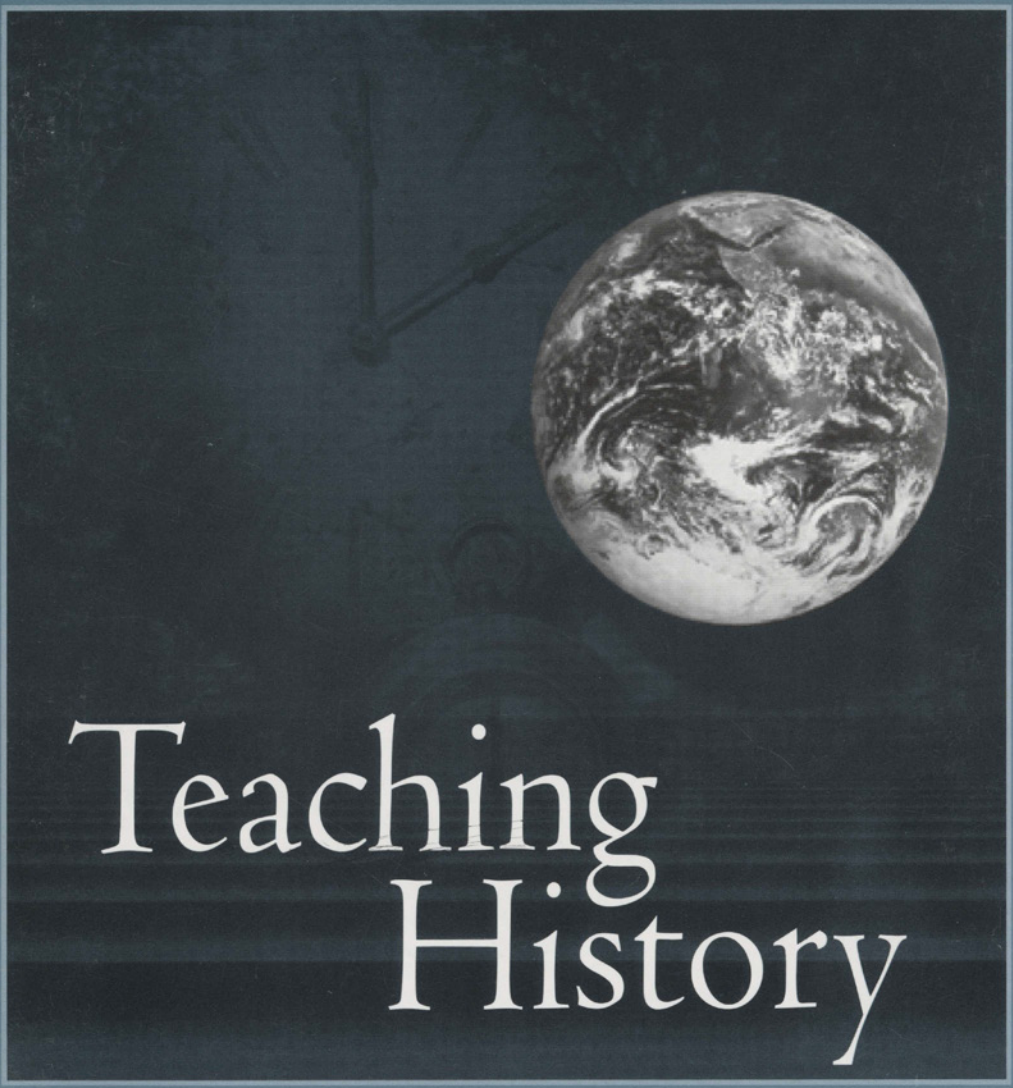

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INTEGRATING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES: A MODEL FROM EARLY AMERICA

James E. McWilliams
Texas State University—San Marcos

It is always a boon to history teachers when one of the profession's most respected scholars publishes a synthetic, concise, and accessible book. It was therefore with much enthusiasm that I assigned Joyce Appleby's recently published *Inheriting the Revolution* in my undergraduate course on early America, and it came as no surprise when this work provoked a lively discussion.[1] Students who were aware of Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation* were intrigued by Appleby's implicit suggestion that America's truly great generation was not comprised of Brokaw's heroes, but rather those men and women born in the years just after the Revolution. Others demurred, questioning the utility of comparing generations at all, and arguing that generations do not exist autonomously, but rather build upon each other, acquiring an identity through the selective adaptation and rejection of the preceding generation's habits and characteristics. Appleby similarly struck a cord with her claim that the founding generation of Americans enjoyed a rare opportunity to set a precedent for American individualism, and that the definition that they forged remains—for better or worse—an integral aspect of American culture today. Perhaps most importantly, *Inheriting the Revolution* evoked excitement from a generally indifferent undergraduate audience because of the primary sources that she used: autobiographies. Her explanation that "almost four hundred men and women in this cohort wrote autobiographies" inspired one student to remark that writing the book "must have been a lot of fun."

As much as I enjoyed this discussion, though, Appleby's book ultimately left me feeling frustrated. Writing the book must have been fun, and as a professional historian, I too have savored the experience of molding the voices of the past to the interpretations of the present. My undergraduate students, however, have not. They were thus only able to appreciate Appleby's research methods from a cold distance, and my traditional approach to the book failed to help close this interpretive gap. In this failure, I know I'm not alone. History teachers are frequently torn between the competing goals of conveying a sound overview of a topic's historiography and establishing a familiarity with the topic's salient primary sources. More often than not, we lack models to help us structure these exercises in a way that allows students to evaluate historical documents against the backdrop of a popular interpretation and historiography. Herein, of course, lies the real thrill of historical investigation—not just grasping what someone else has written or attempting an autonomous interpretation of a discrete primary document, but evaluating that document in the context of what other historians have said about it, and comparing your interpretation to theirs. The

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[1]Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

combination of historiography and primary document analysis adds a rich layer of meaning to the process of historical study that remains well within the grasp of most undergraduates. How, then, can we bring together these goals in a coherent and realistic fashion?

This essay provides one model for doing so. Combining research that I have done on a series of remarkable letters from a Massachusetts family between 1790 and 1810 with the historiography on education and patriarchy from this same time period offers a valuable example of how these disconnected pedagogical imperatives can converge. The letters and the historical issue that I have chosen are not arbitrary. The Cary family's letters are housed in the Massachusetts Historical Society, but they are also published. The closely related topics—the history of education and patriarchy—are scholarly issues with relatively clear historiographical divisions. That is, the issues that historians debate with respect to these topics are not especially abstruse or abstract, but rather concrete and digestible enough for an undergraduate audience. The Cary letters and these two historical themes are also especially useful because they provide applicable examples of how we as teachers might incorporate social history into the undergraduate classroom.

This last goal deserves an added comment. Traditionally, even as the profession as a whole has enthusiastically embraced the methods and perspectives of social history, teachers have continued to rely primarily on political documents to hone student analyses of primary sources. The underlying fear of integrating the social historian's documents, I suspect, has much to do with the suspicion that the particular source might appear disconnected and irrelevant from "conventional" history. The critical student might legitimately wonder why he or she is studying a seemingly odd family letter written in 1796 rather than, say, the Farewell Address. The evaluation of what might appear to be a random historical tidbit, however, takes on added significance when situated in a broadly accepted historical interpretation. This point, in short, can be profoundly reassuring to curious undergraduates: almost any historical document gains legitimacy when it is situated and examined in the proper context. And it's up to the teacher to provide that context.

The classroom material required for the exercise that follows is realistic and manageable. It requires three book chapters totaling about 75 pages, and about 25 letters from the Cary collection.[2] The Cary letters from 1790 to 1810 are published in

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[2]Edmund Morgan, "Parents and Children," *The Puritan Family* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 65–87; Mary Ryan, "Family, Community, and the Frontier Generation," *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790–1865* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 18–52; Appleby, "Enterprise," *Inheriting the Revolution*, 56–89; Cary Family Papers, 1789–1883, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.

The Cary Letters,[3] but history teachers might want to obtain copies of the originals, if possible, in order to give students a more genuine feel for the document, as well as pushing them to examine the handwriting. What follows is a sample lesson plan and suggestions as to how the readings and documents might be interpreted and applied in a two-week section.

Secondary Reading Assignment #1: Edmond Morgan, "Parents and Children," (21 pages)

Morgan's chapter remains the classic articulation of the patriarchal-based, colonial New England family's negotiation of educational instruction. "A parent had to provide for his children," he explains, "because they were unable to provide for themselves." If a father was ever to free himself of such an obligation, "he must see to it that they knew how to earn a living." It was, throughout the colonial period, every father's calling to ensure that "his children were instructed 'in some honest lawful calling, labour or imployment.'" The most common avenue through which a son learned a trade was, as Morgan explains, an apprenticeship. Fathers, however, had to be careful not to push sons into trades for which they were ill suited, for a misguided path not only produced an unhappy master and student, but an angry God. Morgan writes, "It was imperative that a child should undertake no other occupation than that in which he could best serve the Lord." A pupil thus had to avoid working in a line of work "for which God had obviously given him no call." But it was ultimately the father's decision as to what was an appropriate vocation.

As Morgan's ideas bounce around during a classroom discussion, teachers should make sure that they culminate in the conclusion that, throughout the colonial period, the vast majority of New England families followed an educational norm whereby fathers, bolstered by customary, patriarchal authority, made career decision for their sons. And sons, in turn, generally obeyed with minimal resistance.

Secondary Reading Assignment #2: Joyce Appleby's "Enterprise" (33 pages)

The American Revolution established the preconditions for an economic transition away from the small farming systems that prevailed during the colonial period to the increasingly industrialized economy of early America. In this very readable chapter, Appleby explains that "Americans in the early republic experienced the steady reworking of the material environment—acres brought under the plow, steam engines applied in unfamiliar ways, rivers and streams dammed and sluiced to power mills, canals, and roads cut through the wilderness." Widespread economic diversification supported an emerging cultural emphasis on novelty, opportunity, individualism, and mobility. Americans, especially young Americans, started to "look to machines" as they "democratized opportunity" and adopted the attitude of one young man who

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[3]Caroline G. Curtis, *The Cary Letters* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1891).

recalled that "he did not want to work for the farmers, for they worked late and early and their work was too hard for me." A "surprising willingness to venture outside the realm of their experience" underwrote an increasing emphasis on entrepreneurial ventures among young white men in non-agricultural pursuits.

In the class discussion of this chapter, students should be encouraged to appreciate the ways in which commercial expansion opened worlds to which young men previously had never been privy. They should also speculate on the impact that these economic developments might have had on the traditional educational norms described by Morgan.

Primary Reading Assignment #1: The Cary Letters, 1790–1794

In light of these two interpretations, students can now turn to the primary documents. These letters suggest the tensions that arose within families when the traditional patriarchal and educational values forged on the family farm confronted early America's burgeoning economic opportunities. They provide, in other words, a concrete example of how one family experienced and responded to the transition from Morgan's traditional world to Appleby's modernizing one. The following summary of the Cary letters from 1791–1795 describes the nature of this conflict.

On May 31, 1791, eighteen-year old Samuel Cary bade a tearful farewell to his mother, father, sister, and three brothers. The Massachusetts family had spent the previous ten years cultivating sugar on a Grenada plantation and was finally sailing back to Chelsea, the quiet farming town that they had always called home. It was, for Mrs. Sarah Cary, Samuel's mother, a welcome trip. "It is distressing to be obliged to live in a state of separation from our friends," she had written in 1779. Samuel Sr. expressed his own regrets. With palpable sadness, he adhered to Yankee tradition by leaving behind his eldest son and namesake Samuel to manage the plantation. "Perhaps I will never see you again," the frightened Samuel wrote his mother shortly after the family's safe arrival in Massachusetts. Noting that the family had "a great chance for happiness" in Chelsea, he stressed his own hopelessness towards achieving such a question. "Trying as the parting is to me," he explained, "I will subsist on philosophical fortitude."[4]

A month after his family arrived in Boston, Samuel sent them a second letter. Describing the house in Grenada, he complained, "In spite of myself I cannot drive away the melancholy the place inspires me with." He worked in "the little counting room that Marget [his sister] once had," but now "the prospect from the window which I thought would enliven me serves only to inspire me with its own dullness [sic]." Samuel Jr. envied the family's new location ("Oh! the charms of a country life!"), and the absence of his younger siblings especially provoked a nostalgic longing for a lost atmosphere of familial comfort and interaction. "Where is the little group of innocents

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[4]Samuel Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, May 31, 1791.

who once inhabited here?," he exclaimed. Surveying his empty house, he wrote, "The sight of which used to make my heart glow with pleasure is now a lifeless shill."[5]

Samuel begged to come home, but his father demurred, writing, "You cannot know until you are a father the satisfaction your letters afford me, be assured nothing would give me so much pleasure as your setting down near me, but it would be harmful to you and me if anything I should say you should miss an oppty. of engaging in business and afterwards be disappointed in your expectations here." Samuel's mother ostensibly shared her husband's sentiments regarding their son's exile in the West Indies. In a separate letter, she wrote, "I cannot but agree in part with what your father proposes, which is, if anything very highly advantageous offers when you come of age, to remain in the country two or three years longer it should not be rejected, if it will furnish you with sufficient capital." She concluded: "Every good parent is ready to sacrifice his dearest wishes for the advantage of a beloved child." Samuel stayed put.[6]

Writing Assignment #1: "How does the Cary's experience reflect the historical developments described by Morgan and Appleby?" (1 page)

Students must grasp how Samuel Sr.'s insistence that his son remain in Grenada reflected the convergence of a traditional social expectation and a newly emerging economic reality. Fathers in New England, as Morgan shows, had always expected their sons to play an integral role in the family's economic affairs. Sons typically stayed on the family farm well into their twenties in order to earn an inherited plot of their father's land, which fathers usually granted before death. This arrangement rarely prevailed, however, in non-agricultural pursuits like fishing, or merchant or artisan work. Significantly, upon moving to Chelsea, Samuel Sr. did not continue in an agricultural endeavor but, as Appleby suggests so many Americans did, worked as a small time merchant with the profits that Samuel was generating in Grenada. His expectation that his son remain on the plantation in Grenada thus reflected the influence of a traditional colonial arrangement. While this arrangement remained bound together by the time-honored carrot of property inheritance, the major difference now was that father and son were working in different regions of the transatlantic world, thereby missing the essential daily interaction that helped maintain this crucial bond of loyalty. Father's new line of work might have been of a non-agricultural nature in an increasingly opportunistic environment, but father's reasoning went, a son should still work for him. Samuel Sr. thus depended on a traditional sense of paternalism in a newer economic context that simultaneously challenged it. His expectation for his son, only recently so common, suddenly felt anachronistic. Willfully or not, Samuel Sr. was seeking to preserve the best of the old world while moving into the new one.

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[5]Samuel Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, July 30, 1791.

[6]Mrs. Sarah Cary to Samuel Cary, n.d.; Samuel Cary, Sr. to Samuel Cary, n.d.

In light of this dilemma, students might reasonably wonder about the social consequences that might ensue, both for the Carys and the nation as a whole. How long would this precarious arrangement hold?

Secondary Reading Assignment #3: Mary Ryan, "Family, Community, and the Frontier Generation" (39 pages)

In clear, jargon-free prose, Ryan describes the fate of patriarchal authority as economic opportunity undermined traditional social arrangements between 1790 and 1820. Her chapter effectively places the Cary family's dilemma in context. The transition from "a primitive home economy to a specialized trade network"—a transition marked by the decision to "locate offspring in new occupations" and locations—exposed the "corporate patriarchal family" to a whole new set of vulnerabilities. As the "bounds of the family economy" were stretched, the "standard of authority and submission" (perhaps best described as a "benevolent monarchy") diminished noticeably. As fathers lost the land to bequeath to their children, as they experienced less frequently the daily interaction necessary to impart traditional work habits, and as they lost the opportunity to reinforce a clear patriarchal presence, "an awkward period of the family cycle" ensued. Ryan concluded that "the complex economic strategies of the industrial era had also transformed the internal dynamics of family life." As "the internal order and experience of family life had been considerably altered," she continues, "a shift from patriarchal authority to domestic affection" ensued. "The idea of fatherhood itself," in the midst of these changes, "seemed almost to wither away."

Primary Reading Assignment #2: The Cary Letters, 1794-1802

Students should approach this section of letters wondering how the historical developments described by Ryan manifest themselves in the relationship between Samuel Cary and his son. How did the separation of father and son in an increasingly commercialized environment alter their relationship and the patriarchal authority that once defined it? Again, the following summary provides an example of the way in which students can effectively approach these letters.

The precariousness of Samuel Sr.'s paternalistic oversight within this shifting transatlantic context became painfully evident when an explosive and sudden slave insurrection in 1794 shook both Grenada and Samuel Sr.'s economic security. The revolt not only unraveled Samuel Sr.'s customary authority over his plantation but, as we will see, it simultaneously compromised his authority over his wife and children. Samuel, most notably, was now bound to his father with nothing more than loyalty, and he took advantage of the revolt to abandon once and for all the plantation on which he had been more or less forced to oversee under the promise of inheriting it. Instead of heading home to Chelsea, however, he started a merchant business on the island of St. Christopher. Samuel Sr. was stunned. His desperation over his son's defection became palpable as he pondered the fact that he now had to revisit Grenada himself—leaving

behind his family—to deal with the insurrection's ruinous consequences. "The greatest misfortune that could happen," he wrote to his son, "would be a separation from my family." "I do not see," he continued, "how they could go on without me."[7]

With the eldest son off to start his own business and his boys home from school to expand the family's small Chelsea farm, Samuel Sr. packed his bags for Grenada in 1795 as a man whose domestic authority had sustained a considerable blow. The family's traditional patriarchal structure weakened further when Sarah Cary assumed competent control of the Chelsea farm's expansion. "As to the farm," Samuel Sr. wrote from Grenada, "do the best you can." In terms of money management, he advised, "Do as much as you can by shares; the less money you have to pay the better." His agricultural instructions often turned specific. "If the Spring is wet and the crop plentiful the more you have done with the harvest the better," but "if dry, labor will be lower and pay higher, of course." The letter soon evolved into a crash course in farm management. He continued, "The wood, you will, I hope get for salt hay, by giving good loads; and if the hay will not pay ... the horses Brier and Bramble must be sold, and the Spring is the time to sell them; which you should better do at any rate." Samuel's officiousness annoyed Sarah, who appeared to have the situation under her own competent control. In a letter to her son, she confessed her impatience with her husband's mercurial missives. "His mind," she wrote, "is sometimes deprived of all firmness. Now this, now that. He resolves, then re-resolves, still remains undecided, and I dread a state of sickness in his state of mind."[8]

As Samuel Sr.'s world turned upside down, his son's world steadily stabilized. From his trading house in St. Christopher's, Samuel established lucrative contacts with merchants who hailed from Philadelphia to New York. "My emoluments," he wrote his mother, "have far exceeded what my labor has earned." He elaborated that "I have satisfaction also to inform you that this vessell which arrived from M-que [Martinique] has given satisfactory first speculations—which has cleared me three thousand dollars." By 1799, his business had grown to such an extent that his father was asking for any work Samuel could not handle. "I will thank you for any business," he wrote from Boston, "that can be done without an advance, from any quarter, and by that means I may supply the family without calling on Mr. Campbell [for a loan]." When Samuel sent business in his father's direction, however, Samuel Sr. failed to carry it out successfully. A note from a London merchant to Samuel Sr. reveals the nature of his difficulties. "No part of your sugars are yet sold," the London house complained. "When sales take place they will be at very reduced prices indeed." It was a cold reassurance, but the Londoner concluded, "We have every inclination to deal gently

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[7]Samuel Cary to Samuel Cary, Sr., n.d.

[8]Mrs. Sarah Cary to Samuel Cary, November 12, 1799; Samuel Cary, Sr. to Mrs. Sarah Cary, March 15, 1797.

with you." In a move that conveyed the changing economic relationship between father and son, Samuel advanced his father £2000 to cover the debt. His father, realizing the straits into which he had fallen, pleaded with his son, "Tell me what I should do?"[9]

Writing Assignment #2: How does the father-son relationship in the Cary family reflect and complicate Ryan's analysis?

"Tell me what I should do?" Samuel Sr.'s question signaled a power shift without established precedent in the historiography of the New England family. Fathers had always known what to do. But, as Ryan claims, these were changed times. A deep tradition of small-scale, independent farming based primarily on family labor had once perpetuated a generational connection that ensured that sons would remain home and help fathers until the father unilaterally decided when he was ready for independence. To mark that critical transition, as indicated by Morgan, the father would grant his son a plot of land. For the Cary family, however, this conventional strategy disintegrated in a post-revolutionary transatlantic context. The insurrection—which caused the frequent mobility of both Samuel Sr. and his son up and down the East coast, the transference of the family farm's management to Sarah Cary, and Samuel's comparatively strong economic progress—rendered the older patriarchal ideal null and void. In its place, the Carys substituted a newly forged power balance that almost immediately situated Samuel in the patriarchal position once solidly occupied by his father.

The process was subtle and gradual, but Samuel Sr. conceded patriarchal authority to his son as his economic difficulties and patriarchal status diminished. "I am at a loss for words to convey to you my gratitude to Heaven," he wrote, "for raising up in my very dear son a Protector of the Family—as Joseph was separated from his family that he might be the saving of them, so it has pleased Heaven to give you both the inclination and the ability to support me." In a later letter, Samuel clarified that it was in actuality the entire family that depended on his economic support. "You have," he wrote, "not only our sincere thanks for your care of us, but our sincere prayers for your happiness and prosperity." While a father might have said these words to his son throughout the colonial period, he would have done so after having granted him land. Samuel Sr. continued, "On you therefore do my family depend. Under you they must grow up. To you do they look, feel safe ... should anything happen to you, we are undone." The praise poured forth in a non-stop stream of effusion over the next several years. "It is hard to be so long deprived of your company but your being in West Indies has saved the family," Samuel Sr. wrote in March 1802. This letter only echoed the one he had written the previous spring: "to you we are indebted for our place and situation ... we have no wants my dear son." Just in case there was any doubt about who now

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[9]Samuel Cary, Sr. to Samuel Cary, September 30, 1799; John Campbell to Samuel Cary, Sr., April 4, 1799.

called the family's financial shots, Samuel Sr. assured his son that "there is not anything you propose that I shall not agree to." As father and son's material fortunes moved in opposite directions, familial responsibilities slowly shifted to Samuel.[10]

Primary Reading Assignment #3: The Cary Letters, 1798-1807

This final batch of letters allows students to finally grapple with the big question of education. With father's patriarchal authority diminished (as Ryan predicts) by the expansion of opportunity in the rising transatlantic market (as Appleby explains), the traditional educational arrangement endemic to the colonial family (developed by Morgan) crumbled. As they approach this last group of letters students should ask what the Cary family did to compensate for the disintegration of this traditional arrangement.

By the late 1790s, Samuel Sr.'s increasingly dismal economic situation, his lengthy dislocation in Grenada, Sarah's assumption of the family farm's operation, young Samuel's economic success, and his personal desire to keep tabs on his siblings' educational progress made him the most logical choice to assume this role. "If [Lucius] comes," Samuel wrote enthusiastically, "I shall find great use in him."[11] Historically speaking, this arrangement was an ephemeral but necessary solution to a new problem. Throughout the colonial era, as we have seen, the vast majority of New England families worked in environments that reinforced the paternalistic authority that Samuel Sr. had lost in an expanding, proto-industrial economic world. The family farm—the most fundamental unit of social and economic life in early America—supported an internal hierarchy whereby fathers and mothers structured the lives of sons and daughters. Sons' beholden to the logic of inheritance, worked the land to someday own a piece of it. Within this time-honored tradition, education and patriarchal authority thrived in a symbiotic relationship.

The Cary family lost this conventional domestic stability after the demise of the Grenada plantation. Their changed economic circumstances, while unique in their particular details, characterized the lives of many New England families involved in an increasingly industrial economy. The ultimate answer for most families to the educational dilemma engendered by a compromised domestic patriarchy was, as Carl Kaestle has shown, the common school.[12] However, as the common school had yet to emerge, families in the 1790s and early 1800s had no choice but to improvise educational strategies that bridged the gap between an unbound patriarchy and a nascent school system. Samuel, in a sense, became that bridge.

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[10]Samuel Cary, Sr. to Samuel Cary, December 20, 1799; Samuel Cary, Sr. to Samuel Cary, August 8, 1800; Samuel Cary, Sr. to Samuel Cary, March 30, 1802.

[11]Samuel Cary to Samuel Cary, Sr., January 6, 1797.

[12]Carl Kaestle, *The Evolution of the Urban School System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

"I beg to know," he wrote, "if you could spare Lucius—if so send him on ... enclosed is thirty dollars for his expense." Immediately after Samuel Sr. returned from Grenada, Samuel exercised his increasing paternalistic authority to bring his brother Lucius into his St. Christopher merchant house. He assured his parents, "I pay great attention to what you say of his disposition and shall govern myself in my behavior towards him." In case there was any doubt about Samuel's preparedness to educate his brother, he continued, "I have a pretty good idea of the extent of his abilities, and shall have nothing for him to do which he will not in a very short time be able to comprehend." "What I know he shall know," Samuel went on, adding, "as he comes into my hands so much better shall he go out." His parents, after some deliberation, approved. "You tell us ... that you shall not only be able to fix yourself in business, but assist your brother," they claimed. "This is acting the part of a good son and Heaven will doubtless reward you for it."[13]

Life for Lucius under his brother's care began poorly, but his situation slowly improved. "I believe I can now say something," he wrote to his mother, "for the last time I wrote you I was so very homesick that I could scarcely do anything." The days were long and tedious. He explained, "I now get up in the morning, eat my breakfast, and open store. My brother comes down about eleven, and we go about business till one, when we go to dinner and come back at two; at night we shut up store and go home. Now I call this a very lonesome life." In case his mother missed the extent of his misery, he added, "Many a wretched afternoon have I spent since I came here till I almost fretted myself to death." Signs of hope, however, were on the horizon. "I every day receive fresh instances of kindness from my brother," Lucius wrote. "He behaves more like a father than a brother."[14]

Lucius clearly looked up to his brother as if he were in fact a father, thereby assuming the emotional disposition that traditionally bound fathers and sons into successful working relationships. "I would give the world," he explained to his mother, "to see what Sam says about me, so make little extracts from his letters and serve them to me, good or bad." Lucius had trouble with his assignments early on, but eventually he began to develop confidence in his ability to prepare financial reports, correspond with Samuel's clients, and meet detailed orders. His father suggested to Samuel, after Samuel had complained about Lucius's inexperience: "I wish you would let Lucius make a letter-book of a quire or two of paper, give your letters to him to copy and let him send me copies." The advice seemed to work. Soon Samuel Sr. was regularly expressing pleasure in Lucius' progress. "If the whole of Lucius' [report] is his," he wrote after

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[13]Samuel Cary to Samuel Cary, Sr., November 23, 1798; Samuel Cary to Samuel Cary, Jr., January 6, 1797.

[14]Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, February 2, 1797; Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, January 23, 1797; Lucius Cary to Mrs. Samuel Cary, February 8, 1797.

receiving a merchant package from Lucius, "tell him I am exceedingly pleased with it and make no doubt, from his attention, he will be a man of business." By 1803, Lucius's dispatches revealed a comfortable fluency with his work. In a typical dispatch he explained, "The rum is safely landed and according to your desire put into the hands of Mr. Codman ... I thought it most prudent immediately upon my arrival here to write Ross and Co. ... I hope my letter [will] be received in time to save insurance."[15]

In 1799, the brothers moved the business to the island of St. Pierre. "My brother," Lucius reported to his mother, "has been much unsettled these several months, and is not yet quite fixed at St. Pierre." He was prepared to wait patiently, however, as "I shall have many more opportunities making money than I ever should." By the summer after the move to St. Pierre, Lucius was able to report with considerable pride that "my brother has become a [merchant] housekeeper." Much as sons followed their fathers' occupations, Lucius, raised under his brother's apprenticeship, followed Samuel. "I assure you," he wrote his mother, "I know no one single occupation in which I could be more happy or more contented than in my present one." Samuel seemed to think that maybe his brother was warming up to his job too comfortably. He wrote his mother, "One request I wish to make to you ... is that amongst all the good advice you give your son you will not do him such an injury as to deem him to imitate me and make me his model." All other evidence suggests, however, that Lucius was doing just that. The apprenticeship lasted, as was customary, about seven years.[16]

Conclusion

Situating *Inheriting the Revolution* in the context of two other secondary sources and a primary source adds a manageable layer of complexity to the process of historical investigation. The interplay between secondary and primary sources comes alive as students examine how the Cary letters both confirm and challenge established historical interpretations. Rather than remaining once removed from the process of historical interpretation, students are able to participate directly in the same process in which the authors engaged. The entire project of making sense of the past thus becomes more active, creative, and ultimately, I hope, more relevant.

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[15]Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, February 8, 1797; Lucius Cary to Samuel Cary, Sr., September 23, 1803.

[16]Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, December 3, 1799; Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, July 3, 1799; Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, October 4, 1799.

TEACHING CLASS: LABOR AND WORKING-CLASS HISTORY IN THE U.S. SURVEY

Randi Storch
SUNY Cortland

When I think back on my undergraduate courses, I cannot recall one instance when a professor or instructor uttered the words "class conflict," "labor movement," or "union struggle." Growing up in a working-class neighborhood as a daughter of a union electrician, I took it for granted that history in general and United States history in particular were not about me, my family or my neighbors, but instead about people with power who controlled and shaped the important events that occurred in our nation's past.

What a surprise, upon entering graduate school, to find that U.S. labor and working-class history was an actual course being offered. It seemed as though I had entered some parallel universe where one's reality is turned upside down. In this case, working-class people, ideology, politics, and movements were at the center of the historical narrative. Students discussed how differently American history looked when examined from the perspective of working people. From the first day of class, I was hooked.

Through my graduate training, I learned of new trends in history. There was social history, the "new" social history, and the "new" political history. It was not just one course on labor history, but an entire generation of historians trained in the 1960s and 1970s who had conceptualized an entirely different way of doing history.[1] Yet despite all the time passed, books written, songs sung, websites created, and films produced, the predominately working-class students who enter my classes still do not have an inkling that labor and working-class history is a dynamic field of interest and study, and even more sadly, these students lack an understanding of the role that working-class people play in American history.

Perhaps these observations are not surprising. Most young people in college today do not identify with the working class or as working class. My students even feel uncomfortable with the term working class and reveal their biases when they choose to write and speak the term "low class" instead. It is not that they cannot connect to the history of the working class, but they would rather see themselves as upwardly mobile members of an amorphous middle-class. Upon first glance, they cannot see how steel workers' struggles in the 1930s have anything to do with their lives or future in the computer age. In addition, there are few working-class institutions such as unions, clubs, musical groups, or mutual aid societies clamoring for their attention. Shopping at Wal-Mart, for example, is much closer to their experience than picketing at one. And

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[1]For examples of these trends see articles in Eric Foner, *The New American History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

classes in high school and college, for the most part, do not bother to connect workers' struggles of the past with students' concerns of today.

In spite of this situation, maybe even because of it, historians can engage their students through the themes of labor and working-class history. These themes—working-class formation and fragmentation, the changing composition of the U.S. working class, working-class agency and protest, working-class ideologies, working-class organization, the relationship of the working class to the state, and the changing nature of capitalism—encourage students to rethink our country's past from a different vantage point. Seeing U.S. history through the lens of class promotes critical thinking and awareness of alternative voices in our history, including those of race, ethnicity, and gender. Sharing this new perspective with students creates an opportunity to connect the conflicts and drama of the past with major questions of today.

Fortunately the themes and issues related to labor and working class history do not need to be taught exclusively in upper-level and graduate courses of the same name. In fact, there are many ways for historians to incorporate them into history courses covering broader topics. The U.S. survey, for example, comprises the bulk of historians' work at many community and four-year colleges and offers unlimited opportunities to include labor and working-class topics in our nation's narrative. Through songs, novels, the Internet, published primary sources, and films, the themes, issues, and events related to labor and working-class history can be brought easily into any historian's course.[2]

Within the space of a semester, U.S. historians need to do justice somehow not only to the meta-narrative of U.S. history but also the most current research on any of the various events, issues, and problems of the period. At the same time, the survey is usually full of first-year college students with various backgrounds, majors, experiences, and interests. With such a wide scope of material to cover and a generalist audience to whom to appeal, topics from labor and working-class history punctuated throughout the semester can help show how dynamic the discipline of history truly is. What follows are just a few examples of topics and methods that suggest ways to infuse labor and working-class history throughout the second half of the U.S. survey.

Whether the semester begins at 1865 or 1877, Reconstruction can set up some of the initial tension of the course. In addition to discussing Reconstruction in a general way as a political battle between advocates of state's rights versus federal power, historians can focus on the question of work that lays at the heart of the conflict between North and South. One way to do this is to have students read from one state's

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[2]Tom Zaniello, *Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds, and Riffraff: An Organized Guide to Films About Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996) is a rich source on film. There are several collections that deal with labor and working class music, such as Philip Foner, *Labor Songs of the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), and *Songs of the Workers: To Fan the Flames of Discontent* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1973).

black codes (Mississippi's codes work quite well in this case) and discuss what white southerners wanted freedom to look like. Students can also look at petitions from freed blacks for land and dignity. Ask students to consider what blacks wanted freedom to mean. This exercise introduces work as a contested ground. How would it be done, who would control it, and what it would mean were all up for grabs in the 1860s and 70s. Once students understand what was at stake, they are more engaged with the outcome and vocal with their own views concerning state's rights.[3]

As the nation's concerns moved from the struggle in the South to the industrial project of the North, machinery began to encroach on those who manufactured goods by hand. One way to introduce this conflict is to play songs from the period dealing with this tension. One that has worked well in my classes is "The Legend of John Henry."[4] Created in the 1870s, "The Legend of John Henry" describes the momentous battle between John Henry, an African-American "steel drivin' man," and a new machine designed to do the same job. John Henry ultimately defeats the machine, but the struggle kills him. The song allows for a discussion of the meaning of new technology to working people (then and today), of the work ethic of African Americans in relation to racist views at the time, and of the importance of oral tradition in African American and labor history.[5]

In addition to primary documents and songs, historical novels can allow historians to explore major topics in American history while dealing with questions of class. Novels such as Anzia Yezierska's *Bread Givers*, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*,

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[3]Black codes can be found at a number of websites. A handy one is *Mississippi Black Codes*, <http://www.toptags.com/aama/docs/bcodes.htm> (January 3, 2004). Louisiana's can be located at *Louisiana Black Codes*, <http://www.toptags.com/aama/docs/bcodesla.htm> (January 3, 2004). Documents written by freed blacks are harder to find, but one example is "An address to the Loyal Citizens and Congress of the United States of America Adopted by a Convention of Negroes Held in Alexandria Virginia from August 2 to 5 1865," <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa?D/1851-1875/slavery/addres.htm> (January 4, 2004). Another example is "'We Demand Land': Petition by Southern Freemen, 1865," printed in Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Workers* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1991), 137–139.

[4]There are many different versions available. Two good ones are Woody Guthrie's from *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs* (Smithsonian Folkways, recorded 1940, released 1962), and Johnny Cash, *Blood, Sweat and Tears* (Columbia/Legacy, 1995).

[5]Other songs about the economic and social changes of the period can be found in Foner's, *Labor Songs of the Nineteenth Century*. A good exercise involves having students examine the two different renditions of "America" included in the volume. One was written when the Knights of Labor were a strong voice among workers, and one was sung during the period of the American Federation of Labor's founding (151 and 183, respectively). They both speak to changes in the work process, politics, and economics of the periods. The collection also includes songs written about the Homestead and Pullman strikes and reproduces the sheet music and lyrics to I.G. Blanchard's famous song, "Eight Hours," (224) that clearly states why workers in the late nineteenth century wanted their workday shortened.

and Thomas Bell's *Out of This Furnace* touch on themes emphasized by labor and working-class historians.[6] Students enjoy following, for example, Yezierska's main character out of a Jewish working-class ghetto to college where she struggles to fit in and succeed. A central theme of the book is the tension between Old World relationships and values and New World ones. One question my students enjoy debating is whether one can ever completely leave their past behind them as they move through different stages of their lives. What parts will they take with them?

This line of questioning is particularly poignant for students experiencing a number of social transitions during their first year of college. Although many of them have some general thoughts about their transition, discussion of this novel encourages them to consider differences that increasingly exist between themselves and the friends and family they have left home working at local malls and groceries, for example. While these students might have had a hard time fitting into an academic climate that they do not fully understand, they know that they are different from those they left at home. Books such as this one force students to vocalize these transitions and identify the different cultural expectations that exist in the various worlds they occupy while better understanding the challenges faced by certain groups of immigrants and working-class women as they struggled to become professionals at the turn of the century. Class differences naturally shape this discussion of immigration, mobility, values, and gender expectation.

Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* focuses more on working-class struggle than mobility, but does an equally good job in getting students to think about immigration, capitalism, socialism, and reform. Set in Chicago's immigrant neighborhood known as the Back of the Yards, *The Jungle* beckons students to look for representations of this neighborhood on the web.[7] Historic images of the neighborhood encourage students to think about places where Sinclair was exaggerating and to realize descriptions that were historically accurate. The University of Illinois edition of this book, with an introduction by James R. Barrett, does an excellent job of outlining these points of convergence and divergence.

This novel also works well in raising the distinction between revolution and reform. Sinclair hoped his expose of capitalist excess would turn workers toward socialism. Readers, however, could not get past his vivid descriptions of unsanitary workplace conditions. The result, the Meat Inspection Act of 1906, was championed as a victory of progressive reform, but in many ways it was a defeat for Sinclair and his

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[6]Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers: A Struggle Between a Father of the Old World and a Daughter of the New* (New York: Persea Books, 1975); Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, with an introduction by James R. Barrett (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Thomas Bell, *Out of This Furnace* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991).

[7]A good example is located on the Chicago Historical Society's web page, <http://www.chicagohs.org/history/stock/html> (January 3, 2004).

revolutionary ambition. Students can discuss ways that they think the novel was a success and failure. They can also read the Socialist Party platform of 1912 as a way to understand the motivations of Sinclair and the desires of the Socialist Party and as a comparison to the way political issues are framed today. How much of the Socialists' 1912 agenda is commonplace today? How much of it is still relevant or radical and why?[8]

Thomas Bell's *Out of This Furnace* traces three generations of a working-class Slovak immigrant family in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, from the late nineteenth century through the formation of the CIO in the mid 1930s. The structure of the novel lends itself to comparison and contrast across the generations. Students can follow questions relating to family relationships, work life, politics, class identity, gender roles, and union efforts across time. Part three of the book, named after its main character Dobie, is particularly good on detailing workers' frustrations with the American Federation of Labor, company unions, and employer harassment. By contrasting Dobie's struggle to bring the CIO to steel with his father's inability to effect change during the early 1900s and his grandfather's lack of interest in working people's politics in the late nineteenth century, students can see clearly how the historical context shapes workers' ability and desire to organize and act. With such insights, students can begin to think critically about the weak position of the labor movement today and examine the obstacles that exist, such as laws, technology, union structures, and demographics that create challenges to it once again becoming a powerful force in the nation.[9]

Labor and working-class history can also inform teaching on the Progressive era when middle-class reformers often take center stage. One good exercise incorporates primary sources put on the web by researchers at SUNY Binghamton. These sources are organized by topic, many of which deal directly with questions of class, and include an introduction and bibliography[10] One project asks students to analyze the relationship between workers and their wealthy allies during the New York City shirtwaist strike of 1909-1910 and to determine the extent to which the perceived threat of socialism shaped the relationship. If there is no time for students to complete the entire project, they can read perspectives on the strike from various newspapers on-line and discuss the class bias of the different publications. They can also use the strike to discuss an example of cross-class alliance and its limits. Another assignment that will help connect their concerns with those of the strikers from the period is to have them

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[8]A general web search will turn up a copy of this platform. One example is, "Socialist Party Platform, 1912," <http://www.nv.cc.va.us/home/nvsageh/Hist122/Part2/SOCP1912.HTM> (January 3, 2004).

[9]A good short reading to get students thinking about labor relations today is Thomas Geoghegan's "No Love Lost for Labor," *The Nation*, 271 (October 9, 2000): 35–36.

[10]*Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1775-2000*, <http://womhist.Binghamton.edu> (January 3, 2004).

research a more recent industrial conflict, such as the Pacific Maritime Association's lockout of unionized dock workers on the West coast, or a strike, such as that in 1997 of UPS workers, and discuss how it was reported in different kinds of publications. They can then discuss what is similar and different about labor reporting today.[11]

Projects, such as the one on the shirtwaist strike, touch on issues of the Progressive era as well as on those of labor and working-class history. They allow students to see a major event, in this case a strike of more than 20,000 shirtwaist workers, from various perspectives. It also allows them to begin to think like historians by having them interpret documents and question the ways that narratives are constructed. By encouraging them to look for current reports of labor conflicts, they begin to realize that these struggles for coverage and spin are not simply historical but inform politics today.

The 1930s provide ample opportunity to discuss labor and the working-class whether through New Deal programs, the newly created Congress of Industrial Organizations, or communist-inspired unemployment demonstrations. As a backdrop to such events and organizations, *The Grapes of Wrath* appeals to students.[12] The film touches on the themes of farmers' suffering and oppression, a hollow American dream, social and economic justice, the centrality of family and the strength of women, and the persistence of solidarity in the face of adversity. The film helps them visualize the plight of Dust Bowl farmers struggling to maintain their dignity as landlords and bankers force them from their homes and livelihoods into an uncertain future. It also allows students to discuss the nature of the public versus private migrant camps as they consider the role of the New Deal and the federal government in the lives of working people. Students can also use examples from the film to debunk the myth that in America hard work always leads to success, and they can consider why Tom Joad posed such a threat to land owners. A related assignment might be to have students consider the plight of migrant workers today. What has changed and what remains the same?[13]

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[11] *Labor Notes* is a union and worker friendly monthly publication out of Detroit, Michigan, that would provide a counter point to the *Wall Street Journal*, *US News and World Report*, and the *New York Times*, for example.

[12] John Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath* (New York: Viking Press, 1967), and John Ford, *The Grapes of Wrath*, Twentieth Century Fox, 129 minutes, video, 1940. This video is widely available for rental and Amazon.com lists it for purchase.

[13] New Day Films, 22-D Hollywood Avenue, Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423, distributes Heather Courtney's *Los Trabajadores/The Workers* on contemporary migrant workers. The United Farm Workers web page at <http://www.ufw.org> has links to current pieces of legislation being considered related to migrant workers, to reports on migrant work, and to the United Farm Workers' history and press releases.

An alternative depression-era film that raises themes of labor and working-class history is *Union Maids*.[14] The film intersperses film clips and video through talking-head style commentary of three CIO union activists, Stella Nowicki, Kate Hyndman, and Sylvia Woods. All of these women were communists, but there is only one veiled reference to Hyndman's party involvement in a newspaper headline shown briefly. Students can discuss differences between the way that society viewed women in general in the 1930s and the activities open to women in the Communist party and the CIO. They can explain the origins of these women's working-class radicalism and they can decipher between race, gender, and class as distinct and interrelated experiences and identities. Finally, they can begin to question why a film directed by those of the New Left would be interested in disguising the political loyalties of these Old Left women.

In the post-1945 section of the U.S. survey, primary source analysis and films can continue to bring labor and working-class issues and themes to students. One way to accomplish this is to incorporate the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act into a more general discussion of the period of McCarthyism. Looking at the actual documents, students can compare the Wagner Act of the New Deal to the provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act.[15] They will see the federal government turn around on its labor policy and can question why labor leaders had to sign non-communist affidavits if they wanted their unions protected by federal machinery. They can also question the motivations of this provision and speculate on its effects.

For a later period, *Roger and Me*, a 1989 documentary film that depicts the closing of General Motor's auto plants in Flint, Michigan, opens students' eyes to the local effects of globalization and to class differences between GM's executives and its workers.[16] The film also does a great job in raising the question of corporate responsibility to America and Americans. Many students can relate to the effects of corporate closings. In a town such as Cortland, New York, where I teach, the urban mythology is that unions were responsible for the closing of the four or five major plants in town. *Roger and Me* presents a very different picture and pushes students to think critically about the meaning of globalization.

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[14]Julia Reichert, Jim Klein, and Miles Mogulesco, *Union Maids*, New Day Films, 48 minutes, 1976. Other examples of films that look at women and labor in the 1930s and 1940s include Connie Field's *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, Direct Cinema Limited, P.O. Box 10003, Santa Monica, CA 90410, 1987, about women and work during World War II, and Lorraine Gray's *With Babies and Banners*, New Day Films, 45 minutes, about women's support during the 1937 GM sit-down strike in Flint, Michigan.

[15]These documents can be found with a general on-line search. Examples include the "Wagner Act" and "National Labor Relations Act," <http://home.earthlink.net/~local 1613/nlra.html>, and "Taft Hartley," <http://www.multied.com/documents/tafthartley.html> (both January 3, 2004).

[16]Michael Moore, *Roger and Me*, Warner Home Video, 1800-700-888, 87 minutes, 1989, is also widely available in rental stores.

Outside of the factory, Barbara Ehrenrich's book, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*—or her shorter *Harper's* article by the same name— provides wonderful snapshots on the difficulties of living in modern America making minimum wage in one of our many service industries.[17] Students can relate to the degrading circumstances working people are put in and can examine modern discourse on welfare to work programs in a new light. Through their own experiences working these kinds of jobs, students can make comparisons to Ehrenreich's work and conclusions about the feasibility of welfare reform.

Each period of U.S. history provides an opportunity to think about the history of working people. At the same time, labor and working-class history offers history courses a number of tools, sources, and questions to enhance our general survey courses and to provoke discussion and debate among our students. From the perspective of working people, generalizations break down and abstract historical problems become infused with drama. The potential to promote critical thinking among our students is endless. Most rewarding, however, is students' engagement with today's problems and thoughtfulness about the world that awaits them after college. In some ways, these are the best experiences an historian can offer.

Other Resources

Selected Recent Overviews of the Field of Labor History

Eric Arneson, Julie Green, and Bruce Laurie, eds., *Labor Histories: Class, Politics, and the Working-Class Experience* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

Steve Babson, *The Unfinished Struggle: Turning Points in American Labor, 1877-Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).

Melvyn Dubofsky, *Hard Work: The Making of Labor History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

Leon Fink, ed., *In Search of the Working Class: Essays in American Labor History and Political Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

Julie Greene, "Working Gender: Recent Scholarship in American Labor History," *Frontiers*, 14, no. 3 (1994): 181–190.

Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Pricilla Murolo, *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend: A Short Illustrated History of Labor in the United States* (New York: New York Press, 2001).

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[17]Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002), and "Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America," *Harper's* (January 1999): 37–53.

Selected Web Resources

Illinois Labor History Society Web Page
http://www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs
Voices from the Dust Bowl
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/afctshtm/tshome.html
American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1940
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html
America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photos from the FSA-OWI, 1935–1945
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsowhome.html
America at Work, America at Leisure: Motion Pictures from 1894–1915
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awlhtml/awlhome.html
The Haymarket Affair Digital Collection
http://www.chicagohs.org/hadc/
Documenting the American South
http://docsouth.unc.edu/
Studs Terkel: Conversation with America
http://studsterkel.org
Global Communities: Chicago's Immigrants and Refugees
http://www.chicagohistory.org/immigration.html
American Social History Project
http://www.ashp.cuny.edu/

AFRICA IN THE WORLD:
LESSONS FROM AFRICAN HISTORY FOR WORLD HISTORY

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African history is less consistently integrated into world history than other geographical regions. World history textbooks discuss African history more now than they did a decade ago, but Africa is usually only treated in any significant detail after 1000 CE (ancient Egypt being the exception).[1] This is due in part, at least, to the fact that African historians have generally not situated their works and discoveries within a wider frame of world historical developments. Scholars of other regions, therefore, continue to assume that throughout its history Africa was isolated and perpetually lagging behind, thus mimicking historical precedents elsewhere.[2] Achille Mbembe laments Africa's academic isolation, contending that:

> To a very large extent, the confinement of Africa to area studies and the inability of African criticism to think in terms of the "world" go together. These two factors are crucial in explaining why the study of Africa has had such a feeble impact on the life of the various disciplines in particular, and on social theory in general.[3]

African history, indeed, can and should have a stronger impact on our study of history and models of historical processes because it was a place of significant historical developments and offers alternatives to the accepted narrative of the development of civilizations. In short, thorough incorporation of African history into world history changes how we see the world.

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[1]Elisabeth Gaynor Ellis and Anthony Esler, *Prentice Hall World History: Connections to Today* (Teachers Edition) (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997) covers little before 1500 with a focus on states and trade; Jiu-Hwa L. Upshur et al., *World History: Combined Edition* (St. Paul: West Publishing Company, 1991) covers Bantu migrations in early African history. Mounir A. Farah and Andrea Berens Karls, *World History: The Human Experience* (Teachers Wraparound Edition) (New York: McGraw Hill, 2001) also briefly covers Bantu migrations, though most attention is given to Nile Valley and West African states. Lanny B. Fields, Russell J. Barber, and Cheryl A. Riggs, *The Global Past: Volume One, Prehistory to 1500* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1998) does briefly cover earlier developments, including Jenne-jeno. Yet, much more can be done to effectively use this information to inform the narratives and methodologies employed in world history.

[2]For example, Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995) and Robert July, *A History of the African People* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1998). Christopher Ehret's African history textbook is an important exception. Christopher Ehret, *The Civilization of Africa: A History to 1800* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002).

[3]Achille Mbembe, "Ways of Seeing: Beyond the New Nativism. Introduction," *African Studies Review*, 44/2 (2001):4.

African history has contributions to make both in terms of methodology and content. African historians have pioneered methods of uncovering history beyond the use of written sources. As Steven Feierman argued, African historians' use of archaeology, oral traditions (narratives about events that occurred before the orator's lifetime), oral history (accounts from an individual's personal experience), and historical linguistics has generated a wealth of knowledge about African history and other regions as well. These forms of research have allowed historians to learn about hitherto ignored social groups (women and children), time periods (such as the Middle Ages), and aspects of history (such as the culture of North American slaves).[4] The content of African history that has emerged, largely through the use of these sources, differs significantly from that in other regions of the world and challenges us to re-think some long-held assumptions and theories of historical development, such as the belief that when one ethnic group enters the territory of another, this often results in the former violently displacing the latter due to superior technology (if not intellect).

There is much to be gained, then, by trying to examine world historical events in light of African history. In this essay, I present two long-term historical processes of significance in African history before 1000 CE and explore their connections to history in other parts of the world and how they illuminate world history generally.

The first example addresses issues of urbanization, stateless societies, and trade, drawing on the recent work of archaeologists Susan and Roderick McIntosh in the Niger River delta in central Mali. Prior to their work and still persisting in most textbooks of African history, West African history centers on the savanna states of Ghana, Mali, Songhai, and Kanem-Bornu.[5] Similarly, world history texts tend to focus on these West African states in discussions of African history before 1500.[6]

There are several reasons for this focus. One is an attempt by African historians, mostly trained in the West, to demonstrate the value and validity of African history with reference to the West and its history, emphasizing the "universal" process of political hierarchy prominent in the early history of Mesopotamia and Egypt, for example. Moreover, these states were mentioned in written documents, while earlier developments were not. In the standard reconstruction of West African history, trade to the north across the desert was believed to have fueled the growth of these states, generating much of their revenue. The camel (introduced to North Africa in the first

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[4]Steve Feierman, "African Histories and the Dissolution of World History" in *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities*, ed. Robert H. Bates, V.Y. Mudimbe, and Jean O'Barr (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 167, 182–184.

[5]Shillington and July.

[6]Richard W. Bulliet et al., *The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History, Vol. B 1200-1870* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997), 425–436. Also see the textbooks mentioned in footnote two.

centuries CE) and Islamic traders (from the seventh century CE on) were seen as the catalysts for this long-distance trade. In this view, external agents drove state growth.[7]

Emphasizing the various ways in which technology, disease, and foodstuffs, for example, have crossed cultural boundaries has become the staple of world history. In this way, the coming of the camel and Islam are indicators of Africa's link to the rest of the world. While such cross-cultural connections are essential for demonstrating that Africa for most of its history was not isolated from the rest of the world, the danger, as Jerry Bentley argues, is that this emphasis on cultural diffusion masks internal developments and innovations.[8]

In this case, cultural diffusion has concealed internal developments south of the savanna states in West Africa. The McIntoshes have focused on an area south of the savanna states known as the Inner Niger Delta (IND), particularly a site known as Jenne-jeno, and have made several significant discoveries. The first is that urbanization and trade long predated the rise of Ghana in the late first millennium CE. Centered on Jenne-jeno, they argue, was "an earlier, more completely African phase of urbanization."[9] Jenne-jeno existed from about 300 BCE on and reached its height in the latter part of the first millennium CE. At its height, Jenne-jeno, with its accompanying sixty-nine settlements, boasted a population of perhaps as many as 42,000 people,[10] and was drawn together by "a formal, intra-regional economic network"[11] with Jenne-jeno being the largest town and the most significant trading center:

> Jenne-jeno's location at the southwestern extreme of the navigable and agriculturally productive inland delta promoted its growth as a trade center where Saharan commodities like copper and salt could be traded for dried fish, fish oil and rice produced in the inland delta, and where savanna products, including iron from the Benedougou, could be obtained with a

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[7]Susan K. McIntosh and Roderick J. McIntosh, "Cities without citadels: understanding urban origins along the middle Niger," in *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, ed. Thurstan Shaw, Paul Sinclair, Bassey Andah, and Alex Okpoko (London: Routledge, 1992), 624.

[8]Jerry Bentley, *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 19.

[9]McIntosh and McIntosh, "Cities without citadels," 624.

[10]Roderick J. McIntosh, *The Peoples of the Middle Niger* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 200.

[11]McIntosh and McIntosh, "Cities without citadels," 638.

minimum of overland travel in exchange for salt, copper, rice, fish and other staples.[12]

The site is comprised of "many separate habitation mounds in close proximity," each exhibiting an economic specialization.[13] For example, archaeology reveals that two sites near Jenne relied on rice and fonio (a type of grain) production in one case and millet production in another.[14] In other areas, sites indicate that inhabitants specialized in such occupations as cattle-keeping, iron smelting, weaving, and trading. This strategy probably was adapted in order to cope with environmental unpredictability. Rather than everyone in the area participating in the same generalized production for economic security, each group chose a particular economic activity often within a particular environmental niche but relied on the security of regional trade.[15] More distant trade would also have been crucial to dwellers of the IND, lacking as they were stone, minerals, salt, and fuel. Riverine trade supplied these necessities.[16] Local trade and indigenous economic specialization led to urbanization at Jenne-jeno. Indigenous regional trade systems, already present in Africa from early in the first millennium, such as that at Jenne-jeno, facilitated the growth of long-distance trade after the eighth and ninth centuries CE.

Not only does this evidence suggest significant urban development prior to the arrival of Muslim traders and long-distance trade, but it also encourages us to think about political and economic relationships in a different way, outside of the Western norm of state development. It is quite likely that Jenne never came to dominate the region politically as one might expect of its leading economic center. Susan McIntosh claims that their work "challenges deeply embedded evolutionary notions of complexity as differentiation by political hierarchization."[17] Indeed, the concept of heterarchy

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[12]Ibid., 640.

[13]Roderick J. McIntosh, "Early Urban Clusters in China and Africa: The Arbitration of Social Ambiguity," *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 18 (1991): 204.

[14]R.J. McIntosh, *People of the Middle Niger*, 165.

[15]Ibid., 175, 207.

[16]Ibid., 213.

[17]Susan Keech McIntosh, "Pathways to Complexity: an African perspective," in *Beyond Chiefdoms: Pathways to Complexity in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 4, 8.

describes the political relationships that have endured in the IND area over millennia.[18] Heterarchy refers to a complex political entity in which elements are "unranked vertically but may be highly stratified horizontally."[19]

Archaeological work at Jenne-jeno suggests that authority was distributed among a variety of agencies that cut across society and bound together various ethnic groups, subsistence producers, artisans, and merchants.[20] Roderick McIntosh suggests that most likely spatial segregation of the settlements coincided with craft specialization, as we have seen, or ethnicity, and was marked by various symbols such as dress, hairstyles, and scarification that preserved separate identities.[21] While Jenne-jeno was a large settlement with residents engaged in a variety of activities, the cluster of settlements around Jenne-jeno was a network of specialized production. For these urban settlements, authority would have been based on networks of reciprocity rather than persuasion. Communal memories of "extraordinary sacrifice by one group for another under conditions of ecological stress" or the "privileges of 'first arrivals'" integrated disparate communities and encouraged cooperation.[22] Even though some specializations, such as iron-workers, oral keepers of traditions (known as *griots*), and leather workers, would have accorded more authority than others due to their knowledge of the occult on which their work was based, even this authority was checked by competition among various occult trades and by trade among competing factions.[23] Social organizations also served as political associations representing various constituencies within the larger urban community. "Kinship, age sets, secret societies, cult groups, tile societies, territorial and craft associations, and power associations" had competing interests and checked the "tendency of charismatic individuals to monopolize or reinvent authority." The current archaeological evidence suggests that before the second millennium CE both economic and political activity in the Jenne-jeno region relied on "diffused authority" rather than concentrated authority.[24]

Intensive archaeological research in the interior of West Africa has generated enough information by now to rewrite West African history in the first millennium CE,

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[18]R.J. McIntosh, *The Peoples of the Middle Niger*, viii-xix.

[19]Ibid., 304.

[20]Ibid., 8–10.

[21]R.J. McIntosh, "Early Urban," 206, 209.

[22]Ibid., 175.

[23]Ibid., 176–181.

[24]Ibid., 229.

moving from a picture of state development driven by trade and Islam to one in which local trade among specialized producers and non-hierarchical regional urbanism are featured. Moreover, the archaeological evidence in the larger Inner Niger Delta indicates that our earlier reliance on a few written sources for the history of the Sudan has misled us. Until recently, attention focused on developments in the early state of Ghana (at its height in the eleventh century CE) with a capital at Kumbi-Saleh, as recorded by Muslim scholars such as the geographer al-Bakri.[25] Yet, to the south, there were dense population clusters and evidence of societies linked to the trans-Saharan trade. Jan Vansina contends, "It is now obvious that the vast IND was the demographic core and the economic dynamo of the whole region."[26]

In world history courses, the IND's form of economic development could be fruitfully contrasted with early developments in Egypt, Meso-America, India, China, and Mesopotamia in which political hierarchy is evident. However, more than providing a contrast with well-known early societies, this model of heterarchy is likely to be found in other regions. Susan McIntosh contends that the maintenance of multiple power relationships "may tend to emerge among food-producing peoples where agricultural land is relatively abundant, a condition that persists in large parts of sub-Saharan Africa," and was certainly the case for much of the continent in earlier times.[27] It is quite possible, she continues, that these various forms of social organization used to be much more widespread in the world. In fact, Roderick McIntosh argues that from the third millennium to the first millennium BCE in China, early urbanization was a process of "regional transformation by which a rural landscape of undifferentiated villages and hamlets with homogeneous populations transforms into a settlement network" with population centers to which specialists were drawn.[28]

Finally, Jenne-jeno's form of urbanization exemplifies the challenge that Africa presents to widely-held concepts, such as civilization, that are inherent in the Western-born discipline of history. Often historians reduce civilization to a checklist, including the presence of social, economic, and political stratification, intensive agricultural production, long-distance trade, and a form of writing, among other attributes. It is all too easy then for the components of civilization to become a formula devoid of a particular historical context. As we have seen, Jenne-jeno had dense population settlements that did not lead to the development of political or economic hierarchy and

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[25]Shillington, 84–85.

[26]Jan Vansina, "Historians, Are Archaeologists your Siblings?" *History in Africa*, 22 (1995): 369–408.

[27]Susan K. McIntosh, "Modeling political organization in large-scale settlement clusters: a case study from the Inland Niger Delta" in *Beyond Chiefdoms: Pathways to Complexity in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 22.

[28]R.J. McIntosh, "Early Urban," 208.

possessed elaborate local trade networks without any system of writing. Similarly, Igbo (in modern-day southern Nigeria) until recently worked the land with hoes, were engaged in local and, by the nineteenth century, international, trade, all without political hierarchy or writing.[29] Moreover, by examining Jenne-jeno as a regional area, its urbanism and development are more clearly explained. Similar regional research in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and northern China has demonstrated the unique circumstances of development in each case instead of trying to meet the civilization formula. These examples invite us to "transcend entrenched traditional interpretations" of the fundamental processes of human history.[30]

Furthermore, early East African history challenges other traditional historical interpretations. Much of this region's history of the first millennium CE also concerns societies without political hierarchy, but another set of developments merit our attention. Two thousand years ago, speakers of the four main continental language phyla (Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, Afrasan, and Khoisan) populated the interior of Eastern Africa (including modern-day Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, and Tanzania), making it by far the most linguistically diverse area on the continent. In contrast to this early diversity, from 1500 CE on, Bantu speakers (belonging to the larger Niger-Congo language phylum) and Nilotic speakers (belonging in the larger Nilo-Saharan language phylum) became dominant. Reconstructing the events of the intervening 1500 years has been challenging.

The region is totally devoid of written evidence before the mid-1800s. Scholars in the past characterized this lacuna as a serious problem that could only be partially overcome with the use of other evidence.[31] Yet, as is often the case, exploring non-traditional evidence has yielded unforeseen rewards. Talented historians have mastered the techniques of historical linguistics and learned to interpret archaeological reports in order to write a history of the East African interior. Linguistics has been especially valuable. Borrowed words signal the meeting of distinct peoples and one of them borrowing activities, ideas, or beliefs from the other. Historians deduce economic, social, and political differentiation through the development of distinct languages. How all four language groups shaped Eastern Africa and how these many distinct peoples interacted has enormous consequences for understanding cultural contact throughout world history.

In his essay, "World History and the Rise and Fall of the West," William McNeill explored the role of linguistic and cultural contact in world history. He argues that

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[29]Feierman, 177–178.

[30]R.J. McIntosh, *Peoples of the Middle Niger*, xviii.

[31]G. Mokhtar, ed., *General History of Africa: Ancient Civilizations of Africa*, abridged edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 313.

change in human history has occurred largely as a result of language that initially allowed the sharing of feelings and meaning within a community. Most differences in human community until about 10,000 years ago, he contends, would have been due to adjustment to climate and landscape. After that, rather than changes in the environment, "relations with neighboring human bands" were the "principal occasion for innovation."[32] He continues:

> This, in turn, made connections with strangers, who possessed different skills and ideas, critically important. Communities that reacted by borrowing useful skills and ideas, and then knitting new and old ways together by suitable invention, tended to expand their ecological niche, increasing both power and wealth. Those that clung fast to familiar routines tended to be left behind and survived only by retreating to marginal environments.[33]

What scholars have pieced together of early East African history is a testament to the mingling of peoples and ideas with the adoption of certain ideas and techniques that led to a better way of living in a particular area. McNeill adds that "The main shifts of global history have arisen from encounters with strangers bearing new ideas, information, and skills."[34] Early East Africa is one place where this process is well-illustrated.

East Africa is the site of some of the earliest evidence for human history; different humans have likely occupied much of the region for millennia. Significant linguistic evidence, though, is only available for the last four thousand years or so. At the beginning of this period, hunters and gatherers from one or more linguistic groups (Khoisan and possibly Nilo-Saharan) occupied the region.[35] Southern Cushitic speakers (belonging to the Afrasan language phylum) began moving into northern Kenya (from Ethiopia) about 3000 BCE. Nilo-Saharan language speakers, particularly Central Sudanians and Eastern Sahelians, began to occupy the Western Rift valley and Great Lake areas (today this area is part of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda,

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[32]William McNeill, "World History and the Rise and Fall of the West," *Journal of World History*, 9/2 (1998): 216.

[33]Ibid., 217.

[34]Ibid., 220–221.

[35]James L. Newman, *The Peopling of Africa: A Geographic Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 36–39. Two scholars have recently challenged the widely held view that Khoisan speakers were the original inhabitants of Eastern Africa. John H. Robertson and Rebecca Bradley, "A New Paradigm: The African Early Iron Age without Bantu Migrations," *History in Africa*, 27 (2000): 295.

Rwanda, and Burundi) by 2000 BCE.[36] Bantu-speakers were the last to arrive after 1000 BCE.

By examining loan words in Bantu languages spoken in East Africa today, we can conclude that Central Sudanic speakers brought with them knowledge of sorghum and millet cultivation. The word for finger millet, **-lo*, in Bantu languages around the Great Lakes region of East Africa is not found in ancestral Bantu languages, nor is there evidence that it was internally innovated from Bantu words in use at the time. A similar term, *Do*, however, is found in Central Sudanic languages spoken today, indicating that Bantu speakers learned the word **-lo* and the knowledge associated with growing finger millet from their Sudanic neighbors.[37] Similar linguistic evidence demonstrates that sorghum, **-pu*, came from Central Sudanic languages.[38] Millet and sorghum remained staple crops for many Bantu speakers until the most recent century. Eastern Sahelians introduced Lakes Bantu speakers to cattle with the accompanying word, **-ka*. Earlier, Eastern Sahelians introduced Mashariki Bantu speakers to new ideas regarding livestock, as witnessed by words for livestock fence and pen, and agriculture, reflected in terms for the cutting of vegetation prior to cultivation and flour.[39] In other areas of the Great Lakes, Southern Cushitic speakers introduced Bantu-speakers to cattle-keeping and the bleeding of cattle.[40]

Southern Nilotic speakers, who came to dominate western Kenya and northwestern Tanzania, moved into Kenya in the ninth century BCE. They were keepers of livestock and farmers of millet and sorghum. It is probable that Eastern Cushites (coming from Ethiopia and belonging to the Afrasan language phylum) introduced circumcision, clitoridectomy, cycling age-sets, and age-grades to Southern Nilotes.[41] Age-sets were groups of youth and men who had been given a name when they were circumcised and initiated together. Their particular name was part of a cycle of names that recurred after several generations. Originally there were eight age-set names. Age-grades are stages of life with ascribed tasks, such as cattle herding. Boys of approximately same age (in this case, an age-set) moved together from one stage (or

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[36]Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 122–125.

[37]David Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, A Good Place: Agrarian Change, Gender, and Social Identity in the Great Lakes Region to the 15th Century* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998), 9.

[38]Christopher Ehret, *An African Classical Age: Eastern and Southern Africa in World History, 1000 BC to AD 400* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia; Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 49.

[39]Ibid., 43–61.

[40]Ibid., 62–63, 85–87.

[41]Ibid., 162–164.

grade) of life to another while assuming joint responsibility for their duties. Circumcision and the accompanying initiation ceremony would bring together male youth from multiple kin groups, linking many people over a wide landscape together. Having experienced significant psychological, emotional, and physical challenges together as adolescents, these youth would have bonds with one another and be expected to remain loyal to one another for the remainder of their lives.[42] To this day, Nilotic initiations and age-grades are one of the distinguishing characteristics of contemporary East Africa in contrast to the rest of the continent.[43]

Scholars who work with historical linguistics in both Eastern and Central Africa argue that the eventual dominance of Nilotic speakers in Eastern Africa and Bantu speakers in both areas was due to the newcomers absorbing the earlier settlers.[44] Bantu speakers hunted and gathered, cultivated yams, and kept goats as they moved from Central Africa to East Africa in the first millennium BCE. In East Africa, they adopted both cattle-keeping and grain agriculture, the former from contact with Cushitic and Eastern Sahelian speakers, the latter from contact with Central Sahelian speakers. In addition, from at least 900 BCE on, Bantu speakers worked iron, a skill they possibly learned from Nilo-Saharan speakers.[45] Some Bantu speakers, neighbors to Nilotic speakers in southwestern Kenya and northwestern Tanzania, gave age-sets a more prominent cultural role than previously as a means of facilitating cooperation between more distant peoples.[46] Developing a combination of economic strategies enabled them to live successfully in almost any environment and eventually to carry their successful economic package to southern Africa. Moreover, their diverse economic toolkit led to population growth that was likely augmented by strangers moving to their settlements and marrying there. Therefore, Bantu speakers were able to effectively maintain stable population settlements. These population centers would be attractive to peoples who were transhumant cattle-keepers (moving seasonally with livestock between one or more camps) or hunger-gatherers because they could be places of refuge in times of trouble or attractive places to seek a spouse. Nilotic speakers' adoption of age-sets and age-grades with accompanying initiation ceremonies and surgical operations, such as

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[42]Ibid., 133.

[43]Newman, 158–177.

[44]Derek Nurse, "Languages of Eastern and Southern Africa in Historical Perspective" in *Encyclopedia of Precolonial Africa: Archaeology, History, Languages, Cultures and Environments*, ed. Joseph O. Vogel (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 1997), 171; Jan Vansina, "New Linguistic Evidence and the 'Bantu Expansion,'" *Journal of African History*, 36 (1995): 192.

[45]Ehret, *An African Classical Age*, 14–16.

[46]Ibid., 155–158.

male circumcision, produced alliances with people outside of their kin networks and mobilized youth for defensive or ritual purposes. In this way, they would have had an advantage over transhumant cattle-keepers who did not employ these forms of organization.

What is worth emphasizing to students is that the process by which Bantu speakers and Nilotic speakers became dominant was a long one, occurring over several millennia, and not initially marked by significant inequality. The oral traditions maintained by Bantu-speaking peoples in Central Africa, for example, attest to the essential role hunger-gatherers played as teachers in the new environment. The oral traditions recall hunter-gatherers as the original inhabitants, extolling them as teachers and healers possessing knowledge of local medicines.[47] In this light, early Bantu and Nilotic speakers were not in any way inherently superior as they entered these new environments but dependent on the earlier inhabitants as they adapted. Their survival initially depended on the peoples settled there. Nor were Bantu speakers the only ones who learned new skills. Jan Vansina, John Robertson, and Rebecca Bradley argue that it is likely that the original inhabitants learned technologies from Bantu-speakers and adopted their language, thus accounting for some of the growth and diffusion of these skills and languages.[48] In time, however, the combination of skills of grain farming and livestock-keeping, as well as novel forms of social organization, allowed Bantu-speakers to live in more compact and permanent villages than the autochithons.[49] Therefore, their languages and rituals became the ones that dominated the region as their numbers and prosperity grew.[50]

Cultural diffusion, or intercultural borrowing, contrasts with earlier notions of invasion by superior, iron weapon-wielding peoples. Similarly, Bantu speakers' dominance of much of sub-Saharan Africa was explained, until recently, as the result of large-scale migration made possible, in part, by possession of iron weapons.[51] As Vansina recounts, the accepted wisdom was that

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[47]Jan Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforest: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 56–57.

[48]Vansina, "New Linguistic," 190; Robertson and Bradley, 308.

[49]Evidence of increased disease in dense settlements and the risks associated with agriculture contests the common view that agriculture led to permanent settlement and population growth. Robertson and Bradley, 314–317; Newman, 57–59.

[50]Vansina, *Paths*, 57.

[51]Vansina, "New Linguistic," 173; Robertson and Bradley, 287.

> The unvarying success of these Bantu migrants came to be attributed to a vast technological differential: they were sedentary, they were potters, they were farmers, and later metallurgists, while the autochthions were just nomadic foragers.[52]

Moreover, because of flawed linguistic data, authors assumed the migration took place in one wave over several hundred years. While historical evidence has discredited such explanations for Nilotic and Bantu dominance, they have not as yet disappeared from history texts.

We can therefore conclude that instead of crossing the continent with an appreciable technological advantage compared to those they encountered, Bantu and Nilotic speakers entered Eastern Africa lacking the necessary toolkit to thrive. They adapted and learned from hunter-gatherers, Cental Sudanic, Eastern Sahelian, and Cushitic speakers. Even though the populations of Central Sudanic and Cushitic speakers in East Africa are currently quite small, their historical legacy is large and can be traced through the words modern-day speakers use to describe some of their most important economic and social activities. Thus, East African history before 1500 CE is not a story of conquest but of communicating with, being reliant upon, learning from, and intermarrying with those from other cultural and linguistic groups in order to better adapt over the long run.[53] Historical linguistics research in Eastern Africa has yielded a rich picture of interaction over 3000 years.

This evidence from Eastern Africa can be compared with other regions in world history.[54] One example is the current rethinking of Indian-Aryan interaction between 1500 and 500 BCE on the Indian sub-continent. Instead of viewing Aryans as violent conquerors, scholars are emphasizing their interactions with local peoples and their borrowing of local cultural ideas. Indian loan words found in the language of the Aryan speakers and in their adoption of certain religious practices, such as yoga, indicate this learning and interaction.[55] Similarly, recent scholarship on religious interactions along the Silk Road (linking the Middle East and India with China) suggests that for 2000 years Silk Road traders transmitted multiple religious traditions such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and various forms of Christianity to inhabitants of the region. Central Asia during this period, much like Eastern Africa, was an area of cultural fluidity in which

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[52]Vansina, "New Linguistic," 189.

[53]Newman, 158–177.

[54]I wish to thank Jan Bender Shetler for suggesting the following two comparisons.

[55]Fields, Barber and Riggs, 101. See also Romila Thapar, *Cultural Pasts: Essays in Early Indian History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1108–1140.

multiple religious traditions co-existed, building on earlier cultural and religious elements, creating new syntheses.[56]

In Eastern and Western Africa, we can see that archaeological and linguistic evidence brings forth different models of historical processes that can fruitfully illuminate the history of other regions. Dense settlements linked to each other by heterarchy are evidenced by the early growth of the Inner Niger Delta. In the interior of Eastern Africa, peoples of distinct backgrounds came together over several thousands of years, learned from and lived with each other, and created new economic and social syntheses, utilized by Bantu and Nilotic speakers who carry their debt to these other societies in their vocabularies.

What these two examples demonstrate is that our historical research, to date, has been unnecessarily impoverished by an over-reliance not only on Western history but also on concepts of Western history as constructed by nineteenth and twentieth-century Western historians who relied on written evidence and paradigms based on centralized states, development, progress, and technology that neglected most regions of the world. As it becomes increasingly clear that we are overexploiting the world's resources to maintain our current brisk pace of economic growth and have not "outgrown" ethnic conflict, we very well might be faced with the need to find alternate ways of organizing our political, social, and economic systems. If we rely on models derived largely from the industrial West, then we are seriously handicapping ourselves in terms of how we might construct our future. How are we to envision a different future if we do not have different models of the past to draw on? As teachers of African and world history, we can and should make available to our students alternative models of historical development by acknowledging the lessons of African history, as we integrate them into a global context.

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***Note from the author**: Some of these thoughts were first expressed at a roundtable entitled: "Africa in World History" at the Ohio Academy of History meeting in Columbus, Ohio, April 2001. I am grateful to Scott Rosenberg and Pamela Scully for inviting me to participate. I also wish to acknowledge the substantial assistance I received from Jan Bender Shetler who kindly read several drafts of this paper and contributed her expertise based on teaching world history at Goshen College. David Leaver, Jonathan Reynolds, and Alexandra Korros also read drafts of the paper and offered valuable comments.*

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[56]Richard C. Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

REAL WORK, NOT BUSY WORK, PART II: THE PRIMARY SOURCE PAPER

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The first part of this essay, "Real Work, Not Busy Work: The Place Paper," appeared in the fall 2003 issue of *Teaching History* (92–96). Here in Part II, "The Primary Source Paper," I explore ways in which research papers can become "real work" rather than "busy work."

The Primary Source Paper

"Real work" has relevance to people's lives, or the lives they imagine themselves leading. Some history majors envision themselves as professional historians upon graduation, so assignments that train them to do what historians do in those future jobs will be seen as "real work." Yet many of our students, even in upper-level classes, will not become professional historians. When the skills acquired in "doing" history—i.e., finding information, weighing evidence, examining interpretations critically, and communicating effectively to nonspecialists—can be made relevant to other jobs, then assignments that sharpen those skills will also be seen as "real work." Still other students have no clear idea what they want to do. These individuals, feeling a bit lost and adrift, often respond well to activities that help them feel empowered. My Primary Source Paper assignment provides one way to address each of these sets of students.

We all know well the usual "research paper" assignment: The student must review the secondary literature, analyze primary sources, and formulate an argument on a specific topic or question. Many quite justifiably call this "real work" because professional historians follow these steps. I take a slightly different approach. My students begin by reading their assigned textbook or monograph carefully, then find a primary source the author did not use, and finally consider how the author's interpretations would be affected had s/he used that source. Would the argument be reinforced, revised, or refuted? The next step provides the twist that makes this assignment different: Students actually send their papers to the author, framed along the lines of "If you were to write a new edition of your book, you might consider this source because ...." And the authors reply with substantive comments, much to the students' surprise and delight ("I can't believe he actually read my paper! He said I was right!").

The Primary Source Paper constitutes "real work" not just because students do what historians do or because they can follow their individual tastes and select something from the full spectrum of primary sources that suits their interests (poems, photographs, music, paintings, letters, diaries, oral history interviews, architecture, and more). Students get a different kind of "real work" experience by sending their papers to the author. They become more sensitive writers when their audience includes someone from outside the class. Perhaps most importantly, this assignment establishes a dialogue between the students and a professional historian. Ideas first tried out in

class among one's peers are reworked and then placed before an expert in the field. We professional historians understand this process—we write a draft, show it to peers and colleagues for advice, then revise, and eventually send it to the referees who decide about publication or funding—but students often stumble in this unfamiliar territory. Engaging in this dialogue serves a larger purpose as well. Students have their doubts at first, but then are amazed that they have something substantive to say to the "Big Name Professor" who wrote the book they read.

The success of this assignment depends upon finding the right "Big Name Professor." I had to begin with a book that fit my pedagogical needs—something appropriate for the topic, readable, well-organized, based on solid scholarship, and having a clear thesis. Then I had to see if the author would be willing to comment on the students' papers and, more importantly, see if the author was temperamentally suited to the task. A dismissive or condescending reply to the students might quash any desires they might have to become professional historians or to engage in any other forms of dialogue. A superficial reply could make students believe they had wasted their efforts. Overly effusive or empty praise could mislead students about the rigor demanded by serious scholarship. I thank my stars that I have found two model authors: John Opie, author of *Nature's Nation: An Environmental History of the United States*,[1] and Robert Middlekauff, author of *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763–1789*.[2]

I contacted these authors well in advance of the first day of class. They agreed to participate in this assignment primarily because, as committed teachers, they believed the students would benefit from such interaction. I also made the argument that, as authors, they would benefit as well. Wouldn't they get a kick out of hearing from their readers and from knowing that a group of people took their work seriously? Few of us who write professionally ever get this opportunity. I also argued that the students' papers could be of genuine help, and indeed Robert Middlekauff has told me he is working on a second edition and has taken some of the students' comments to heart. Finally, I made it clear that the authors need not "grade" the papers, but simply respond to them. John Opie read about thirty papers, grouped them into categories, and wrote two or three sentences of critical yet supportive commentary about each paper. Robert Middlekauff responded with grace and intelligence, and wrote anywhere from one-half to one full double-spaced page for each of the twenty or so essays he read.

Students responded enthusiastically to the Primary Source Paper. One said the assignment was "especially useful because it allowed us to present our thoughts to

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[1]John Opie, *Nature's Nation: An Environmental History of the United States* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998)—for my survey course "North American Environmental History."

[2]Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763–1789* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982)—for my upper-level course "The American Revolution."

another historian to see his viewpoint." Another said that "writing to Middlekauff was a good idea because it was neat to get a letter back from him, and it made class more interactive." According to a third, "the chance to write to Middlekauff himself [was] awesome." "I especially liked the primary source paper," wrote an education major. "I am aspiring to be a teacher and this would be something I would like to integrate into my class." Finally, I knew I reached my goals when another student wrote: "I really enjoyed the Middlekauff assignment and enjoyed the feedback that he sent us. It was really nice to know that even though we are college students a professor can learn from us too." The students became empowered; they realized "lowly" undergraduates **can** make suggestions, be taken seriously, and contribute to the author's thinking. Furthermore, they realized their efforts could have a lasting effect. Writing usually done simply for a grade in one class now had the chance to affect a textbook or monograph that would be read by untold numbers of students in classrooms around the country. Many students had never before realized the power of their pen to accomplish "real work."

I have also adapted the Primary Source Paper assignment for use with non-academic books. When I teach the first half of the introductory U.S. survey course, the first non-textbook reading is a mass-market historical mystery. In the past I had used primary sources such as the writings of Captain John Smith at Jamestown or of Puritans in New England, but most students found the language so alien that they quickly lost their way. Mass-market historical mysteries, however, give students a more accessible and, to many, a more engaging way of entering the world of seventeenth-century America. And once immersed in this way, students are able to grapple better with primary sources and accomplish the "real work" that historians do.

I have recently used Robert J. Begiebing's *The Strange Death of Mistress Coffin*,[3] a story based on an actual unsolved murder in New Hampshire in 1648, and Stephen Lewis's *The Sea Hath Spoken*,[4] the third book in a series featuring a sharp-eyed midwife and her friend, a Pequot Indian sachem, in Massachusetts at about the same time. In this version of the Primary Source Paper, students investigate the author's accuracy regarding any element of the book's historical context by researching primary sources and the scholarly secondary literature. For example, students with an interest in legal matters have searched Massachusetts court records for the frequency of adultery cases or for the punishments meted out against Quakers. In order to benefit the authors, the students must suggest ways in which subsequent mysteries might incorporate their research (both authors have continued to publish stories set in the colonial period).

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[3]Robert J. Begiebing, *The Strange Death of Mistress Coffin* (Chapel Hill: Alogonquin Books, 1991).

[4]Stephen Lewis, *The Sea Hath Spoken* (New York: Berkeley Prime Crime, 2001).

This variation of the assignment also succeeded, even though the students' interaction with the authors differed from the experience described above. Because I had a total of seventy students in two sections of the survey course, the authors could not respond to each student individually. Each wrote long letters to the class as a whole, identifying patterns in the students' research and analyses. Several students argued that Stephen Lewis's main character, the midwife Catherine Williams, held a degree of status, wealth, and power that was unrepresentative of seventeenth-century New England. Stephen Lewis agreed to a point, but also noted that he modeled his character on Anne Hutchinson, who did indeed wield considerable influence during the 1630s and who was thought to be a midwife. Lewis also pointed out that "the usual assertions about the powerlessness of women in the seventeenth century need to be nuanced by the recognition that actual lives usually do not fit neatly into the generalizations."

Robert Begiebing echoed this point when students noted that a "witch" in his story not only escaped persecution, but also seemed to be well regarded. "I included a few things in the novel that are exceptions to the general historical trends of things but for which I did find 'eccentric' evidence," he explained, "evidence that is sound but exceptional and 'proves the rule.'" The "witch" had indeed existed, and "historical evidence often points both ways, and general rules are seldom exclusive authorities when you focus on the very particular—on one time (a few months or years), and one place (a town or parish) and one person (one old widow). And when you are constructing a novel you have to make choices that serve the tale; often you go with the general rule, sometimes with the exception (founded on evidence and believably motivated through characterization) to make the story work." Such comments on "exceptions" and "proving the rule" led to fruitful class discussions. How many exceptions can one have before the historian must rewrite "the rule"? These mysteries helped my students see how historians and novelists construct the past—an especially useful lesson for budding historians—and the mysteries provided the students a "feel" for colonial New England that will probably remain with them long after they have forgotten the textbook and my lectures.

The Primary Source Paper has changed the way I think about my work. I admit to being one of those teachers who dreaded reading all of those blue books after midterms. I disliked grading so much that I would put it off, which only made it worse when students legitimately asked, "So when are you returning the tests?" Now, I look forward to reading the Primary Source Papers because they introduce me to sources I might not have seen otherwise, sources useful in my own research and in my preparations for the next year's class. The grading, rather than being a chore, has become more of a boon. Of course, I do not dive into these essays the way I eagerly reach for the latest Harry Potter book, but I think I can refine the assignments so that they can become even more useful and engaging. To do so will require a lot of "real work," but it will be worth it.

APPENDIX

The Primary Source Paper (for "The American Revolution")

Our understanding of the past depends on primary sources, those items created during the time period under consideration. The historian's task involves finding relevant and interesting sources (not always an easy job!), understanding the context as explained by other scholars, coming up with one's own interpretation of how the source fits into the context, and engaging in a dialogue with peers and/or the experts about the topic. With this in mind, please follow these steps:

1. *Select a source that was created around the time of the War for Independence.* You need not select a "famous" person or the typical written/printed document. What about works of art or music? Or some physical object that was created at the time? Or an example of a landscape transformed by humans? Be creative and choose something that interests you.
2. *Each student must choose a different source* and not duplicate those selected by students in classes from previous years. I will approve your selections on a first-come, first-served basis and will provide an updated list of the sources chosen.
3. *Choose a manageable source.* Don't pick something so big that you will never get through it, but be sure to select something substantial enough that it will give you plenty of raw materials to analyze. For example, a single diary entry is too meager, while five years of entries is probably too much.
4. *Begin by identifying the source.* In your 5–7 page paper, spend the first 1–2 pages introducing the source: What is it, who created it, for what purpose, who is the audience for the source, and why is the source worth considering for this assignment?
5. *In the body of your paper, explain to the author how he might use the source in a second edition of his book.* Where exactly (give a page number) would you suggest he discuss this source? How would this source affect his interpretation of the larger context of the American Revolution and the War for Independence? For example, would the source reinforce, modify, or refute what he has said? If your source is a piece of music or a physical object, you might want to suggest how a CD-ROM or website containing this source could accompany the book. Remember the author has already written a big book; if you suggest that he add your source, what do you suggest he eliminate, and why? As for your writing style, you can choose to use your personal voice and write directly to the author, or you can use the more typical "student paper" style.
6. *Please include with your paper a photocopy or printout of your source*, or the main part of your source if it is big.
7. *Turn in two complete copies.* I will send one to the author and grade the other. Remember that for every three spelling and/or basic grammatical errors, your grade may drop by as much as one full letter.

REVIEWS

Alan Booth & Paul Hyland, eds. *The Practice of University History Teaching.* Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2000. Pp. xiv, 258. Cloth, $74.95; ISBN 0-7190-5491-5. Paper, $27.95; ISBN 0-7190-5492-3.

Practicing historians and teachers are all too aware of the primacy placed on research over teaching by many in the academy. Research is the "serious" work of historians, teaching something merely to be tolerated. Although that's a pervasive attitude, readers of this journal undoubtedly will scoff at such a distinction, knowing all too well the importance that both activities play in the historical profession. But recognizing the false dichotomy of choosing research or teaching as the more important of our duties doesn't undercut the reality that scholarship on teaching history is not regarded with the same respect as "content" research. In *The Practice of University History Teaching*, British historians Alan Booth and Paul Hyland have edited a collection of essays that confront this issue head on. The challenge, they assert, is "to re-emphasize the importance and scholarship of teaching, to bring a research perspective to history teaching and learning."

This challenge is taken up by 38 historians, most of whom are working in Great Britain. The editors group eighteen essays in three sections that mirror the normal process of preparing a course, conducting it, and assessing student learning. In "Context and Court Design," the first of the book's three main sections, the contributors tackle a number of issues that confront contemporary teachers of history: structuring courses to focus on developing concrete skills in students, enhancing student communication and group-work skills, and using information technology both in the traditional classroom and in distance-learning courses. Essays in the second section, "Enhancing Teaching and Learning," consider issues of active learning, oral history, fieldwork in history, and dealing with large seminars in creative new ways. In the final section, "Learning and Assessment," the authors consider assessment in a myriad of forms, from reworking the history essay to assessing group work and collaborative learning.

The strength of this collection lies in its applicability. Informed by field work, surveys, and other research methods, the authors all focus, as the book's title suggests, on practice. As a result, this is not a collection of vague assertions to rework our teaching practice, but rather a collection of tangible evidence about the relationship between teaching and learning outcomes. Each essay is chock full of ideas that can be applied immediately as we prepare our courses, conduct them, and finally assess student learning. Readers will find essays that address methods they currently employ as well as those they haven't yet adopted or considered. As a result, these essays don't just inspire positive change, they provide a wealth of examples to enhance our current practice and/or guide us into new methods, and they provide the evidence that shows what those new methods are capable of doing to improve student learning. Historians at all levels, from surveys to graduate seminars, will find something of value in each of

the essays. It will also be valuable as an assigned text in any course designed to prepare future history teachers. *The Practice of University History Teaching* is a fine example of rigorous scholarship on teaching, one that addresses large pedagogical questions in concrete ways that can be taken directly into the classroom where they belong.

Western Michigan University Timothy Berg

Paul N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, & Sam Wineburg, eds. *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives.* New York & London: New York University Press, 2000. Pp. ix, 482. Paper $25.00; ISBN 0-8147-8142-X.

The 22 useful and engaging essays in this book represent leading work in the scholarship of teaching and learning related to history. The collection is a valuable effort by a group of interdisciplinary, international authors to address the complex interaction of learning theory, classroom practice, and the discipline of history in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

As the editors note, this volume grew out of a session at a meeting of the American Historical Association and developed into a larger, international effort. More broadly, it is part of a confluence of three major trends. First is the cognitive revolution in learning and teaching. The second involves changes in the discipline of history, especially the inclusion of marginalized groups and the critique of historical narrative. The final trend has been the growing interest in issues of historical memory and the public representation of history.

Limitations on space prevent a full discussion of each piece, but together the essays in the volume address these large trends and note that while difficult, improving history teaching and learning is possible; the essays collected here represent attempts in this direction.

The editors divide the book into four parts. "Current Issues in History Education" contains seven essays that assess the complex interactions of what history is, how it should be taught, and why it is important to learn in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

In Part Two, "Changes Needed to Advance Good History Teaching," four contributors, Diane Ravitch, G. Williamson McDiarmid, Peter Vinten-Johansen, and Shelly Weintraub recommend changes to improve professional development and history teacher education. In general, they conclude that greater emphasis should be placed on content in teacher training and that interdisciplinary programs, such as the one at Michigan State discussed by McDiarmid and Vinten-Johansen, are the best means to increase teachers' training in historical reasoning skills.

The six essays in Part Three, "Research on Teaching and Learning in History," reflect on the findings of various studies on what history is and how people, both

students and adults, understand and develop historical thinking, becoming, in Sam Wineburg's words, "historical beings." They suggest that history is not something confined to schools, but rather is a subject learned in a number of places, including museums, movies, and family scrapbooks. The public, Roy Rosenzweig shows, is deeply engaged with the past, most often through familial relationships and events. The authors also point to the need for students and teachers to address, rather than avoid, areas of conflict and tension in historical narrative.

Part Four, "Models for Teaching," is the most "hands-on" section of the book, covering direct application of the ideas discussed in earlier chapters. Three essays written by teachers and three by educational researchers, while different, share a common, constructivist theme, that teachers should use a mixture of teaching practices and embrace methods and assessments that center on historical thinking, including assessing primary and secondary sources and handling multiple viewpoints, as opposed to mere memorization and recitation of facts.

This book would be useful for classes in history and education for individuals engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning, or simply for those interested in informing their own classroom practice. Hopefully these essays will do much to bridge the gap between historians, teacher educators, and teachers.

University of Akron Gregory S. Wilson

Susan Dunn. *Sister Revolutions: French Lightning, American Light.* New York: Faber & Faber, Inc., 1999. Pp. x, 258. Cloth, $26.00; ISBN 0-571-19900-3.

Susan Dunn introduces her analysis of the American and French revolutions with an intriguing and gripping story of the young nobleman known as the Marquis de Lafayette. Lafayette's story and his association with the revolutions and George Washington draw the reader to a consideration of how these two events compare. This is an exceptional intellectual history of two great revolutionary events that were intertwined and mutually influential.

Dunn contrasts the views of Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès with those of James Madison, concluding that Madison had already dealt in 1787 in the Federalist No. 10 with what Sieyès was proposing in 1789. It is at this point that the two revolutions diverged into radically different directions. The gross exceptions and regrettable violence of the French in the Reign of Terror came from this divergence. Also, Dunn explains "the revolution of 1800," the contributions of both Madison and Jefferson in what "constituted a second American Revolution," and the value of political factions in maintaining political equilibrium and equality.

Captivated with the American Revolution, the French view wasn't what many Americans perceived it to be—a "return to the rights and freedoms they had long enjoyed before Parliament and King George III violated them." Dunn argues that the

French Revolution "denoted not return but total transformation." Although there were differences between the two revolutions, they "shared significant features." The two events are personified in Jefferson and Lafayette. Dunn explains Jefferson's commitment to both revolutions, emphasizing his political experience and imagination, concluding that "ideas gone amok doomed the Revolution in France."

Dunn emphasizes the power of ideas in shaping and empowering revolutionary actions. Her comparison of the two events tends to stress the appraisal of Louis Hartz in *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955) that highlights the obvious connection of the French to the *ancien régime* and the social upheavals attendant to it, while the American Revolution is seen more as a political revolt than as a social upheaval. Of course, there is the obvious individualism of the American effort and the collectivist tendencies, the radicalism of the French, as compared to the conservatism of the Americans that Dunn sees primarily as an effort to reclaim and retain rights in a struggle against the British monarchy's imperial power.

Sister Revolutions is an excellent book for instructors to use in demonstrating the "how" of history. Dunn gracefully and provocatively explains the motivations, the strategies, the philosophies, and the consequences of the two revolutions. In addition, she traces the influence of these events that has been used by others subsequently, from Vladimir Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, and Nelson Mandela, to Tony Blair.

Dunn obviously interprets the American Revolution from the perspective of "ideology," and she focuses her attention on what she sees as the essential difference between the "sister revolutions"—their very different conception of unity and how that determined the revolutions' outcomes. This difference in political vision of the committed revolutionaries of both events resulted in very different consequences.

Her style is engaging, even at times inspiring, and can be used to bring students into discussions on how to "do" history in analyzing such events as revolutions and how subsequent revolutions have drawn from both. Instructors can draw materials illustrating the Revolutions and the important relationships that existed and persisted between America and France. Students can gain a good understanding of the thought that characterized and differentiated the revolutions and their offspring. I recommend this very readable and insightful book.

East Texas Baptist University Jerry Hopkins

Don Nardo, ed. *Charles Darwin*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2000. Pp. 239. Paper $15.96; ISBN 0-7377-0080-7.

The name Charles Darwin, the theory of evolution, and the related concepts of natural selection and survival of the fittest still provoke fiery debates nearly 150 years after publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859. Don Nardo's *Charles Darwin* is a useful, if limited, anthology of primary and secondary sources by authors such as

Desmond King-Hele, Carl Sagan, and Gertrude Himmelfarb on the origins, publication, and impact, short- and long-term, of Darwin's ideas. Organized in four sections, this collection provides excerpts from secondary sources on "Pre-Darwinian Theories of Life's Origins," a mixture of primary and secondary sources on "Darwin Develops and Publishes his Theory of Evolution" and "The Immediate Impact of Darwin's *Origin of Species*," and excerpts from secondary sources on "Modern Reevaluations and Objections to Darwin's Ideas." A concise and clearly-written introduction provides an overview of Darwin's life and work. Although unsigned, it is likely the work of the editor, a professional writer and author or editor of numerous books for young adults on history and science, including the recent *The Origin of Species: Darwin's Theory of Evolution* (San Diego: Lucent Books, 2001). Also found in *Charles Darwin* are suggested "Discussion Questions and Research Topics," a somewhat eccentric chronology, additional excerpts from primary sources, and an eclectic list of titles suggested for additional research.

Potential users of this anthology should be aware of the manner in which it was edited and its limitations. According to a statement on the reverse of the title page, "The articles in this volume may have been edited for content, length, and/or reading level." A comparison of several selections with the originals revealed only a few passages where the wording had been slightly altered. However, the excerpt in this anthology about the 1860 Oxford Debate on the idea of evolution, which is reproduced from Francis Darwin's three-volume collection of Darwin materials, differs significantly from the 1888 edition published by John Murray. Also, citations for the excerpts usually omit page numbers, thus making it difficult to locate the passages in the original sources. The major limitations of this anthology are found in the two sections on the impact of Darwin's ideas. The selections deal primarily with Darwin's influence on scientific thought and advances in scientific knowledge since publication of *The Origin of Species*. Although the on-going Creationism-Evolution debate is touched upon by the inclusion of a statement on Creationism from the Institute for Creation Research in California and a refutation of Creationism from Chet Raymo's *Skeptics and True Believers*, there is little in this collection that considers Darwin's impact on philosophy, social thought, or literature. Finally, according to the Preface, the intended audience is "young adults," but many of the selections are—sad to say—beyond the reading ability of the average high school student. And, since the anthology lacks the sophistication of the recently updated Norton Critical Edition on Darwin, it is not suitable for even lower-division college and university students. Nonetheless, instructors preparing lectures or class discussions may find useful the primary source selections such as the famous third chapter on "Struggle for Existence" from *The Origin of Species*, Adam Sedgwick's contemporary critique of Darwin from the 1860 issue of *The Spectator*, or Joseph D. Hooker's favorable 1859 review in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*.

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke Robert W. Brown

***Queen Victoria's Empire*, 2001. Brook Lapping Productions, Ltd. Written, produced, and directed by Paul Bryers. Narrated by Donald Sutherland. Distributed by PBS Home Video at shopPBS.com ($29.98) and PBS Video at shopPBS.com/teachers ($69.95). 219 minutes on two VHS tapes.**

Victorian Britain has recently been treated by no less than three major historical television and video productions without even counting A&E's miniseries *Victoria and Albert*, which is clearly more love story than history. Simon Schama's *A History of Britain*, a BBC and History Channel production, carries the story into the Victorian era where he focuses on emerging concepts of gender and family life and the hubris of liberal humanism and colonialism. Patrick Allitt of Emory University delivers a series of lectures for The Teaching Company that focus on the achievements of Victorian Britain as well as the strange internal contradictions of a time that seems remarkably close to our own in so many ways. PBS's entry in the current Victorian video derby is *Queen Victoria's Empire*, part of the Empires Collection that includes *Egypt's Golden Empire*, *The Greeks*, *The Roman Empire in the First Century, Islam: Empire of Faith*, and *Napoleon*. And it is, well, just so very PBS in style and format. The viewer will not be disappointed in this solid, well crafted, well paced production, but neither will it leave the impression that one has just viewed four hours of something memorable. A lot of this can be explained by the fact that PBS markets toward a classroom audience while Schama looks toward the home market. *Queen Victoria's Empire* employs dramatic re-enactments, voice-over narration by Donald Sutherland, the historical words of individuals read by actors, and talking-head commentary by the likes of Lawrence James, Roy Jenkins, and Stanley Weintraub, as well as a descendant of David Livingstone, which seems to be his only qualification for the task. They all perform admirably, giving the production the patina of scholarship so vital for this type of documentary. As the title implies, the videos focus on personalities of the time beginning obviously with Queen Victoria herself and her beloved Prince Albert, and including the usual pantheon of eminent Victorians: Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Gladstone, Disraeli, Livingstone, Charles Gordon, and Cecil Rhodes. One can carp at this approach but given the large number of eccentric, colorful, and larger-than-life figures that came out of Victorian Britain, it does have some legitimacy beyond the narrative ease provided by such an approach in a documentary.

All of this can make such a documentary quite trite and very staid, something you would expect to be used in a classroom setting. The topic of industrialization, for instance, never gets very passionate beyond Prince Albert's fascination with new technology. Victoria's morbid preoccupation with Albert's death is not exaggerated, nor is it dismissed as some sort of psychosis. It just became part of her personae. The relationship that the Queen had with John Brown, her Scottish servant, and the subject of a movie in its own right, *Mrs. Brown*, receives appropriate and accurate treatment. Speculations about a sexual relationship remain just that, speculation. But there is no mention of Abdul Karim, "the Munshi," who replaced Brown in Victoria's affections

when he became her servant in her old age. Brown's death in 1883 devastated the Queen and after Victoria's death, the Munshi was pensioned off and he returned to India.

The production has as the central theme the relationship of the Queen to all the central Victorian players, especially Gladstone and Disraeli, and this might skew the historical perspective, but still there are some images that do stand out. The Indian Mutiny and massacre at Cawnpore are particularly vivid, showing the violence inflicted upon the perpetrators by the British. When British troops recaptured Delhi, Cawnpore, and Lucknow, they killed all the defenders and looted everything they could find. The sequence dealing with Sudan and Charles Gordon presents an almost comic opera aspect as this hero of empire is sent off to the Sudan with no money and with British generals resorting to raising money at gentlemen's clubs in the middle of the night to get him on his way. Gordon remains the ultimate imperial hero, martyr, and eccentric, an evangelical Christian who carried not only the Bible but an ample supply of brandy with him at all times. His passion was adopting orphan boys off the street, taking them home with him, cleaning them up, educating them, and sending them off into the empire. No one hinted at any other motive than that of Christian charity. But that is certainly no more eccentric than Gladstone's habit of going out at night, wandering the streets, looking for prostitutes to reform. He would frequently take them home, and sometimes sent them out to his country estate. In his diary entries he would draw a whip indicating that he had to scourge himself that night if he felt any sexual lust. The Queen never thought much of this activity, and since she didn't like Gladstone as much as Disraeli anyway, his night prowling only increased her suspicion of the man. Also when she met Cecil Rhodes, who never married and who much preferred male company, she asked him if he was a "women hater," to which he deftly responded, "How could one be such a thing in the presence of such beauty as your majesty?" H.G. Wells once referred to Queen Victoria as a "great paper weight that for half a century sat on men's minds," and maybe that was true for something called "Victorianism," but the Queen herself was much more complicated than a dead paper weight.

Queen Victoria's Empire then takes the PBS middle of the road approach to historical documentary: predictable, yet instructive and straightforward, neither sensational nor bland, but including some memorable moments and scenes, and also some omissions. Where are the trade unions? William Morris? Today we are all too aware of the exploitativeness, insularity, sexual hypocrisy, pompous piety, and materialism of the Victorians. This video in concert with modern popular and scholarly notions of Victorians focuses more on these traits and their ill-treatment of servants and colonial subjects, while not completely forgetting the legacy of public culture, morality, and high public and political standards. Victoria and the Victorians are hard acts to follow.

Cameron University Richard A. Voeltz

Brenda Stalcup, ed. *Adolf Hitler*. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2000. Pp. 202. Paper, $21.81; ISBN 0-7377-0222-2.
A.J. Nicholls. *Weimar and the Rise of Hitler*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Fourth edition. Pp. xiv, 229. Cloth, $59.95; ISBN 0-312-23350-7. Paper, $25.00; ISBN 0-312-23351-5.

Studies on the Nazis and biographies of Adolf Hitler are as popular and as common as they are important. Unfortunately, they are not always of high intellectual quality. But the two volumes at hand are examples of responsible scholarship treating the troubled history of Germany from the 1920s to the 1940s. They are both accessible for undergraduate readers, although many freshmen and sophomores will find the Nicholls volume rather demanding. Instructors might want to consider using the books together for two reasons. First, the book on Hitler is an edited collection of sixteen essays from fifteen different scholars, mostly historians, and their diverse interpretations provide the raw material for some fascinating historiographical debates. Second, the monograph by Nicholls treats many of the most important aspects of Hitler's ideology and rise to power and places them in a helpful, broad perspective—a very fruitful form of overlap, one might say, with the Stalcup volume.

Weimar and the Rise of Hitler locates the weakness of the Weimar government more in the attitudes and decisions of individuals and parties than in systemic flaws. It was, above all, its political shortcomings that sealed Weimar's fate and allowed Hitler's rise to power. Nicholls demonstrates ably why this explanation takes precedence over—but does not fully displace—other causes, such as German political culture, economics, and Hitler's political skills. This work is recommended for courses in German history, modern Europe, and World War II.

For Nicholls, voluntaristic factors outweigh structural and international considerations. For instance, the army and police forces were not thoroughly purged and reconstructed after 1918, thereby leaving in place many armed elements that later would be sympathetic to Hitler or at least hostile to the central government. Groups on the far right and far left fought paramilitary street battles with each other and against the federal authorities, while the parties in the center had fault lines between them (and even within themselves) that diminished their power. Important and popular leaders were assassinated. Bavarian particularism weakened Berlin's authority and provided a safe haven for radical groups. Even in times of crisis, a genuine spirit of cooperation within *Reichstag* coalitions and between branches of government eluded politicians.

Field Marshal Hindenburg, who became President in 1925, was both manipulable and ambivalent in his feelings towards the very system of government he was sworn to protect. He also caved in to the special requests of grain-growing Junkers during the Depression, battering German consumers and small farmers and playing into the hands of Darré, the Nazi agrarian ideologue. Worst of all, when Hindenburg and others thought they could make tactical use of Hitler to settle old scores or to govern during a general crisis, they committed a mind-boggling error in judgment.

Nicholls should be praised for working in a thorough discussion of Weimar's economic woes. Still, one wishes the author had spent some time chronicling the disjuncture between German culture and politics at the time. Klaus Mann's challenging statement from his memoir *The Turning Point* deserves exploration: "The Weimar Republic was completely indifferent to the efforts of its literary supporters ... No writer could hope to earn gold or glory by sticking out his neck for the German Republic."

Adolf Hitler is a solid work useful for courses on German history, the Nazi period, or World War II. The book includes material on the Holocaust but it does not seem appropriate for use in courses specifically on that subject, since such courses now typically move beyond the "commanding heights" of the ultimately responsible Nazi regime to examine many varieties of perpetrators (including non-Germans) and victims (including resisters). The book consists primarily of selections from already published—and mostly well known—works of history and psychology about the Nazi era and Hitler. The brief introductions supplied by the editor are helpful. Working into the book some sort of discussion of fascism as an ideology would help make it compatible with general European history courses. There is, refreshingly, among the selections no dalliance with the tired old notion of Hitler as some sort of "evil genius," military or otherwise, as one often finds in popular histories.

The selections cover Hitler's youthful intellectual and artistic development, the ways his charisma and opportunism helped cement his rule, his war aims, the policy origins of the Holocaust, and his legacy. Some of the selections are tantalizingly short, but they are all worth reading. The essays that are most likely to catch students' eyes and stretch their understanding of the period are by Henry Grosshans ("Hitler's Failure As an Artist"), William Carr ("Hitler's Oratorical Skills"), Lucy Dawidowicz ("The Final Solution Was Always Hitler's Ultimate Goal"), and Ian Kershaw ("Hitler's Devastating Legacy to Germany").

A substantial appendix includes 21 documents that will be useful in sparking student discussion and giving students practice in working with primary sources. Six of these documents are rather illuminating selections from *Mein Kampf* covering Hitler's youth and the evolution of his world view. Others are drawn from Hitler's speeches or from memoirs of people who knew him. Although all of the selections are interesting, the use of some of them in a classroom setting is to some degree problematic. Can it sometimes be irresponsible to present students with a cavalcade of anti-Semitic slurs (as in Hitler's book and speeches) without refuting them? Of course these selections are not included here for propaganda purposes, but as illustrations of his oratory and style of argument; likewise, a study of Hitler that ignores his rabid racism is unthinkable. But teachers should at least consider whether we owe it to today's undergraduates—many of whom know next to nothing about Judaism or Jewish history—to confront and puncture Hitler's stereotypes.

A few of the documents (9, 11, 19) add little significance to the detailed portrait of Hitler already created in the book. The several documents that speculate on whether or not he was insane also lead to a sort of pedagogical dead-end. How does Hitler's

(possible, eventual) insanity relate to the acceptability of his ideas to other Germans, and if Nazis are just "crazy," then how does this affect the issue of culpability? The self-congratulatory tone of the excerpt from Hitler's "Last Political Testament" seems trivial when contrasted with other possible inclusions, such as his bitter "sunset" imprecations at the German people for ailing in their historic mission under Nazi leadership. The other documents are both well chosen and introduced by a paragraph of insightful analysis. An essay at the start of the book gives an overview of Hitler's rise to power and World War II in Europe; at the back of the book one also finds a bibliography, a chronology, and three pages of useful discussion questions for students.

The Stalcup book is well edited; unfortunately, the editing of the Nicholls book leaves something to be desired. The number of misspellings and other small errors, while not overwhelming, is puzzling, considering that this book is in its fourth edition. More troubling is the fact that we are told that the Nazis received nearly 44% of the vote in Reichstag elections on 5 April 1933, two weeks after the Enabling Act. This is a major error. The elections were on 5 March, and the correct date is actually given in the Chronology at the back of the book.

Wheeling Jesuit University John K. Cox

Ian S. Wood. *Churchill.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Pp. xii, 209. Cloth, $49.95; ISBN 0-312-23061-3. Paper, $19.95; ISBN 0-312-23062-1.

This new title in the British History in Perspective series by Ian S. Wood, Lecturer in History at Napier University in Edinburg, is not a conventional biography of Churchill—adding another seemed superfluous to the author—but rather a thematic study of the major and sometimes overlapping issues in the long and exceptional career of Winston Churchill. After a short preface in which Churchill's political career is divided into three phases—1900–1915, 1915–1939, and 1939–1955—the author investigates Churchill's career through nine themes that make up the nine chapters of the book. Among the themes are "Churchill the Warrior," "National Leader, 1940–1495," and "Churchill, Party Politics and Social Policy." Wood also focuses on Churchill's relationship with the United States, the Soviet Union, Europe, Ireland, and the British Empire, as well as his role in the appeasement policies of the 1930s.

Each of the nine chapters reassesses the historical literature that bears on the theme under consideration, including the more recent revisionist literature of authors such as John Charmley and Clive Ponting. One of the author's strengths is always weighing critical events in Churchill's career in terms of his entire career. While Wood does not ignore Churchill's failures, he does believe that on the most important issue of going to war rather than attempting to negotiate with Hitler in order to try to save the British Empire, Churchill was right. He states that the democratic Western Europe that

emerged after 1945 "owed everything to Churchill's decision that in 1940, Britain should fight on against Hitler whatever the risks or costs."

The intended audience for this book is students, but the general reader would profit greatly from the author's writing style as well as his balanced and thoughtful assessments of the voluminous literature on Churchill. The book includes a helpful chronology of the main events in Churchill's life and an annotated bibliography of the works on Churchill used by the author. Unfortunately, the book appeared before the publication of two new important Churchill biographies, those of Roy Jenkins and Geoffrey Best, and David Dutton's biography of Neville Chamberlain.

Since Churchill played such a significant role in many of the key events of the first half of the twentieth century, this book would be excellent to assign to students in any class dealing with this era as well as any course on modern British history. It introduces students to the vast literature on Churchill and demonstrates that very able historians can differ greatly on key aspects of his career, thus giving students a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of history. Depending on the instructor's purpose, this book could be assigned at the undergraduate and/or the graduate level. Teachers who are not well versed in the literature on Churchill, especially the arguments of the revisionists, can obtain a quick overview of their arguments and the counter-arguments by reading this book.

In many ways this book is more serviceable than another biography of Churchill. In less than 200 pages, Wood looks at Churchill's illustrious career through the eyes of its leading historians and gives the reader his careful, balanced, and sound judgments on the key issues in that career.

Texas A&M University-Commerce Harry E. Wade

Paul A Winters, ed. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union.* San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1999. Pp. 288. Cloth, $24.96; ISBN 1-56510-997-X. Paper, $15.96; ISBN 1-56510-996-1.

Christopher Read. *The Making and Breaking of the Soviet System: An Interpretation.* New York: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. x, 259. Cloth, $65.00; ISBN 0-333-73152-2. Paper, $20.95; ISBN 0-333-73153-0.

The Collapse of the Soviet Union and *The Making and Breaking of the Soviet System* offer two different approaches to the question of why the Soviet Union came apart. Paul Winters focuses his attention on the Gorbachev period and immediately after. Christopher Read, on the other hand, provides what is, essentially, a history of the entire period of the Soviet Union and its aftermath.

The Collapse of the Soviet Union is a collection of essays organized under the following chapter headings: "Prelude to the Collapse," "Attempts at Reforming the Government," "Disintegration of Empire," "Collapse of the Union," and "Strife in the

Former Union." Each of the sections contains four or five readings presenting different perspectives on the topic. The range of interpretations is impressive, reflecting the editor's view that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a complex event with no clearly identifiable single cause. It is unfortunate, however, that nearly all of the essays were written by Westerners, leaving the reader with little understanding of how the Soviets viewed the collapse of their nation. With only a couple of exceptions, the essays were written during or immediately following the period of Soviet collapse. Thus, there is little benefit of hindsight or examination of sources that have become available more recently. The reader is left with a feeling of suspense as the information ends in the early 1990s. An Afterword might have been included to tie some of the loose ends together and to bring things closer to the present. Nonetheless, the diversity of interpretations presented would provide an excellent starting point for discussion in a course on the history of the Soviet Union. Some of the selections probably assume a bit too much general knowledge of the Soviet Union for the book to be effective in a western or world civilization class.

There are discussion questions on the readings at the end of the book. However, each question focuses on a specific essay. None seem to ask students to pull the essays together for comparison and contrast. An extensive appendix includes excerpts from a number of documents critical to the period—several speeches by Gorbachev, declarations of independence by Soviet republics, and Shevardnadze's resignation speech, among others. One of the most useful features is an extensive chronology of the major events from the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 to Gorbachev's resignation as Soviet president in 1991. A list of books and articles for further reading is also included.

The Making and Breaking of the Soviet System begins with the triumph of Bolshevism in 1917 and unfolds the story of its strengths and weaknesses until its final collapse in 1991. It examines the role of the Communist Party under each of the Soviet leaders, describing the inherent contradictions implicit in establishing a workers' society in a peasant-dominated nation. Read argues that three themes can be followed throughout the Communist period, those of productionism, careerism, and bureaucratism. He defines productionism as putting "every effort ... into increasing industrial output *at all costs* in the short and medium term in order to build the revolution in the long term." Careerism is the phenomenon whereby people increasingly joined the Communist Party in order to advance their careers rather than in support of revolutionary goals. Finally, the revolution gave rise to endless agencies that employed large numbers of *apparatchiki* (bureaucrats) and yet seemed to accomplish very little. These themes appear repeatedly throughout the book as weaknesses in the Communist government that are never successfully overcome. Another theme that likewise appears in nearly every chapter is the notion that "Centralization and the erosion of democracy created discontent—discontent made the leadership turn to even stricter centralization and greater discipline." Using the above concepts, Read argues that although it never engaged the hearts and minds of its citizens, Soviet Communism survived because

discipline eroded the will to resist and bureaucrats were unwilling to jeopardize their positions. When the centralized economic system atrophied under Brezhnev, observers on various sides of the political spectrum were concerned. However, they lacked both the power and the will to act. It was Gorbachev with his use of *glasnost* who opened the floodgates of reform. Although he had hoped a revitalized Communist Party would be the agent of change, there was no revolutionary commitment to its goals. The failure of the Bolshevik experiment ever to win genuine support among Soviet citizens was ultimately its undoing.

Read is clearly a Gorbachev supporter. He takes great pains to delineate the restraints under which Gorbachev was forced to act, given the divisions between reformers and conservatives whose support he needed to bring about change. The implication is clear that Gorbachev is not responsible for the ultimate failure of his efforts. On the other hand, the author is critical of Yeltsin for taking a "bull-at-a-gate approach" to Russia's problems without having any long-term plan in mind. The reader is left with little hope that things will improve in the foreseeable future.

While Read's ideas are thought-provoking and well argued, they will be challenging for the undergraduate student. If used as a textbook for a course on the Soviet period and supplemented by other readings (such as *The Collapse of the Soviet Union*), undergraduate students might be able to handle the material. Certainly graduate students and faculty will find useful information here. The layout of the text is uninviting, however, with solid pages of small print often organized into nearly page long paragraphs. The book does include an extensive list of suggested reading that includes a number of post-Soviet works.

Both works provide useful contributions to the on-going debate over why the Soviet Union collapsed and who should take the credit/responsibility. While Winters's book might be profitably used by the typical undergraduate student, Read's requires a greater degree of sophistication.

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Steven E. Woodworth, ed. *The Loyal, True, and Brave: America's Civil War Soldiers*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002. Pp. xii, 222. Cloth, $60.00; ISBN 0-8420-2930-3. Paper, $18.95; ISBN 0-8420-2931-1.

Paul Ashdown & Edward Caudill. *The Mosby Myth: A Confederate Hero in Life and Legend.*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002. Pp. xxxvi, 231. Paper, $17.95; ISBN 0-8420-2929-X.

Clearly, there is no shortage of source material when studying the American Civil War. Where does a teacher or student begin to sort through the thousands of volumes that have been published on America's most-studied conflict? Steven E. Woodworth, associate professor of history at Texas Christian University, has assembled a collection

of essays intended to serve as an introduction, "to present the Civil War to both formal and informal students of the conflict and to select brief excerpts from some of the numerous books that have been written about the soldiers."

Woodworth's work is organized into eight chapters, each devoted to specific aspects of the war and with reflections from common soldiers North and South. He begins his study by examining the recruitment of soldiers, drawing a comparison between the U.S. Army of the 1860s, "hometown companies that kept friends together and today's bureaucratic army, that is drilled into the interchangeable human parts that are distributed throughout a huge organization." Individuals such as Wimer Bedford of Illinois, John C. Reed of Georgia, and Abner R. Small of Maine come to life in these pages. Veterans returning from the war wrote their memoirs well into the early twentieth century when Bell Wiley's landmark studies, *The Life of Billy Yank* and *The Life of Johnny Reb*, appeared. According to Woodworth, Wiley's works would "set the standard for historians who would seek to write straightforward accounts of what a soldier's life was like."

I have often wondered how teachers explain the confusing environment of combat to students, particularly those teachers who come to the classroom without the benefit of military service behind them. How does one explain the fear of facing combat for the first time, the deaths of comrades, or the perceptions of those placed in charge of leading young men into battle? Chapter 2 helps to fill in this gap by presenting excerpts from soldiers' memoirs. We learn from Rice Bull of the 123rd New York Infantry that "new and untried soldiers had to deal with their own doubts about how they would behave in battle. This inner struggle with doubts and fears meant that sometimes the most frightening part of the soldier's existence was not the time of greatest physical danger."

Abner Small of the 16th Maine Regiment reflects on the utter confusion of battle: "After the first volley of musketry, he is a rare man who theorizes, or speculates on the actions of his comrade, or of his regiment, much more on that of the commanding general, three miles distant. The inequalities of the ground, the wooded slopes and deep ravines, the fog, the dense smoke, and the apparent and often real confusion of troops moving in different directions under different orders, utterly preclude the possibility of a correct detailed observation of a battle of any magnitude."

Woodworth's attempts to balance arguments regarding the issue of courage on the battlefield by examining the writings of the post-Vietnam era historian Gerald F. Linderman, who advanced a controversial argument that "high casualty rates had, by the middle of the war, so eroded the soldiers' faith in the value of courage that the men experienced an overall sense of disillusionment."

While other chapters cover the daily life of the Civil War soldiers in the camps, hospitals, and prisons, Woodworth's chapter on the service of African-American troops is most informative and deserves special notice. Included are two wonderful essays by James M. McPherson and Joseph T. Glatthaar, both of whom have written extensively on the war. Woodworth's choice of McPherson's classic *Battle Cry of Freedom* is

highly appropriate in revealing the dilemma of African-American troops serving the North. According to McPherson, the true impetus for using black troops was "the need for labor battalions to free white soldiers for combat." Also, McPherson points to President Lincoln's reluctance to use black troops for combat assignments: "To arm the Negroes would turn 50,000 bayonets against us that were for us." Glatthaar argues, "The failure or success of black troops was largely dependent on the attitudes and approach to training adopted by their white officers." In one of his later essays titled *Why the Confederacy Lost*, Glatthaar gives black troops credit for "arriving in great numbers at the critical moment, and their contribution on and off the battlefield, in conjunction with those of whites, were enough to force the enemy to capitulate." Woodworth's book is a fine introduction to the Civil War for the casual reader, in addition to being a great supplement to a history textbook on the Civil War era.

Among the most studied leaders of the Confederacy, Colonel John Singleton Mosby (1833–1816) will be forever etched in the memory of Civil War students and scholars as the fabled Gray Ghost. Paul Ashdown and Edward Caudill, both journalism professors at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, have produced a new biography that brings the famed partisan ranger alive for twenty-first century students of the Civil War. Mosby's life and myth are examined through the memoirs of the people who rode with him as well as through the eyes of the news media, popular literature, art, and television. Thus, Ashdown and Caudill have assembled a work that addresses the issues of history versus memory.

They frame their work in the life and legend of Mosby, calling to mind not only his achievements in the Virginia theater of the war, but also how he was remembered by future generations of Civil War scholars and buffs. After all, Mosby himself did not pass from the scene until 1916. Ashdown reflects on his own perception of Mosby, as portrayed in the 1957 television series *The Gray Ghost*. The show was cancelled after its first season, perhaps due to poor timing. The mid-1950's was the era of civil rights activism, particularly *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), and it was considered somewhat insensitive to have such a show on national television.

Ashdown and Caudill tell us that Mosby the soldier "seemed to be everywhere and unbeatable. His brilliant and unconventional tactics were exaggerated in the press, and his ability to elude Union troops seemed uncanny. And so the seeds of a myth were planted in press accounts that reflected the bewilderment and frustration of Northern military leaders, or the fleeting glory and enduring belligerence of the Confederate States of America." In 1909 Mosby donned his old gray butternut uniform of the Confederacy to attend a movie preview of *The Old Soldier's Story*, based on some of his military exploits against General Grant. As Caudill puts it, "Mosby is not only a window on his times but also on our own. In Mosby, one can see the paradoxes in the conflict that eventually tore the nation apart—loyalty to state or nation, but not to both. He fought for the South and after the war went to work for the Federal government he had opposed. He personifies regional pride, grounded in emotion and mythology, which is set against the cold, logical, industrial work that was emerging."

Ashdown and Caudill's work is thoroughly researched, each chapter concluding with a series of detailed notes. The book makes a fine addition to the library of any Civil War scholar or amateur buff.

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