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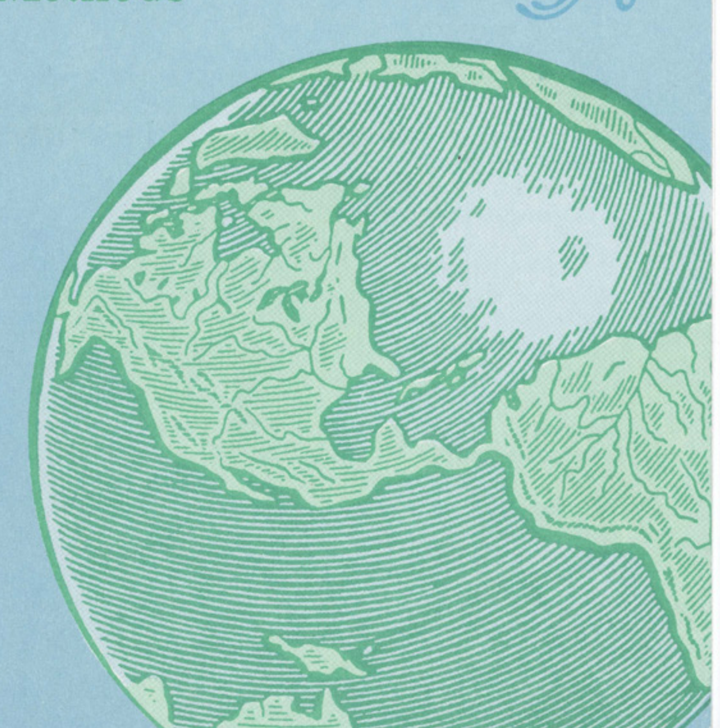
TEACHING HISTORY

A Journal of Methods



TEACHING HISTORY
A JOURNAL OF METHODS

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THE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PAPER AND ELECTRONIC RESOURCES: A CAUTIONARY TALE

Fred R. Van Hartesveldt
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Collecting information to describe, to analyze, and ultimately to reach a conclusion about human development is what historians do. One of the most important ways students learn this process is the research paper. It is true that the growth of the World Wide Web and the availability of other electronic resources have made research easier for many students and certainly have made primary materials more accessible than ever before. But have such modern technical advances actually rendered the educational process easier and less time consuming? Or does the very power of the technology not only create new problems but also exacerbate old ones?

There is a great deal of "magical" thinking about the effect of electronic resources on education. President Bill Clinton has called for access to the Internet in every American classroom, to the cheers of "technocrats" and many educators. Microsoft advertises its net browsing software and "interactive" CD-ROM reference materials by showing students completing their homework with the click of a mouse button. All this "hype" is a celebration of form over substance. Such thinking commonly "equate[s] information with knowledge, and research with information or diffusion of information."[1]

Unfortunately, demagoguery and overstatement from educators and politicians have led students--and some teachers--to believe that using the computer will make their work dramatically easier while improving quality. On my campus "technology infusion" in instruction has become a required category in faculty evaluation, and there is much emphasis on the importance of using electronic resources in teaching--without the presentation of any evidence that such methods are inherently superior to others. Colleagues from other fields are eager to explain how much history can be found on the Net and sometimes seem puzzled why the institution even bothers to offer courses in such an easily accessible area.

The Internet does offer access to many resources, ranging from journal articles that are not available in the university library to primary sources that used to require a visit to an archive to find. A good example of such material is U.S. Census data[2] that have become available to virtually any student on any campus. The need for the Adobe Acrobat Reader in addition to a good browser to access some parts of the site

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[1]Mario Bunge, " A Humanist's Doubts about the Information Revolution," *Free Inquiry*, 17 (Spring 1977), 26.

[2]http://www.census.gov (April 18, 1998). The date shown in parenthesis at the end of Web references indicates the last time the author accessed the site shown.

makes it a bit inconvenient, but the availability of demographic data broken down, in many cases, to the county level is certainly useful. The National Archives and Records Administration[3] has some 35, 760 items on line, in addition to finding aids for much of its collection, although at present the latter help only in preparing for a visit to the archives. A valuable assessment of American history resources on the Web can be found in a recent article in the *Journal of American History*.[4]

The opportunity to research such materials is clearly valuable, but all the click of a mouse button achieves by itself is plagiarism. With very limited computer skills, a student can download and insert blocks of text directly into his or her composition. The material need not even be retyped to be turned in; the word processor will make the format consistent for printing. Worse, whole papers can be downloaded from the Internet for a small fee.[5] The possibility of buying a paper is, of course, not new, but the convenience of doing so via the Net is much greater than with past methods. The Net also makes it particularly easy for purveyors to gather papers from a variety of sources into a pool from which students literally all over the world can draw. An essay might be resold many times without much danger of its being submitted to the same instructor twice. Multiple use creates volume sales and keeps the price down. In addition to such commercial sources, the World Wide Web, now estimated to comprise more than 320 million pages,[6] is filled with essays concerning an enormous number of subjects. It is, as one critic says, "a worldwide vanity press."[7]

The vast amount of material makes it more important than ever for a professor to follow student work in detail. Without this increased oversight, the result is likely to be more acceptance of plagiarized papers or a reduction in the amount of research-based writing. The variety of material available is so great that the hints of style and format that in the past might have suggested copied material are less likely to appear. Checking a student's footnotes is quite difficult. To be dependable, it must be done using the same search parameters with the same search engine. Even that is no guarantee. The Web is constantly shifting and growing, and search engines are not very efficient. The very best, HotBot, covers only a little more than one-half of the

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[3]http://www.nara.gov (May 1, 1998).

[4]Michael O'Malley and Roy Rosenzweig, "Brave New World or Blind Alley? American History on the World Wide Web," *Journal of American History*, 84 (June 1997), 132-155.

[5]See http://schoolsucks.com (May 1, 1998) as an example of sites developed to providing papers for fees. They also provide crude endorsements of and encouragement for cheating.

[6]Steve Lawrence and C. Lee Giles, "Searching the World Wide Web," *Science*, 280 (April 3, 1998), 100.

[7]Todd Oppenheimer, "The Computer Delusion," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 280 (July 1997), 61.

Web, and the worst tested, Lycos, only 4.41%.[8] Since the engines use different methods of searching, results from one to another might be different even when seeking the same topic. Thus, cited material might be gone from the Web, missed by the search engine, or found only after a merry chase through hundreds of sites. Some instructors require submission of printed copies of all Web sources cited, but doing so certainly makes use of the Web more cumbersome than it should be or than traditional library sources.

Cheating is only one pedagogical problem that is worsened by electronic sources. Especially for students in their first years of college who are really trying to do honest research, the Internet often means more work than old-fashioned methods. One of the fallacious claims for electronic resources is that they provide vitally important new information. I have been involved as a student and professor in higher education for more than thirty years, and it has not been my experience that research by undergraduate history students--especially in the first two years of matriculation--has been seriously impeded by a lack of information.[9] Majors in upper-division courses at small colleges sometimes do lack primary materials that the Net can provide.[10] The Net also makes available various databases of articles, such as the University System of Georgia's GALILEO,[11] and with increasing frequency these provide full text of the items listed. This is, of course, only an accelerated interlibrary loan service and new only in convenience.

The rest of the flood of information on the Net is more problematical, for both student and professor. As humorist Dave Barry once said "all the information on the information superhighway was put there by people, and so most of it is wrong." Perhaps not most of it, but how is a student who starts with relatively little knowledge

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[8]Lawrence and Giles, 98.

[9]For a discussion of the impact of the current flood of information and the role of schools in managing it, see Neil Postman, "Technology: The Broken Defenses," in *Technology and the Future*, 7th ed., ed. by Albert H. Teich (New York, 1977), 28, *passim*.

[10]High school teachers with whom I discussed the use of the Internet at the 1997 Georgia Council of Teachers of English convention were often enthusiastic about the materials they had found on it, especially those in rural and/or poor districts, where traditional resources were limited. But every one reported spending what seemed to me inordinate amounts of time on monitoring students to prevent access to salacious sites being obtained. No one had any thoughts about why it might not be easier to print out material from good Web sites and use it in that form.

[11]"GALILEO is a suite of applications which includes the databases accessing the various electronic indexes to newspapers, periodicals, and journals (Periodical Abstracts, MLA, *Contemporary Authors, et al.*); various 'hot links' under the 'Internet Resources' button; and access to the WWW via any of several search engines." Description provided by Jerry Brown, Reference Librarian, Hunt Memorial Library, Fort Valley State University.

supposed to judge? Critical discrimination among sources requires significant knowledge of the subject and a level of sophistication to be expected from an advanced student, not a beginner. Furthermore, the nature of the Web makes such discrimination significantly more difficult than in a library.[12]

In learning to evaluate sources, students traditionally had a number of supports. Any book bought for the university library was thought by an author, an editor, and an acquisition librarian, at least, to have some value. The tests for scholarly journal articles have generally been even more stringent. Journalistic sources are less dependable, but those in university libraries, by and large, have been done by professionals. In the library, student decisions about what to use as sources have been based on such considerations as the degree of primary information, effectiveness of argument, and accuracy as determined by comparison with other sources. Information on the Net, however, is subject to no refereeing or editing and might be--often is[13]--deliberately intended to mislead. Whereas a university press might be presumed trustworthy, a university Web site might have material so controversial and incorrect that separate disclaimers have to be posted.[14] Most historians would regard it as foolish to take a first-year student to the National Archives, get him or her permission to use documents, and then leave him or her to do research. And that would be foolishness that had librarians and archivists to direct it, using documents chosen for their historical value. In other words, even if the Net were simply an extension of the library, the student would be faced with many additional hours of reading, and the professor with the necessity of much more time-consuming supervision over the basic

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[12]Librarians are beginning to recognize this problem and to suggest solutions. See Marsha Tate and Jan Alexander, "Teaching Critical Evaluation Skills for World Wide Web Resources," *Computers in Libraries* (Nov.-Dec. 1996), 49-55. For additional comment see also Oppenheimer, 61.

[13]According to a Knight-Ridder syndicate investigation, the Ku Klux Klan maintains over 200 sites at present. *The Macon Telegraph*, March 15, 1997. The number concerned with paranormal phenomena, mostly treating completely unconfirmed events, powers, and entities as scientific fact, is also huge. A recent survey limited entirely to Yahoo identified more than 1000. See Clifford A. Pickover, "Paranormal Web Sites Proliferate," *Skeptical Inquirer*, 22 (May-June 1998), 12. See also Oppenheimer, 61.

[14]The reference is, of course, to Northwestern University and the page of Arthur Butz: http://pubweb.acns.nwu.edu/~abuta/ (April 17, 1998). Butz supports the idea that the Nazis did not conduct a Holocaust during World War II. Northwestern's disclaimers (see http://www.nwu.edu/president/news/970107-Butz.html [April 17, 1998]) appropriately defend freedom of expression, but are separate items. Butz's page provides reference to his book *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* (Torrence, CA, 1976), and the *Journal of Historical Review*, published by the Institute for Historical Review, which is devoted to denying the Holocaust.

collection of information.[15] One might argue, along with John Stuart Mill, that exposure to false ideas is a good--perhaps the best--way to refine one's own thinking, but in practice such an argument is unrealistic in dealing with freshmen and sophomores, who are mostly being taught a one-term survey course.

The nature of the medium, furthermore, makes the Web much more difficult to use than a library annex, and so creates even more problems for students and their teachers. Every bit of information is immediate, and there is no apparent distinction. A student might be reading an article in the *American Historical Review* and in a click or two of a button be presented with completely unsubstantiated, perhaps deliberately falsified, information about the same subject.[16] The student's potential confusion is also worsened by his experience of the medium. He is seeing what is, in effect, a television, a source he has depended on for information for most of his life.[17] Today's students might also have been influenced by Channel One[18] in public school and almost certainly have seen videotapes in class that were treated with the same respect as books. He or she might even have had one of the new "distance learning" courses presented entirely by television. Suddenly the previously trusted television is--sometimes--a liar.

The confusion about the virtue of Internet sources is also worsened by what seems to me a growing confusion between virtual reality and reality.[19] Even the emerging

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[15]S.J. Marcus, "Ask the Librarian: Finding Research Quality Information on the Web," *Technology Review*, 99 (Nov.-Dec. 1996), 5. See Also O'Malley and Rosenzweig, 138.

[16]Gertrude Himmelfarb, "A Neo-Luddite Reflects on the Internet," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Nov. 1, 1996), A56. As a practical example, see Robert A. Peterson, "A Tale of Two Revolutions," *The Freeman*, Online--http://www.self-gov.org/freeman/8908pete.htm (May 27, 1997), and James J. Drummey, "Their Sacred Honor," *The New American* (June 24, 1996), Online--http://www.jbs.org/sacrdnr.htm (May 27, 1997) for two quite different and opinionated depictions of the American revolution; one from the John Birch Society, presented very much as scholarly journal articles. Although one might not have expected freshmen in the past to stumble on such items, one of my students reported they were quickly on his screen as he used hyperlinks to pursue material on revolutions. A senior, he recognized that this material, while useful, was not necessarily the production of objective scholars.

[17]This subject is discussed by B. Keith Murphy, "The Men in Black: The Use of Narrative to Establish Victimage in Conspiracy Theory," *The Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Narrative* (1996), ed. by Joachim Knuf (in press).

[18]Mark Crispin Miller, "How To Be Stupid: The Lessons of Channel One," *Extra!*, 10 (May-June 1997), 18-23.

[19]Clifford Stoll, *Silicon Snake Oil: Second Thoughts on the Information Highway* (New York, 1995). Stoll has been involved with the Net since the original ARPANET. His amusing but often very thoughtful book should be on the reading list of everyone seriously excited about the new world being created by computer technology.

vocabulary for describing the Internet reflects this problem. A collection of information and images (what a troglodyte like me calls a book) is a Web site. Site? Isn't a site a real place? Computer enthusiasts speak of visiting both actual and Web sites, however. Would anyone equate visiting the Web site devoted to the battle of the Somme[20] with walking over the site of the battle in France? Regrettably, such equation seems to happen. In a lecture to the Fort Valley State University faculty, Donald Farmer, an historian of ideas from King's College in Pennsylvania, described a project using the World Wide Web that he assigned to his class in Japanese culture.[21] Via the Web, the students were able to "stroll" through a number of Japanese gardens and then write about the aesthetics represented in them. Surely, Professor Farmer does not equate sitting at a computer in a dormitory amidst the fragrances of unwashed laundry, leftover pizza, and stale beer, or even in a harshly lit, institutionally decorated library, and looking at pictures with physically being in a Japanese garden. Even granting some virtues to being able to make choices about what to look at (which a film does not offer) and about movement (which a book does not offer), all that has really happened is that the student looked at pictures of Japanese gardens and read or heard a narrative. If the garden assignment is presented to students with no allusion to the limitations of the experience, it will certainly add to their confusion about the value of material drawn from the Internet. Once again, the pedagogical reality is that a beginning student--more often than not an advanced student also--will require more help than ever before from mentors if he or she is to cope effectively with research. Even with that help, he or she will spend more--not the often proclaimed less--time on his or her project. My argument here is not that the "virtual" experience is unhelpful, but that it is not what it is portrayed to be. A substantive secondary source is better than a superficial one, but being better does not convert it into a primary source. Such miraculous conversion is exactly what is being claimed by suggesting that virtual reality is real.[22]

There is yet another problem for history students in the use of Internet sources. Efforts to cope with the vast number of sources available can result in a damaging

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[20]http://www.somme.com/ (May 1, 1998).

[21]Donald W. Farmer, Consultant, Fort Valley State University Faculty Workshop on Assessment, January 24-25, 1997.

[22]For an example of treating the virtual as real see *Parade Magazine* (Aug. 7, 1997), 7. In suggesting good sites for children the editors comment that at http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/kids/html/home.html (May 1, 1998 "... kids can tour the President's home" and at http://www.dinosociety.org/homepage.html (May 1, 1998) they can have "visits to dinosaur digs." While in themselves these might be trivial examples, imprecision in language has always been one of the greatest banes of education. How much worse is it if the imprecise language represents confusion about what is real?- Educators cannot control the popular media, but they should not fall into the same sloppiness and error.

narrowness of focus. An undergraduate's paper is more likely to lack context than specific facts about a topic. For example, an extraordinary knowledge of the trials and tribulations of the Lewis and Clark expedition is worth much more if the journey is set into the context of the Louisiana Purchase. But accumulating general knowledge is time-consuming, and its value is not obvious to students. The nature of computer search software, unfortunately, promotes narrow research, removing the need to read the chapter in which a subject is discussed. A "find" command will take one right to the particular information sought. Often hyperlinks will allow a jump to more very specific information. Such research represents poor methodology, but without a professor looking over the shoulder, a student is likely to be tempted. The result of students using this very convenient means of expanding their bibliographies--unless the professor spends increased time helping with the initial research and/or suggesting revisions and rereading the paper--is that the students get a lower grade than expected without quite understanding what went wrong. Using electronic tools, as valuable as they can be, demands more rather than less time from all concerned.

In many ways, then, the use of electronic resources magnifies faults that students have always had, forcing them and their professors to work harder and to develop a more sophisticated research ability much earlier in their matriculation than ever before. I recently learned this in practice from one of my first-year students. The young man, an African-American, was to write on the topic: "The Ku Klux Klan in the 1990s: Real Threat or Kooks?" Although instructed to hand in a bibliography and outline and given the option of having rough drafts reviewed, he did nothing until the deadline was near. Then he typed "Ku Klux Klan" into one of the standard search engines and was promptly viewing a Klan homepage. Not only did this give him lots of information, it also had links that at the click of his mouse button took him to other Klan sites.[23] In half an hour he had downloaded the suggested minimum number of sources. His paper presented the KKK as a white equivalent of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and David Duke as the equivalent of Martin Luther King, Jr. He was taken aback when the paper was criticized as one-sided and his uncritical use of sources cost him grade points. He had access to some excellent primary sources for his research, but the computer had made it easier to delay and still do the minimum research, easier to get one-sided sources, and harder to realize that the sources were biased. Neither he nor I worked hard enough on that paper.

Although some people maintain that the nature of the medium makes the effort of research seem more like fun than work to the student of the 1990s, [24] the real work

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[23]He saw 10 of the 200 plus that are reportedly available. See "Web of Fear," *The Macon Telegraph*, March 15, 1997.

[24]Oppenheimer, 47-48.

never starts until the information from which the paper is to be written has been acquired (in other words, after leaving the library or exiting Netscape). Of course, convenient access to sources is a good thing for graduate students, but for undergraduates, and especially those in survey courses, that is not so true. The latter are in the process of learning methodology and acquiring context, and once beyond superficiality, breadth is more important than depth. They must learn what to do with information and how it fits into the larger picture. Being overwhelmed with quantity at the beginning of the process is not helpful. Past generations of historians learned their craft in old-fashioned libraries, and, as they gained skill and background knowledge, they sought increasingly detailed and extensive resources. Finding such resources is now sometimes easier thanks to the Internet, but their value is still dependent on the ability to use them effectively. That skill is only developed--the fun promised by Big Bird on Sesame Street notwithstanding--in the laborious, traditional manner.

My technologically-oriented colleagues, who often seem strangely defensive, and react to my cautiousness about electronic sources as if I were joining the Iraqi government's newspaper, *Al Jumhuriya*, in condemning the Internet as "the end of civilizations, cultures, and ethics."[25] They then spend much time telling me about what the Net will be like in the future when all its problems have been solved[26]--as though my concerns were based on technological problems. The assumption always seems to be that computers offer only the best for education. Although there has been much research that argues in favor of computers in the classroom (with the debate mostly focused on lower grade levels), questions have been raised.[27] I suspect that it will be some years--more likely decades--before there is any consensus about the effect of computers on education. It is certainly premature to abandon the printed word, although some libraries seem so inclined. The San Francisco public library disposed

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[25]AP Wire Online, February 17, 1997, at http://www.wire.ap.org.

[26]For an example of this sort of enthusiasm about what might be, see J.M. Barrie and D.E. Presti, "The World Wide Web as an Instructional Tool," *Science*, 274 (Oct. 18, 1996), 371-2. The idea of correcting technical problems with more technology is neither new nor without critics. See John McDermott, "Technology: The Opiate of the Intellectuals," in *Technology and the Future*, 7th ed., ed. By Albert H. Teich (New York, 1977), 77-92.

[27]For popular comments see Stoll, *passim*; Oppenheimer, 45-62; Lyric Wallwork Winik, "Do Computers Help Children Learn?" *Parade Magazine* (Feb. 2, 1997), 8-9. More scholarly questioners include Stephen Kerr (ed.), *Technology in the Future of Schooling* (Chicago, 1996); Sherry Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (New York, 1995); Neil Postman, *The End of Education* (New York, 1995); Jane Healy, *Endangered Minds: Why Children Don't Think and What We Can Do About It* (New York, 1990); Larry Cuban, *Teachers and Machines: The Classroom Use of Technology Since 1920* (New York, 1920); Himmerlfarb, A56; O'Malley and Rosenzweig, 133, 136-138.

of more than 100,000 books to make room for more terminals,[28] and the New York Public Library reduced browsing opportunities in favor of a computer catalog that provides limited access and confuses even some who work professionally with computerized information retrieval.[29] My concern is guiding student research through the maze as it exists today. I think that such guidance is going to take a great deal of time and effort to overcome the nature of the medium and the enormous variety of sources it provides. Students will need help from professors who not only understand the value of electronic research, but who also understand its difficulties and pitfalls. And they will need teachers who do not fall into the trap of magical thinking and assume that the problems and hard work of research and writing have been electronically whisked into the pages of history.

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[28]*Morning Edition*, National Public Radio, February 20, 1997.

[29]Ingrid Eisenstadter, "My Turn: A Tangled Info Web," *Newsweek* (February 17, 1997), 16.

ONE TEACHER'S EXPERIENCES WITH STUDENT PORTFOLIOS

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At the start of my second year of teaching, I faced the challenges and pressures felt by all educators upon returning to the classroom. I experienced feelings of confidence and self-doubt simultaneously. My first year as a teacher had been rewarding and fulfilling; I knew I had chosen a profession I could truly enjoy. My greatest fear, however, was that I would remain content with lessons that had "worked" during my first year of teaching and that I would become satisfied with what teachers fresh out of university methods classes might consider mediocre. Therefore, as I looked toward the start of the fall semester, I established several personal and professional goals. In order to compel myself and my students to engage in active learning processes, I decided that one of my goals would be to guide them in the development of portfolios.

Prior to my employment at Naperville North High School, I graduated from Illinois State University with a B.A. degree in history. As a product of the history education program at Illinois State, I felt prepared in both content and methodology. As I began my second year of teaching, I was reminded of a problem facing Henry Adams, who in 1870 was to teach medieval history at Harvard College. Granted, I do not claim the intellectual acumen of Adams; nor are all my students at Naperville bound for an Ivy League experience. In my brief career, I have come to empathize with Adams, however, for he was a history teacher who wanted so desperately to motivate his students to love history as he did and to involve them more actively in its study.[1] Adams believed his efforts in discussion, lecture, and use of the "historical method" were illusory pleasures at best. He speculated that "the number of students whose minds were above the average was ... barely one in ten; the rest could not be much stimulated by any inducements a teacher could suggest." He therefore decided to "try to cultivate the tenth mind, though necessarily at the expense of the other nine."[2] While I confess that Adams's conclusion has tempted me, I have vowed that I would succeed in engaging *all* my students in an understanding of the past.

My methods class at Illinois State University had encouraged me to construct history lessons that utilized the broad range of abilities students possess, namely, to develop students' seven multiple intelligences (now eight), as proposed and

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[1]Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918), 300-304.

[2]Adams, 302.

categorized by Howard Gardner.[3] My methods classes encouraged me to construct lessons that foster student analysis of primary sources in various mediums, draw upon sources from a number of disciplines, and include individuals from the past who represent diverse segments of society. Thus, during my student teaching experience and my first full year of teaching at Naperville North High School, I implemented a variety of sources to help students construct a meaning of the past and to recognize the importance of history in the curriculum.[4] Moreover, I tried diligently to assess my students' knowledge and skills through traditional assessment practices (multiple choice and essay tests) and to develop classroom activities that required alternative means of assessing what my students know and are able to do.

During my last semester at Illinois State, my history methods instructors were beginning to write a book on alternative assessment.[5] In my methods classes, we discussed "alternative assessment," the use of "rubrics," and the creation of "portfolios."[6] In fact, we were required to produce our own teaching portfolios to demonstrate our capabilities as teachers and to prepare ourselves better for the interview process. I thought the creation of these portfolios had been vital to my development as a student and as a future educator. Compiling examples of my best work compelled me to focus on the content knowledge and reasoning skills I acquired as a student. At the same time, selecting items for inclusion and defending these selections required me to organize my thoughts and to recognize important themes and concepts in my study of history and in my preparation as an educator.

I believe that the purpose of schooling and assessment is to foster the development of standardized knowledge, while simultaneously making the knowledge personal and contextual. After my first year of teaching, I decided I wanted my students to have an opportunity to reflect on the work they completed throughout the

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[3]Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

[4]Paul Gagnon and The Bradley Commission on History in Schools, ed., *Historical Literacy: The Case for History in American Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989).

[5]My methods instructors eventually wrote an alternative assessment book for the Illinois State Board of Education. See Lawrence W. McBride, Frederick D. Drake, and Marcel Lewinski, *Alternative Assessment in the Social Sciences* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Board of Education, 1996).

[6]Two works are particularly helpful regarding portfolios. Teachers who are interested in developing their own portfolios should see, John Zubizarreta, "Teaching Portfolios and the Beginning Teacher," *Phi Delta Kappan* (December 1994), 323-326. Teachers who are interested in encouraging their students to develop portfolios should see, "Testing and Grading Strategies," Chapter 11 in Merrill Harmin, *Inspiring Active Learning: A Handbook for Teachers* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1994), 142-154. My portfolio project is different than the suggestions of Merrill Harmin. However, Harmin's chapter might to helpful to teachers.

semester and to recognize the content knowledge and reasoning skills they gained and hopefully had come to appreciate. I began the semester by introducing students to "History's Vital Themes and Narratives"[7] and "History's Habits of Mind."[8] The National Council for History Education (formerly known as The Bradley Commission on History in Schools) outlined six "Vital Themes and Narratives" and thirteen "Habits of Mind" for the study of history. (See figures 1A and 1B. Used by permission of the National Council for History Education.) I planned to emphasize "History's Vital Themes and Narratives" and "Habits of Mind" throughout the semester. I wanted students to use the "Habits of Mind" as a starting point to stimulate their thinking about the past. "History's Vital Themes and Narratives" would provide the structural framework and a way to organize their knowledge of history. Like Henry Adams I wanted "to teach [my] students something not wholly useless."[9] I hoped that organizing our study of the past through a thematic construct would make history relevant for my students. Thus, I began the experiment of assigning students the responsibility of creating their own portfolios as a way to engage them in an active learning process that required them to construct their own meaning of history.

Helping Students Succeed

Naperville North High School has a rich tradition of excellence among its faculty, students, and administrators. Therefore, I knew that initiating a form of assessment through the use of portfolios would be met with enthusiastic support from members of the Social Studies Department and the administration. My major concern was selling the idea to the students. Although many Naperville North students are highly motivated and focused, most of the student body is made up of typical high schoolers. My explanation of the creation of portfolios was met with a spark of interest from some, quiet acceptance from others, and outright protest from a select few. Determined and still idealistic, I plunged in and explained the purpose of the portfolios and why they would be beneficial to students in their lives. I attempted to entice them by relating the creation of portfolios as a way to prepare for college entrance and for job interviews. During the orientation session to developing portfolios, which was during the first week of the semester, my students expressed misgivings but accepted the idea overall. After the orientation, I suspect most stuffed the explanation and criteria sheets I had distributed into their folders and forgot about the entire project. (See Appendix on the "Portfolio Project.")

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[7]Gagnon, 26-27, and The Bradley Commission on History in Schools, *Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in Schools* (Education Excellence Network, 1988-1989), 10-11.

[8]Gagnon, 25-26, and The Bradley Commission, 9.

[9]Adams, 302.

Figure 1A

Vital Themes

Civilization, cultural diffusion, and innovation.

Human interaction with the environment.

Values, beliefs, political ideas, and institutions.

Conflict and cooperation.

Comparative history of major developments.

Patterns of social and political interaction.

The Bradley Commission on History in Schools, *Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in Schools* (Education Excellence Network, 1988-1989). Used with permission.

Figure 1B

History's Habits of Mind

...acquire at one and the same time a comprehension of diverse cultures and of shared humanity.

...understand how things happen and how things change, out of the tangle between purpose and process.

...grasp the complexity of historical causation, respect particularity, and avoid excessively abstract generalizations.

...understand the significance of the past to their own lives

...appreciate the often tentative nature of judgments about the past, and thereby avoid the temptation to sieze upon particular "lessons" of history as cures for present ills.

...comprehend the interplay of change and continuity, and avoid assuming that either is somehow more natural, or more to be expected, than the other.

...prepare to live with uncertainties and exasperating--even perilous--unfinished business, realizing that not all "problems" have solutions.

...recognize the importance of individuals who have made a difference in history, and the significance of personal character for both good and ill.

...appreciate the force of the nonrational, the irrational, the accidental, in history and human affairs.

...read widely and critically in order to recognize the difference between fact and conjecture, between evidence and assertion, and thereby to frame useful questions.

...understand the relationship between geography and history as a matrix of time and place, and as context for events.

...perceive past events and issues as they were experienced by people at the time, to develop historical empathy as opposed to present-mindedness.

...distinguish between the important and the inconsequential, to develop the "discriminating memory" needed for a discerning judgment in public and personal life.

The Bradley Commission on History in Schools, *Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in Schools* (Education Excellence Network, 1988-1989). Used with permission.

My teaching assignments for the semester consisted of classes in ancient history and United States history survey II (the antebellum period to the First World War). Ancient history students are ninth-grade students who have an interest in history content and take the ancient/medieval history sequence of study offered at North to meet their world history requirement. U.S. history survey II students are mainly juniors who enroll in the course to satisfy an American history requirement for graduation. The range of student interest, creativity, and intellectual capability varies in both courses, and the development of portfolios would exemplify student diversity. The creation of student portfolios confirmed one of my major beliefs as an educator: All students can succeed in the classroom if given the opportunity to express their knowledge and interests in ways that have personal relevance and meaning.

Building the Assignment

After the initial orientation to the portfolio project, I waited a few weeks to discuss with students the criteria that would help them decide what to include in their portfolios. During the criteria session, I asked students what they thought should be in a portfolio. They were reticent and offered very few suggestions other than a test paper or quiz that they might include from the course. Thus, I was compelled to help them realize the potential items that they could include in their portfolios. In the course of our discussion, I encouraged them to select their items based on these two questions: What items will demonstrate "what I know"? And, what items will demonstrate "what I am able to do"? Based on these two fundamental questions, we then discussed the types of items that would help them demonstrate their knowledge and performance. We also decided that they should select ten items to include in their portfolios and that these items would represent the most important work they had completed throughout the semester. I emphasized that the items they selected did not necessarily have to be their best work in which they had earned an "A" or a "B." My major goal was to have students select items to demonstrate that they had learned about the past. In addition to selecting ten items, we decided that a completed portfolio should address questions about the portfolio's contents. We then came up with several questions they would answer on a criteria sheet for each of the ten items. Although students had played an important role in discussing possible items that they could include in their portfolio and the types of questions that could be asked about the items, they were unwilling to discuss any other components of this project. I was disappointed but not surprised that they did not want to continue a discussion of additional requirements. Nevertheless, I told them I thought it would be good for them to write a summary statement in which they explained the most important concept(s) they learned during the semester and for them to schedule a ten-minute interview with me so I could examine and discuss the contents of the portfolio with them.

The class discussions with my students about the items and questions for the portfolio proved important: Students believed they had some ownership in the project.

My decision to require them to write summary statements and schedule an interview, albeit imposed upon the students, proved to be crucial components of the project. Like Adams, I have discovered that a major difficulty in any classroom is getting students "to talk at all." Adams believed that the most beneficial experience in schooling is private consultation with the teacher. He plaintively explained how he "had to devise schemes to find out what they were thinking about, and induce them to risk criticism from their fellows."[10] I certainly hoped the private interviews would foster discussion with me. However, I wanted to go beyond a teacher-centered instruction. I wanted the project to give my students more confidence, prompting them to share their ideas and questions with their peers in the classroom. At the time, however, I felt some trepidation at having made such an instructional decision.

Thus, to initiate the portfolio project I devoted a little over one class period in preparing students for the project with an orientation session taking about the last fifteen minutes of one class period and an initial criteria session taking a whole class period. Throughout the semester my students and I continued our discussions of what might be in a portfolio.

As the end of the semester approached, I reminded students of their responsibilities to complete their portfolios. Most, as I expected, began to panic as the time for final completion of their project drew near. Some students even protested at this point that it did not make sense to "get graded on work we already got graded on." I emphasized that I was interested in their reasons for including the items they chose and their abilities to recognize important ideas we had studied throughout the semester. Tensions began to mount as we scheduled interviews and the due dates approached. I faced uncertainty and doubts. Would the students actually complete their projects? What would the interviews be like? How would they react to my assessment of their knowledge and performance?

Assessment

I had decided at the beginning of this project to utilize a rubric with which I was familiar to aid me in the process of assessment.[11] The rubric (designed by my methods instructors at Illinois State) evaluated student performances in three areas: knowledge, reasoning, and communication. (See Figure 2, "A History Rubric for Alternative Assessment." Used by permission of the authors and *The History Teacher*.) As I set up the assignment, I established the criteria for evaluation with the rubric in mind. I wanted students to demonstrate their content knowledge during the interview process

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[10]Adams, 301-302.

[11]The rubric I used came from Frederick D. Drake and Lawrence W. McBride, "Reinvigorating the Teaching of History through Alternative Assessment," *The History Teacher*, 30 (February 1997), 145-173.

and to be able to give evidence of their historical reasoning. I wanted them to demonstrate their reasoning skills through the selection of the items included in the portfolio. I thought they should be able to justify their choices based on how the assignments they completed contributed to their thinking processes and how their project enabled them to demonstrate their knowledge about history. Finally, I thought students needed an opportunity to show the ability to communicate their ideas effectively. The summary statement and interview, I hoped, would enable them to demonstrate this crucial skill. As I waited for the interviews to begin, I reminded myself of my goals. I was determined to maintain high expectations while remaining flexible and open-minded.

The rubric was an important instructional tool in the process of assessment. I found that as I used it for guidance throughout the semester my understanding of its efficacy changed. Initially I experienced difficulty because I confused the evaluation of knowledge and reasoning skills. Somewhat obsessed with the importance of content, I attempted to categorize too much under the knowledge dimension. I also confused reasoning and communication. After working with the rubric, I believe I have improved in my ability to assess student skills in each of the three dimensions. Through practice, it became easier for me to recognize what constitutes reasoning and how the skill differs from a demonstration of knowledge and communication. To aid myself in evaluation, I developed my own criteria specific to the assignment based on the generic guidelines provided by the history rubric.

The Interviews

The experience of interacting with each student on an individual level for ten minutes fascinated me. I discovered new information about students whom I had taught for an entire semester but unfortunately knew little about. With large class sizes and daily administrative demands, some students inevitably are overlooked. I do not excuse myself for such occurrences, but I recognize they do exist. The individual interviews enabled me to learn more about some students and build on my relationships with students I already "knew well."

During the interviews, I explained that I wanted the students to "take me through" their portfolios and explain "why you selected what you selected." I asked them to focus on what each item represented to them and how it demonstrated the work they had done as students of history. I was impressed with the analysis and synthesis inherent in their responses. Students selected a wide assortment of projects and daily assignments to represent their work. Many chose group projects, Venn Diagrams, journal entries, essays, and research papers. Political cartoons, posters, and maps were popular items as well. As students explained the rationale behind their selections, I realized they truly understood the purpose of assignments in which they had been engaged. They explained how the Venn Diagram on Sumerian society enabled them to show they could "separate the parts that make up a society and show how they

Figure 2

A History Rubric for Alternative Assessment

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge of evidence from history: facts/supporting details/themes/issues; and concepts/issues

6
- Key concepts/Vital Themes and Narratives/issues/ideas are thoroughly identified, defined, and described
- Significant facts/supporting details are included and accurately described
- Has no factual inaccuracies

5
- Key concepts/Vital Themes and Narratives/issues/ideas are considerably identified, defined, and described
- Facts/supporting details are included
- Has only minor factual inaccuracies

4
- Key concepts/Vital Themes and Narratives/issues are partially identified, defined, and described
- Some facts/supporting details are included
- May have a major factual inaccuracy, but most information is correct

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3
- Some key concepts/Vital Themes and Narratives/issues/ideas are identified, defined, and described
- Few facts/supporting details are included
- Has some correct and some incorrect information

2
- Few key concepts/Vital Themes and Narratives/issues/ideas are identified, defined, and described
- Facts/supporting details are not included
- Information is largely inaccurate or irrelevant

1
- Key concepts/Vital Themes and Narratives/issues/ideas are not identified, defined, and described
- Facts/supporting details are not included
- Information is inaccurate or absent

Figure 2 (cont.)

REASONING

Analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence

6

- **Identifies and logically organizes all relevant evidence**
- **Uses appropriate and comprehensive critical thinking skills and Habits of Mind to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize evidence**
- **Reaches informed conclusions based on the evidence**

5

- **Identifies and logically organizes most of the relevant evidence**
- **Uses appropriate and critical thinking skills and Habits of Mind to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize evidence**
- **Reaches informed conclusions based on the evidence**

4

- **Identifies and organizes some of the relevant evidence**
- **Uses partial critical thinking skills and Habits of Mind to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize evidence**
- **Reaches informed conclusions based on the evidence**

3

- **Identifies some of the relevant evidence but omits other evidence**
- **Uses incomplete critical thinking skills and Habits of Mind to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize evidence**
- **Reaches incomplete conclusions based on the evidence**

2

- **Identifies little relevant evidence and omits most of the evidence**
- **Uses unclear or inappropriate critical thinking skills and Habits of Mind to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize evidence**
- **Reaches inaccurate conclusions based on the evidence**

1

- **Important evidence relevant to the problem is not identified**
- **Critical thinking skills and Habits of Mind are absent**
- **Conclusions are lacking or unclear**

Figure 2 (cont.)

COMMUNICATION

Demonstrates knowledge and reasoning through oral, written, visual, dramatic, or mixed media presentation

6
- All ideas in the presentation are expressed in a way that provides evidence of the student's knowledge and reasoning processes
- The presentation is well focused with a well-defined thesis
- Presentation shows substantial evidence of organization
- Presentation shows attention to the details of specific performance conventions

5
- Most ideas in the presentation are expressed in a way that provides evidence of the student's knowledge and reasoning processes
- The presentation demonstrates a focus and thesis with minimal narrative gaps
- Presentation shows sufficient evidence of organization
- Presentation has minor mistakes in attention to the details of specific performance conventions

4
- Some ideas in the presentation are expressed in a way that provides evidence of the student's knowledge and reasoning processes
- The presentation demonstrates a focus and thesis with several narrative gaps
- Presentation demonstrates adequate evidence of organization
- Presentation has mistakes in attention to the details of specific performance conventions

3
- Few ideas in the presentation are expressed in a way that provides evidence of the student's knowledge and reasoning processes
- The presentation demonstrates an inadequate focus and thesis
- Presentation demonstrates inadequate evidence of organization
- Presentation has insufficient attention to the details of specific performance conventions

2
- Most ideas in the presentation are not clearly expressed
- The presentation demonstrates insufficient focus and a poorly defined thesis
- Presentation demonstrates insufficient evidence of organization
- Presentation has multiple mistakes in attention to the details of specific performance conventions

1
- Expression of all ideas in the presentation is unclear
- The presentation demonstrates little focus and lacks a thesis
- Presentation demonstrates little evidence of organization
- Presentation has no attention to the details of specific performance conventions

Frederick D. Drake and Lawrence W. McBride, "Reinvigorating the Teaching of History through Alternative Assessment," *The History Teacher*, 30 (February 1997): 145-173. Used with permission.

relate." They majority of students claimed they enjoyed writing journal entries and letters from the perspective of people living during the time period because such work made them "feel" like they were there. One assignment that was particularly popular among ancient history students required them to write a letter to an eight-year old in which they explained the situation in Rome after the Punic Wars and Tiberus Gracchus's attempts at reform. Several students commented that having to write a letter to a younger person compelled them to really think about the topic. One student explained, "If I have to explain it to someone younger, I have to understand it myself."

Students in United States history also offered insightful reasons for including some of the items they selected. Since I incorporated the use of political cartoons as primary sources frequently in class, most students inserted in their portfolios political cartoons they had drawn. One student included two political cartoons and justified his selection because, "I did really bad on the first one, but the second one was better. It shows I 'got it.'" Another assignment that seemed to have an impact on students was one that required them to compose an essay in response to an article on whether English should be made the official language of the United States. Students liked this assignment because "it related immigrants [which was our topic at the time] to stuff today, and I got to say what I think and use stuff from history." As an educator, I was truly impressed with the ability of high school students to recognize the importance of discussions that take place in the classroom and the true purpose for completing the assignments I make.

Summarizing Concepts

Including a "summary statement" in student portfolios seemed vitally important to me. I wanted to learn what concepts students thought were most significant. I was anxious to read what ideas they thought had contributed to their development as students of history throughout the semester. In describing the requirements and purpose of the "summary statement" on the criteria sheet, I purposefully left the assignment open-ended. I realized that my ambiguity might cause consternation among students, but I wanted to find out how students would respond with as little prompting from me as possible. Overall, I was impressed with the results. The majority of students took the project seriously. They identified and explained a concept that they believed had an impact on them as they studied the past. I felt gratified as I realized that many of my students were able to recognize the vital themes and narratives that historians might use to organize their knowledge. As important, the students were expressing their ideas to please themselves rather than to satisfy my requirements to complete the assignment. The nature of their statements revealed that the ideas they communicated were written as a result of personal examinations and insightful reflections. Students entered the study of the past by utilizing history's habits of mind. The following examples demonstrate the analysis of many students in my history classes.

Example

"I learned a lot of little facts in Survey, but I learned one really big concept. That concept [is] not just events and names. It is different for every person in the world. Another thing about that is history covers everything. During the school year in Survey we not only learned events and peoples, we learned business and economics. History really can't be defined for by the people who lived it, and those people who lived it are every one of us living today and everyone who has ever lived."

-- United States history student

"I think that the most important concept I learned in my study of ancient history is to look at things in terms of wholes. If I did not do that in ancient history, I would be very lost and unable to relate different groups and cultures to one another. Thinking in terms of wholes lets me see how completely different events are like each other or cause one another to happen. If I did not think in terms of wholes, I would not be able to understand why we study history, or why we spend so much time trying to understand it. Ancient history is not the only class in which I have to think in terms of wholes. I have to do it in all classes, so that I can understand and learn from the material we cover. As Roderick Nash said, 'The environmental historian like the ecologist [sh]ould think in terms of wholes, of communities, of interrelationships, and of balances.'"

-- ancient history student

"I entered this class thinking that history is just past information. However, having nearly completed one semester of ancient history, I now recognize that history is an extremely vast field that can help us view the world from multiple perspectives. The study of history can stretch far beyond dates and wars and civilizations. As we study environment, geography, government, trade, religion, social classes, political leaders, art, even currency of the past, we are really using all of the tools/methods of the historian. By looking at all of these different aspects of history, we acquire a richer understanding of the world around us. After all, history is what shapes the future."

--ancient history student

Improvement

After completing my first experience with student portfolios I have the opportunity to evaluate the procedures I used and to recognize the positive and negative aspects of this form of assessment. I have concluded that the use of student portfolios is crucial because the project requires reflection on the part of teachers in their construction of the past. Creating portfolios compels students to examine the knowledge and skills they develop throughout a semester and to place such information in a perspective that has meaning and relevance for them. Portfolios require teachers to reflect on the way they construct the content and teaching methods they incorporate

in each lesson. I was able to identify lessons that had particular interest to students and lessons that students felt caused them to think critically in their study of history. Interviewing students and responding to their comments gave me an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the types of assignments and issues that are of interest to high school students.

The interview process was particularly important in helping me find additional information about my students and to use this information to inform educational decisions. By listening to students and examining their portfolios, I was able to recognize the topics and themes I taught well and those that would need improvement. The extra time and effort I demanded from the students and myself was undeniably time well spent.

In the future I plan to continue using the basic structure and concepts regarding portfolios, but I will make changes. I plan to utilize the history rubric more as an instructional tool. The rubric, with its three dimensions of knowledge, reasoning, and communication, provides the framework for "coaching" my students. It is particularly applicable for helping those who are at the developing level to attain a developed level in all three dimensions. Such coaching procedures will offer students immediate feedback, and it will increase communication opportunities for my students and me. In addition, I will encourage students to interact more with each other as they create their portfolios. I believe that students learn well from their peers and the free exchange of ideas will contribute to both intellectual and interpersonal development. I will, of course, continue requiring personal interviews and summary statements. I believe both these requirements are the crux upon which the success of portfolio development rests.

Furthermore, I would like to strongly consider the students' disposition as they engage in historical inquiry. What attitude does a student have about examining primary sources? How does a student go about gathering information for the portfolio? These are but a few of the questions that I would like to study as I help my students improve their understanding of history.

My brief experience in the use of student portfolios inspires me daily as I teach. The portfolios created by students confirmed my belief that all students are capable of experiencing success in the classroom.

Conclusions

Using portfolios as a form of assessment was the most beneficial and personally rewarding project I have undertaken thus far in my teaching career. Watching my students explain their rationale behind the selections they included in their portfolios helped me to realize that students are concerned with their work and truly do want to do their best. The personal communication in the interviews was vital to the legitimization of this project. The interviews helped me recognize what types of assignments truly have an impact on students and will aid me in the future as I create

new lessons. Interacting with students as they explain why they liked certain activities and how their images of history changed throughout the semester provided me with a focus and renewed sense of direction. As I work to improve on past lessons and strive to create new lessons, I plan to refer to the notes I took during the interviews and concentrate on the types of activities that make history relevant and important to students.

I teach history because I want to provide students with a sense of their place in the world and engage them in lessons that will compel them to think critically as they construct their own meaning of the past. Portfolios help them to reflect upon the meaning of people, events, and ideas of the past. Active learners and reflective thinkers are vital in a fast paced, competitive world. Students must also have a sense of pride in their accomplishments and must be challenged to construct a meaning of history. The portfolio project helped them to recognize their self-worth. I hope that by using portfolios as a form of student assessment I was able to contribute to the development of knowledge, reasoning, and communication skills all citizens need to succeed in our diverse society.

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Appendix

Portfolio Project

Explanation:
Many times prospective employers want to see examples of the type of work you are able to do. Therefore, they may ask you to bring a portfolio with you to a job interview. A portfolio is a collection of papers, projects, or activities you have completed that represent the work you are capable of doing.

This semester you will have the opportunity to create a portfolio for your history class. The portfolio will consist of the work you have done in class throughout the semester. The materials included in the portfolio will represent the best work you have completed in the study of history and will demonstrate the progress you have made during this course.

You will be required to keep all the assignments we complete this semester in a special folder for this class. This semester we will engage in several projects, daily assignments, and special written work. At the end of the course, you will choose the ten assignments that you feel best represent your work and progress as a student of history. You will also participate in an individual conference with Ms. Drake in which you explain your selections and discuss and evaluate your portfolio. Before this meeting, you will complete a preconference self-evaluation form to help you select the items you wish to include in your portfolio and explain the rationale for your selections. The form will address the following questions:

-Why was this item included.?
-What content knowledge is demonstrated by including this item?
-What reasoning skills are demonstrated by this item? What Habit of Mind did I use?
-What was the purpose of the assignment? What did I learn?
-How does this item relate to one of History's Vital Themes and Narratives?

Thematic Organization:
To provide structure for your portfolio, select two of History's Vital Themes and Narratives. Then choose five assignments that apply clearly to each Vital Theme and Narrative. The selections should be chosen from all time periods in history and should be linked conceptually and thematically.

Peer Evaluation:

As a class we will conduct peer evaluation sessions three times during the semester. These sessions should help you to organize your portfolio and improve your ability to explain and rationalize the selections you made.

Requirements:

-10 assignments that represent your work as a student of history.

-Self-evaluation form completed for each selection.

-Identification and explanation of the Vital Theme and Narrative represented in the portfolio (separate from the self-evaluation form).

-Personal statement written and included in the portfolio. The statement should explain the most important concept learned in your study of history.

-Individual conference with Ms. Drake in which you explain your selections and discuss and evaluate your portfolio.

-Representative selections organized in a pocket folder with a table of contents.

Evaluation:

A rubric will be used to evaluate your portfolio. A rubric is an evaluative tool which enables teachers or peers to assess the work of others in a consistent manner. The rubric used to evaluate your portfolio will assess your skills in three areas: knowledge, reasoning, and communication. You have received a copy of this rubric to help you organize your portfolio and understand the expectations of the assignment. If you have any questions, please ask Ms. Drake for clarification. A summary of key elements in each area includes the following:

Knowledge:

-Content knowledge demonstrated

-Supporting details/facts included

-Themes identified

Reasoning:

-Organization evident in selection of items

-Critical thinking skills demonstrated by items and the selection of items

-Conclusions reached

-Selections relate to the identified Vital Theme and Narrative

Communication:

-Expression of ideas demonstrates knowledge and reasoning

-Focus is clear

-Attention to detail/conventions of assignment

Your portfolio will be worth 135 points. It will be due at the time of your scheduled conference.

USING HISTORICAL SITES TO HELP TEACH THE UNITED STATES SURVEY

Gary W. Gallagher
University of Virginia

Everyone who teaches the American history survey in the United States has at hand some historical site that can be integrated into the curriculum. It might be a house or a neighborhood, a road trace, a fort, an old canal or railroad bed, or the remains of an iron furnace. Whatever the nature of the site, it holds the potential to bring a piece of the past vividly to life for students too often conditioned to rely on electronic images to stimulate their imaginations. Historic sites permit students literally to touch our past, and in that moment to make a connection to earlier Americans and their lives that cannot be duplicated in any classroom.

My major field is Civil War-era studies, and I am fortunate that several splendid mid-nineteenth-century sites lay within fairly easy reach of the University Park campus of Penn State. Ten miles away is Curtin Village, a well-interpreted historical settlement that focuses on the nineteenth-century iron-making culture of central Pennsylvania. Slightly farther away are impressive remnants of a canal along the Juniata River that serve as an excellent backdrop for examination of nineteenth-century transportation. For my purposes in this article, however, the sites that are most important are the Civil War battlefields at Antietam and Gettysburg.

I suspect that a poll of most of my academic peers would reveal a consensus that Civil War battlefields hold only limited value for any students except military buffs who want to examine in excruciating detail the tactical movements of regiments and brigades or to evaluate the tactical decisions of generals and colonels. Indeed, in testimony before Congress in 1990 the deputy executive director of the American Historical Association--who claimed to speak not only for the AHA but also for the broad historical community in the United States--opposed congressional support for additional Civil War battlefield preservation on the grounds that it would perpetuate "narrow, antiquated views" of history that give undue emphasis to battles and generals. "Historians today have redefined the study of the Civil War," he stated, "shifting attention from military action to the diverse experiences of individual groups, the impact of emancipation," and the ways in which the war exacerbated old social divisions and created new ones.[1]

Editor's Note: Professor Gallagher moved from Penn State to the University of Virginia during 1998. He has indicated that he will continue to visit two battle sites a semester with his students in his new location.

[1]*Testimony of James B. Gardner, Deputy Executive Director American Historical Association, Before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives, H.R. 3513 and S. 1770, September 4, 1990* (Washington: American Historical Association, 1990), 2-3.

Apart from its quite breathtaking innocence of the myriad ways in which military events during the Civil War shaped all the dimensions of American life he listed as currently important to historians, this testimony radically underestimated the value of Civil War battlefields as tools that can help teachers move well beyond any specific tactical story. Over the ten years I have been taking students to Antietam and Gettysburg, I have found these sites to be singularly effective as aids in helping students place themselves in another time and in helping them understand the people who lived and worked in that time.

Let me start with Antietam, which is located in western Maryland and which, with more than 23,000 casualties in one day, marks the bloodiest single day in American history. My students and I follow the battle chronologically during the course of a six- or seven-hour walking tour. Traversing the field most obviously enables students to grasp what happened militarily at Antietam; more than that, it promotes their shifting mental gears so that they sense the presence of the people who lived during the Civil War. At various stops during the tour, we discuss such topics as the circumstances that sent men into the respective armies, the responses to the war in the different states represented by monuments on the field, the factors that led some slave states such as Maryland to remain in the Union while others seceded, and the postwar efforts to create a suitable public memory of the war that resulted in the erection of the monuments.

Because the battlefield constitutes a tangible link to one of the watershed events in our history, students easily move from specifics concerning what they see in the Sunken Road, or at the Dunker Church, or at Burnside's Bridge, to the larger questions of the era. Did the founding generation envision a true nation, or did they have in mind a collection of semi-autonomous states? Why was emancipation added to restoration of the Union as a second great goal for northern armies? How did events on the battlefield influence morale behind the lines? Were the soldiers in the two armies more alike than different? How did women such as Clara Barton, who made her first major appearance at Antietam, overcome a range of obstacles to play a significant role in a conflict too often seen as exclusively the province of men?

Antietam is especially useful as a site where I can explore the ways in which the battlefield and the home front intersected during the Civil War. For example, I talk about the battle's importance in giving Abraham Lincoln a victory that enabled him to announce his preliminary proclamation of emancipation. I go on to discuss the nature of the proclamation, its relationship to earlier congressional actions such as the Second Confiscation Act, and the shift in historical analysis from a preoccupation with political events in Washington concerning emancipation to a broader interpretation that takes into account the actions of African Americans--both slave and free--that furthered the cause of black freedom during the war.

Antietam also provides a good place at which to discuss the diplomatic implications of military events--how England and France backed away from some type

of mediation in the American war following Robert E. Lee's retreat from Maryland in September 1862. I point out the irony that on September 17, the day Antietam was fought, British Foreign Secretary Lord John Russell agreed with Prime Minister Viscount Palmerston that a victory by Lee's army in Maryland would open the door for Britain to attempt to arrange an end to the conflict.

Finally, I use the battlefield at Antietam to examine internal rifts in northern and southern society. For example, at the Dunker church, which stood at the epicenter of the battle, we discuss conscientious objectors in the North and the fact that western Maryland contained few slaveholders and thus did not welcome the Confederate invaders.[2]

Gettysburg affords an equal number of opportunities to consider broad questions relating to the Civil War. In the National Cemetery, where the students are surrounded by the graves of roughly 4,000 northern soldiers who died at Gettysburg, we talk about what the concept of Union meant to thousands of northerners in the mid-nineteenth-century. In my experience, one of the hardest things to get across to students is some idea of why hundreds of thousands of American risked their lives to hold the Union together. Historian Barbara Fields has labeled preservation of the Union "a goal too shallow to be worth the sacrifice of a single life,"[3] an observation that might seem to make sense to modern students. But Fields's observation overlooks the fact that untold northern men and women did believe the Union worth fighting to preserve, and we cannot understand them or the Civil War unless we try to understand why. No one got to the essence of what the war was about more effectively than Lincoln in the 200-odd words of his address delivered at the dedication of the cemetery in Gettysburg on November 19, 1863. We read those words in the cemetery and discuss how the conflict evolved during its first two years.

The war had begun as a war for Union--a test to see if a republican government could withstand the threat of disunion. At Gettysburg, Lincoln spoke to the widely held belief that the United States was a beacon of democracy in a world where democracy had not yet taken firm root. If the Confederacy succeeded in winning its nationhood, believed Lincoln and other northerners reared on the rhetoric of Daniel Webster, the noble American experiment in democracy would have failed. When the students hear Lincoln's words in the setting of the cemetery, it brings home to them the awful price that thousands paid to keep the Union together. They see evidence of what Lincoln meant when he said the Union dead gathered on that hilltop had "given the last full measure of devotion."

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[2]For another look at Antietam as a classroom, see John F. Votaw, "Old Battlefields and Their Lessons: The Case of Antietam," *Teaching History,* 21 (Spring 1996), 16-21.

[3]Barbara J. Fields, "Who Freed the Slaves," in Geoffrey C. Ward, Ric Burns, and Ken Burns, *The Civil War: An Illustrated History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 178.

Lincoln also touched on the North's second great war aim when he spoke at Gettysburg about the conflict's bringing "a new birth of freedom" to the United States. This affords an opportunity to talk to students about the addition of emancipation to Union as a focus of northern efforts and to emphasize how controversial this was across much of the North. I talk about the viciously racist character of the New York City draft riots, which took place in the immediate aftermath of Gettysburg, and the grudging acceptance of black soldiers by many of the northern men who had enlisted to save the Union but in 1863 expressed a disinclination to die for emancipation.

The thousands of monuments at Gettysburg provide a perfect opening to follow up on the theme of racial tension during the war. Many of the monuments were erected during the era of reconciliation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and commemorations of the battle often included scenes of former Union and Confederate soldiers in cheerful interaction. Absent were black veterans, a testament to the almost universal agreement between North and South to slight or ignore entirely emancipation in favor of celebrating the war as an epochal event that made the nation a great world power.

I will mention one last theme I develop at Gettysburg, and that is the impact of the war on civilians caught in its path. I discuss how any major battle overwhelmed the civilians in the area, who faced catastrophic loss of property, had to help care for thousands of wounded men, and had to clean up thousands of dead animals and untold material wreckage--all with little or no government help. I make the point that Gettysburg's civilians were among the very few northerners who experienced the war in a way scores of thousands of southern civilians did. Any consideration of the respective home fronts, I emphasize to the students, must begin with acknowledgment of this difference. For most northerners, the war was much like that of the March girls in *Little Women*. Their father is gone and they miss him, but otherwise their days proceed very much as before the war. Few southerners, white or black, could claim as much.

Virtually all of my students find it a moving experience to stand where Americans paid the ultimate price in a struggle over their differing beliefs. They look over countryside that evokes images of people trying to settle profound questions relating to slavery and freedom, to the nature of the Union, and to the relationship between segments of the population that had become increasingly estranged over the previous half century. In anonymous written evaluations by students, the trips to Antietam and Gettysburg always are among the most frequently mentioned strong points of my classes. Many students have singled these trips out as the most memorable part of their four years at Penn State. I believe such statements attest to the great value of not only battlefields, but also of historic sites in general, as tools to help those of us who teach about United States history.

REVIEWS

Akira Iriye. *Japan and the Wider World: From the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present*. London and New York: Longman, 1997. Pp. viii, 213. Paper, $11.96; ISBN 0-582-21053-4.

Iriye's book is an expansion of two earlier works by this leading Japanese-American scholar previously published in Japan in the 1960s and early 1990s. It is an extremely readable survey of Japan's history and place in the world between the mid-nineteenth and end of the twentieth centuries. Beginning with the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and ending with the post-Cold War world, Iriye provides not only an historical account of the Japanese effort to move from isolation to a significant role in the modern world but, more importantly, an emphasis on how the Japanese viewed themselves during this period in the context of the nation, Pacific Basin, world, and even internal dynamics. In his opinion, each of these frameworks stimulated a number of images the Japanese used to develop foreign policy and thus form a "mental universe"--a means to identify and understand themselves and their role in an ever changing world.

Iriye's approach is the real strength of the work. He does not overwhelm the reader with a flood of personalities or data but at the same time provides a glimpse of the men who directed the affairs of state and just enough statistical information to compare Japan's development to the world at large over the two centuries. While the book does maintain a neat and comforting chronological flow, the reader is quickly drawn into its larger scope. Iriye opens most chapters with a general review of the world scene--United States, Europe, Asia, and at times Latin America--so that the reader is reminded of the images that Japan witnessed through its lens and from its vantage point in each particular era. That is to say, one can begin to appreciate the large number of competing external demands on the Japanese decision-making process. This is an extremely valuable technique, especially for persons taking a world history survey course. Used as a supplementary work for such a course, Iriye's book could facilitate the ability of the student or general reader to gain an appreciation for the whole range of political, diplomatic, economic, and military considerations that characterized periods such as the modernization and westernization in the late nineteenth century, the 1930s, World War II, the years of peaceful coexistence, or even the post-cold war world. Furthermore, the work offers a clear, narrative style, does not burden the reader with footnotes, and offers a helpful list of sources in English that relate to Japanese foreign affairs.

Iriye's conclusion is the most telling portion of the book. He contends that the Japanese have gained much from the world they joined in the nineteenth century. Japan benefited from the evolving interaction, particularly in the economic arena, on the world scene and found her niche through being passive rather than proactive. Yet, he is openly critical of Japan's reluctance to accept accountability. Indeed, Iriye finds fault with the Japanese attitude of traditionalism that he maintains has prevented the

country from accepting its past errors. Iriye believes that Japan in the future needs to develop a broader sense of historical perspective and not continue "to indulge in self-congratulatory parochialisms." Since Japan is indebted to the world for security and economic viability, Iriye holds that it is time for her to change and become a partner with other nations for "the preservation and consolidation of the world community."

United States Military Academy Lee T. Wyatt, III

Peter Burke. *The Renaissance*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. vii, 77. Paper, $10.95; ISBN 0-312-17230-3.

Peter Burke, a Fellow at Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge, has written an effective yet concise overview of the rise and fall of the Italian Renaissance. The text, which is only 77 pages, consists of five chapters: The Myth of the Renaissance; Italy: Revival and Innovation; The Renaissance Abroad; The Disintegration of the Renaissance; and Conclusion. The text closes with a comprehensive bibliography that is divided into fifteen significant subsections for the reader's benefit.

In chapter one, Burke discusses the many myths associated with the evolution of the Renaissance Era. The chapter emphasizes the emergence of "realism" as expressed principally in Italian art work. Chapter two focuses on Italian Renaissance writings such as Leonardo Bruni's *The History of the Florentine People*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Castiglione's *The Courtier*, and others. These works are discussed in context to the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, in exalting the importance of humanist culture and society. The chapter concludes with reference to many Italian artists and their manifestations of great Greek and Roman historical and mythological figures.

Chapter three, The Renaissance Abroad, explores the influence of Italian humanists in other European cultures, primarily England, France, and Poland. Burke's discussion of Don Quixote is particularly useful for the novice student of Renaissance history. Chapter four, The Disintegration of the Renaissance, presents a picture of struggle in sixteenth-century Italy with numerous pressures building in Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, in Tudor England, and French aggression in northern Italy. Chapter five, the Conclusion, provides a five-page review and brief definition of the Italian Renaissance, citing such writers as J. Burckhardt, describing the concept of "scholastic humanism and individualism."

The Renaissance is a well written but brief overview of the importance of the Italian Renaissance, primarily of the sixteenth century. However, the text would be somewhat limited for general use in the teaching of a broad-based college course in European Renaissance or world history. Due to the author's basic assumption that the reader has a foundation of knowledge of the Renaissance and pre-1500s Europe, the

book would be too advanced for significant use at the secondary school level, although it could be useful for Advanced Placement (AP) courses in world history, usually taught in the tenth grade of high school. One other possible concern is that this text is focused exclusively on the Italian Renaissance era, and would not be significantly useful for teaching and understanding of a broader context of European Renaissance history. However, Peter Burke in *The Renaissance* has captured in definition and brief description the essence of the sixteenth-century Italian Renaissance and its influence on Western civilization.

Old Dominion University S. Rex Morrow

Michael B. Young. *Charles I.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. vii, 223. Cloth, $49.95; ISBN 0-312-16515-3. Paper, $17.95; ISBN 0-312-16516-1.
W.M. Spellman. *John Locke.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. xi, 165. Cloth, $49.95; ISBN 0-312-16511-0. Paper, $18.95; ISBN 0-312-16512-9.

Michael B. Young's *Charles I* is useful not only for his excellent review of the reign of that king but also for his discussion of the literature on the period. Even sophisticated historians might be impressed with how people studying the same documents can reach such contradictory conclusions.

Young himself is no admirer of Charles I, whom he presents as a devious and vengeful incompetent who got off to a bad start and, unable to learn from experience, never did recover. He did not try to work with Parliament but rather threatened and tried to intimidate it. He levied forced loans, jailed people who refused to pay them, and housed troops in private homes. His prerogative took precedence over the common law. Considering himself answerable only to God, he used ambiguous language in order to avoid outright lying and later interpreted his statements as he pleased. He was dishonest even with his own ministers. He was "a stubborn, imperious, dangerous man."

Charles accepted the Petition of Rights of 1628 with such ill-grace that the House of Commons began to catalogue its grievances, and he finally had to re-affirm his intention to honor it but then distributed his earlier response rather than the later one. Vindictive and inflexible, and always equating criticism with disloyalty, he jailed his critics wholesale. Among them were nine members of the Parliament of 1629. He allowed Sir John Eliot to die in prison in 1632 and kept two others in prison until 1640, when he had to appease public opinion before the meeting of the Short Parliament.

From 1629 to 1640 Charles avoided a contest with Parliament by ruling without it. In 1640, however, he had to recall Parliament to pay for his projected war against the Scots. This was the Short Parliament, which Charles dissolved after only three weeks because of the complaints about his Personal Rule. In 1642 he had to summon

Parliament again. Still he had not learned: He tried to arrest five members of Parliament, and this time he got Civil War. Charles's enemies were no better than he was, and he was beheaded on 30 January 1649 in what Young calls a case of judicial murder by an "outrageously illegal tribunal."

While most historians think of John Locke as a political writer, W.M. Spellman presents him as fundamentally a religious thinker. The "undertaking which united all of his diverse interests was the clarification and solidification of a traditional Christian world-view during an age when the buttresses of the ancient faith were under severe strain from a number of quarters."

In religion and psychology as much as in politics, Locke was ahead of his time. In his powerful *A Letter Concerning Toleration* he made a strong case for religious toleration: The state should "permit a healthy diversity in religious thought and worship" not only because we can never be sure that we are right and because pretending to believe what we do not believe is unacceptable to God but also because insistence on conformity leads to civil unrest. Locke did exclude Catholics and atheists from his toleration.

Probably the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in which Locke denies the existence of innate ideas, is his most important and courageous work. All knowledge comes from the perception of our senses. Conscience is whatever a person is taught is morally right, and we have to act on our beliefs even though we have no way of knowing that they are true. Since nothing is innate, there can be no such thing as original sin.

Such revolutionary ideas were dangerous, and Locke was unable to follow them where they should have led him. Instead he concluded that it is possible through "a true science of human conduct" to achieve true moral knowledge, which would agree with the law of nature and the law of God. Instead of trying to figure out what those laws are and how reasonable men can discover what they are, Locke falls back on the New Testament. Reasonable men would agree on "the truths of Revelation."

Without innate moral truths the teaching of morality becomes all the harder, and in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, which has more to do with creating a gentleman than with education, Locke emphasizes the importance of building Christian character over the acquisition of information. The danger here is that Locke's "education" is actually indoctrination, and thus he anticipates what has been the overriding function of schooling ever since.

Locke wrote *The Two Treatises of Government* not as a defense of the Revolution of 1688-89 but rather much earlier, in 1679 to 1681, during the Exclusion Controversy, the period when some Englishmen were trying to keep Charles's Catholic brother James from succeeding him as King.

The *Second Treatise* is by far the better known. Originally people lived in a state of nature, governed only by natural law, which men can discover through the use of their reason and which every man can enforce. Because some people violate the law

of nature and individuals cannot adequately enforce it, people form a civil society by entering a social compact to establish a government. If the government becomes oppressive, it has dissolved itself and the people can enter into a new compact. Thus the people are more important than the government: another revolutionary idea.

Again Locke *assumes* that reasonable men can agree on what constitutes natural law, and he is inadequate also when he argues that men acquired property by combining their labor with it in the state of nature. He does not explain how some people deserve to have property to which they do not apply their labor; he accepted slavery and even invested in the Royal African Company; and he advocated the dispossession of the native Americans.

Though Spellman oversimplifies Locke and is inadequate on the inconsistencies of this brave man, both of these books should be useful to history teachers on any level as well as to the best high-school students and in upper-level courses in college. In the case of Locke, however, there should always be a teacher who can point out, as Spellman does not, that the state of nature is a fiction, the social compact a myth, and the concept of natural law useful only as an excuse for fruitless intellectualizing.

The drawback of these books is that both are overpriced and thus too expensive to ask undergraduates to buy.

Cortland, New York — C. Ashley Ellefson

Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, eds. *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*. London: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 1997. Pp. xi, 266. Paper, $17.75.
Sarah Shaver Hughes and Brady Hughes, eds. *Women in World History*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997. Vol. 2--Readings from 1500 to the Present. Pp. xviii, 275. Paper, $22.95.

These two works are aimed at the women's history classroom, but are very different in format and execution. With the surge in enthusiasm in women's history, both of these books should provoke great interest; however, they represent very different models of thought and application to the classroom.

Gender in Eighteenth-Century England is a collection of secondary sources covering the role of women in areas such as gender relations, working life, politics, and society. The work is divided into four parts: Social Reputations; Work and Poverty; Politics and the Political Elite; and Periodicals and the Printed Image. Each section contains either two or three articles. Most of the articles are based on case studies of one or several women, although there is some valuable demographic information given.

Barker and Chalus's introduction offers a wealth of historiographical information. It includes a thorough summary of the growth and development of gender history, as well as most of the important historians in the field. They look at several models of change that illustrated the progress of this relatively new area--some models they like and some they do not. Wonderful use is made of the footnotes, providing even more insight into the best (and sometimes) only works in a given area.

Gender in Eighteenth-Century England would be very useful for an upper-level course--a women's history course or an English history course. It would find less use in a survey course. The articles are too esoteric for the average freshman or sophomore to sink their teeth into and too narrowly focused to serve a general course. It is perfect, however, for advanced work, especially for those instructors looking for revisionist material. The vast majority of the nine articles center on the importance of women in eighteenth-century life. There is no doubt that, as stated in the introduction, gender in this period lacks current scholarship. When compared with the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, this middle zone needs more thorough research. However, in six of the nine articles, great effort is given within the conclusion to put forth the idea that each topic is not the aberration previously thought, but a common societal occurrence that has simply been ignored over the ages. In some cases, this might well be true, but the instructor must be careful not to imply to students that, for example, the political role of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, was one shared by large numbers of women in the eighteenth century, which was not the case.

A refreshing trait of this work is that equal attention is given to all classes. Most articles, in fact, rely heavily on information dealing with middle and lower-class women. Part One: Social Reputations seems to be the weakest section. The two articles deal with fops and prostitutes, neither of which successfully conveys the points that the authors lay out in the introduction. Part Two: Work and Poverty is more effective. Containing an article by Barker, this unit describes occupations available to women. The final article delves into the tricky and tenuous position held in community life by impoverished, usually single women. Part Three: Politics and the Political Elite, containing an article by Chalus, works very well. It combines political interest from the general female community with a detailed description of the life and work of Duchess Georgiana with the Whig party. Finally, Part Four: Periodicals and the Printed Image looks into the coverage of women's lives in papers and magazines.

Gender in Eighteenth-Century England is well written and thoroughly researched. Any student of the period will appreciate the book and might even find it invaluable in their work. My only reservation is its highly revisionist nature. As a scholar whose field is sixteenth-century women and feminism, I am continually gratified to see new works on any subject related to women. Yet, when most of the articles go to such great pains to stress the importance of their topic, whether it is fops or prostitutes or the *tete-a-tete* series in *Town and Country Magazine*, I feel a need to justify their confidence. This says nothing, however, of the quality of the scholarship. All of the articles are

highly interesting and meticulous in their research. It would be a useful addition to the proper upper-level course.

Women in World History, Vol. 2, is a collection of secondary sources; however, these sources make extensive use of primary material. This work is perfect for the survey women's history course, but could also fit well into a general survey classroom, if balanced with other types of readings. The selections cover society, culture, and politics very nicely, and the strong introductory sections provide ample information on the general state of affairs of each period. The introduction to the book does a fine job of outlining the position of women in history, as well as how that position has changed due to the development of the modern period. There are also some suggested further readings, but I would have liked to see more historiographic material.

Volume Two is divided into two parts, from 1500-1800 and from 1800 to the present. Each part contains six regional sections, which in turn contain several excerpts. The regional sections are China and Japan, the Middle East, India, Europe, the Americas, and Africa. Each excerpt, as well as each section, includes a thorough introduction. These sections, which easily equal one-third to one-half of the book, are instrumental to the student's understanding of the era. The flavor of the time is handily given, of course emphasizing women, but retaining the common ideas and threads running throughout society. There is a tremendous amount of basic information that will help the student put the readings into perspective. Follow-up is also provided to give closure to each section.

Although most of the excerpts come from historians such as Jonathan Spence, Leslie Pierce, and Gisela Bock, there are primary sources from people such as Voltaire, Frederick the Great, and George Sand. The historians also include a variety of primary material in their work. Jonathan Spence, for example, uses a seventeenth-century account of a woman after the Qing conquest of China to illustrate changes in rape laws of the era. Many sections contain retellings of folk tales and eyewitness accounts of events. The historians take on the role of facilitators when presenting the information. It is a wonderful mix of analyses and stories (incidentally, the stories are intriguing enough to keep even the most skeptical freshman interested).

At the end of each of the twelve sections are suggested further readings. In addition, there is a glossary of pertinent terms. I was very impressed by the flow of this work, and am convinced it has a dual role as a tool for women's history and the general survey. The writing is concise and appropriate for the student. Most of the excerpts are brief enough to look at in class and still have time to do some critical essays or paragraphs. Perhaps the greatest compliment I can give *Women in World History* is that, by the time a student has finished the book, they will have an excellent picture of world history that simply happens to be gender-balanced.

Floyd College Laura G. Musselwhite

John W. Mason. ***The Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1867-1918.*** **London & New York: Longman, 1997. Second edition. Pp. xiii, 126. Paper, $12.15; ISBN 0-528-29466-5.**

Albeit significant, traditionally Central Europe has been a rather complicated region for students and others less well informed to comprehend historically and in the present. Moreover, since the era of *glasnost* and the fall of the Soviet Empire this complexity has seemingly intensified. A similar situation existed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially with regard to the demise of the then once-great empires still overlaying the region—German, Russian, Turkish, and Austro-Hungarian.

In the second edition of *The Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1867-1918*, John W. Mason, a retired lecturer in history at Bournville College of Further Education in Birmingham, England, attempts to clarify the complexity of this earlier era in Central Europe with the hope of providing some insight into more current circumstances. As he correctly observes in the opening lines of the Forward, "The Austro-Hungarian Empire is one of the great lost causes of modern European history. Yet, lost causes have perhaps as much to tell us as successes in history." This new edition references several new sources and examples of the post-1985 scholarship in the field. It also contains more documents in Part Five, now eighteen pages worth, and a new map at the beginning.

In addition to the final documents section, this succinct volume is divided into four other informative parts—historical background, domestic affairs, foreign affairs, and assessments. The first part very briefly traces the development of the Empire from the origins of the Habsburg Monarchy through 1848 and the imperial union—*Ausgleich*—of Austria and Hungary in 1867. The second part underscores the Empire's failure to adjust to modernization, nationalism, and democracy. Czech-German problems in the 1880s and 1890s, the parliamentary government established in the 1890s, Austro-Hungarian problems in the 1900s, and South Slav problems (e.g., Bosnia) all are highlighted.

The third part takes the reader into late imperial foreign affairs through the First World War—the final strain on the dying Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russian and Turkish empires as well. Like these other two ailing states, the Dual Monarchy somewhat recklessly chose war in 1914 to offset the above cited and other internal problems. Part Four then provides a short interpretive summary. Beyond the concluding documents, which are both interesting and helpful, this book contains an extensive and well-organized bibliography, but comprised mostly of secondary sources.

While this volume is clearly intended as a primer on the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for relative neophytes and is quite successful in what it sets out to do, in the process it nevertheless offers some informative distillations of late Habsburg

history. Within these stated parameters, for example, the explanation of Austro-Hungarian multinationalism (concerning eleven nationalities) is excellent. Thus, this book might also prove a refreshing summary briefing for those better versed in Central European affairs as well.

The University of Texas at Arlington — Dennis Reinhartz

David G. Herrmann. *The Arming of Europe and the Making of the First World War.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997. Pp. ix, 307. Paper $16.95; ISBN 0-6910-1595-3.

Even a freshman student of European history can make a list of crises that led up to World War I, including the two Moroccan confrontations, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Balkan Wars. To read the Table of Contents in David Herrmann's new book one might think that he had done no more than trace this familiar pattern as so many have in the past. Herrmann has, however, done much more. Studies of the outbreak of World War I have focused on the political and diplomatic maneuvering in the capitals of the major powers. This is certainly an appropriate focus, but Herrmann has added an important factor that has been underplayed in the past--military policy.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a time of enormous and competitive technical innovation for soldiers. In hindsight, the most important changes were in artillery, but for the soldier of the day that was not so clear. Machine guns, neutral colored uniforms, and a variety of other changes were sweeping through the Great Powers. Increasing the numbers under arms and providing proper training and equipment also had to be considered. Herrmann does an excellent job of tracing these technical changes in all of the Powers and some of the lesser states such as Italy. In this the volume is fairly traditional military history. What makes the book unusual and deserving of the honors it has won (including the American Historical Association's 1996 Paul Birdsall Prize) is Herrmann's account of how military advisers influenced political decisions. In clear, effective prose, Herrmann shows that in each of the crises leading up to July 1914, a significant factor in decision making was the generals' evaluation of military preparedness and the likelihood of success in war. In the final chapter, he suggests that by July 1914 German commander Helmuth von Moltke and his staff had concluded that militarily the situation was likely to worsen for Germany over the next few years. The other Powers were engaged in expansion and modernization that soon would reduce the German advantages in training, technology, and manpower. Russia was particularly a concern. In those other Powers the military staffs tended to believe that war was virtually inevitable in the foreseeable future and that their military improvements were far enough along to make success in an armed

confrontation likely. The generals gave the politicians no cause for major concessions over the assassination of the Archduke, as they had in the earlier crises.

Herrmann's marriage of military, diplomatic, and political history is superb, and it goes far to clarify the issues that led up to World War I. His research is extensive and multilingual. His writing is excellent, making his book desirable for anyone studying the background to the war from the upper division of undergraduate work through post-graduate researchers. The book is not, however, as the publisher seems to intend, particularly desirable as a general text. *The Arming of Europe and the Making of the First World War* is a superior work of historical scholarship, but it is too narrowly focused for use in any but an upper-level class emphasizing the background to World War I.

Fort Valley State University — Fred R. Van Hartesveldt

Harry Browne. *Spain's Civil War*. London & New York: Longman, 1996. Second edition. Pp. 146. Paper, $14.53; ISBN 0-582-28988-2.

The Spanish Civil War, once famed but now relatively forgotten at the end of the twentieth century, still attracts coverage. Harry Browne, a British professor of Spanish history and literature, has prepared for Longman's Seminar Series in History a narrative historical text of slightly over a hundred pages, accompanied by 27 pages of translated documents on key episodes and actors in the civil war. There is also a short section identifying key personalities, a glossary, and a short bibliography.

The work is synthetic, often based upon the historical work of Paul Preston, certainly one of the finest historians on the topic but also a blunt northerner who does not mince words. I long for more Spaniards writing their own history, since everyone in the UK has written a book about the Spanish Civil War, it seems.

Still, I was impressed by this series to such an extent that I looked over some of the other volumes. They are all of great use to classroom teachers, particularly if there is a need to select special topics to emphasize in survey courses on modern history. British issues predominate, Stuart and Tudor England in particular, but there are also volumes on Early Modern Europe and Europe, 1789-1918. Their texts are short enough to be read quickly, and their documents give some basic sense of the period or topic.

University of New Mexico — Robert Kern

Michael J. Salevouris and Conal Furay. *Learning American History: Critical Skills for the Survey Course.* Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1997. Pp. xii, 178. Paper, $21.95; ISBN 0-88295-920-4.

This book is designed, the authors tell us, as a supplementary text and workbook for college and university students, introducing them "to the nature of history and historical thinking, the methods of historical inquiry, and the elements of effective historical writing." Varied materials are provided that allow instructors "to insert relevant skill-development and skill-assessment exercises at appropriate points in a particular course." The book's aim, they say, is to help undergraduates "attain a deeper understanding of how history is made and what it means to think 'historically.'" Salevouris and Luray are professors of history at Webster University, St. Louis. Their writing style is notable for its clarity and simplicity.

At the outset the authors disabuse their readers of the idea that history is concerned with human experience over the whole span of historical time. "The key challenge faced by any historian," they believe, "is that the past is lost forever." They define history narrowly as studying and writing about the past with the help of the written record as set down by eyewitnesses or participants. This definition limits history to time elapsed in the past two or three thousand years. Not all written records survive, and those that do are "flawed and incomplete." Writing history, the authors conclude, "is an act of personal creation, ... as much a product of the historians who write it as the people who actually participated in the events it attempts to describe. Small wonder that written history is subjective."

Salevouris and Luray nonetheless make a radical distinction between historical literature and fiction. Accounts based on relevant evidence, they affirm, do give us valid information about the past "in a living and evolving dialogue about ... the human experience." This critical distinction between historical literature and fiction is the single most important philosophical issue that the book confronts. To demolish the frontier between fact and fiction and to reduce historical writings to a collection of texts not differing qualitatively from other literary texts is to overthrow the claim of history to rank as an independent scientific discipline.

The authors of *Learning American History*, in my opinion, ought to have elaborated their position on the objectivity of history more fully. Otherwise their students might be thrown into the arms of radical subjectivists like Hayden White, who argues that works of history are nothing more than literary texts or mythologies, entitling us "to conceive 'history' as we please, ... [and] to make of it what we will." (*Metahistory* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1973], 433.)

Salevouris and Luray might well have cited a dramatic example of history as a struggle for objective, scientific truth offered not only to Americans but to the whole world in September 1991. At that time a glacier high in the Alps gave up the body of a Neolithic shepherd-hunter who died over 5,000 years ago. Konrad Spindler,

chairperson of early history at Innsbruck University, organized a team of scientists and historians from a dozen disciplines to undertake an investigation. His report--published in the United States in 1994 under the title *The Man in the Ice* (New York: Crown Trade Paperbacks)--is a thrilling historical work. Spindler and his colleagues deserve the thanks of the world not because they "made" history, but *because they were its devoted servants.* Theirs was a collective struggle to search for and scrutinize fresh evidence; to fling back the frontiers of the unknown; to bring to birth new truth about human life and human creativity. Their written report is already a part of our historical heritage.

Committee on History in the Classroom — John Anthony Scott

Stephen G. Weisner and William F. Hartford, eds. *American Portraits: Biographies in United States History*. Blacklick, OH: McGraw Hill, 1998. Vol. I. Pp. x, 321. Paper, $25.43; ISBN 0-07-069141-X. Vol. 2. Pp. x, 317. Paper, $25.43; ISBN 0-07-069142-8.

Teaching historians often assign biography to supplement reading lists for the introductory survey classroom, even though selecting which life to share might be a difficult process. Biography represents a unique form of history and literature, inviting a reader to come to terms with the significance of human agency. Indeed, a biography possesses the potential to reveal how a particular person influenced and was influenced by broader historical forces. Personal stories allow the student to identify with the subjects of history, that is, the people who made the past. *American Portraits*, however, fails to make these fundamental connections.

Stephen Weisner, a teacher at Springfield Technical Community College, and William Hartford, an independent scholar, have brought together a number of biographical profiles in this two-volume collection. The work is packaged as a supplemental reader for the U.S. history survey classroom, with nineteen selections in the first volume and eighteen in the second. Written by a number of different authors, the essays introduce the lives of noted Americans. While including preliminary material, bibliographic discussion, and primary sources, the editors also provide a few questions to accompany each selection. A picture of each biographical subject appears with the profile.

These texts, though inviting the reader to learn more about a diverse cohort of Americans, do not present the interconnections that create an effective biographical project. The editors' introduction provides no criteria for selection of the various subjects, only suggesting that the brief profiles in this anthology have been selected "not only for their readability but also for the interest they are likely to generate." Furthermore, the excerpts from primary sources seemed awkwardly juxtaposed to the

biographies. For example, the creation myth from the Mandan of the Missouri river follows the portrait of an Oregon pioneer missionary, Mary Richardson Walker. Therefore, the volumes lack a clear demonstration of historical significance; they constitute a historical collage.

The uncertain criteria for inclusion/exclusion of material creates specific inconsistencies in the texts, although these concerns might be particular to me. No American Indian appears until Tecumseh's portrait in unit two, an oversight that distorts the portraits of Columbus, Anne Hutchinson, William Penn, and William Byrd II--all exhibited in unit one. Why omit George Washington from the collection, an eighteenth-century gentleman who remains a mystery for most undergraduates? Where are the stories about America's immigrants? Why include more than seventeen pages about Elizabeth Blackwell, America's first female physician, but only ten pages to explore the remarkable story of African American poet Phillis Wheatley? Even more puzzling was the omission of one of the foremost American lives of the nineteenth-century--Frederick Douglass. The editors gave us Generals William Sherman and Philip Sheridan, but not Robert E. Lee or Clara Barton.

The selections might be justifiable if the authors clarified their criteria, but the biographies also demonstrate an unfortunate unevenness in quality. Clearly, Joe Frantz's profile of Sam Houston in the first volume sets the highest standard, while William Chafe's version of Eleanor Roosevelt in the second volume merits praise. However, I was disappointed by the anecdotal piece about George Patton by Stephen Ambrose and Judith Ambrose, who never mention the general's role in suppressing the "Bonus Marchers" in 1932 nor explore his attitude toward the Soviets during World War II. The Betty Friedan story as presented here was unsatisfactory, since author David Halberstam's narrative was less her individual portrait and more a Fifties' pastiche.

I am puzzled by the final entry in volume two, which considers the economic shifts of post-industrial America. The editors selected an article by researcher Katherine Newman "that provides a collective portrait of various people affected by these economic changes." Whatever the editors' intention for this selection, the profile was not an attempt at biography at all. The displaced manager, unemployed blue-collar workers, and dislocated people were viewed from a sociological perspective by the author. Indeed, the author's photograph appears at the start of the selection, losing the focus of the varied biographies included elsewhere in the collection, which all began with visual images of Theodore Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, and so on.

Without a critical design, this collection lacks the clarity of purpose that one might expect in a supplementary reader. Of course, the effective use of biographies in a U.S. history classroom opens up space for students to understand the power of personal stories and to consider the quandaries of modern historiography. This, in turn, invites students to enter into the debates over the "national standards" for history teachers, or other recent controversies about inclusion/exclusion in the profession.

Without the texture constituted by an explicit criteria, though, *American Portraits* might not represent a critical teaching utensil.

My concern about this clustering of biographies is pedagogical, then. While a number of the personal stories in the collection were interesting, the lack of consistency or continuity undermines the classroom functionality of the texts. Clearly, a package of parts does not make a whole. Agglomeration of unconnected stories will not elevate the level of reflective discourse for students in the survey classroom, although a reading supplement using biographies at least adds flavor to classroom discussions. However, both of these volumes suggest a rather bizarre recipe: add people randomly and stir briefly.

American Portraits provides a kind of uncritical mass of personal stories and anecdotes. With work, the texts might become useful supplements for teaching history. I would not recommend them, though. This collection of biographies allows students to explore a fragmented past, but the collage will not help them to connect some of the pieces.

Columbia College Brad Lookingbill

Ann D. Gordon, ed. *African American Women and the Vote, 1837-1965*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997. Pp. 217. Cloth, $45.00; ISBN 1-55849-058-2. Paper, $15.95; ISBN 1-55849-059-0.

African American Women and the Vote, 1837-1965 is a fine collection of essays dealing with a rarely documented topic: the struggle of African American women to assert themselves in American politics. It is always a pleasure to find a series of readable academic essays, and this book falls into that select group. It is a collection that offers both instructors and students several fine pieces for study and discussion.

Some of the essays in this collection really shine. One of the finest is Elsa Barkley Brown's, "To Catch the Vision of Freedom: Reconstructing Southern Black Women's Political History, 1865-1880," a vivid description of how women without the legal authority to vote still exerted unquestionable clout on election day. Brown's work incorporates a variety of sources that seek to show how women of color used their gender and social positions in the family to sway their husband's, brother's, and father's vote.

Additionally, Janice Sumler-Edmond's "The Quest for Justice: African American Litigants, 1867-1890" is quite an enlightening piece. This paper examines cases that involved African American women who had filed suits in southern courts. It compares the promise and the disturbing reality of how African American trials of the post-bellum era were adjudicated. Sumler-Edmond's painstaking use of legal records and

literate style reveal the disappointing reality for African-American women in courts of the period.

Perhaps the best of the group is Martha Prescot Norman's "Shining in the Dark: Black Women and the Struggle for the Vote, 1955-1965." It recounts the extraordinary suffering African-American females underwent once they had attained the right to vote. Upon registration, these women faced evictions, unemployment, shootings, threats--all in an attempt to assert themselves politically. After reading this piece, I was shocked to think this occurred just a little over three decades ago. Norman, herself a former member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, was a witness to many of the events and personalities with which her essay deals. It is a fine piece of prose, one that will make a real impression on students who read it.

This book would definitely be suitable for use in the college classroom, an excellent tool for any sort of Afro-American history course. Additionally, southern history courses, women's history courses, or twentieth-century American history classes could utilize the information in this collection as supplemental reading assignments. Sometimes touching, and at other times shocking, *African American Women and the Vote* is a valuable addition to the burgeoning field of African American history. Its portrayal of ethnic unity and tenacity makes for excellent academic reading.

Georgia College & State University David Ezell

Kenneth S. Greenberg, ed. *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents*. Boston & New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996. Pp. xii, 148. Paper, $7.95; ISBN 0-312-11207-6.
Paul Finkelman. *Dred Scott v. Sandford: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston & New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. xii, 240. Paper, $7.95; ISBN 0-312-11594-6.

As most history teachers already know, it is a difficult task finding just the right supplemental readings for a class. If a book is too dense or detailed, many students simply will not read it. Too specialized, however, and the students are unable to place it in any kind of general context. Most teachers constantly search for that elusive balance--don't overwhelm the students, yet try to pique their interest while also introducing relevant historical materials.

Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press once again has presented historians with two works that will certainly meet those perplexing classroom needs. I have used several of their books in my college history classes and they have always been read with enthusiasm by the students. In *The Confessions of Nat Turner* and *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, Bedford has further strengthened its continuing series in History and Culture

and published two books that history teachers can use to enhance the study of the United States in the antebellum era.

Most history books supply only the basic information concerning Nat Turner's rebellion, so many students never acquire a full understanding of that uprising and its implications. In August 1831 Turner and about 60 other slaves killed between 57 and 60 whites on plantations around Southampton, Virginia. Turner and his associates were captured and hanged several months later. Few texts delve any further into this fascinating and important story.

But Nat Turner's rebellion deserves a more exhaustive analysis. At this same time, the state of Virginia was debating various forms of manumission and some Southerners were actually considering the idea of a future without slavery. In effect, it was Turner's violent and bloody insurrection that helped to crystallize Southern sentiments against emancipation and few anti-slave voices were raised in the South for the next three decades.

Nat Turner is also a critical historical figure because he was able to talk about the rebellion. This book includes his now famous "Confession" and examines Turner's motivations and convictions in extensive detail. After his capture, local lawyer Thomas R. Gray visited Turner and recorded this series of confessions. The words of Turner can help students understand the insurgents and the attitudes of African Americans toward the Southern slave system. Turner's powerful words and thoughts provide the central focus of the book.

Along with Turner's confession, there are a number of other important historical documents. There is a series of newspaper editorials from the South that reveal the fears and anxieties that were beginning to grip the South as the danger of continued slave uprising became a real possibility. Also included is Thomas Dew's defense of slavery. Dew, a Southern intellectual, published his apology of slavery at nearly the same time as both Turner's rebellion and the Virginia debates on the general abolition of slavery. Kenneth Greenberg calls Dew's analysis "an important conservative response to Turner's insurrection."

The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents would work very well in any college history class primarily because it explains both the specific and the general historical issues in a thorough manner. Turner's rebellion itself is discussed in satisfactory detail. But the consequences of his actions--the larger historical picture--are also examined. The book can be used to study both slavery and the general history of the antebellum era. It can also be a wonderful resource in understanding Southern fears and trepidations in the critical period of the 1830s when the termination of slavery was actually debated in the Old South.

Dred Scott v. Sandford is a slightly different kind of book. The Dred Scott Supreme Court case was one of the most momentous political events of the 1850s, helping bring about the sectional split that led to the Civil War. In 1857, the Southern-led Supreme Court ruled that blacks could never be considered citizens of the United

States, and that Congress had no power to regulate slavery in the territories (which they had done in the Missouri Compromise). The Dred Scott decision, as editor Paul Finkelman writes, was about slavery, freedom, the constitution, and the political situation in antebellum America.

This book does a superb job placing the Scott case in the political context of the period and connecting all the aforementioned issues. While *The Confessions of Nat Turner* can be read as a social history of slavery, *Dred Scott v. Sandford* is a much more political and legal narrative. Finkelman takes great pains to describe contemporary issues, like territorial expansion, sectionalism, and political party upheaval, which affected the Scott case. The case actually proves to be a convenient way to understand the complicated political situation of the 1850s, for it symbolizes much of the turbulence that was taking place in the nation.

Dred Scott v. Sandford also contains a wealth of documents. Finkelman has included the opinions of the justices, newspaper editorials about the case from all sections, and various political debates and speeches, including what future president Abraham Lincoln said about the case. In fact, the document section contains lengthy excerpts from the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates. That dress rehearsal for the upcoming 1860 presidential campaign between two leading Illinois politicians revealed what each party saw as the primary issues and consequence of the Dred Scott judgment. Including these historical debates adds considerably to an already generous selection of primary documents.

The narrative and the documents in both of these books are invaluable. I especially liked the newspaper editorials, for they show the reaction of the country to these defining events. In the Turner case, we observe the South beginning to defend their "Peculiar Institution." In the Scott decision, we can see both the North and South making their arguments concerning the territories, the future of slavery, and the future of the nation.

These books also contain good bibliographies and a section entitled "Questions for Consideration." These questions are valuable for both the history teacher and the student attempting to understand the complexity of the materials.

I highly recommend either of these books for both introductory or upper-division college history classes. And I anxiously await additional history books from Bedford.

Metropolitan State University David E. Woodard

Roy Finklebine. *Sources of the African-American Past: Primary Sources in American History*. New York & Reading, MA: Longman Publishers of Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 1997. Pp. xv, 215. Paper, $6.32; ISBN 0-673-99202-0.
Brook Thomas, ed. *Plessy v. Ferguson: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston & New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. 205. Cloth, $35.00; ISBN 0-312-16284-7. Paper, $9.99; ISBN 0-312-16284-7.

Two new works document the history of African-American struggle for equal rights in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Finklebine's work, *Sources of the African-American Past: Primary Sources in American History*, is a welcome addition to the primary source literature on the perpuity of, and challenges to, the social positions African Americans inhabited from the slave trade through recent times. Organized chronologically along topical lines, the book covers the slave trade, the colonial experience, the Revolution, free blacks, slavery, black abolitionism, emancipation, Reconstruction, segregation, progressivism, the New Deal, the two World Wars, migration, school segregation, the civil rights movement, black nationalism, and African Americans since 1968. Each section is introduced by a brief summary covering the general contours of the period. Critical, thought-provoking questions follow each section as well, as does a useful bibliography of each period.

Most of the sources are brief enough to retain a student's interest, yet each one reveals in some depth the richness of the African-American experience. Many of them have rarely been used before, and all evoke the major themes in African-American history--oppression, hope, and resistance--as reflected in the daily lives of the participants. Especially noteworthy are the selections from the lesser-known figures whose writings and/or views have received little mainstream attention. Thus, while the writings of Benjamin Banneker, Phyllis Wheatley, and Frederick Douglass are given appropriate attention, undergraduate students are also exposed to a varied set--former slaves, emigrants, poets--of African-American thinkers and activists they otherwise would not study in a standard history class. As just one example, Louisa Picquet, a mid-nineteenth-century domestic slave, tells of living with her older master, and having four of his children, in forced concubinage in New Orleans.

This diversity is one of the real strengths of the book. Finklebine presents a varied set of main actors--professionals, laborers, thinkers, radicals, soldiers, and others. He allows for the multi-dimensionality of the African-American experience in United States history to come through. Within their community, there was a set of status positions that belies easy conflation to one ideology or behavioral tendency. Yet the evidence is also clear that, underneath the diversity, blacks commonly faced a caste position in a society that for several hundred years practiced either legal or cultural apartheid. Despite its status mobility, or internal ideological differences, the African-American community was often judged in accordance with the overarching social definition of race in U.S. history.

Finklebine's collection of sources also points students to how standard interpretations of American history might be subjected to critical scrutiny through the use of primary sources temporally closest to the event. The 1851 speech by Sojourner Truth, which belies a later white feminist account that Truth speaks in slave dialect, and repeatedly utters a refrain, is a good example.

Perhaps more attention could have been given to the post-1968 period, which seems thin compared to the rest of the periods. Especially interesting would have been more information on the contemporary integration v. exclusion positions, the latter represented by Louis Farrakhan. An index would have also been helpful.

Brook Thomas's work is more, but not exclusively, legal in scope. *Plessy v. Ferguson: A Brief History with Documents* places racial attitudes in social context through speeches, essays, legal decisions, books, and other documents. The selections provide much argumentative depth on the racial equality issue. Complete speeches (one previously unpublished by Charles W. Chestnutt; one annotated by its author W.E.B. Dubois) and articles counterpoint the African-American viewpoint with those of a southern politician, a proponent of scientific racism, and a northern minister. The depth also prohibits as wide a selection of sources as in Finklebine's collection. Nevertheless, the practical and ideological implications of race in nineteenth-century America come through clearly. Thomas wants the book to allow students to understand the Court's reasoning in the Plessy case, the factors behind the decision, and the effects of the decision on race relations, as well as legal precedents.

There are three main points to the book: the legal issues in the Plessy case; the Court's opinion on the case in full, along with samples of different views on race, and varied reactions to the decision at the time; and a section on how the N.A.A.C.P. developed strategies to overturn the decision, and on how the decision affects racial politics today. The excellent appendices provide a brief profile of the members of the Court during the decision, a concise chronology of events associated with the cases, and some very useful summary questions dealing with the issues raised by the case.

While all sections are interesting, perhaps the most intriguing insight Thomas provides is how the Plessy case relates to contemporary discussions of race and affirmative action. It is ironic, he notes, that Justice Harlan's dissent in *Plessy v. Ferguson*--that the Constitution should be color blind--is now a position held by opponents of affirmative action. Also, the affirmative action debate is now faced by the same paradox that led the court to rule in 1954 that Jim Crow laws of separate but equal had not in fact produced equality in public schools. But the Brown paradox, Thomas wisely suggests, was based on clear historical/empirical evidence of the negative effects of school segregation. The 1978 Bakke paradox is future-oriented, asking Americans to assume (without any empirical evidence) that such a restriction on affirmative action will produce a color-blind society.

Both books are excellent sources for upper-level undergraduate courses, or as a primary source supplement for graduate classes, in African-American history or race

relations. Thomas's book would also be appropriate for classes in constitutional history, or twentieth-century U.S. studies. The works are also useful for providing lecture materials and selected source documents.

Floyd College T. Ralph Peters

David Carlton and Peter A. Coclanis, eds. *Confronting Southern Poverty in the Great Depression: "The Report on Conditions of the South" with Related Documents.* Boston & New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996. Pp. viii, 168. Paper $7.50; ISBN 0-312-11497-4.

Begun in 1993, the Bedford Series in History and Culture, edited by Natalie Zemon Davis and Ernest R. May, has become a wonderful addition to the study and teaching of American history. Designed as a week's worth of reading that combines a short narrative introduction with primary documents related to important personalities, events, writings, or critical historical eras, the Bedford books have uniformly been of high quality and especially helpful in developing the capacity for critical thought and analysis among undergraduate students. David L. Carlton and Peter A. Coclanis, editors of *Confronting Southern Poverty in the Great Depression*, have continued the fine standards of the series. The particular challenge they confront is in convincing students and others that the major document they have selected to explore poverty in the South during the 1930s, "The Report on Economic Conditions of the South," can speak to generations that are often unaware of that poverty--past or present. "Whether of southern origin or not," the editors note, "Americans today might well have a difficult time believing that the South was once defined in part as a uniquely poor region in a land of plenty. Those who have grown up during the glory years of the so-called Sunbelt, in particular, might find it surprising, even a little implausible, that a bit over fifty years ago the South was called 'the Nation's No. 1 economic problem' by no less an eminence than the president of the United States."

The "Report on Conditions of the South," published in 1938 by the federal government, was indeed crucial, not only in forcing national attention on southern poverty during the Great Depression era, but equally important in the role it played in President Franklin Roosevelt's attempt to "purge" his own Democratic Party of its right wing, primarily southern, opposition during the 1938 political election. Behind the famous Roosevelt attack on southern critics of the New Deal like Senator Walter George, whose Georgia re-election campaign first prompted FDR to proclaim the South as the "nation's number one economic problem," lay other significant concerns. It was pro-New Deal southern liberals like Francis Pickens Miller and young Clark Foreman, the first official New Deal "Adviser on Negro Affairs," who with a handful of other liberal white southerners within and outside the Roosevelt Administration,

wrote "The Report" with the expressed hope to focus attention on the South and produce a favorable federal response to what they saw as the basic causes and effects of the South's poverty. Carlton and Coclanis explore this and other critical themes linked to the study (over a half a million copies had been distributed by the end of 1938), including the complex relationship involving race, the "distinctiveness" of southern poverty, and white southern liberals; debate over "The Report's" explanation of the historical causes for the poverty in the region (purchasing power and colonialism); and, the conflicting reactions within the South and the nation to "The Report." Following their perceptive introduction that outlines these and other issues, the editors provide a complete text of "The Report," photographs depicting poverty conditions, three "Life Stories" from white and black tenant farmers and a cotton mill worker in the 1930s, statistical data on farm income, soil erosion, illiteracy rates, and other information from Howard Odum's 1936 study, *Southern Regions*, which strongly influenced the writers of "The Report," and, finally, primary sources such as Roosevelt's 1938 "purge" speech, southern editorial commentary on the South as the "nation's problem," and the "resolutions" of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, an organization created out of the 1938 debates concerning southern poverty and race relations and involved in combating those issues during the next two decades.

With a basic introduction to the history of the South and the New Deal era, *Confronting Southern Poverty in the Great Depression* should be a solid source for the teaching of twentieth-century America as well as courses on the American south and African-American history. As with the other Bedford books, this volume includes a helpful bibliography.

Denison University John B. Kirby

Brian Holden Reid. *The Origins of the American Civil War*. London & New York: Longman, 1996. Pp. xv, 440. Paper, $19.76; ISBN 0-582-49178-9.

This is the fifteenth volume in Longman's "Origin of Modern War Series." Its author is a Senior Lecturer in War Studies at King's College, London, and Resident Historian at the British Army Staff College in Camberley. Developing his thesis that wars in general, and the American Civil War specifically, are the result of a series of ironically well-intentioned acts, Reid maintains that "whatever the strength of public opinion, and electoral shifts of opinion, it is the *action*--the decisions taken by politicians--which determine the chain of circumstances that result in war or peace." Tragically, for America in 1861 these decisions led to the "decisive event in American history." Both Unionists and Confederates believed the conflict would be brief and all combatants would return home by Christmas; such optimism was reflected in the length of the first enlistments. Such naiveté is understandable, Reid explains, because

none of the political leaders of 1861 had any precedent to gauge the size or length of a "great civil war." Was the war inevitable? Reid spends much of the book considering this point and is ecumenical in presenting varied and opposing interpretations.

The book does not strive to be an encyclopedic history of America during the antebellum period, but focuses on tracing the incidents and enactments that combined to attain critical mass that produced armed conflict. This search for "origins" reaches into America's moment of creation, the Revolutionary War, and continues through the growth of the nation via western expansion. The Nullification Crisis of 1831-32 is examined in detail and compared and contrasted with events, similar, yet dramatically different, in 1860-61.

Reid acknowledges the work of previous scholars, especially Allan Nevins, throughout the text, in the bibliography, and in footnotes. The latter are most helpful to the reader because they appear at the bottom of the text and not in a "works cited" section at the book's end. Almost all of the bibliography, sixteen pages in length, is secondary monographs or published primary sources. Discovery and presentation of formerly unknown information is not an intent of this study.

The chapter arrangement is traditional and the author generally follows a chronological presentation of events that dominated national politics from the 1840s through the first combat in spring 1861. The apparent resolution of sectional tensions (1840-1850) is explored, while the following chapter delineates the increasing sectional suspicion and animosity that characterizes the period from the Compromise (truce?) of 1850 through the panic of 1857. The Presidential campaign of 1860 is minutely dissected. Efforts at compromise, all of which were doomed, are presented and their failure analyzed. The South's "peculiar institution" is deemed worthy of chapter-length discussion. Of special interest is the development of a two chapter-length "model" to explain the increasing acceptance of violence that made war the obvious "solution." The book concludes with an external view of the war by discussing various reasons for its containment as purely an American national conflict; British, French, and Russian official policies and national "attitudes" toward both Confederate and Union governments are seen to be driven largely by financial practicality.

A detailed index facilitates specific information location; four monochromic maps aid the reader in visualizing the nation's sections, waves of secession, Charleston Harbor, and Fort Sumter. In both content and format, this is a worthy addition to the field of "why the war" study.

Logically organized with a text that is easily comprehended, this book is well suited to college-level American Middle Period courses or advanced high school (AP or honors) students. The constant inclusion of both "standard" and less orthodox interpretations is most helpful to students and instructors who wish to look beyond "what happened" to "why it happened" and "who said it happened this way." Reid has

done an admirable job expanding the "causes" (origins) of the Civil War from the traditional political explanations to include social, intellectual, economic, cultural, and even geographic factors. Such breadth of interpretation enables the book to interest a wider audience than more monofaceted "political" studies. The reader is presented myriad points throughout the text and footnotes that virtually demand further research. The book , therefore, is not only an excellent source of information but also a platform to launch further inquiry.

Piedmont College Ralph B. Singer, Jr.

Lee Kennett. *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997. Pp. xiii, 265. Paper, $16.95; ISBN 0-8061-2925-5.

Lee Kennett's book is a new paperback edition of a book originally published in 1987. With information from new sources, the author has produced a first rate social history of the American G.I. during World War II. He has detailed the "collective portrait" and the "collective experience" of the G.I. from his draft and induction to his return to civilian life. In doing so, Kennett based his story primarily on the noncombatant experiences of the G.I., the letters and memoirs of the G.I.s themselves, the thoughts of their commanding officers, the statements of fellow Allies and enemies, those who were liberated and conquered, and the historical literature of the Second World War.

According to Kennett, the 1940 peacetime draft created an Army that represented the ethnic and racial diversity of America despite the racial and ethnic problems associated with, for example, draft evasion and those who managed to get deferred. Most inductees, however, accepted their draft status and participated in the processing aspect of induction and service without much complaint. For black inductees Army adjustments were made more difficult and complicated than for their white counterparts because Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, some politicians, and other top military brass felt that their usefulness was limited due to their lack of education and their inferior intelligence level.

Based on statements from both the Allies and the enemy, both the black and white G.I. was nevertheless the best trained in the war. As Kennett suggested, the American G.I. was a "compleat soldier," second to none in Europe and in the Pacific.

In terms of location, Kennett showed that the American G.I. preferred the European theater of war. There the climate and the conduct of war matched the training and experiences of the G.I. The G.I. in the Pacific arena dreaded the jungle climate and diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. He also suffered greatly there because the Japanese refused to observe the Geneva rules of war.

Kennett claimed that the G.I. just wanted to go home. This was true of most white G.I.s. For the black G.I., Kennett pointed out, without much scientific proof, that "while abroad he had often found an acceptance and had been accorded a dignity and respect he had never known before, [and] the conditions black servicemen returned to 'engendered a bitterness that propelled many into the civil rights struggle.'"

As a teaching tool, Lee Kennett has produced a solid, lucid, and well-researched social history of the American soldier in World War II. For teachers in the social sciences and indeed in the humanities, *G.I.* provides them with the opportunity to engage students at the high school and college level in discussions and written assignments of the G.I. based primarily on the testimony of the G.I.s themselves. The book is also an excellent tool for teachers to use in developing lectures on WW II without getting bogged down in discussions of great battles, military strategies for victory, and the exploits of medal winners. Lectures and assignments on WW II race relations are also possible with this book.

My only regret after reading *G.I.* is that Kennett only scraped the surface of the noncombatant and collective experiences of the black G.I.

Fayetteville State University — Phillip McGuire

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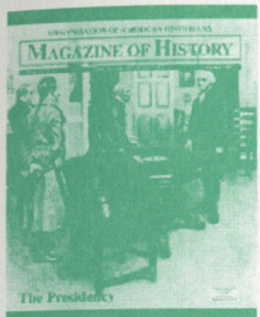
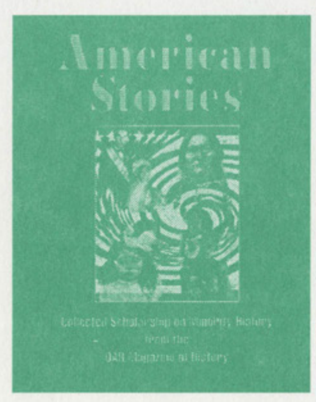


A national publication designed to address the interests and concerns of history and social studies teachers, the *Magazine* is organized around thematic issues based on recent scholarship in American history. Guest editors work with their colleagues to develop three or four short essays on particular aspects of the theme. Each issue contains lesson plans providing examples of how significant new scholarship can be incorporated into classroom exercises. Upcoming issues will focus on Congressional history, Teaching History Through Literature, Imperialism, Judicial history, Early Republic, and the Gilded Age. In addition to the topical articles, each issue includes **Dialogue**, which presents various approaches to history teaching; **Student Speak**, where students discuss their views on history and history teaching; **History Headlines**, a listing of upcoming conferences and events of interest; plus reviews, teaching resource guides, and more.



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