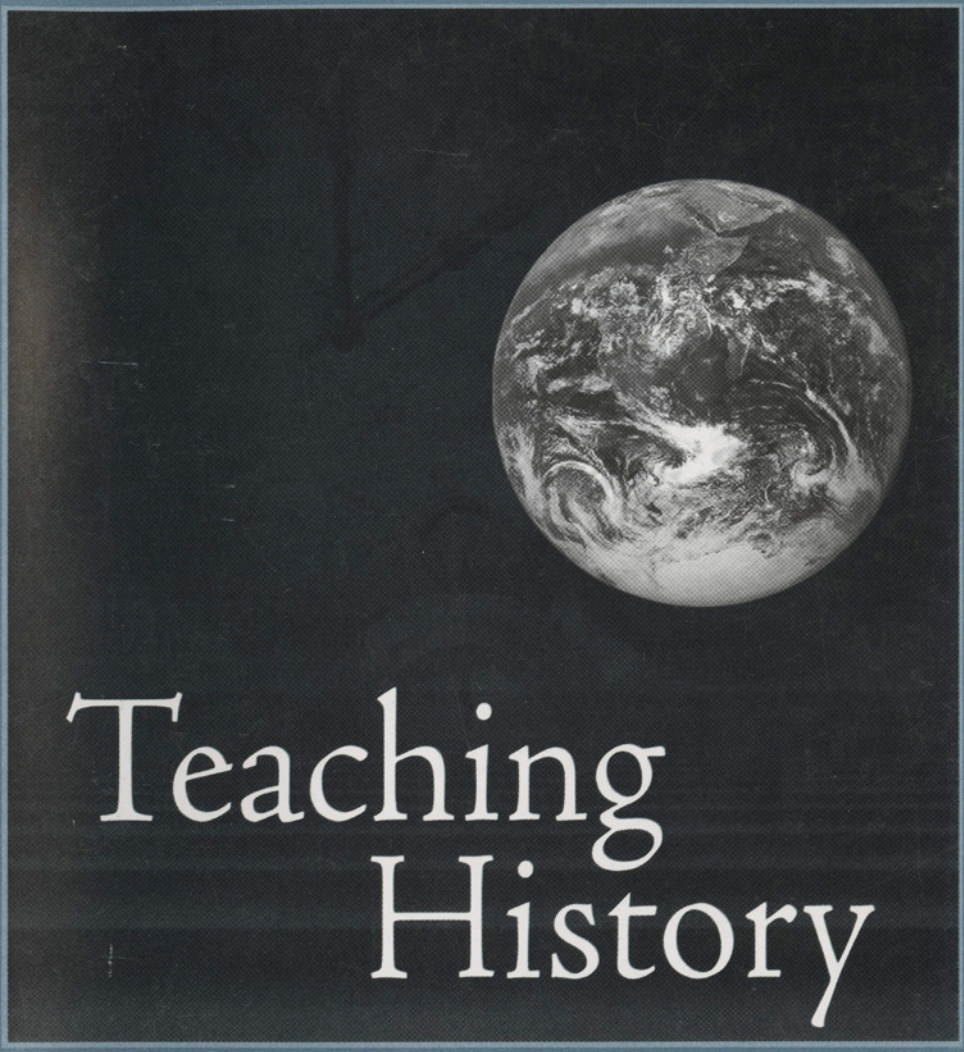

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All correspondence in regard to contribution of manuscripts and editorial policies should be directed to Stephen Kneeshaw, Department of History, College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, MO 65726-0017, fax 417/690-3250, e-mail kneeshaw@cofo.edu. All books for review and correspondence regarding book reviews should be sent to Robert Page, Division of Social and Cultural Studies, Georgia Highlands College, Rome, GA 30162-1864, fax 706/295-6610, e-mail rpage@highlands.edu.

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BOOK REVIEWS

EARLY BIRD SPECIALS:
SOME THOUGHTS ON USE OF CLASS TIME BEFORE CLASS BEGINS

Robert Blackey
California State University, San Bernardino

Please read no further if you are a teacher who, for whatever reason, is rarely able to arrive in class early. But if, instead, you routinely appear at least five minutes before class begins—to set up materials, to be available to students with questions, to set a good example, or to demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm for your teaching—then the suggestions I offer for using those few minutes constructively might whet your creative appetite.

Recently I began my fifth decade as a full-time university professor of history. Not surprisingly, I have found that just as our discipline continues to evolve and expand, so have the topics and areas to teach in my courses, as they surely have, or will have, for most teachers. Yet class time is not part of an expanding academic universe, and the number of minutes we spend in class—each day and each term—ordinarily does not increase from year to year in order to accommodate a potentially fuller, more thorough, and inclusive course syllabus. This dilemma inevitably involves us in reevaluating what we do and cover in class and more so when we factor in changing technologies that enable us to be innovative. Most of us, I expect, add and drop some subjects and expand and contract others, but not without considerable deliberation and regret for topics we have had to abridge or even eliminate altogether.

In recent years I have been integrating significant numbers of projected images—along with a little music and occasional artifacts—into classroom presentations, which in turn has inspired—if not pushed—me to be creative in nontraditional ways.[1] Although students both enjoy and seem to profit from these visual and audio stimuli—many of which can function as documents and primary sources, as they draw students more fully and effectively into the subject at hand[2]—they require additional class time

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[1]Robert Blackey, "To Illuminate History: Making History Picture-Perfect," *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods*, 30:2 (Fall 2005), 59-71. Also see Robert Blackey, "New Wine in Old Bottles: Revitalizing the Traditional History Lecture," *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods*, 22:1 (Spring 1997), 3-25. For more on using images see Anna Pegler-Gordon, "See Images in History," *Perspectives*, 44:2 (February 2006), 28-31 and Joseph Coohill, "Images and the History Lecture: Teaching the History Channel Generation," *The History Teacher*, 39:4 (August 2006), 455-65.

[2]For example, in describing the changes that took place in written English, from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, I project samples of handwritten letters from early, middle, and late parts of those centuries (some of which, not incidentally, come from my own research) and, in each case, then have students take turns trying to read them aloud. Whether it is in the use of words, phrases, or the actual physical form the letters of the alphabet take, this lesson in paleography—and working with documents—has never failed to capture students' attention. Paintings, too, become primary sources when they are used to augment aspects of social history, as I do, for example, with seventeenth-century

(continued...)

to show and discuss. As a result, I have chosen to marginalize rather than cut some of this visual material by showing and describing it during the three-to-five minutes before the official start of a class session.[3] None of this pre-class material appears on course examinations, so students who merely arrive on time are not penalized, but by giving a few extra minutes of my time I am able to give much more to my students, who now, not incidentally, have an incentive to arrive early as well. As students have noted in their course evaluations, "The way you taught the class enhanced my learning experience and made me want to get to class earlier because I did not want to miss any of the pictures;" or "I always looked forward to coming to class early because the images served as a way to transition from class to class, to focus on the subject at hand, and to 'travel' the world;" and "One of the things I appreciated … was the five or so minutes leading into the class. He set the tone by projecting images of different locations that I never would have known about if it were not for his class. These images … inspired me to think outside the normal curriculum. It was truly a benefit to my learning experience."

The genesis of this practice is to be found in my lower-division large-lecture World Civilizations course where I launch each class session with music from a different part of the globe.[4] In doing so, I highlight the important role played by music in civilizations past and present. Not incidentally, students generally respond well to music, but the realization that it plays an historical role is something of a revelation to many. For this course, in addition to integrating music selections and excerpts into the overall narrative, I arrive in class ten minutes prior to its start and play music that is usually linked to the content, continent, or thematic subject of that day's lecture. For example, I plan Antonin Dvorak's *New World Symphony* when I introduce the unit "Global Expansion and Encounter, 1450-1750," which is appropriate, because Dvorak composed the symphony in order to capture some of the spirit of America; ceremonial music from Dahomey precedes a lecture on the African slave trade and thus calls attention to the cultural side of one African people; music from the Balkans provides sounds from that explosive part of the world in the early twentieth century and thus provides background for a presentation on World War I. To accompany the pre-class

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[2](...continued)
Dutch art.

[3]To anticipate those who might ask why useful visual and audio material is seemingly being exiled to pre-class time instead of incorporated into regular class sessions, I would note that I do so in order to be able to include *additional* material for which I literally do not have time otherwise and because the pre-class material serves the dual positive function of helping to set the mood for the subject of the day's sessions as well as providing an opportunity for students to engage the subject when they arrive a few minutes early.

[4]I am especially grateful for inspiration from Alex Zukas, "Different Drummers: Using Music to Teach History," *Perspectives*, 34:6 (September 1996), 27-33.

music, I project one or more complementary images, all of which I elaborate on as the actual session is about to begin. For example, when the subject is Asian history, at the start of one class session, I play Cambodian music recorded at Angkor Wat, which I complement with projected images of this well-preserved temple as well as others from around the Angkor complex, and of the ubiquitous, ever-encroaching jungle, along with a little background history. When imperialism in Africa is the subject, I play a recording of music of the BaBenzéle Pygmies while projecting photographs of pygmy people at work in their village. Before a class session on World War II, I play music and project images specific to that global conflict, just as for the preceding class session on the Great Depression era, I play period music to the visual accompaniment of images from the 1930s. For the final class session I show scenes from the film *Koyaanisqatsi*, directed by Godfrey Reggio, while students listen to the mesmerizing score composed by Philip Glass; the Hopi Indian word *koyaanisqatsi*, meaning "life out of balance," seems an appropriate way to end the course as well as to reflect the contemporary state of world affairs.

Virtually all the music and images function as primary sources, about which I pose questions and encourage students to offer commentary. By the time the course is over students have been exposed to select and diverse samples of music and accompanying images of places and peoples from the major continents. Here is what a few students have observed: "I loved the projections and music. He really helps different styles of learners apply themselves in this course;" or "The music, especially when combined with the images, helped me hold interest not only in the class but outside of class too! I would search to find out more about a certain piece or the culture that the music was from;" and "I found that it was enjoyable to listen to world music that would otherwise be lost to me. If I did not particularly care for the style of music, I would try to picture what kind of people sat around listening to the music. Did they listen to phonographs, were they smoking opium and relaxing, was this music only accessible through concerts?"

This practice in my World Civilizations course has worked effectively to interest, and sometimes to inspire, students, which in turn encouraged me to think about what I might do for my other courses. For several years I had been using the few minutes before the start of each class session to encourage or spark in students an interest in words and language use and to tickle them with unusual historical facts or anecdotes. For example, in one of my English history classes, each day I project the spellings of a couple of proper names and challenge students to pronounce them correctly, such as Leicester (Lester) and St. John (Sin Jin). Doing so served, and still serves, a function comparable to that played by the people who warm up audiences that attend television programs taped before actual audiences: It helps to establish a positive atmosphere. In my case, it also helps to ease students into the subject at hand. Then, I added another pre-start-of-class activity linked to what I was already doing during class time.

As a history undergraduate and graduate student in the 1960s, my teachers never made use of images, projected or otherwise, but I appreciated their value when I came

across them during my own reading and research: portraits of historical figures, photographs and paintings of historically relevant places and documents, works of art, and even cartoons on history-themed subjects.[5] Collectively, they helped me to visualize places and to comprehend the role they played in events, to put faces to names (especially as those faces and forms reflected personality), to add depth and character to subjects, to value the artists and paintings that were otherwise mere names and titles, and to learn that there often was insight embedded in humor. In other words, images can be used not simply as illustrations of historical experience but rather as another dimension of that same experience. When I began to teach, I circulated among students books that included such images as well as occasional cartoons for comic-history relief, and I showed slides of works of art and from my travels as well as occasional filmstrips or video clips that provided useful images to supplement course narratives. But passing books and other printed images around the room takes time for each student to examine them, and more often than not by the time a given book or image reaches the last student I have already moved on to another topic. The problem with old-fashioned slides is that they cannot be used easily for every topic. Now, however, the same technology that enables us to search the Internet for images and to make transparencies and PowerPoints has changed the way we teach, and it also adds, with mind-boggling potential, to the material that we weave into class sessions. Compelled to drop some images rather than compromise more traditional content, I came up with the idea to use pre-class time constructively.

It's all rather simple: Interested teachers can make use of the types, number, and variety of images appropriate to their subjects and students.[6] The best way to illustrate this is with examples from several courses. But I should note first that in addition to what can be mined from the Internet and from visual records of personal travel, images for class use also can be secured from different types of books, including history textbooks that change some of their illustrations with each new edition and others in art, architecture, or photography, including "from the air" books.[7] In addition, you can

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[5]The first cartoon I ever cut out was from a mid-1960s issue of *The New Yorker*, by cartoonist James Stevenson, that showed two peasants walking away from a castle, one saying to the other: "What do you think will be next—a period of spiritual rebirth, with renewed inquiry in the sciences and a humanistic resurgence of the arts?" As a student of European history I was hooked, and I have been collecting cartoons relevant to historical events ever since.

[6]Typically, I project between two and five images during pre-class time, coupled with some description and historical information from me. I encourage students to offer comments and ask questions, which they often do, especially those who have been to the country in question or are planning on going. If all this sometimes results in our spilling over into class time, I do not mind, as it is educationally sound.

[7]For example, see Georg Gerster, *The Past From Above: Aerial Photographs of Archaeological Sites* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005); Guido Rossi & Franco Masiero, *Venice from the Air* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988); Guido Rossi & Franco Lefevre, *Rome from the Air* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989);

(continued...)

draw from books that focus on travel, national heritage sites, histories of cities, and museum exhibits, as well as from illustrated encyclopedias, cultural atlases (e.g., Facts on File), and history-related series,[8] and unusual books that offer nontraditional images of places.[9] All you have to do is seek, as there is much to find.

I first experimented with projecting images before class in a course on Tudor and Stuart England. I already had been using projected images that included portraits, documents, and both paintings and photographs of historical sites and artifacts that are integrated throughout the course narrative. As an example, to discuss and analyze the trial of Charles I in 1649, which follows an examination of the Rump Parliament, I project an image of Oliver Comwell, who led army officers in pushing for the trial. I then turn attention to the king who, though strong in spirit, was looking older than his 48 years, as attested to in a portrait by Edward Bower, who observed Charles throughout the trial. The trial itself took place in Westminster Hall, which can be shown as it survives today but can also be seen as it looked from the outside in the mid-seventeenth century in an etching by Wenceslaus Hollar and on the inside during the trial itself in other contemporary engravings. The red velvet chair on which Charles sat has survived, as has the specially made reinforced hat of John Bradshaw, who presided over the trial.[10] Seeing photographs of these artifacts adds authenticity to previously shown images and helps students to visualize the event in some detail. To add further dramatic verisimilitude, I play a recording of a performance of an exchange between the king and Bradshaw, based on the actual trial transcript, wherein they debate the meaning of treason and the degree to which Charles was an "ordinary" prisoner. I then lead students into exploring the arguments of the opposing sides. Other projected images include the death warrant signed by 59 judges, complete with waxed seals; a painting by Canaletto of the Banqueting House as it looked in the eighteenth century and a photograph of the way it looks today (i.e., Inigo Jones' Banqueting House is where Charles waited before stepping outside onto the scaffold erected especially for the occasion) along with photographs of its brilliant ceiling by Peter Paul Rubens,

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[7](...continued)
Annabel Walker, *England from the Air* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989); Mick Aston, *Interpreting the Landscape from the Air* (Charleston, SC: Tempus, 2003).

[8]Some useful ones are *Treasures of the World* (Chicago: Stonehenge Press, 1982-83), *Time Frame* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life books, 1987-91), and *What Life Was Like* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1997-2000).

[9]For example, those interested in British history will find some gems in Julian Calder & Alastair Bruce, *The Oldest: In Celebration of Britain's Living History* (London: Cassell Illustrated, 2005).

[10]For photographs of the chair and hat, see Christopher Hibbert, *Charles I* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 162-63; and D.R. Watson, *The Life and Times of Charles I* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), 180.

installed in 1635 and with its center panel representing, with unintended irony given that Charles virtually passed under it, the apotheosis of his father, King James I; one of the two shirts worn by Charles at his execution, so he would not shiver on that cold January morning and perhaps convey the impression of fear; and John Weesop's painting imagining the execution and the reaction of the crowd.

Considering the extensive use of images I already employed in that course, and wanting to give students a broader impression of the British Isles, even as I lacked additional class time to do so, I had something of an epiphany when I realized that a useful way around this dilemma would be to project a few images as part of what I was doing already in the several minutes before the start of class. To augment this new approach, I keep at the ready historical maps of the British Isles and of London so as to be able to identify the location of what will be viewed each day; this has the added benefit, therefore, of enhancing students' awareness of the geography of both the British Isles and England's capital city.

I launch this course's "early bird special" with photographs of Stonehenge and a brief summary of the site's significance, plus news of nearby excavations (in 2003-06) of the remains of what probably was the village of workers who erected the monoliths on the Salisbury Plain. Other images of early Britain that I project and discuss at the start of class sessions include Hadrian's Wall, Tintagel, the ruins of the abbey church at Glastonbury, a twelfth-century bridge in Lincoln to which still-surviving houses were added in 1540, Bury St. Edmunds, the scant remains of Old Sarum (eventually an infamous rotten borough), and Salisbury Cathedral, along with photos of its Magna Carta—one of four surviving copies—and a clock mechanism from 1386 and still functioning, purportedly the oldest in Europe.

Throughout the term I also show images from around England, e.g., Dover Castle and the White Cliffs, Windsor Castle, Oxford and Cambridge Universities, Bath, Coventry Cathedral (the new one and the remains of the old destroyed during World War II), York, the Major Oak (in Sherwood Forest) and the Bowthorne Oak (among the last of the huge oak trees that are wide enough to house people in their trunks), Windsor Castle, and Leeds Castle; Scotland, e.g., the ruins of Urquhart Castle and a satellite view of Loch Ness, West Highland Cows (more commonly known as Highland Beasties), whose hides are coated with long auburn hair and are the oldest type of cattle in Britain, Edinburgh Castle, and Scone Palace and the Stone of Scone; and Ireland, e.g., a satellite view of the emerald island, Trinity College Library, Dublin along with pages from the Book of Kells, Blarney Castle, and a "beehive" house located on the Dingle Peninsula. In addition, I include images from around England that relate to Tudor and Stuart times but have not otherwise been incorporated into regular class sessions, e.g., Hever Castle, which was given to Anne Boleyn's father by Henry VIII and then later to Anne of Cleves, which in turn functions as a commentary on the politics of marriage, beheading, and divorce, St. James's Palace, Stratford-upon-Avon, the new Globe Theatre as well as a drawing of the original, the Monument to the Great Fire of London, Hatfield House, built by Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, Greenwich,

and St. Paul's Cathedral along with a model of the earlier cathedral destroyed in the Great Fire.

Thus, by the time the course ends students have seen a variety of images that add to their experiencing and understanding sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England and the contemporary British Isles. Comments by students, some solicited by me and others as part of course evaluations, reinforced my expectation and in-class observations that my efforts were worthwhile and added a dimension to the course that students appreciated: "I liked his use of visuals before and during class, including pictures of historical places which allowed me to visit them without ever going to Europe (but now more than ever I want to go);" or "I hate history, but he made it fun with his pictures, music, stories, artifacts, and more, even doing some really interesting stuff before class began;" from another, "Your class turned me into an Anglophile! My hope is that one day I will travel to Britain and see the places you showed and spoke of. I will soak it all in like a sponge;" and finally "The pre-class activities helped add depth to the course material; they provided visual stimulation at the very least and also added a cultural flavor to the course in that they helped to explain some of the peculiarities that are unique to different countries or time periods. They also help you remember that there is a lot more to the making of history than just wars and important figures; it is almost like looking through kaleidoscope in that everything is made of the same material but at every turn it creates a different pattern, similar to the previous but always different."

I modify my pre-class approach in courses on the Renaissance and Reformation and on Europe in the Age of Absolutism and Enlightenment by including images, along with accompanying maps, from a number of continental European countries. Not surprisingly, for example, Italy is featured prominently in my course on the Renaissance and Reformation. But in addition to the images that are integral to an examination of the political, economic, social, and cultural history of the period, I use pre-class time to familiarize students with the rich variety of surviving sites. From Rome, for example, there is the Church of Immaculate Conception with its macabre Cemetery of Capuchin Fathers, which includes six chapels crowded with the symmetrically and artistically arranged bones of some 4,000 monks who died between 1528-1870; the Michelangelo-designed Piazza del Campidoglio along with the broken remains of what was once a rather large statue likely to have been a representation of Constantine; the Mamertino Prison, one of the oldest buildings in Rome, with its dark and forbidding subterranean stone cell and its upside-down cross, symbolic of the way St. Peter was crucified, as this prison might have been the last place of his confinement—an accompanying image of Caravaggio's "The Crucifixion of St. Peter," showing Peter on an inverted cross, creates an artistic link to the photograph of the prison cell; and the Pyramid of Caius Cestius, a marble-faced brick pyramid-tomb, built shortly before the birth of Jesus, that makes up part of a section of the Roman wall built in the third century C.E.

Like Rome and Venice, Florence is saturated with history and art. Some of the images I project include the Medici Chapel, the cloister of San Marco along with one of Fra Angelico's angelic frescoes, Brunelleschi's Pazzi Chapel, and Basilica di Santa Maria Novella with Masaccio's "Trinity" fresco (1425), the first known painting to demonstrate linear perspective. I use the occasion of this Masaccio innovation to talk about the role churches have played as repositories of art. Other images come from landmark sites in Milan, Ravenna, and Assisi. Additional images used during pre-class minutes focus on Spain, e.g., the building that once housed the University of Alcalá, founded during the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabel by Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros; the Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba; the pilgrimage destination of Santiago de Compostela; and select locations in Salamanca, Toledo, Segovia, Avila, Seville, and Burgos; on Germany, e.g., Cologne, Munich, and Nuremberg; and on Belgium, e.g., Bruges and Brussels.

The end result of these pre-class activities is that whether students take one or several of my courses, they have not only been exposed to the history and scholarship of the countries and time periods we study but to a panoramic sweep of historic and cultural sites that help to reinforce and expand upon the history they are learning and, at times, the documentary sources they are reading. Naturally, it's not the same as their being there, but it does help to give their imaginations some added stimulation and direction. This, in turn, works for me as a teacher, both because it broadens what I teach and because I enjoy talking about and revisiting places I have experienced myself or have come to know through teaching and reading.

So it seems that technology—especially in the form of the Internet, scanners, and the different methods available for projecting and interjecting visual materials—presents us with both challenges and opportunities. How we take advantage of these technologies depends upon our willingness to be creative as teachers and on how we decide to use our time. In my experience, using pre-class time is time well spent. One insightful and generously expressive student effectively captured what I hope all my students will experience:

> The beginnings of Robert Blackey's classes were decidedly different from any classes I'd ever taken before.... Prior to each lecture, Dr. Blackey made it a habit to project a series of images that were relevant to whatever topic or geographic region he would be covering that day.... There was no need to take notes, no pressure to awaken from your pre-class reverie if that was your choice—it was truly just an added bonus to take or leave as one saw fit.
>
> As an early-arriving student to all my classes, my initial reaction to these pre-class visual feasts was one of simple relief: it was less time I had to spend staring at blank walls and the even blanker looks on the faces of some fellow students. In retrospect, however, my experience in the five minutes before class officially started had a richness and depth I would not

have anticipated. When I think back on the Renaissance and Reformation, my mind is instantly filled with vivid images, in much the same way a particularly pleasant vacation evokes fond memories of the sites one has visited. In some ways this is strange, because I equate the images with the lectures—as if they were being experienced simultaneously—but the lectures were characterized by fast and frantic note-taking and the clamoring sense of urgency about getting down the most important facts and perspectives in preparation for the inevitable exams. Yet my memory marries these separate events and manifests a symphony of color, architecture, landscape, time, place, perception, and information. I can recall seeing mosques, churches, palaces, statues, cottages, and fountains. In my head there is a map that connects these images to places: Cordoba, Granada, Venice, Rome, [and] Florence. It is hard to image that this *experience*—for that is what I must call it—was made possible because the teacher showed us images for five minutes before class even started, yet I know I must attribute it to this.

Additionally, there were times when I would see an image of some unknown place and feel a subtle quickening in my spirit, an intangible tug of desire, like seeing for the first time the face of a person one will later come to love. In these instances, I would find myself in a grip of a strange passion that would no longer allow Spain to be the country I never noticed, or Italy to be the place I never cared to visit. Suddenly, there was about these places something irresistible, something not-to-be-overlooked, and I would rush home after class and look online for the Spanish Steps, or every picture I could locate of Cordoba, and with this the world became both smaller and grander as well as more accessible, more familiar, and also a great deal more beautiful and wondrous.

While I cannot say that this is the effect that Dr. Blackey's unusual teaching method had on everyone, I am grateful that it had this effect on me. And though it is peculiarly egocentric to say so, I'd like to suggest that therein lies proof enough of its worth.

BUILDING HISTORICAL IMAGINATION WITH THREE POTATOES, TWO CARROTS, AND ONE ONION

Pamela Riney-Kehrberg
Iowa State University

Cultivating historical imagination in undergraduate students is often a difficult task. The distance between their lives, generally lived in the last quarter century, and the ways in which people lived in the pre-World War II period can be enormous. The task becomes even more difficult when students think that certain elements of their lives in the present are much more similar to those of previous eras than they actually are. Case in point is the Great Depression. Given the current economic downturn, many students are convinced that, in some ways, they are living in a situation akin to that of the 1930s.

As historians, however, we know that (at least for now) the distance between the depression of the 1930s and the economic troubles of today is significant. The U.S. Department of Labor posted a 9.8 percent unemployment rate for the nation in September 2009. This number, of course, masked significant differences between states. North Dakota boasted the lowest unemployment rate in the nation, at 4.3 percent. Iowa's unemployment rate was 6.8 percent, while neighboring Illinois' was at 10 percent. Michigan suffered the highest unemployment rate, with 15.2 percent unemployed in August.[1] Reflecting the general level of distress, mortgage foreclosures are as high as they have been in a generation. Consumer confidence has slumped significantly. In most parts of the country, retail sales fell considerably at Christmas 2008. Families have found themselves scrimping and saving, trying to remember long forgotten strategies for getting by in difficult economic times. Given the situation and constant news coverage, it is altogether too easy for today's students, whose context for understanding history is the period since 1990, to draw erroneous comparisons between the hard times their grandparents and great grandparents faced with the economic downturn of 2008-09.

During a class lecture, a few historical facts will demonstrate that in the winter of 2008-09, the United States was not again in the depths of the Great Depression. Unemployment between 1929 and 1933 soared to around twenty-five percent. Another twenty-five percent of working Americans were underemployed, working part time when they needed full time work, taking drastic pay cuts, or doing jobs that did not make use of their skills. Unemployment remained above twenty percent in 1934 and

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[1]U.S. Department of Labor, www.dol.gov, accessed October 6, 2009; "Unemployment Rate by States, August 2009," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov/web/laumstrk.htm, accessed October 6, 2009.

1935, and did not fall below fifteen percent until 1941.[2] Other economic indicators were equally grim. Gross national income declined more than 44 percent between 1929 and 1933. In the same period, personal consumption declined nearly twenty percent. By the time Franklin Roosevelt took office in March 1933, nearly every bank in the United States had closed.[3] By any measure, the depression of the 1930s was a staggering economic calamity.

It can be difficult, however, to impress this information in any meaningful way on a group of 18 to 24-year olds who do not have the context to understand the day-to-day impact of these numbers. I began planning a senior seminar on the Great Depression in the fall of 2008, anticipating that the current economic turmoil might make it difficult to imagine the difference in degree between the problems of the thirties and the problems of today. I was looking for a very concrete way in which to demonstrate the differences between their grandparents' and great grandparents' depression and their own recession. I decided that one of the most concrete and immediate ways to demonstrate this difference was to use food.

Food is, of course, incredibly important to all of us. Without it, we perish. The degree of difficulty families in the U.S. have experienced obtaining adequate food has varied enormously. Although the variety of food available for purchase grew significantly in the early years of the twentieth century, obtaining sufficient food often depended upon income. Depression-era families had to be extremely careful about how they spent their food dollars. In 1935-1936, 41.7 percent of all American families had an income of $1,000 or less per year. More than 75 percent of all families receiving relief had incomes of $1,000 or less per year.[4] Food was the greatest single expense of most American families. Families with incomes of $1,000 a year and less generally spent forty percent or more of their money each month on food, but still suffered from malnutrition.[5] Among wage earners at the lowest income levels, ninety percent consumed too little calcium, more than eighty percent too little iron, and seventy-five percent too little Vitamin C.[6]

When the Department of Agriculture's home economists tackled the problem of budgeting for hard times, they were pressed to reduce cost estimates to the income levels many families faced. In *Diets to Fit the Family Income* (1936), home economists

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[2]Lester V. Chandler, *America's Greatest Depression, 1929-1940* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 34.

[3]Chandler, 8-10, 22.

[4]Clair Brown, *American Standards of Living* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), 100.

[5]Brown, 105, 114, 455.

[6]Brown, 110.

Rowena Schmidt Carpenter and Hazel K. Stiebeling offered sample grocery lists and menus for families in liberal, moderate-cost, minimum-cost, adequate, and restricted levels. They wrote "this restricted-diet plan is for emergency use only, because it may not provide a sufficient surplus of protective foods (milk, eggs, tomatoes, and green vegetables) to insure good health over an indefinite period." The grocery list, which was heavy in potatoes, dried beans, peas, peanut butter, and cereals, did not, they believed, contain adequate protein, vitamins, and minerals for the long haul.[7] The menus Carpenter and Stiebeling suggested were pretty bleak. In a sample week's menu, their Monday offerings included a breakfast of hot cereal, with tomato juice for children, a lunch of boiled beans with salt pork for adults and eggs and bread for children, followed by a dinner of onion soup with cheese and toast and a side of fried potatoes. Other bare-bones suggestions included a soup of potatoes and oatmeal, cheese mush, kidney bean stew, and whole-wheat chowder.[8] They predicted that feeding a family of four at this barely adequate level would have cost $6.15 per week, or nearly $320 for the year. By contrast, the "minimum cost adequate diet," which included twice or more the meat, eggs, fruits, and vegetables of the restricted diet, would have cost $9.15 per week, or nearly $475.80 for a year.[9] Families with incomes of at least $1,000 a year might have been able to make this minimum, but millions of families with incomes below this mark might not have been able to afford even the restricted diet.

When unemployment struck, families had to be even more careful about their spending. In 1931 in Pennsylvania, for example, most destitute families received only eight to twelve dollars per month in aid. Some states rationed their aid, providing funds to only the most "worthy" of the poor, generally meaning widows, orphans, and the disabled. Many states ran out of money for aid by 1932 and 1933, leaving the poor to fend for themselves.[10] In a situation such as this, food was not entertainment. Food was a matter of survival.

But in the period after World War II, a time of relative prosperity, people came to think of food as entertainment as well as sustenance. Rising standards of living and changes in the American family have changed food and eating significantly. Today, families eat out regularly. Since the 1970s, American families, on average, have spent as many of their food dollars on meals in restaurants as on groceries for home. "Home cooking" is more likely to involve heating pre-prepared foods than making a meal from

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[7]Rowena Schmidt Carpenter and Hazel K. Stiebeling, *Diets to Fit the Family Income*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farmer's Bulletin No. 1757 (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1936).

[8]Carpenter and Stiebeling, 29.

[9]Carpenter and Stiebeling, 10-12.

[10]Chandler, 43-47.

basic ingredients.[11] These are generally post-World War II developments. During the depression, eating out was a rare and expensive treat. Most families made the majority of their meals at home from basic, minimally-processed ingredients. Prepared and convenience foods were expensive and less common than today. For example, in 1937 when Kraft Macaroni and Cheese made its first appearance in grocery stores, it cost nineteen cents for four servings. While this might sound like an insignificant sum, for family budgets in 1937, it was not. That nineteen-cent box of macaroni and cheese is the equivalent of a $2.85 purchase today, far more than we would pay for the same product.[12] In the 1930s Kraft Macaroni and Cheese was not survival food, but a small luxury.

But how does one convey to students what eating for survival means? An instructor could take a small pile of vegetables into a class—say, three potatoes, a carrot, and an onion—and explain to students that for many poor families of the 1930s, this was dinner for five. What would be more effective, however, would be to *give* the same ingredients and a few instructions to them and see what they make of the challenge.[13]

Preparing the assignment required a good bit of advance preparation. I made root vegetables the center of the meal. Potatoes, onions, and carrots were inexpensive in the 1930s, readily available, and central to many different regional cuisines. Additionally, they would be familiar to most students (and readily available), unlike turnips, parsnips, cabbage, or rutabagas, which often were eaten in the thirties. The students would also need less expertise in cooking than would be required if I gave them other inexpensive 1930s staples, such as dried beans, peas, or grains. After doing a bit of counting and weighing, I determined that I needed approximately twenty pounds of potatoes and four pounds of carrots for a class of seventeen, and I purchased nearly thirteen pounds of onions. I also bought five and a half pounds of inexpensive, fatty bacon to approximate the salt and fat pork that many families in the thirties used as a source of calories and protein. (If a local grocery has a full service meat counter, slab bacon could be substituted.) All of the food supplies cost $21.43. At 2009 prices, this is the equivalent of 75 servings at .29 per serving, making this budget food indeed. Using contemporary grocery advertisements, I calculated that the same amount of food in 1933 would have cost approximately $1.31, or 75 servings at .02 per serving. Groceries actually cost

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[11]Cathy K. Kaufman, "The Rise of Restaurants," *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, edited by Andrew F. Smith (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 501; Sylvia Lovegren, "Historical Overview: 1960s to the Present," *The Oxford Companion*, 296.

[12]Caroline Wyman, *Better than Homemade: Amazing Foods that Changed the Way We Eat* (Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2004), 22. Relative cost computed using EH.Net's "Purchasing Power of the American Dollar," http://www.measuringworth.com/ppowerus, accessed February 20, 2009.

[13]For this idea I thank Richard Kehrberg, who suggested that making students cook would be far more effective than just showing them a pile of vegetables.

more relative to family incomes in 1933 than today, a reflection on technological changes that have increased the supply and reduced the price of most foodstuffs in the last 75 years.[14]

The week before the class was to discuss the topic of "poverty and dislocation," I announced that they would be completing a "mystery assignment" for the next week. I gave the following instructions to each member of the class, plus a small brown paper bag of food, including three to four potatoes, one or two carrots, and one large onion. Students who had no objections received a small bag of bacon.

* * *

Mystery Assignment: Food and Eating in Impoverished Families

During the Great Depression, food and eating were an obsession for many. Because money was so tight, finding resources to provide a family with healthy, satisfying meals was difficult and sometimes impossible. In the bag provided, you will find three potatoes, an onion, and two carrots. If you have no objections to bacon, you will be provided a small portion of bacon pieces. During the depression, these were all common elements in the Midwestern family diets.

During the next week, use the items in your bag to make a meal. You can use your own spices and water. If you aren't quite sure what to do with your potatoes, onion, and carrots, get help. Call a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, Boy or Girl Scout leader, 4-H leader, or other person knowledgeable about cooking on a budget. Remember: In the 1930s, people relied on friends and relatives to provide them the support they needed to survive. If you are absolutely, positively stumped about how to turn these ingredients into a meal, you may spend up to $1 on additional ingredients (the equivalent of $.05 in 1933 money). If you do spend $1 on additional ingredients, they MUST be ingredients that were available in 1933. In other words, you CANNOT buy a $1 frozen pizza and call it dinner. You CANNOT buy a box of Kraft Macaroni and Cheese, since that would have cost .19 when it was first marketed in 1937. You could buy canned milk, a small portion of meat, or bread, for instance.

When you come to the next class, bring a short written discussion of your cooking and eating experience, answering the following questions.

1. What did you cook with your ingredients? Did you purchase any additional items? What?
2. Did you get any help from a parent, grandparent, or other experienced cook? Remember, this is OK.
3. How many people would your meal feed?

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[14]David Danbom, *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 239.

4. If this was what your family ate on a regular basis, during the depression (and remember, for poor people, those on relief, and farm families, this or something like this often was), what does this tell you about what daily life was like for the poor?

If you are feeling inspired to further inquiry, feel free to take in a free dinner at the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church in Ames. They will not try to convert you. You will then have a small (very small) idea of what the "soup kitchen" experience might have been like during the depression.

* * *

After distributing brown paper bags of food to my stunned class, I took some time to answer questions. Yes, they could use a crock pot, which would be equivalent to the long, slow cooking that many people used during the 1930s. No, they could not use a microwave. Yes, they could buy proportionally, using a part of a bag of flour or a part of a can of chicken broth, as long as that part was equivalent to one dollar or less. Yes, they could work with another student, particularly if they did not have easy access to cooking facilities. No, they could not go out and kill a squirrel or rabbit to put in the pot, since I did not want to be responsible for anyone hunting out of season. This question did, however, provide an opportunity to discuss how Great Depression families extended their diets with hunting, fishing, foraging, and gardening. I encouraged students again to ask for help if they needed it, since grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other older relatives are generally interested in sharing their historical experiences and expertise. In a roundabout way, I hoped they would learn some of their own families' Great Depression stories.

Anticipating the next week's discussion, I also participated in the assignment, making a pot of potato soup for my family. I used the same ingredients as I had given the students, but added half a can of evaporated milk to the soup. This fell well within the limit of $1.00 of additional ingredients. I also dug into my own cache of Great Depression stories about food and eating in hard times, in order to be able to extend the story beyond the students' sacks of groceries. In my research with Dust Bowl families living in southwestern Kansas, I found that people had relied upon oatmeal, cornmeal mush, sauerkraut, macaroni dishes, beans, wild game and weeds, and many different versions of potatoes. Families ate repetitive diets with very little in the way of meat or fresh fruits and vegetables.[15]

Other sources provided additional information on 1930s cooking. *Stories and Recipes of the Great Depression of the 1930's and More from Your Kitchen Today* by

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[15]See Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, *Rooted in Dust: Surviving Drought and Depression in Southwestern Kansas* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), chs. 3 and 5; for descriptions of other Depression meals, see also Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, editor, *Waiting on the Bounty: The Dust Bowl Diary of Mary Knackstedt Dyck* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999).

Janet Van Amber Paske and Rita Van Amber is readily available and provides an array of truly budget recipes from the thirties. These include such culinary treats as "Baked Macaroni and Tomatoes," created from bacon fat, tomatoes, and cooked macaroni, and "Pigs in a Potato Patch," concocted from a bowl of mashed potatoes, studded with sliced wieners. The cookbook also explains how to prepare rabbits, squirrels, and partridge, as well as dandelion greens.[16] The authors gathered most of these recipes from families in the upper Midwest, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. Further descriptions of budget cooking, cooking from scratch, and preserving food can be found in *Voices of American Homemakers*, edited by Eleanor Arnold. Indiana farm women explained in oral interviews what their families ate, how they prepared food, and all of the work involved in keeping a family fed and healthy.[17] A vintage source of inspiration is the U.S. government publication *Selections from Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes and USDA Favorites*, a collection of recipes broadcast into American homes by United States Department of Agriculture home economists.[18]

Another source available on the Internet and YouTube is very useful to anyone but particularly for those in heavily Italian-American areas: "Great Depression Cooking With Clara" provides recipes (and wonderful footage) of a ninety-three year old great grandmother preparing such Great Depression favorites as "Pasta with Peas," "Poorman's Meal," "Egg Drop Soup," and "Cooked Bread."[19] Much to my surprise, many of her recipes also begin with a potato and an onion. Armed with this information, as well as my own family's stories, I eagerly awaited the students' reports of their meals and reactions to the assignment.

The students came to class full of excitement about the project. They had seriously thought about the assignment and planned their meals carefully. The meals that students cooked, however, were not what I expected. Only two students chose to make a soup, something of a surprise, since soups, which could be watered down to stretch ingredients further, were one of the staples of poor people in the depression era. Several made stuffed baked potatoes, tasty, but hard to stretch beyond three hungry diners. Several happened into the idea of hash, which would have been fairly common in the thirties and easier to stretch. Two made mashed potatoes that they topped with

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[16]Janet Van Amber Paske and Rita Van Amber, *Stories and Recipes of the Great Depression of the 1930's and More from Your Kitchen Today* (Menomonie, WI: Van Amber Publishers, 1986), 35-36, 38-40.

[17]Eleanor Arnold, editor, *Voices of American Homemakers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 118-149.

[18]Consumer and Food Economics Institute, Agricultural Research Service, *Selections from Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes and USDA Favorites* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1976).

[19]"Great Depression Cooking with Clara," http://www.greatdepressioncooking.com/Depression_Cooking/Welcome.html, accessed February 20, 2009.

a carrot and onion mixture. One chose to make potato pancakes, another inexpensive staple. Several chose to consult mothers and aunts. One student who did not know how to cook called his grandmother in Kansas. She talked him through the entire process.

Students also made some surprising decisions about how to use, or not use, the food in their bags. Two threw out carrots that had become slightly rubbery before they could be cooked. This was far different from the course most cooks would have pursued in the thirties, since even a rubbery carrot would have been too precious to discard. On the positive side, the students recognized that most home cooks would have considered this wasteful seventy years ago. One wrote, "The thing that really struck me after we ate was the fact that a poor family that was feeding four or five people would never have discarded a carrot simply because it was a little shriveled and spongy. I could not help but wonder how many families ate food that had gone bad simply because they otherwise would have gone hungry." (I commented in the margin of his paper that our ideas about what had "gone bad" and what was edible have probably changed significantly over the last seventy years.) Several students decided that their onion was too big, and they only used a small portion, without realizing that using the whole onion would stretch their ingredients significantly. While some students realized that cooking grease was an important part of the caloric content of Great Depression meals, several drained off the grease and used cooking oil instead, without even realizing that bacon fat, from the point of view of a depression-era housewife, would have been food. Others, however, really got into the spirit of the assignment. One commented, "My premeditated strategy was simply to use up all of the bacon grease … I placed the mashed potatoes in the pan and used them as a sponge to soak up the grease." He also broke out a piece of hard tack, saved from a Civil War class the previous spring, and incorporated it into his bacon fat. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this was a thin young man, unconcerned with calorie counting, or the fattening consequences of eating so much grease.

One student decided to carry the assignment further than I had suggested. He created a much more elaborate meal plan by using the foods I provided as the base for his dinner, while researching additional ways in which to provide nutrients and calories within the one dollar guideline. Particularly useful to his assignment was the 1909 volume *Household Discoveries and Mrs. Curtis's Cookbook*, by Sidney Morse and Isabel Gordon Curtis, which is full of budget recipes.[20] Using this and the rest of his mother's extensive collection of period cookbooks, as well as her advice, he concocted a meal of boiled beans, biscuits, and vegetable soup. He was particularly concerned about increasing the protein value of his meal, given that so many families included pregnant women and growing children. Calculating fractional grocery purchases, he proved that his single dollar would stretch to cover the entire meal. While he believed

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[20]Sidney Morse and Isabel Gordon Curtis, *Household Discoveries and Mrs. Curtis's Cookbook* (New York: Success Company, 1909).

his three dishes would have served three adequately, his mother predicted five and his grandmother six.

When I asked other students how many people their meals fed, they reported that they fed between one and three people with their bags of vegetables. When asked how many people they *could have* fed, most agreed that between four and six people (two adults, two to four children) could have eaten a somewhat meager meal. All agreed that eating this kind of diet, day in and day out, would lead to serious nutritional problems. One wrote, "I also believe that this meal, or the ingredients given to prepare it, would not give me the sufficient energy needed to complete many of the manual labor jobs taken by the willing workers during the 1930s." Wielding a WPA shovel could be difficult, given the insufficiency of relief budget diets.

Students made other interesting observations as well. Predictably, many found the meal "tedious and dull," something of which they "would grow very weary," while another called it "surprisingly tasty." Another commented that it was "disgusting," making me wonder when plain food had become so undesirable. One student speculated about the psychological impact of this kind of diet: "Eating would be a constant reminder of the state your family was in because you have to eat everyday, there is no avoiding it." One young woman beautifully captured the difference between the way most Americans eat today, and eating for survival.

> I realized when making this meal how focused we are these days on how good something tastes and even how pretty something is on a plate. Many of us don't worry about whether the meal will fill us up, or whether it is good for us, because we know we will get to eat again in a couple of hours. I don't think families trying to make it through the depression were worried about presentation, variety, or even taste. The focus of depression-era families, and mothers in particular, was to try to keep their families from starving, even if it meant eating the same three ingredients over and over again. We are privileged enough to be able to make food choices based on what we like, what tastes good, and what keeps us satisfied.

She had correctly identified the crux of the matter: Relief and poverty-level diets robbed families of the element of choice. Nothing but survival really mattered.

Interestingly enough, no one chose to visit the local charity meal program. Whether this was a result of tight schedules, the potential for embarrassment, or indifference, I do not know. Food at First, which is run by a consortium of local churches and charitable organizations, collects leftover food from various businesses, as well as having a modest budget with which to buy staples from local grocery stores. Food at First regularly serves main dishes such as sloppy joes, burritos, lasagna, and ham, accompanied by such dishes as rice, fresh vegetables, salads, jello, brownies, ice

cream, and cookies.[21] If the students had chosen to visit the meal program, we would have discussed the differences between the hearty meals of restaurant and fraternity house leftovers served at Food at First and the thin soup and dry bread of a depression-era charity meal.

Because of the cost and the logistics of portioning out the food, I would only recommend this assignment for a fairly small class. Fortunately, departmental funds paid for the groceries in this case. I also would recommend the assignment for upper-level students rather than freshmen, because of the problems of finding cooking facilities in dormitories. On a commuter campus, this would be less of a concern. Fortunately, only one student lacked basic cooking skills, and he was able to overcome this with the help of his grandmother.

This assignment can easily be paired with another project I developed and have used in the past, "Feeding a Family of Five: Role Playing the Great Depression," published in *Teaching History* in 1997.[22] In this assignment, students take on the role of a parent or guardian, with a relief budget of $2.50 per week to care for themselves and their dependents. Using a selection of newspaper advertisements and period cookbooks, they must create a grocery list, a set of menus, and a written justification for their choices. A problem that I have encountered in the past is the enormous gulf between the eating habits of the past and those of the present; a number of students simply did not know how to formulate a meal plan using basic ingredients such as root vegetables, beans, and other cheap, less processed foods. I believe that if I required students to complete the "mystery assignment" prior to their attempts to "feed a family of five," the results would be more satisfactory, and more true to the eating patterns of the 1930s.

The assignment seemed to energize the students. They certainly wanted to talk about their meals and their reactions to them. One student commented, "this was the most exciting assignment I have had all year," while another wrote, "I would encourage you to use this with future classes." My primary goal, which I believe I achieved, was to create a "stop-and-think" moment, when students could measure the distance between the past and present, using a concrete medium, such as food. Instead of just reading or hearing about the distance between their own dinners and those of families on relief, they could actually plan a meal, cook the food, and eat it, weighing that meal against what they normally would have eaten for dinner. As a result, the class has a greater appreciation of the substantial difference between their eating habits and those of relief clients and other poor families of 75 years ago.

Making an assignment such as this does require trade-offs in terms of class time. The time spent explaining the assignment, and then discussing it with the class, does

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[21]"Food at First: Past Meals," http://www.foodatfirst.com/past_meals.htm, accessed February 27, 2009.

[22]"Feeding a Family of Five: Role Playing the Great Depression," *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods*, 22:2 (Fall 1997), 59-63.

mean that other content might be lost. There might be less of an opportunity to discuss economic change in the 1930s or New Deal programs. However, if an instructor is going to spend at least one class period on a discussion of the meaning of poverty in the thirties, this assignment would more than justify itself in terms of making the contours of hunger and deprivation more real. From my perspective, an important part of an education in history is the understanding that now is not then and that there have been enormous changes in the fabric of American life in the last eighty years. Fortunately, our students have not grown up in a time of want, but that does present certain challenges in impressing upon them the gravity of the situation in the 1930s. Presenting them with a few instructions and a small bag of vegetables is a gentle but effective means of demonstrating how much our world has changed since the Great Depression.

WORKING WITH PROBATE INVENTORIES: A CLASS ASSIGNMENT IN HISTORICAL METHODS

Darren Hynes
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Introduction

Probate inventories are listings of property that were sometimes taken upon an individual's death. A team of appraisers would tour the home and lands of the deceased, describing everything of value and assigning an estimated worth. This appraisal would help the administrator or executor of the estate pay off all creditors, with the remainder being distributed according to a will or divided among heirs for those who died intestate. For the past four decades family historians as well as economic and social historians have made extensive use of these inventories, but it is hard to make generalizations about them, as laws governing them vary according to the jurisdiction and year being examined; the literature on probate inventories is consequently very wide-ranging.[1] Used initially for the study of wealth distribution, researchers have also used them to investigate other areas of historical interest. For example, doctors' kits and libraries inform us about the material culture of medicine; word usage and spelling in the lists interest linguists as well as intellectual historians, who also find an indication of the degree of literacy in the number of documents signed by "x" rather than a name; in named books and ownership of Bibles there is evidence of learning and intellectual interests; pottery, dishware, and utensils interest archaeologists; sociologists find status symbols in the details of furnishings, apparel, and cultural objects; agricultural implements tell of farming methods and crop specialization; horses, harness, wagons, and boats indicate modes of production as well as travel; tools speak of craftsmanship; household implements like spinning wheels,

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[1]The material on early modern France alone is vast and dates back to the seventeenth century: Claude De Ferrière, *La Science parfaite des notaires, ou le moyen de faire un parfait notaire. Contenant les ordonnances, arrêts et reglemens rendus touchant la fonction des Notaires,* 2e éd. (Paris: Charles Osmont, 1686); *Nouvelle introduction à la pratique contenant l'explication des termes de pratique, de droit et de coûtumes*, nouv. éd. (Bruxelles: Par la Société, 1739); Guy Cabourdin, "Jalons sur une méthodologie des actes notariés sous l'ancien régime," in *Les Actes notariés: Sources de l'histoire sociale XVIe-XIXe siècle*, Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg (Mars 1978), éd. Bernard Vogler (Strasbourg: Librairie Istra, 1979), 47-69; Bertrand Gautier, "L'habitat des marchands bordelais au XVIIe siècle d'apreès décès," *Annales du Midi* 108/216 (1996), 505-520; Ralph E. Giesey, "Rules of Inheritance and Strategies of Mobility in Prerevolutionary France," *American Historical Review*, 82:2 (April 1977), 271-289; Julie Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); Sébastien Jahan, *Profession, parenté, identité sociale: Les notaires de Poitiers aux temps modernes* (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 1999); Jean-Paul Poisson, *Études notariales* (Paris: Éditions Economica, 1996).

wool cards, looms, and soap kettles suggest household production. We can also examine patterns such as the seasonal round of work and the sexual division of labor.[2]

At first glance these inventories can appear quite daunting and even confusing, as they consist of long lists of material, in no apparent order and with numerous arcane abbreviations. Historians have to learn how to work with them. Accordingly, for my level-three Historical Methods class I put together an active learning module on probate inventories that takes up about three periods of class time.[3] The module is designed to introduce students to the comparative method, the study of material culture, the analysis of primary documents, and the use of vital records as a cross-referencing tool. The focus is on the Colonial New England household economy, using a sample of Essex County, Massachusetts, probate inventories from 1774 taken from Alice Hanson Jones, *American Colonial Wealth*.[4] The early vital records for Essex County from 1600-1849 (the "Tan Books") are available online under "Massachusetts Vital Records 1600-1849."[5] Other inventories are also available online and in published compilations. The module follows an eclectic approach to teaching and learning that combines lectures and readings with homework and group work on documents.[6] This will be discussed more extensively in the conclusion.

The Assignment

To introduce the topic and illustrate the kind of work that can be done with this evidence, I first ask the class to read Chapter 1, "The Ways of Her Household," from

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[2]See John Bedell, "Archaeology and Probate Inventories in the Study of Eighteenth Century Life," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 31:2 (Autumn 2000), 223-45, and Peter Benes, ed., *Early American Probate Inventories*, assoc. ed., Jane Montgue Benet; contrib eds., Ross W. Beales, Jr. and Kevin M. Sweeney, ed. Advisors Richard M. Candee and Robert F. Trent; The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife: Annual Proceedings 1987 (Boston: Boston University, 1989). For family history, see Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans, and Nigel Goose, eds., *When Death Do Us Part* (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000); for medical history, see J.W. Connor, "Estate Records and the History of Medicine in Ontario," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 10 (1993), 97-114; "Estate Records of Medical Practitioners in Ontario, 1793-1900," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 10 (1993), 115-43.

[3]Maryellen Weimer, "Active Learning: Quantity, Extent, Depth, Count," *Teaching Professor*, 10:10 (December 1996), 1.

[4]Alice Hanson Jones, *American Colonial Wealth: Documents and Methods* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 3 vols.

[5]http://www.rootsweb.com/~maessex/VitalRecords/

[6]Anastasia S. Morrone and Terri A. Tarr, "Theoretical Eclecticism in the College Classroom," *Innovative Higher Education*, 30:1 (2005).

Laurel Ulrich's book, *Good Wives*.[7] This chapter uses exactly the sort of inventory evidence the class needs to examine in order to describe the lot of women in colonial New England. Ulrich first defines the household and then describes the role of women in the domestic economy between 1670 and 1730. She focuses on three inventories and three women (Beatrice Plummer, Amanda Grafton, and Magdalene Wear) who lived in Essex County in the years before 1750. Through an examination of the contents of their household, she is able to sketch out the varied complexity and underlying unity in the lives of these early American women, showing that despite their class differences they all had a common vocation as "good wives."

We spend the first class discussing Ulrich's work, what it tells us about women in Colonial New England, and how she uses the evidence from her probate inventories. I write the names of the three families on the board, discuss how they compare with regard to time, place, and circumstance, and try to discern what might account for the differences. I also distribute some floor plans of typical New England houses to help in the imaginative recreation of eighteenth-century space.[8]

For the second period I ask the class to look at a selection of five inventories from the second volume of Jones' monumental compilation. These inventories all come from small towns in Essex County and date from the year 1774. Each of the documents begins with the name, the hometown, the occupation, and the estimated age ("EA") of the deceased. It then lists all of his or her property, giving the type and quantity in the left-hand column, and the value in pounds ("L"), shillings ("s"), and pence ("d") in the right-hand column. There are twelve pence in a shilling and twenty shillings in a pound. By today's currency, a Massachusetts pound in 1774 would be worth about $100 (U.S.) today. These inventories were chosen to constitute a representative sample of probated estates from the period and they reflect the norm for coastal New England in the eighteenth century. When I distribute the lists, I ask students to consider what this evidence might tell us about life in colonial New England.

At the beginning of the second period, I divide the thirty students into five groups and assign one inventory to each group. I then ask each group to do three things: (1) list the items in the inventory room by room; (2) draw a floor plan of the house in question; and (3) analyze the household economy based on the material found in the

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[7]Laurel Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). This whole exercise is based upon a guest lecture first given by Danny Vickers in Chris Youé's "Historical Methods" class at Memorial University in Newfoundland in 1996. It was Vickers who first suggested reading the sample inventories from Jones in conjunction with Ulrich's *Good Wives*. Youé used the idea in subsequent Historical Methods classes; I added the focus on material culture and the cross-referencing to vital records, and also divided the work into three class meetings.

[8]Kimball Fiske, *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic* (New York: Dover, 1966 [c. 1922]).

inventory, explaining what it can tell us about work, leisure, and consumption patterns in New England in 1774, paying particular attention to the woman's role. I then circulate among the groups to check on progress and answer any questions. The students then present the results of their analyses in the third period.

For the third meeting I ask each group to informally present the results of their analyses, and as each student makes a point I write it on the board for all to see. I then ask the class to identify the features that the inventories shared in common and those that distinguish them from one another. How might these probate inventories compare to modern ones? How might these inventories from the period compare to those from eighteenth-century Europe? At the end of this period, I take ten minutes to show the class how the names we found in probate inventories can be cross-referenced to the data contained in the vital records for Essex County, which are found online under "Massachusetts Vital Records 1600-1849." Such information as marriages, births, and deaths can help us fill in some of the gaps in the information about family life and the household economy provided by the inventories. We can discover when the deceased was born, when he or she was married, and how many children the family had.

To complete the exercise, I ask each student to write up the results of their group work, including any additional information they could gather from the vital records. As with the group assignment, so with the individual assignment, they are asked to: (1) list the items in the inventory room by room; (2) draw a floor plan of the house in question; and (3) analyze the household economy based on the material found in the inventory, paying particular attention to the woman's role. Drawing on material covered in a previous assignment, I also ask them to include visual evidence about the material in question. This paper comes due the following week, at which point we move on to the next component of the course.

Conclusion

Rather than lecturing and "teaching" the students everything I knew about probate inventories, I decided to approach the material for this assignment cooperatively, transforming what we all knew as individual about the evidence and its meaning into a larger and more socially constructed understanding of the past.[9] I did not abandon lecturing but made it part of a larger, more eclectic approach to learning that combined the transmission and processing of knowledge from the teacher with autonomous research on the part of the students, both as individuals and as groups.[10]

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[9]Robert B. Barr and John Tagg, "From Teaching to Learning—A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education," *Change*, 27:6 (1995).

[10]Morrone and Tarr, "Theoretical Eclecticism in the College Classroom;" J. Biggs, "Advantages and Limitations of the Lecture," in *Teaching for Quality Learning at University* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999), 98-102.

The organizing principle for this eclecticism was the Kolb model for experiential learning as modified for instructional design by Svinicki and Dixon.[11]

According to D.A. Kolb, learning involves a cycle of four processes, each of which must be present for complete learning to take place. The first stage involves the learner in a specific educational experience, which in the second stage the learner reflects upon, seeking to find meaning. Out of this reflection, in the third stage, the learner abstracts concepts and comes to conclusions about the material, fitting these into a more theoretical understanding of the subject matter. Finally, the results are used to guide more active experimentation with the subject matter, leading to new concrete experiences.[12] Svinicki and Dixon argue that different activities support different phases of the cycle, and I follow their model in order to connect the disparate parts of the module: (1) the reading of secondary and primary sources gives learners firsthand experience with the content; (2) discussion and group work require students to reflect on their own experience and the experience of others; (3) the homework and assignments help foster abstract conceptualization and theoretical understanding; and finally (4) the use of primary data and cross-referencing require students to apply their interpretive models to novel problem situations.[13] The experiential learning model thus provided the functional framework for our investigation of probate inventories. Its use in this module easily illustrates its adaptability.

Students respond well to this assignment, and they seem to appreciate the time spent on one aspect of historical investigation.[14] They can cross reference the families in the inventories with the names in the vital records, and, while most provide photographs or drawings of the items listed, some also provide illustrations of house forms or of work areas where women might have spent their time. The historical picture that emerges, however, is a result of our collaboration. Typically all of the class members believe they are part of the production of knowledge, not simply recipients. These happy results are best explained by the learning-centered approach that informs the design of the assignment as a whole. The exercise shows the wisdom of the adage that education is more like lighting a fire than filling a bucket.

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[11]D.A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984); Marilla D. Svinicki and Nancy M. Dixon, "The Kolb Model Modified for Classroom Activities," *College Teaching*, 35:4 (Fall 1987), 141-146.

[12]Svinicki and Dixon, 141.

[13]Ibid., 142.

[14]This is judging by course evaluation questionnaires, in possession of the author.

USING MUSIC TO ENLIVEN THE AMERICAN HISTORY CLASSROOM: LOOKING AT THE POST-CIVIL WAR YEARS THROUGH THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF HENRY CLAY WORK

Eric Juhnke
Briar Cliff University

In my early years in teaching during the mid 1990s, I became excited about the potential use of music in the classroom to enliven my teaching. I learned that popular culture was not only fertile ground for historical study but also an effective tool in aiding students' understanding of the past. As George Lipsitz has explained, students might not know American history, but they know Hollywood movies, television shows, and top-40 hits.[1] Thus, when used effectively, clips from Charlie Chaplain's *Modern Times*, the sitcom *Leave it to Beaver*, or the Beatles' *White Album* help introduce issues of mechanization, postwar conformity, and the counterculture in terms students can comprehend.

As part of my own effort to bring popular culture into the classroom, I began mining the music libraries for contemporary songs to use in my United States since 1865 survey course. One early experiment was to play period music during the first five minutes of class to attract attention and stimulate participation for the lessons that followed. From there I began organizing mini-lectures and discussions around songs and artists to match the topics and themes of the course.

I was eager to find music for the post-Civil War Reconstruction era. First-year college students, I have found, know little about this tumultuous period in which the Union remained fragile, former slaves adapted to freedom, southern whites adjusted to a new order, and Congress and the President struggled for power. Lessons on Reconstruction also help introduce students to the interpretive nature of history. Was this the torturous "Age of Hate" that threatened destruction for the South? Was it a grand experiment in racial equality? Was it conservative or revolutionary? Or was it the beginning of Modern America?

Sources of popular culture provide one means to explore these questions and introduce students to the complexities of Reconstruction. During the late 1990s, I attended an OAH Conference in San Francisco, where, at a "Focus on Teaching" session, Eric Foner recommended that teachers use D.W. Griffith's 1915 film *Birth of a Nation* to stimulate classroom discussion on Reconstruction.[2] Available in many library and video store collections, this silent film classic illuminates the harsh racial

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[1]See George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), xii-iix.

[2]Eric Foner, "Major Themes, Issues, Interpretations of the Reconstruction Era," Workshop on Teaching the Reconstruction Era, Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, San Francisco, April 19, 1997.

climate of the day and justifies the Ku Klux Klan's efforts to redeem the South from the evils of Radical Republicanism.[3] Thomas Nast's political cartoons on Reconstruction, published in *Harper's Weekly*, offer another opportunity to reach students, who enjoy deciphering Nast's coded criticisms of Andrew Johnson and his supporters.[4] To this list, I would like to add the music of Henry Clay Work.

My interest in Henry Clay Work, a prominent composer of popular music during the 1860s and 1870s, does not derive from any particular expertise in nineteenth-century American history. Nor am I an authority on music or songwriters. Rather I got acquainted with Work and his music because I wanted to become a better teacher and saw in his music a way to make the post-Civil War years a livelier time for my students.

In his book *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America*, Charles Hamm noted that the end of the Civil War marked a turning point in American music. During the war, Hamm explained, songs had reflected the pathos of the age, "the military and political events, the heroes and villains …, the patriotic fervor and pride of both sides, [and] the tragedies and heartbreaks of civilians and soldiers alike." Americans looked to music to unleash their wartime emotions. But after 1865, Hamm said, composers largely ignored postwar problems of race, region, and politics. Perhaps emotionally drained by the "fever pitch" of war, Americans now favored themes of nostalgia, comedy, and love over political and social turmoil. "In deliberately turning away from contemporary issues," Americans, Hamm declared, "made popular song something it had never been before—escapism."[5] While this might have been the post-war trend, composer Henry Clay Work, for one, did not evade key political and social issues. Instead he "watched the news dispatches," "kept his songs topical," and took on contemporary controversies over Andrew Johnson, race relations, temperance, and the treatment of Native Americans.[6]

Unlike the Pennsylvanian Stephen Foster, whose sentimental songs of the antebellum slave culture confused many who mistook him as a native southerner, it was hard to mistake Henry Clay Work's frame of reference. Born in Middletown, Connecticut, in 1832, Work drew inspiration from his father, Alanson, an outspoken "anti-slavery agitator" who had served three years in prison for his involvement in the

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[3]See Melvyn Stokes, *D. W. Griffith's The Birth of a Nation: A History of the Most Controversial Motion Picture of All Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[4]See Morton Keller, *The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), Thomas Nast, *Cartoons and Illustrations* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1974), and Albert B. Paine, *Thomas Nast: His Period and His Pictures* (Princeton: Pyne Press, 1974).

[5]Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), 253-254.

[6]Edwin Tribble, "Marching Through Georgia," *The Georgia Review*, 21 (December 1967), 425.

Underground Railroad and later co-authored a popular anti-slavery tract about his experience.[7] As a young man, Henry Clay Work began to develop his song-writing talent as a typesetter in the printing trade. His trademark style involved lengthy contemplation before setting his thoughts directly to type in a finished score.

While employed as a printer at the Root and Cady publishing firm in Chicago in 1862, Work presented one of his pieces entitled "Kingdom Coming," to boss George Root, an accomplished composer himself. The song was "elegant in manuscript," Root recalled years later, "full of bright, good sense and comical situations in its 'darkey' dialect—the words fitting the melody almost as aptly and neatly as Gilbert fits Sullivan—the melody decidedly good ... and the whole exactly suited to the times."[8] Written from the perspective of a plantation slave, "Kingdom Coming" describes the scene as the Union Army approached. "De Massa run? Ha, ha! De darkey stay? Ho Ho!" declares the slave. "It mus' be now de kingdom comin, an' de year ob Jubilo." In a matter of months, the song sold 75,000 copies. It later became a favorite among black troops, as well as liberated slaves, who used it to serenade Robert E. Lee's mansion after his surrender at Appomattox.[9]

Work realized similar success writing abolitionist songs, including several in black dialect, and patriotic tributes to the Union effort. In late 1862, he composed "Grafted into the Army," a comedic tune with veiled criticisms of the draft as well as the use of substitutes by wealthy northerners. Three years later, Work released "Marching through Georgia," composed in honor of General Sherman's march to the sea. Arguably the most famous war-song ever written, it became a standard at political conventions, veteran reunions, and military parades in the post-war era. By 1890, Sherman had heard the song so often that he remarked, "If I had thought when I made that march that it would have inspired anyone to compose such a piece, I would have marched around the state."[10]

After the war, Work entered the fray between Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, and the Radical Republicans in Congress over reconstruction in the South. The song, "Andy Veto" was Work's response to the President's repudiation of a bill to

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[7]See George Thompson, *Prison Life and Reflections: A Narrative of the Arrest, Trial, Conviction, Imprisonment, Treatment, Observations, Reflections, and Deliverance of Work, Burr, and Thompson* (James M. Fitch, 1847). While in prison, Alanson Work received a letter of support from a promising young lawyer from Springfield, Abraham Lincoln. See W. Ward Loper, "The Life of Henry Clay Work: A Native of Middletown, Connecticut, and Author of 'Marching through Georgia,'" Middlesex County Historical Society (no date), 2.

[8]George F. Root, *The Story of a Musical Life* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 137.

[9]Kent Bowman, "The Muse of Fire: Liberty and War Songs as a Source of American History," Dissertation (North Texas State University, 1984), 282-283.

[10]Bowman, "The Muse of Fire," 290. See also, Tribble, "Marching Through Georgia."

extend the Freedmen's Bureau, designed to assist former slaves and refugees in the South. Work poked fun at Johnson, who after Lincoln's death had encouraged Radical Republican designs to provide greater civil rights for former slaves, when he likened himself to Moses:

> Moses can't afford to let his people vote;
> Darkey's, he's your Moses!
> He must watch his little flock, his own scapegoat,
> For, darkeys he's your Moses!
> Thinking of you brings him wakeful nights, you know;
> You might up and take your "civil rights," you know,
> And make a "war of roses" with the whites, you know;
> So, darkeys, he's your Moses![11]

Months later Work completed, "Who Shall Rule this American Nation," which again attacked President Johnson and urged support for the Radicals' reconstruction program. "Who shall rank as the family royal? Say, boys, say! If not those who are honest and loyal?" the song asked listeners. "Then shall one elected as our servant, In his pride, assume a regal sway? Must we bend to the human dictator? Say, boys, say!" Work dedicated this musical critique of President Johnson to U.S. Senator Lyman Trumbull, a moderate Republican from Illinois who joined the Radical camp in 1866.[12] Ironically, Trumball would become one of only seven Republicans in the Senate to break ranks with the Radicals and vote to acquit Johnson during his impeachment trial a year later.

Work's remaining years echoed the turmoil of the times. In 1867, his wife of nearly a decade became schizophrenic and entered an asylum. Soon thereafter, Work lost two of his three children to illness. His finances deteriorated as well when an investment in a fruit farm in Vineland, New Jersey, collapsed during the depression of 1867. Dejected, Work sought release through his music, but a persistent bout of writers' block limited his productivity. He found a muse in 1868 when he fell in love with eighteen-year-old Susie Mitchell of Philadelphia. But, although the two maintained a tender relationship through letters, Susie never committed herself to Work, who remained married to his estranged wife.

Several of his later songs related to his infatuation with Susie Mitchell, but others indicated his continued social consciousness. One of Work's greatest post-war hits was "Come Home, Father," a piece he had actually composed years before. The song

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[11]Benjamin Tubb, Public Music Domain "Henry Clay Work," www.pdmusic.org/work.html.

[12]Bertram Work, *Songs of Henry Clay Work*, Reprint (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1974), 108-110.

describes a young girl's heart-rending plea for her father to come home from the tavern to care for her sickly brother Benny, who dies before the night is through.

> Father, dear father come home with me now!
> The clock in the steeple strikes one;
> You said you were coming right home from the shop,
> As soon as your day's work was done.
> Our fire has gone out, our house is all dark
> And mother's been watching since tea,
> With poor brother Benny so sick in her arms,
> And no one to help her but me.

Benny's last wish was for a good night kiss from his father who never arrives. Root and Cady's house magazine promised a free copy of the song for anyone who could read the lyrics without weeping. According to the editors, only ten subscribers of an estimated 10,000 claimed a free copy. Burlesque performers often parodied the maudlin song. However, the Women's Christian Temperance Movement, organized amidst the wave of nativism and reform of the mid 1870s, adopted "Come Home, Father," as its official anthem.[13]

During the late 1860s, Work turned his attention toward the western United States, where railroads, warfare, and the elimination of the buffalo had decimated Native Americans. In the "Song of the Red Man," Work sympathized with their plight, yet resigned himself to the inevitable. Observing the onslaught of whites into the plains, the "Red Man" sings:

> They came! They came! Like the fierce prairie flame,
> Sweeping on to the sun-setting shore:
> Gazing now on its waves, but a handful of braves,
> We shall join in the chase nevermore
> Till we camp on the plains where the Great Spirits reigns,
> We shall join in the chase nevermore.[14]

To emphasize the point, an illustration on the song sheet cover depicted a lone Indian gazing down from atop a butte upon a frontier town below. After traveling to San Francisco by train a year later, Work composed, "Crossing the Grand Sierras," a tribute to the same railroad industry that he had lamented in "Song of the Red Man." An apparent convert to manifest destiny, Work now wrote "We sing a wond'rous story, No

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[13]Bertram Work, 54-56; Dena Epstein, *Music Publishing in Chicago before 1871: The Firm of Root & Cady* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, Inc., 1969), 52.

[14]Tubb, www.pdmusic.org/work.html.

nation sang before! Continental Chorus, That echoes either shore: We sang it on the summit! We sing it on the plain! We've clim'd the Grand Sierras with Lightning Palace Train."[15]

After years of inactivity, Work in 1876 released what became his most popular song, "Grandfather's Clock," which eventually sold nearly one million copies of sheet music. A quaint story of an old man's relationship with his loyal clock that only required winding once a week, "Grandfather's Clock," spoke to Americans' desire for stability in an era marked by the boom and bust cycles of the post-war industrial economy. In Work's lesser known sequel to "Grandfather's Clock," a saddened grandson returns to find his grandfather's house inhabited by strangers and the old clock replaced with a newfangled "vain, stuck-up thing on the wall."[16]

By 1876 Radical Reconstruction was largely over and home rule returned throughout the South. Still, Work maintained his commitment to racial justice. No doubt disturbed by the North's failure to sustain black rights in the South, Work voiced his disappointment with the song, "Used-up Joe." Its subject Joe was a former slave and Civil War veteran for whom Reconstruction had brought nothing but grief. Challenged by indebtedness, racism, and industrialization after the war, Joe lost everything, including his limbs. Now elderly, alone, and infirm, Joe ponders repeatedly in the song's chorus how "things will meander away," a lament likely shared by many southern blacks with dashed hopes over land reform, equal rights, and political participation.[17]

Although Work earned $5,000 in royalties from "Grandfather's Clock," the money failed to sustain him throughout his remaining years. In 1882 Work moved to a small town in upstate New York, where he tinkered with mechanical experiments and hoped in vain to recreate his song-writing success. His appearance aroused excitement among locals, who urged Work to perform his songs at various social gatherings. "It is really surprising to find that I have excited so much curiosity and interest, not only among romantic young women, but of all classes," Work wrote Susie Mitchell, now Susie Scupham, in 1883.[18] But his celebrity on the national scene had long since passed. A year later, Work suffered a heart attack and died without fanfare at the age of fifty-one.

Work's career is important because his work mirrored the times in which he lived. Unlike other composers, who retreated from the political, social, and economic

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[15]Bertram Work, 146-153.

[16]Tubb, www.pdmusic.org/work.html.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Henry Clay Work to Mrs. S.R. Scupham, 18 February 1883, The Letters of Henry Clay Work, Music Division, Library of Congress, ML 95.W784.

controversies of the age, Work used them as inspiration. He was, according to one music historian, "the ultimate composer of quintessentially realistic popular song during the 1860s and 1870s."[19] Of course, Work's point of view did not represent the sentiments of the entire nation. Still, his popularity and stature as a musical activist make his song-writing career an ideal case study for investigating the post-Civil War era in the classroom.

Fortunately, for educators interested in highlighting Work's career, there are numerous online resources and sound recordings available for classroom use. Although the Library of Congress' Music Division holds Work's voluminous correspondence with Susie Mitchell, its American Memory collection is more useful and accessible. This online resource contains digital reprints of song sheets, including illustrated covers, for several of Work's most famous tunes.[20] Benjamin Tubb, the recent editor of the *Complete Songs and Choruses by Henry Clay Work*, also administers a website, Public Domain Music, that contains biographical information on Work as well as lyrics and piano recordings for eighty compositions.[21] Individual sound recordings of Work's songs are available on several compact disks and LP's featuring the music of the Civil War and the Gilded Age. The LP, *Who Shall Rule This American Nation: Songs of the Civil War*, represents the most comprehensive sound collection of Work's music with fifteen songs.[22]

Work's songs, biographical material, and song sheet illustrations can be adapted to various lesson plans for the post-Civil War era. In my American survey course, I play and present the lyrics of Work's 1866 song, "Who Shall Rule This American Nation," to reinforce a lecture on the politics of Reconstruction. This fast-tempo, catchy song generates discussion on northern concerns about the leniency of Johnson's reconstruction plan, the growing rift between the President and Congress, and the rise of the Radical Republicans in the 1866 midterm elections. For students reared in an age of MTV, compact diskettes, and MP3s, it is also worthwhile discussing how Work's songs, disseminated primarily through the sale of sheet music, became popular hits as compared to music today. For a more in-depth group exercise, I hand out song sheets, including illustrations, from a handful of Work's tunes and Thomas Nast illustrations with instructions for students to analyze the meaning of the texts as a

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[19]Jon Finson, *The Voices that Are Gone: Themes in Nineteenth-Century American Popular Song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 56.

[20]For analysis of Work's correspondence with Susie Mitchell see Richard Hill, "The Mysterious Chord of Henry Clay Work," *Notes*, 10 (March/June 1953), 211-225; 367-390; The Library of Congress American Memory, memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html.

[21]Tubb, www.pdmusic.org/work.html.

[22]Henry Clay Work, *Who Shall Rule This American Nation: Songs of the Civil War Era* LP (Nonesuch Records, 1975).

window into changing popular attitudes of the post-war Era. In the future, I hope to incorporate Work and his music into more directed lessons on such topics as westward settlement, Native American policy, and the Temperance Movement.

My course evaluations reflect students' appreciation for incorporating music into the classroom, including the songs of Henry Clay Work. A recent student commented that he "enjoyed [Work's music] because it was interesting … to listen to the songs and lyrics from HCW's perspective and how he viewed the era and then expressed it in his songs."[23] Another shared that the songs "helped me get a better understanding of that time period." The student added that "the songs were also a different way for me to learn. [I]t can be boring when all it is lecture, so when a professor does something unique like this, it makes the class more enjoyable and helps … student[s] absorb the information better."[24] Of course, not every experiment with music realizes such dividends. I have learned, for example, that the use of music in the classroom is much more effective when students can read the lyrics while listening to the song. But with minimal effort, teachers of the post-Civil War era can enrich students' understanding of history with the help of the music of Henry Clay Work.

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[23]American History to 1877, Student Evaluations, spring term 2006.

[24]Studies in American History II: Civil War and Reconstruction, Student Evaluations, winter term 2007.

TEACHING WITH ONLINE PRIMARY SOURCES: DOCUMENTS FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

THE DEMISE OF SLAVERY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, APRIL 16, 1862

Michael Hussey
National Archives and Records Administration

On Thursday, May 22, 1862, Margaret C. Barber of Washington, D.C. stood before the Board of Commissioners for the Emancipation of Slaves in the District of Columbia. She presented a claim to the Commission to be compensated by the Federal Government, which had freed her 34 slaves. She was not alone in making such a request, as more than 1,000 District residents filed similar documents, but hers was the second largest. Documents from her claim provide a vantage point onto both the institution of slavery and the beginning of its demise during the Civil War.

As of April 16, 1862, all slaves within the District of Columbia were freed by the "Act for the Release of Certain Persons Held to Service or Labor in the District of Columbia," passed by the U.S. Congress. According to this Act,

> All persons held to service or labor within the District of Columbia by reason of African descent are hereby discharged and freed of and from all claim to such service or labor; and from and after the passage of this act neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except for crime, whereof the party shall be duly convicted, shall hereafter exist in said District.[1]

The Act passed after considerable congressional and Presidential debate and compromise. Some urged a cautious approach for fear of alienating slaveholding border states such as Kentucky. Abolitionists wanted immediate emancipation without compensation to slave owners, with some suggesting compensation be given to slaves instead. Non-abolitionists tended to favor compensation to former owners.[2]

The final legislation provided for owner compensation. The Act created a presidentially appointed Board of Commissioners to determine the amount of compensation. The amount was not to exceed $300 per emancipated slave and was limited to owners who could prove that they had remained loyal to the United States. Compensation would not be provided "for any slave claimed by any person who has borne arms against the Government of the United States in the present rebellion, or in

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[1]This law is available through the National Archives at http://archives.gov/research/arc/. In the Search box, type the Archival Research Catalog (ARC) number 4644520.

[2]Michael J. Kurtz, "Emancipation in the Federal City," *Civil War History*, XXIV, 1 (March 1978), 250-258.

any way given aid or comfort thereto ...." Commissioners hired Bernard M. Campbell, a Baltimore slave trader, to assist them in assessing the value of the slaves.

In 1860, Margaret C. Barber had owned 29 slaves ranging in age from 2 to 75.[3] By 1862, she had "acquired her claim" to five additional slaves through inheritance both from her father and from her late husband. While the 1860 census listed only the age and sex of Barber's slaves, her compensation claim provided names, descriptions, and monetary value.[4] Following are some examples from this document. Peter Jenkins, listed as a "slave for life," was 65-years old, 5-foot 8½ inches tall, and a "number one farm hand." Barber was able to hire him out for $70 a year. She listed his worth at $250. Ellen Jenkins, 60-years old and 5-foot 7 inches, was also a slave for life, a "good cook" who could earn $82 a year in wages for Barber. Jenkins's worth was listed at $250. Richard Williams was 25-years old and 5-foot 10 inches tall. He was valued by Barber at $1,500. She noted that Williams was a "slave for life," a shoemaker, a carpenter, and a first-rate farmhand. Susan Carroll was 36-years old and 4-foot 11 ⅞ inches tall, a seamstress and house servant but not a "slave for life." She was to "serve till 44 years of age." Barber listed her worth at $400. In a number of wills cited in claims to the Commission, slaves were bequeathed for a limited number of years, after which the slave was to be freed.

The District of Columbia slave emancipation act and two pages of Barber's claim provide dramatic insight into slavery—or at least as to how it was practiced in one District of Columbia household in 1862. The language of the law itself is deeply revealing. According to the act, Peter and Ellen Jenkins, Susan Carroll, Richard Williams, and Barber's thirty other slaves were deprived of freedom and "held to service or labor" simply "by reason of African descent." The act in quite simple terms makes clear that race was the primary factor used by slavery supporters to justify the institution.

Commission documents also highlight another aspect of slavery: treating people as property. Barber had acquired 34 slaves through inheritance. Jenkins, Carroll, Williams, and the others were transferred from parent to child and from husband to wife in exactly the same manner as a house, furniture, or cash would have been: through a will. In other cases, slaves were sold to pay off the debts of a deceased

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[3]This data comes from the slave schedules of that year's Census for the District of Columbia. This record is reproduced in National Archives microfilm publication M653A, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, Roll 105.

[4]A facsimile of Barber's compensation claim (number 366) is available through the National Archives at http://archives.gov/research/arc/. In the Search box, type the Archival Research Catalog (ARC) number 4664520.

person. Such a case is described in the compensation claim of Nicholas Acker.[5] His claim included a copy of the 1858 bill of sale for a thirteen-year-old slave named Ann Maria Adams. Acker had purchased Adams for $650 from the estate of William Burford who had died with unpaid debts.

The claims of other slave owners provide additional examples. Anthony Addison's claim included the will of Anthony Addison Callis of Prince George's County, Maryland. As with Barber's slaves, some were slaves "for life," others were to be emancipated after a certain date. Callis's will stated that:

> I give ... unto my beloved friend Sarah D. Hanson the following servants, namely ... Phill ...Martha and her child Elizabeth ... Polly ... Kitty, and Sam. The said slaves to serve Sarah D. Hanson during her natural life and after her death Phill, Martha, Polly, and Kitt to serve Anthony Addison of the District of Columbia six months, and then to be free from slavery.[6]

While providing eventual freedom for all of his slaves after they had served both Sarah Hanson and Anthony Addison, Callis's will included an ominous warning to these slaves. "Should any of the above named servants conduct themselves in a disorderly manner their said mistress ... shall have the power to sell them for life."

Altogether, Margaret Barber estimated that her slaves were worth a total of $23,400. On June 16, 1862, 28 of Barber's slaves were examined by slave trader Bernard Campbell so that their value might be assessed by the Commission. Ultimately, Barber received $9,351.30 in compensation for the emancipation of her slaves. Unfortunately, there is no indication in any of the Commission's records as to the value that Barber's former slaves assigned to their newfound freedom. We have no way of knowing, based on existing documents, how they felt about their imminent emancipation.

District of Columbia court records, however, reveal freedom was something that at least five of Barber's 34 slaves were eager to grasp. They would not await the Commission's deliberations. "[S]ince the United States troops came here," said Barber, five of her slaves had "absented themselves and went off and are believed still to be in

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[5]A facsimile of Acker's compensation claim (number 370) is available through National Archives microfilm publication M520, *Records of the Board of Commissioners for the Emancipation of Slaves in the District of Columbia, 1862-1863*, Roll 3.

[6]A facsimile of Callis's will is contained within the compensation claim of Anthony Addison (number 457). It is available through the National Archives at http://archives.gov/research/arc. In the Search box, type Archival Research Catalog (ARC) number 4644604.

some of the Companies and in their service." These five were Mortimer Briscoe, Towley Yates, Resin Yates, Andrew Yates, and William Cyrus.[7]

Teaching Suggestions

1. Provide students with basic information about the institution of slavery. If necessary, define important terms such as "emancipation." Then divide students into small groups. Provide them with copies of Barber's petition and ask them to read it silently. When they have finished reading the document, give them a piece of paper and ask them to write up to three words that describe how the document makes them feel. Collect the papers, read the words aloud to the class, and ask students if any of them would like to elaborate on their choice of words. Next, ask them to what extent their feelings influence their interest in learning more about the abolition of slavery in DC.
2. Ask students to read Margaret Barber's petition carefully. Divide them into small groups and ask each group to choose one of Barber's slaves to discuss. The discussion should focus on describing what a typical day might have been like for that person. What sort of work might he or she have done? How long would they likely have worked each day? Were they forbidden to do certain things (e.g. travel to another state without permission)? Each group should then present its description of the slave's day. Encourage them to think how the slaves' days would be different (or the same?) after they were freed.
3. Direct students to compose a list of words that come to mind when they hear the word "freedom." Alternatively, students could draw pictures (or clip them from magazines) to create a collage of images regarding the term freedom. Then instruct them to do the same for the word "slavery." Lead a discussion in which students can share their lists.
4. Ask students to compose a list of worlds or a picture collage that one of Margaret Barber's slaves might have created just prior to his or her emancipation in 1862. What might have come to his or her mind when they heard the words slavery and freedom? What sorts of opportunities might they have hoped that freedom would bring them?
5. Distribute to students a copy of "An Act for the Release of Certain Persons Held to Service or Labor in the District of Columbia." Ask them to read it carefully. Lead a class discussion. Was there a symbolic importance to emancipation in the nation's capital in addition to the very real benefit of emancipation to DC slaves?
6. Instruct students to choose one of the five slaves who "absented themselves" from Barber's household and went to the Union Army. Direct them to write a letter from that person to one of Barber's slaves who did not leave her household

[7]The page from Barber's claim which lists these five former slaves is not currently available in digital format through the National Archives website.

prior to the Commission hearing. The letter should describe the writer's motivation for leaving and how life was different (or in some ways the same?) as during slavery.

7. In April 1866, Congress passed and the President signed a Civil Rights act "to protect all persons in their civil rights and furnish the means of their vindication." Direct students to analyze this document with the following questions in mind:
   - What rights did this act protect?
   - Why would Congress feel the need to pass this type of legislation?
   - What kinds of hypotheses might you pose regarding the lives of African Americans based on this document?

   Ask students to write down their answers to these questions. Then, direct them to conduct research on the lives of African Americans during Reconstruction. In a second writing assignment, ask them to incorporate their initial analysis of the 1866 Civil Rights Act with insights gained from their research.

Note: A digital copy of this law is available at www.archives.gov/research/arc. Type the identifying ARC number 299820 into the Search box to access the document.

Sources

Digital copies of the documents cited in this article are available from the National Archives website. Go to www.archives.gov/research/arc. Type the identifying ARC numbers into the Search box to access the documents.

You and your students can explore the debate within Congress pertaining to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia by reading the 1862 edition of the *Congressional Globe*, available at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwcg.html. The "Browse Appendix Page Headings" link will lead to a number of speeches reflecting a diversity of viewpoints on the emancipation of slaves in DC. You may also select the "Browse *Congressional Globe*" link. This will allow you to search the full text of the *Globe* and the Appendix. The *Globe* is arranged by Congress. You will want to select the 37th Congress, 2nd Session, for this topic.

[The author would like to thank his colleagues, Lee Ann Potter, David Rosenbaum, Stephanie Greenhut, Rebecca Martin, Charlie Flanagan, and Christine Blackerby, for their generous assistance and creative suggestions regarding this essay and the teaching suggestions.]

IN MEMORIAM: HOWARD ZINN
AUGUST 24, 1922–JANUARY 27, 2010

Davis D. Joyce
East Central University, Professor Emeritus

When I first came up with the idea of writing a book about the life and writings of Howard Zinn, I knew that writing a study of a living person could be problematic, and that at the very least I would need his cooperation, including interview time, access to papers, e-mail contact, and more. So I wrote Zinn, told him what I had in mind, and asked if he would cooperate. "Of course I'll cooperate," he replied, "otherwise, I'll appear in your book not merely as a radical but as a surly one." One thing few have called Howard Zinn is "surly." To the contrary, I am reminded of the comment of a secretary who had worked with Zinn at Boston University who informed me when I was doing research that "Everybody likes him!" Not everyone *agreed* with him, obviously, with his stand on issues or his approach to history, but most would agree that he was an incredibly nice guy.

I have argued that Zinn held consistently to a "radical American vision." It was radical in the sense that it sought to bring about fundamental change in the political, economic, and social orders, to get to their roots. It was deeply American because it was grounded firmly in the ideals on which the United States was founded, the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, such ideals as life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness and equality and self-determination that are so self-evident and inherent that no government has the right to take them away. And it was a vision because, obviously, living up to those ideals is an on-going struggle, not yet a reality but a hope. Zinn realized that visions do not become reality through mere hope, that much work is required. He did his share!

Howard Zinn was born into a poor Jewish immigrant family in New York City in 1922. Indeed, poverty helped to shape his consciousness: He entitled one chapter in *You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times* "Growing up Class-Conscious." He worked in the shipyards as a teenager, had friends who were Communists, and though he never joined the party himself, once participated with some of them in a demonstration at Times Square, which wound up serving as one in a series of radicalizing experiences. Although the demonstration was orderly and nonviolent, the police cracked down, and Zinn was one of the demonstrators who took a blow to the head. He came to, he recalled, with a painful lump on the side of his head, but "More important, there was a very painful thought in my head … The state and its police were not neutral referees in a society of contending interests. They were on the side of the rich and powerful."

Still Zinn volunteered for military service in World War II, being, as he put it, "imbued with anti-fascism." He served as a bombardier in the Army Air Corps. But, as Oklahoma blues artist Watermelon Slim sang in his recent song, "Blues for Howard," "He dropped bombs in my daddy's war, Come to wonder what he dropped

them for." Indeed, by the end of the war, Zinn had changed his mind enough about the viability of war as a legitimate method of solving problems in the modern world that he filed away his discharge papers and awards in a folder labeled "Never Again." Increasingly over the years, though he stopped just short of calling himself a pacifist, anti-war activism was a central element of his life and writings.

Zinn earned his Ph.D. at Columbia University in 1958. His dissertation, on the Congressional career of Fiorello LaGuardia, became his first book the next year under the title *LaGuardia in Congress*, and won an award from the American Historical Association. Not surprisingly, Zinn found much to admire in this "leading spirit and master organizer of the progressive bloc in the House of Representatives." Already in 1956, Zinn had accepted his first teaching position—at Spelman College, a school for African American women in Atlanta, Georgia. While there, he had another of those radicalizing experiences. Driving off campus on a cold winter night, he stopped to give a ride to one of his students. They reached their destination, but were still sitting in the car talking when "powerful headlights swept through the car," and two white police officers ordered Zinn and his student out of the car and into the back seat of theirs. "If you're arresting us," asked Zinn, "what's the charge?" The response: "You sittin' in a car with a nigger gal an' wantin' to know what's the charge?" The charge, by the way, was "disorderly conduct."

This incident was one of several turning-point experiences for Zinn's deepening involvement in the civil rights movement. As so often was the case with him, his writing reflected and grew out of his experiences, for in 1964 both *The Southern Mystique* and *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* were published. Comparing the young black and white students of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee to abolitionists was itself interesting (and reasonable), but *The Southern Mystique* was even more interesting, among other reasons because it challenged the dominant idea of "southern exceptionalism." Zinn argued instead that the South was "the *essence* of the nation," and contained "in concentrated and dangerous form, a set of characteristics which mark the country as a whole." Those characteristics? "It [the South] is racist, violent, hypocritically pious, xenophobic, false in its elevation of women, nationalistic, conservative, and it harbors extreme poverty in the midst of ostentatious wealth." Zinn was always willing to speak the truth, even when it was painful.

By the time those two books saw print, Zinn had already left Spelman (fired for "insubordination") and accepted a position in the political science department at Boston University, a position he would hold until his retirement in 1988. At BU, the Vietnam War increasingly occupied his time, and, again showing the close relationship between his life and his writing, he published a book in 1967 entitled, revealingly, *Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal*. On a personal note: That was the first Howard Zinn book I read, as a young assistant professor of history at the University of Tulsa, and it helped me to gel the doubts I was already having about Vietnam and to become involved in the anti-war movement myself.

Zinn's 1970 book *The Politics of History* is a crucial one for understanding his approach to history. Notice the title—traditionally, historians were trained to consider history totally objective, "just the facts." Since we must be brief, let's segue directly into Zinn's *magnum opus*, *A People's History of the United States*, published originally in 1980 and selling over the thirty years since some two million copies. This is perhaps the crucial paragraph:

> In that inevitable taking of sides which comes from selection and emphasis in history, I prefer to try to tell the story of the discovery of America from the viewpoint of the Arawaks, of the Constitution from the standpoint of the slaves, of Andrew Jackson as seen by the Cherokees, of the Civil War as seen by the New York Irish, of the Mexican war as seen by the deserting soldiers of Scott's army, of the rise of industrialism as seen by the young women in the Lowell textile mills, of the Spanish-American war as seen by the Cubans, the conquest of the Philippines as seen by black soldiers on Luzon, the Gilded Age as seen by southern farmers, the First World War as seen by socialists, the Second World War as seen by pacifists, the New Deal as seen by peons in Latin America. And so on, to the limited extent that any one person, however he or she strains, can "see" history from the standpoint of others.

Powerful stuff. Radical stuff. Taking sides is inevitable. Zinn chooses to side not with the insiders (presidents, kings, queens, generals, the rich and powerful, the few), as so much history traditionally has done (but without being honest enough to say so, or perhaps not even realizing it), but with the outsiders (the minorities, the poor, working people, women, dissenters and protestors, the many). That's what "people's history" means, and why it's sometimes called "history from the bottom up." Many would agree that this approach, as practiced by Zinn and others coming out of the 1960s and its movements (civil rights, anti-Vietnam war, women's, environmental), had a profound impact on the way history is done, including textbooks, which tend to be more balanced and inclusive now.

There's not space even to mention all of Zinn's books. But we would be remiss if we did not note his work with Noam Chomsky on *The Pentagon Papers*, and such works as *Disobedience and Democracy: Nine Fallacies on Law and Order*, *Declarations of Independence: Cross-Examining American Ideology*, and *Failure to Quit: Reflections of an Optimistic Historian*. Notice Zinn's gift at creative and revealing titles. Notice also, in the last one, the important word "optimism." Optimism was one of Howard Zinn's central characteristics—and he took a lot of heat for it. "I can understand pessimism," he wrote, "but I don't believe in it." Looking back at our history, he saw many examples of people getting organized and making good things happen, and therefore he believed people might be able to make more good things happen. His was not a blind, shallow optimism. "I *am* hopeful," he once said. "But

hope rests on doing something. If you're not doing anything to change things, you have no right to be hopeful." Howard Zinn had a right to be hopeful!

We should mention briefly a couple of other books. Zinn wrote lots of essays over the years, for *The Progressive* and other publications. Many of those were brought together in *The Zinn Reader*, meaningfully subtitled *Writings on Disobedience and Democracy*. And my favorite of his numerous books after his retirement: *A Power Governments Cannot Suppress*. Howard Zinn believed that is what "We, the People" have.

Since his death, less than two weeks ago as I write this, much has been said about Zinn's life and work, and, not surprisingly, some of it has been quite critical. To me, the worst example of that, strangely enough, was on National Public Radio, specifically the program "All Things Considered." Far-right activist David Horowitz said, "There is absolutely nothing in Howard Zinn's intellectual output that is worthy of any kind of respect." Wrong! But Horowitz continued, "Zinn represents a fringe mentality which has unfortunately seduced millions of people at this point in time. So he did certainly alter the consciousness of millions of younger people for the worse." To the contrary, it seems clear to me that Howard Zinn loved this country, in particular the ideals it was founded upon, and did more than his share to help it live up to those ideals. It might be said that his approach to history, especially in his *People's History*, was to focus on the on-going struggle to live up to those ideals.

Of the many positive comments, two strike me as especially accurate, insightful, and helpful in understanding Zinn's life and work. First, Bob Herbert, writing in the *New York Times*: "I always wondered why Howard Zinn was considered a radical," said Herbert. "He was an unbelievably decent man who felt obliged to challenge injustice and unfairness wherever he found it. What was so radical about believing that workers should get a fair shake on the job, that corporations have too much power over our lives and much too much influence with the government, that wars are so murderously destructive that alternatives to warfare should be found, that blacks and other racial and ethnic minorities should have the same rights as whites, that the interests of powerful political leaders and corporate elites are not the same as those of ordinary people who are struggling from week to week to make ends meet?" Herbert's conclusion: "That he was considered radical says way more about this society than it does about him."

And finally, James Carroll, writing in the *Boston Globe*, showed a deep understanding of Zinn's life and work using the headline "Zinn's life was a testament to possibility":

> The most striking fact of his life story, what set him apart from every other left-wing prophet of the movement heyday, is that his voice continued to be heard, generation in and generation out. Wherever he went, young people—high school students, as well as college—flocked to his lectures and lined up to greet him. I saw it in the late 1960s and I saw

it a couple of months ago. Why was that? The young recognized two rare gifts in Zinn. He could share the wisdom of his long work as a professional historian, and as one who'd actually put his convictions into action—but without in any way condescending. Zinn genuinely believed that young people have a special capacity for ethical insight, and he addressed it.

Secondly, even as he blistered the hypocrisies of conventional thought, they always heard from him a profound message of hope. Unlike many radicals, he was no mere denouncer. He so believed in America that he believed it could transcend itself. He lifted up alternative futures, and insisted they were possible. Indeed, Zinn's life was a testament to possibility, as all who revere his memory know from their own experience.

Davis D. Joyce is Professor Emeritus of History, East Central University (Ada, Oklahoma), and author of *Howard Zinn: A Radical American Vision* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003).

BOOK REVIEWS

Benjamin Reilly. *Disaster and Human History: Case Studies in Nature, Society, and Catastrophe.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 2009. Pp. 399. Paper, $49.95; ISBN 978-0-7864-3655-2.

The breakdown of the global economic system in the first decade of the twenty-first century has shed further light on the incapacity of national governments to plan effectively for and deal with natural disasters. This is perhaps most evident with the Asian Tsunami of 2004, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and more recently the devastating earthquakes and aftershocks near Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where hundreds of thousands of casualties occurred. But these are only the most recent catastrophes that mankind has dealt with poorly. Reilly's intention with his world history textbook on human interaction with natural catastrophe is "to give readers the necessary historical and scientific knowledge they need to make informed decisions about how to address global warming and other problems raised by mankind's often disastrous interaction with the natural environment." With this goal in mind, the author produces a primer that examines volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, environmental changes, tropical cyclones, floods, tsunamis, famines, and disease and how humans have interacted with environmental tragedy.

The first chapter of *Disaster and Human History* delivers a brief sketch of global historical phenomena over the past five hundred years. Each successive chapter is broken into two areas. The first area examines the scientific and historical context of each sort of natural disaster. The second part examines specific disasters as case studies. These sections allow Reilly to examine wide-ranging disasters such as the eruption of the Krakatau volcano in 1883, *El Nino* and desertification phenomena, and hurricanes such as Andrew in 1992 among many others. He also examines events that triggered famines such as Mao's Great Leap Forward and the Irish Potato Famine. Finally Reilly investigates what he describes as diseases of imperialism, industry, and globalism: malaria, cholera, and AIDS respectively.

Reilly produces a very usable environmental manual for history, geology, political science, and public policy classes. His writing is engaging, his conclusions are provocative, and he has a clear handle on the current scientific and historical context. By concentrating on the science and the history of environmental calamities from diverse locations, he suggests that humans around the world have had to interact with and negotiate the physical environment. But his textbook also critically examines how social constructions of race, class, and gender have hampered humankind's historic ability to respond effectively to natural calamity. Natural disasters, claims the author, disproportionately affect the most vulnerable people and, to make matters worse, some of these natural disasters are significantly enhanced—sometimes even created—by human activities. Human agency, the author argues, is even more prevalent in the social constructions that rule human interactions with the natural environment. Reilly points much of his criticism toward the failure of state-run

humanitarian efforts at preventing starvation, disease, and fire that often come after a natural disaster hits. These tragedies frequently have political consequences; French authorities in Martinique, for example, provided economic inducement to largely poor black citizens in the town of Le Morne-Rouge to stay put while citizens from the largely white and wealthy nearby town of St. Pierre were evacuated—this despite the continual eruption of the volcano Mount Pelée for nearly a year beginning in August 1900.

This textbook, grounded in the discipline of world history, could be a valuable resource for those seeking ways to develop lectures or explore environmental issues in their classes. Reilly has produced a text that is significantly relevant in a world of increasingly intense natural catastrophes and an increasing global system that has yet to prove completely reliable or effective in predicting and dealing with tragedy. The author limits his focus to natural catastrophes of the Industrial Age and beyond with very limited discussion of the Pre-Modern and Antiquity periods. Creative historians will have to work hard to use this text in broad introductory classes, but courses concentrating on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will have a provocative text full of effective case studies. This text perhaps would be most effective as a source for upper-division courses or introductory graduate-level courses. In these sorts of classes, Reilly provides a text that would be very helpful in beginning a discussion about the way humankind has employed modern social and economic systems to respond to natural catastrophes.

Georgia Highlands College Shannon Bontrager

Wilson J. Warren and D. Antonio Cantu, eds. *History Education 101: The Past, Present, and Future of Teacher Preparation.* Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2008. Pp. 270. Hardcover, $73.99; ISBN 978-1-59311-861-7.

This volume of thirteen essays explores the current state of history education for pre-service teachers. Warren and Cantu divide the essays into three sections: "Context," "Practice," and "New Directions." For educators and academics who share in the education of pre-service history teachers, the topics explored in this collection are, unfortunately, all too familiar. Despite the resurgence of attention paid to the education of history teachers that began in the late eighties and reached its greatest pubic attention with the publication of the *National Standards for History* in the mid-1990s, it appears there is less interest or investment by academia in this issue now than ever before.

In the "Context" section, co-editor Cantu opens with a statistical analysis of data provided by the *AHA Directory* and job-postings that present a demographic landscape for understanding the past and current conditions of history education and training. Russell Olwell offers an exploration of the AHA's efforts during the Cold War decades,

Wilson J. Warren and Frederick Drake explore the history of two major teacher training programs. The first section ends with an essay by Ashley Lucas that considers the value of a social studies education within a History Department.

Opening the second section on "Practice," David Hicks presents a comparative consideration of history teacher preparation in the United States and England, highlighting the best features of both systems. The next two essays might be the most useful for academics and history teachers who are continually on the lookout for innovative ideas and insight into their own efforts. Flannery Burke and Thomas Andrew use their own teaching experience and offer a system to improve the training of history teachers that follows with an essay by Daisy Martin and Chauncey Monte-Santo presenting readers with innovations used in teacher training at Stanford University. The final entry in this section is Gina Hogue's contribution arguing the importance of technological training for history teachers.

The final segment on "New Directions" includes three essays that propose to offer new perceptions, but instead read like dire warnings. While Fritz Fischer presents ways in which academic historians might contribute to the intellectual integrity of history teachers and their work, he also demonstrates the chasm between these professions. The following two essays by Richard Cooley and Sean O'Neill, respectively, focus their attention on issues of accountability, generally lacking in most pre-service programs, and the impact of accountability on future work.

In conclusion, the volume's organization and overall objectives were well met. The essays will be applicable to academics committed to understanding their past and present role in the education of pre-service history teachers. The essays in whole or part could be assigned in history education courses. For history teachers, there are few new innovations offered here that are of practical use. In the first essay, co-editor Cantu identified the perceived debates between history and education departments as a schism that has grown into a chasm. The challenges facing both are greater than ever. This collection of essays serves as both a bellwether of what lies ahead and a ray of hope for those dedicated to the work.

Purdue University Dawn Marsh

Rachel G. Ragland and Kelly A. Woestman, eds. *The Teaching American History Project: Lessons for History Educators and Historians.* New York: Routledge, 2009. Pp. 352. Paper, $38.95; ISBN 978-0-415-9882-7.

This book delivers the first scholarly examination of the Teaching American History Project, which awards grants to colleges, universities, local educational agencies, schools, libraries, museums, and nonprofit historical and humanities institutions, to improve instruction in American history. The editors are Rachel Ragland, assistant professor of education at Lake Forest College near Chicago, and

Kelly Woestman, a former teacher who now is professor of history and history education director at Pittsburg State University in Kansas. The editors have organized the book well. Its contents include a foreward by leading education researcher Sam Wineburg, a preface by the editors, and four sections: Emerging Practices for Historians: Introduction, Emerging Practices for Classroom Teachers: Introduction, Emerging Practices for Professional Development: Introduction, and Emerging Practices in the Larger Perspective: Introduction. The editors frame each section with an introduction that articulates the themes and overviews the chapters in each section.

Although the subtitle of the book, *Lessons for History Educators and Historians*, suggest even handed treatment, K-12 teachers accrue much of the attention. Perhaps this is inevitable given that, according to one study, in 1997 more than eighty percent of middle and high school social studies teachers had neither a history major nor minor in college. The answer to this deficit in knowledge, the authors of more than one chapter assert, is to teach teachers more history. Here academic historians have much to offer. They teach prospective teachers in their large surveys and educators returning to college for an M.A. The need to teach more content might not surprise historians, most of whom are knowledgeable about content and able to deliver it to students. To give teachers and prospective teachers more content, the book affirms the value of introducing American history to teachers and students through the use of archives, museums, and local history.

In addition to the mantra of content, the book focuses on the desirability of cooperation between professional historians and K-12 teachers and between departments of history and colleges of education. In the right hands, *The Teaching American History Project* might coax historians to nurture relationships with K-12 teachers. Collegial historians might collaborate with education faculty to design a historical methods course. College teachers who wish to expand their repertoire beyond the traditional lecture will find encouragement in this book. One chapter author, perhaps uneasy about the delivery of content by lecture, believes that college faculty should adopt the strategies of K-12 teachers. The book is also relevant to historians who teach prospective teachers and teachers returning to college for advanced training. Through such interaction with educators, historians influence the next generation of teachers. The book also shares with historians online collections of primary documents. Some websites will be familiar to readers, for example the Library of Congress (www.loc.gov) and the National Museum of American History (www.americanhistory.si.edu).

Historians will probably not derive lectures or assign readings from *The Teaching History Project*. The book nevertheless has value in urging historians to collaborate with colleagues in education colleges and with K-12 teachers, to use primary documents and online resources to enliven teaching, and to use archives and museums to introduce

students to local and national historical issues. Many historians, serious about both scholarship and pedagogy, have already adopted these practices in their classrooms.

Independent Scholar, Canton, OH Christopher Cumo

Peter Fritzsche. *Life and Death in the Third Reich*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009. Pp. 368. Paper, $17.95; ISBN 978-0-674-03465-5.

Historian Peter Fritzsche's latest work, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, is an attempt to study the relationships between Germans and Nazis. In doing so he reveals the appeal of the Nazis on the German public and the depth of collective guilt among the Germans for racism, the Holocaust, and World War II, in other words, the crimes of the Third Reich. In this endeavor, Fritzsche joins other key historians, including Christopher R. Browning (*Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, 1993) and Daniel Goldhagen (*Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, 1997). Fritzsche's previous work, *Germans into Nazis* (1999), examined the role of the post-World War I era on Germany, the impact of the Treaty of Versailles, and the creation of the *Volk*. His new monograph seems almost a natural extension of the first study.

The basic history is not that different from other works on the Third Reich. Fritzsche's true strengths are the questions that he poses and the way that he uses his unique sources to address these issues. He states early on that "the following pages explore the Nazis' ambition to regenerate national life in Germany and the allied conviction that to do so they needed, on an increasingly gigantic scale, to annihilate life."

He relies heavily on diaries to view everyday life in Germany the way that the German people viewed it. He then uses these observations to try to understand why the Germany people went along with the Nazis and how much they believed what they were being told. As these accounts unfold, we can see how some Germans descended into fanatical Nazism, while others became increasingly disillusioned.

Fritzsche concludes that many Germans exhibited passive or even lazy attitudes towards Nazi ideology. Germans often agreeing with Nazi rhetoric or not speaking out against Nazi laws seems to be taking the easy road rather than a case of active compliant participation. Through diaries we learn that even the act of saying "Heil Hitler" was viewed by many as egregious, or often ignored in certain settings. This is also true of Nazi propaganda, like the speeches playing in the background at a truck stop that busy German customers didn't even seem to notice. Yet, "as more Germans said 'Heil Hitler!' to one another, it became harder not to respond in kind." Despite this outward appearance of conformity, Fritzsche states that "insiders were never sure whether support for the regime was genuine or halfhearted; the border between true believers and mere opportunists was not clear."

On the other hand, Fritzsche notes that the longer that the Nazis were in power in Germany, the more the German people were forced to rationalize their behaviors. The bullying of Jews and vandalizing of theirs homes and businesses in 1931 could be dismissed by some diarists as simply the work of bad kids. When the government started to create stricter and clearly racist anti-Jewish laws, Germans wrote that the Nazis were simply addressing some of the wrongs of the Treaty of Versailles, restoring German pride, and ending German suffering.

Fritzsche makes a powerful assertion early in the book that sets the framework for the remainder of the work. He states that "National Socialism exerted strong pressure on citizens to convert, to see the credibility of the people's community, and to recognize one another as 'racial comrades.'" This caused the German people to grapple "with questions about the importance of fitting in, the convenience of going along, and the responsibilities the individual owed to the collective."

I found this work to be a very engaging and important study of a very controversial topic. It has added to the discourse on the subject and will certainly find a home in many classrooms. As a professor of German history, specializing in the Nazi period and World War II, I highly recommend this book for upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses in this period. Alone it will provide a useful reading assignment and will certainly spark some heated and interesting debates. I will use it in conjunction with the other books mentioned in this review. It should not, however, be used as an introduction to the Third Reich or Nazi social history.

United States Military Academy at West Point Antonio Thompson

Ronald C. White, Jr. *A. Lincoln: A Biography.* New York: Random House, 2009. Pp. 796. Hardback, $35.00; ISBN 978-1-4000-6499-1.

Writing in 1936, historian James G. Randall questioned whether there could be anything new about Abraham Lincoln. Over seventy years later and as the bicentennial of his birth wanes, it is abundantly clear that the answer is a resounding, yes! While dozens of books have appeared in recent years touting some novel or revisited perspective of Lincoln's life, only Ronald C. White, Jr. attempted to write a full-length, single-volume biography. His task was a daunting one to be sure. Previous works, from Benjamin Thomas's *Abraham Lincoln* (1952) to Stephen Oates's *With Malice Toward None* (1977) to David Donald's *Lincoln* (1995), met with varying degrees of acclaim, the latter winning the Pulitzer Prize for biography. White's *A. Lincoln* (the title taken from the manner in which Lincoln signed his correspondence) will be no exception and, in some respects, will be hailed as the best.

White's rhetorical expertise is clearly evident as he weaves a life tapestry through the words of Lincoln, from well-known letters and speeches to random thoughts scribbled on scraps of paper to the recently released *Lincoln Legal Papers*.

While there is not much new in some aspects of Lincoln's life, such as his bouts of melancholy, White provides a great many intimate details in a wonderful, flowing narrative. In this regard, this biography surpasses Donald's largely academic work. But make no mistake, *A. Lincoln* is not just for the casual reader. It should be on the shelves of every high school and college library in America.

One of the book's themes is Lincoln's personal and intellectual development, from the limited opportunities in the frontier wilderness of Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois to his iconic status as America's greatest president. Struggles are seen as the key to Lincoln's maturation—whether they were private, including family, women, and religion, or public, the Civil War. For example, Lincoln became estranged from his father yet doted over his own children. He never joined a church nor left a written statement of conversion yet believed in the divine will of God and mentioned God fourteen times and cited four biblical passages in his second inaugural address. With only a few weeks of military experience and seeing no actual combat during the Black Hawk War, Lincoln became the nation's first modern commander-in-chief during the Civil War, transforming and enlarging the powers of the executive branch. And at a time when the tide had turned and Union victory seemed assured, Lincoln displayed reserve and humility, avoiding the pronoun "I" in the 272 words of the Gettysburg Address. Thus, White presents Lincoln as something of a paradox: humble yet confident, curious yet pragmatic, compassionate yet resolute, common yet extraordinary. In short, he was a simple yet complex man whose moral integrity became his life's foundation.

White states that Lincoln is "one of the few Americans whose life and words bridge time." Past generations have attempted to define him, claim him. Ronald White has provided the twenty-first century with the opportunity to do the same. *A. Lincoln* can be summed up best by recasting Edwin Stanton's April 15, 1865, final declaration of the slain president this way—It belongs to the ages.

College of the Ozarks C. David Dalton

James W. Loewen. *Teaching What Really Happened: How to Avoid the Tyranny of Textbooks & Get Students Excited About Doing History*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2009. Pp. 264. Paper , $21.95; ISBN 978-0-8077-4991-3.

Since 1995, James W. Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me* has enjoyed phenomenal success in both sales and influence. Nobody who has read it can look unskeptically at a history textbook again. Loewen's *Lies Across America* (1999) proved a worthy successor, inviting readers to look critically at the historical plaques and monuments that litter the American landscape. More recently, Loewen turned his attention to the forgotten heritage of structural racism in small-town America, in his 2005 book *Sundown Towns*. Now, in *Teaching What Really Happened*, Loewen

promises in the subtitle that he will explain *How to Avoid the Tyranny of Textbooks and Get Students Excited About Doing History*. Loewen has an ambitious goal, and he sets out to fulfill the promise of the subtitle in a volume that appears in the Multicultural Education Series of the Teachers College Press, which suggests another major goal for this book, that of incorporating a more robust multicultural agenda into K-12 history. Neither aim will be surprising to anyone familiar with Loewen's work, but this time, he attempts to lay out for readers a blueprint of sorts for connecting the two.

In the first part of the book, in which Loewen lays out his philosophy and goals, he assures teachers that they need not succumb to pressure to "cover" everything in the text (or that might be on the tests), and urges them not to lose sight of the forest for the trees, much less, as he puts it, the "twigs" of individual factoids. Rather, he suggests, they should select 30-50 subjects to address in a school year, and ignore the rest. He assails standardized tests and counsels teachers to set their own objectives for their classes, with an emphasis on historiography and critical thinking. So far, so good. Although he demurs on the idea of prescribing what teachers teach, the remainder of the book models, in six detailed chapters on six subjects, the ways in which he argues that teachers can "cover" topics critically, while inspiring students to a love of history.

But much of the book is, in fact, a script for a history that is supposedly relevant to a multicultural America, and the line between model and prescription is blurred. The subjects Loewen discusses are the timing and means of the arrival of the first people in America; why Europe came to dominate the world; the myth that Indians sold Manhattan to the Dutch for $24 worth of beads; slavery; the causes of the Civil War; and the era of lynching. Most of these are, as Loewen argues, important and potentially of great interest to students, or at least to those in high school. But this section of the book, ironically, reads like a textbook, and an especially opinionated and weakly-documented one at that, supported only by poorly-developed chapter bibliographies.

To be fair, perhaps Loewen's intention really is to inspire and excite teachers, not to instruct them, in which case only time will tell whether his teaching suggestions actually do serve to "get students excited about doing history." Loewen overestimates the extent to which most teachers are willing and able to risk their livelihoods by shifting their teaching focus from the state 'twig tests" he so rightly derides. Even the best teachers have difficulty getting around crowded state curricula and exhausting testing regimens. Further, the anecdotal evidence Loewen offers for the success of his approach suggests that what excites students most is iconoclasm, pointing out that the chance to prove teachers and other adults wrong is irresistible. While that is true of teenagers (assuming they know the myths), it isn't true of elementary school students, who (in the right hands and with the right topics) have an innate love of history, although it would help if we taught them about Egyptians, Romans, and Vikings, rather than Teddy Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan.

As an historian, I have always enjoyed a bit of iconoclasm, and I used it to my great advantage in the classroom, for example, by starting my discussion of the American Revolution with clips from Mel Gibson's *The Patriot*. But Loewen's

relentlessly iconoclastic approach misrepresents what history is. Critical thinking about received wisdom is a central part of an historical education, but that critical thinking must extend to a rigorous examination of one's own views. History as academic discipline is not about shaping the evidence to ones political views, but about following the evidence in the pursuit of truth, no matter how unpalatable that evidence proves. As Loewen himself observes, professors prefer their students arrive in college unprepared because "social studies," with its cheerily triumphal perspective, has little or nothing to do with history as a subject. Loewen might be a sociologist, but he understands this. However, what he actually advocates is something else. The title alone, *Teaching What Really Happened*, ducks the reality that history is not what happened, but an ongoing argument about the interpretation of the past. Loewen's embrace of the sociological term *verstehende* does not emphasize that historians, as they participate in this argument, must try to emphasize with all historical players, not merely those with whom they sympathize. Do we learn more by empathizing with the victims or with the victimizers, with slaves or slave owners?

By purveying history as identity politics, Loewen thus diminishes the discipline. At the same time, by making himself an easy target for conservatives in this book, he risks marginalizing efforts to retrieve history from the hands of those who would prefer it remain a bloodless exercise in memorizing factoids. Historical education is fundamentally about being inspired by content taught with clear-eyed passion and style: There is no indication in this book that a teacher could offer a subject like military strategy or traditional political history, interest students in it, and get them to think critically, and yet that can and does happen.

Those who hope for Loewen to fulfill the promise in the subtitle might be disappointed. As a resource, assuming that teachers wish to tackle the topics Loewen describes, the book is problematic. Good teaching is not done to a script, but depends on the knowledge and enthusiasm of great teachers who do their best to eschew dogma of any kind. On a practical level, the suggested activities might be too time-consuming and too lacking in content and clear outcomes if teachers are to have any hope of dealing with 30-50 subjects that Loewen suggests. The sparse chapter bibliographies frequently cite Loewen's earlier works and little else, and provide an inadequate starting point for teachers and students. While this book, like all of Loewen's critiques, provides some food for thought for working teachers, those seeking texts for a college course in historical methods might be best advised to stick with *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. There, Loewen was on surer ground, critiquing textbooks rather than trying to write one.

Independent Scholar, Statesboro, GA Annette Laing

J. Fred MacDonald. *The History Shoppe*. http://www.thehistoryshoppe.com (accessed February 12, 2010).

The question at the center of J. Fred MacDonald's e-book *The History Shoppe* is a familiar one for most history teachers. More often than not, students come to survey-level courses with the misconception that history is all about the memorization of obscure facts. MacDonald offers an alternative. The narrative begins when Scott Tennyson, a high school student who fancies himself the "King of History," unexpectedly stumbles upon a mysterious store called "The History Shoppe." Inside, he encounters an intriguing gentleman, Dr. Papadopoulos, who tells Scott that history is not about memorizing disparate facts, but rather about understanding and interpreting the past. Dr. Pop introduce his young student to a special machine, Clio, that transports its passengers into the production world of any film they choose. Scott visits Guernsey in the early years of World War II, explores the United States during the 1950s, and finds himself squarely in the middle of the political minefield that was the New Deal, as he seeks to formulate an answer to the question posed by countless history teachers: What is history?

Although there is nothing remarkable about the narrative itself, *The History Shoppe* succeeds admirably in its goal of illuminating professional history. It offers clear examples of how historians work (immersing themselves in sources, looking at a topic from multiple perspectives, trying to avoid moral judgment) in a straightforward style accessible to both the secondary and post-secondary student. Minor grammatical and spelling errors will give sophisticated readers pause, but they are not so prevalent as to distract from the larger point. Slightly more frustrating are historical inaccuracies, as when the story asserts that Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette died in January 1793, when the queen was in fact not executed until October of that year. A larger weakness, however, rests in the e-book's insistence on film as the ultimate historical authority; with few exceptions, Scott experiences history through film. While unsurprising (MacDonald is the president of a Chicago-based historical film archive), it remains slightly unsettling in light of students who regularly decry the reading of "boring old documents." While this reviewer has no problem with film as an historical source, and though the time-traveling Clio machine serves as a compelling metaphor for the immersive experience of archival research, the e-book's elevation of the visual record risks distorting the historical process, which remains primarily rooted in the written word.

Despite these issues, *The History Shoppe* provides many illuminating moments, as when Dr. Pop shows Scott an easy method to remember the myriad ways historians can approach a primary source; his acronym, STAMPIERE (social, technological, administrative, political, intellectual/cultural, economic, religious, external) is useful not just for Scott, but for the student-reader confronted with primary sources for the first time. The chapter entitled "Schools of Thought" explores the notion of competing interpretations of history through the lens of the New Deal, a topic relevant to the

modern student, living in the midst of an economic recession and regular political haranguing over the level of politico-economic intervention. Read in conjunction with some shorter articles on the topic, this chapter likely would prompt a lively discussion in contemporary classrooms. Finally, Scott's epiphany in the final chapter—his answer to the "what is history" question—offers seven discussion-worthy characteristics appropriate to any level, secondary or post-secondary. As such, *The History Shoppe* successfully simplifies the historical process without resorting to clichés (e.g. "Those who don't learn from the past are doomed to repeat it.") and offers a convincing explanation of the methodological processes that distinguish historians from history buffs.

Georgia Highlands College Jayme Akers Feagin