. Gordon's unclear citations make it even more difficult for readers to follow the trail of evidence.

Having pointed out these major weaknesses of the author's approach, the book has some merit for students because of the primary source material included. The chronology of the "four days in May," the photographs of National Guardsmen and students, interview transcripts, and the annotated bibliography provide a good starting point for those wanting to investigate the Kent State tragedy. It is also a good opportunity to teach students how to detect an author's bias and the limitations of having a closed-minded approach to a topic. The author's writing style, however, is short and choppy, and this limits the analytical aspect of the text. In other words, evidence is presented and the author expects the reader to automatically agree with his assertions without further explanation.

So, while the author presents a good deal of information, the poor analysis limits its usefulness. This book should only be assigned to graduate students and some upper-level undergraduates. Any professor could easily cull some good information from this book for lectures since he or she will have the historical background to adequately evaluate the evidence. In Part One of the text, Gordon discusses the actual events of May 1970, the search for "smoking guns," and asks "Who Burned ROTC?" In Part Two, the author follows up the events with information about the "early cover-up," the "struggle for justice," and reopening the investigation. Gordon then explains his view of the prosecution of the National Guardsmen, the civil trials, and then presents some final thoughts for the reader. The appendices include excerpts from interviews with John Ehrlichman, President Nixon's chief domestic advisor, and Colonel Fassinger, the commander of the National Guard troops at Kent State. Approached with caution, this book can be useful for professors and some of their students who are interested in the Kent State tragedy.

Pittsburg (KS) State University

Kelly A. Woestman

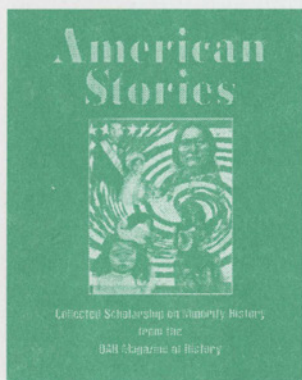
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