Perspectives on History

The Newsmagazine of the American Historical Association | 52: 5 | May 2014

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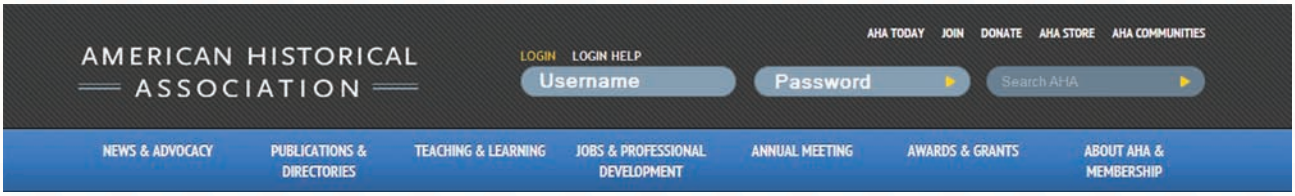

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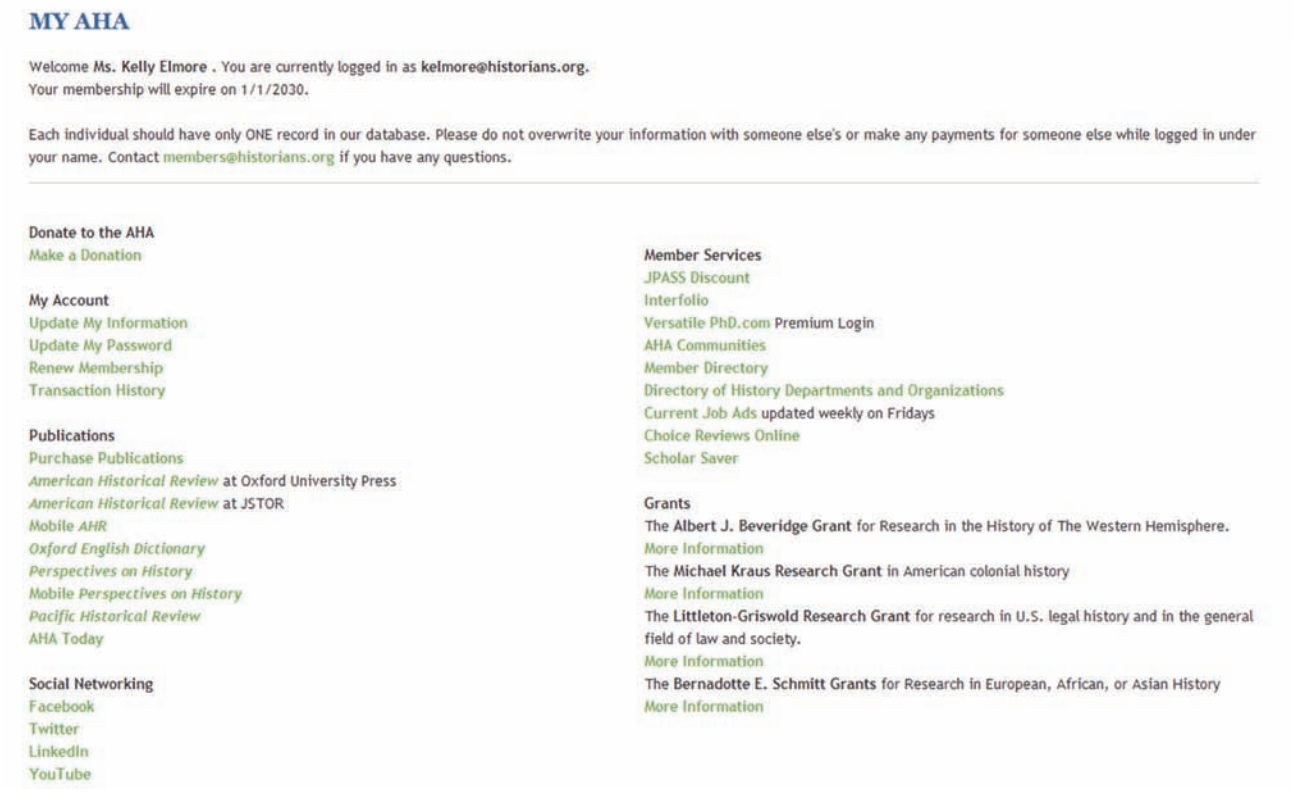

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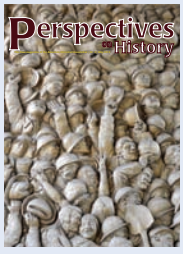
FEATURES

On the Cover



The relief featured on the cover shows soldiers joyfully returning home in 1918 and is a stark contrast to the solemn or heroic atmosphere surrounding most war commemorations. The relief is from the *Monument aux Combattants de la Haute-Garonne* in Toulouse, France. The memorial to soldiers from Haute-Garonne who fought in World War I was built in 1920; the sculptures are by Camille Raynaud, André Abbal, and Henry Raphaël Moncassin.

The National Endowment for the Humanities recently launched the latest of several veteran-focused initiatives. *Standing Together: The Humanities and the Experience of War* will use literature, scholarship, arts, and digital history to build bridges over the significant gulf between those who have experienced war and those who have not. More on this initiative can be found in this issue, on page 14, and at www.neh.gov/veterans/standing-together.

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Photo by Bill Sewell

The AHA as Bully Pulpit

Jan Goldstein

About a decade ago I occasionally watched a TV news show featuring a panel of conservative and liberal journalists. At the end of each show, after they'd chewed over the events of the previous seven days from their respective political positions, the moderator invited them each to pick the "outrage of the week." That expression always made me smile. Embedded in it were several largely true observations about the 21st-century public sphere: that each week brings a bumper crop of occurrences violating someone's sense of justice, fairness, and common decency; that outrage is in the eye of the beholder; and that, because outrages are so ubiquitous, venting about one's pet outrage is unlikely to change much on the ground.

It was something of a surprise, when I became president-elect of the AHA, to learn how often our Association is asked to respond to various functional equivalents of the "outrage of the week." These outrages don't present themselves at regular intervals but ebb and flow unpredictably, and almost all of them carry a peculiarly arresting charge, a signal that one ought to stop in one's tracks, raise one's voice in protest, and try to do something to rectify the situation. Appeals of this sort, when directed to us as individuals, often produce an internal dialogue. We wonder: Should I sign the petition, attend the meeting, make a cash contribution? But when they are addressed to the collective person of the AHA, they become more complicated still, generating lengthy conversations among AHA officers and Council members and sometimes, implicitly, efforts to rearticulate the mission of the AHA in the face of a particular request for its intervention. Calls for the AHA to speak out can thus double as miniature identity crises. Since the AHA is not a static entity, they can force us to ponder what the Association is now and what it aspires to be. To what purposes should it lend its authority and good name?

In the past 15 months, the subjects on which the AHA has been asked to speak out have included: the deliberations of the US Supreme Court on the Defense of Marriage Act; revelations that former Indiana governor Mitch Daniels had hoped to remove a book by historian Howard Zinn from the state's system of public education; a bill on the professionalization of history before the Brazilian legislature that refused historians of science the designation "historian"; the tendency of the current Turkish government to convert Byzantine-era churches into mosques, with uncertain consequences for scholarly access to their original artifacts; a bill introduced in the New York State legislature that would bar the use of public funds to support any academic association that boycotted institutions of higher education abroad; an allegation that US State Department regulations had forced a MOOC provider to suspend service to students in countries (Syria, Iran, Cuba) subject to US trade sanctions.

Calls for the AHA to speak out can thus double as miniature identity crises. Since the AHA is not a static entity, they can force us to ponder what the Association is now and what it aspires to be.

The most obvious feature of this list is the dizzying variety of appeals and hence the sheer amount of information required to verify the facts of each case. For verification, the AHA frequently turns to experts within and beyond our membership. In addition, we often do rudimentary research ourselves. Little did I imagine when I got this job that I'd become an aficionado of the New York State Assembly's website of pending legislation!

But confirmation of basic facts, while hardly simple, is only the beginning. Interpretation is, as we historians well know, a more elusive and contentious art. And when the interpretation of a purported outrage is combined with considerations about the legitimate purview of the AHA, the plot palpably thickens.

So what is the AHA's purview? Let me take a stab at answering that question, at least in a way suitable to the present historical moment, since it can never be resolved once and for all.

Most of us would agree that the AHA has two core missions. The first concerns the promotion of historical scholarship by ensuring the preservation and accessibility of historical documents, the vitality of the institutional spaces for free scholarly debate about matters of historical interpretation, and the free dissemination of the results of historical research through publication and teaching. This aspect of the core mission is basically the application to a particular domain—the study of the past—of fundamental liberal values concerning freedom of thought and expression. The second mission concerns history as an occupation. The AHA promotes fair and nondiscriminatory hiring practices and satisfactory workplace conditions for historians.

In recent years, the first part of this core mission has expanded to include advocacy for the use of historical thinking in the public sphere. At a time when economic considerations and calculations seem to reign supreme and are applied to policy issues across the board, the AHA has sought to redress the balance and to assert the

relevance of historical knowledge to the problems facing our society.

If, then, the AHA has a warrant to speak out in all these areas (historical scholarship, historians' employment, historical reasoning on public issues), does that warrant extend to political matters? The boundaries of the "political" are, of course, notoriously fuzzy, and the category is difficult to encapsulate with any rigor. But, nonetheless, as a general principle, the AHA places partisan politics outside its purview. It does so on the grounds that, while individual historians have political views, and while those views may responsibly shape good historical scholarship, the common denominator that brings us together in the AHA is our politically neutral commitment to studying history. For the AHA to use its collective voice to speak out politically threatens to divide the membership. And a divided membership weakens the Association's ability to implement its core mission.

The corollary of this self-denying ordinance is the AHA annual meeting—a forum for the free discussion in a historical register of some of those same politically controversial issues. What gets excluded when the AHA speaks with a single voice, then, is not merely restored but actively embraced in those public settings where we address one another and air our disagreements as individual historians.

With these rough guidelines about the legitimate purview of the AHA in mind, we can return to two of the issues on which the AHA was recently asked to take a stand and see how the guidelines informed our decisions.

Early in 2013, some historians asked the AHA to sign the amicus brief they had crafted on behalf of the appellees who challenged the constitutionality of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Since DOMA defined marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman, wouldn't endorsing such a brief amount to taking a political stand in favor of same-sex marriage? Some members of the Council thought so and warned against AHA endorsement. But the argument that eventually carried the day construed endorsement differently: DOMA's supporters routinely defended the law by citing *bad* history (they claimed, inaccurately, that the federal government had always played a major role in the legal definition of marriage). Hence AHA endorsement of the amicus brief, as a document that set the historical record straight, fell securely within the AHA's core mission of advocating for the importance of expert historical knowledge as a guide to public policy. A second argument that swayed the Council concerned the financial penalties (higher tax rates and insurance premiums) borne by same-sex couples denied access to the institution of marriage. From this perspective, the AHA's endorsement of the amicus brief additionally fulfilled the AHA's pledge to defend nondiscriminatory workplace conditions for all historians. The AHA signed the brief.

In July 2013, the Associated Press brought to light some e-mails written by Mitch Daniels three years earlier as governor of Indiana. Daniels had been reading obituaries of the recently deceased Howard Zinn and was alarmed to learn of the nationwide popularity of Zinn's left-leaning American history textbook. He instructed his staff to find out who in Indiana assigned the textbook and seemed poised to ban it from the state's school and university curricula. How far Daniels actually went in this direction remained murky, but the gist of his musings was unmistakable, and it contradicted the AHA's core commitment to the free dissemination of the results of historical scholarship through teaching. The AHA thus issued a statement "deplor[ing] and condemn[ing] the spirit and intent" of the e-mails—a statement subsequently quoted in a widely circulated Associated Press story, which described the AHA, appropriately, as a "nonpartisan group."

I've intended this column both as an exercise for myself—to try to systematize in rough terms the principles that the AHA applies to the multifarious "outrages of the week" brought to its attention—and also as a way to give AHA members a clearer, behind-the-scenes look at this aspect of the Association's work. As I've stressed, no abstract guiding principles can ever be fully adequate to this job (the cases are simply too particular and complicated) nor definitive, since the AHA is a constantly evolving organization. Our intention, when we do speak out with the AHA's collective voice, is that the vast majority of our members feel that the AHA is speaking for them.

Jan Goldstein is president of the AHA.

Career Diversity's Time Has Come

Mellon Foundation Awards AHA $1.6 Million to Expand Historians' Options

Julia Brookins and James Grossman

A PhD in a humanities discipline conventionally prepares a student to be a college professor. This is as it should be. Most graduate students seek faculty positions, and most research universities consider training the next generation of scholars as part of their institutional mission. But few humanities graduate programs prepare their students to earn a living or contribute to public culture in other ways as well. At a time when many scholars with doctorates struggle to establish long-term careers in the conventional faculty mold, and when more sectors of American institutional life clearly could benefit from the expertise and values derived from advanced education in the humanities, we must question our commitment to this narrow training, and explore the possibilities and implications of a broader perspective on the education of historians.

The American Historical Association's recent efforts to expand the career horizons of historians have culminated in a $1.6 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to continue, expand, and enhance our Career Diversity and the History PhD initiative. This grant will help us move toward establishing a new norm: doctoral graduates in history (and by extension the humanities) will know how to pursue career opportunities across a wide spectrum, including the professoriate, higher education administration, cultural institutions and other nonprofits, government, public education, and the private sector. And as these graduates fan out into a variety of careers, they will help us achieve an equally important goal: widening the presence and influence of humanistic thinking in business, government, and nonprofits. Implicit assumptions about historical context inform thousands of decisions made every day in nearly every institutional context, and we believe that a substantial proportion of those decisions are made without recognition of those historical assumptions, and certainly with very little actual historical knowledge.

This grant will fund a suite of national activities implemented by the Association, in concert with pilot programs at four universities that will demonstrate how a graduate program in history can serve *all* doctoral students, not just those on the path to tenure-track jobs at research universities.

Our four pilot projects will take place at PhD-granting universities—UCLA, Columbia University, the University of Chicago, and the University of New Mexico—with large enough programs to test substantial experiments in different parts of the country, and with enough administrative and faculty support for innovation to facilitate collaboration with colleagues well beyond the humanities.

We want to redefine success as a historian in a way that takes account of all the possibilities.

The vast terrain covered by the recent conversation about problems with doctoral education in the humanities suggests considerable disagreement on such central issues as the ethics of graduating more PhDs than there are academic jobs, and the purpose and format of the doctoral dissertation. Yet the AHA's initial research has found a remarkable consensus on an agenda for change. Graduate curricula in the humanities—according to potential employers, university faculty and administrators, graduate students, and history alumni working beyond the academy—need to evolve in four ways:

- Students must be required to practice communicating their knowledge and research to a wide range of audiences through a variety of media;
- Curricula must provide intellectually relevant opportunities for students to work collaboratively toward common goals with others, both within and beyond their discipline—including disciplines beyond the humanities;
- Programs cannot neglect quantitative literacy. Graduates who lack a basic threshold of quantitative literacy are disadvantaged in careers both within and beyond the academy, other than in that small number of instances when a historian can pursue a successful career without undertaking his or her share of administrative work;
- Graduate education should instill in students the intellectual confidence to venture beyond their comfort zones, whether intellectual, cultural, or institutional.

Communication, teamwork, numeracy, confidence. This agenda for broadening graduate education will not divert PhD candidates from the training they need for a career in the professoriate. Indeed, we also hear from teaching-oriented institutions that new hires come to them prepared to be scholars, but not prepared to be *faculty*. The same skills that open new opportunities to our students would also speak to these laments and will enhance the professionalization of students who go into faculty positions as well. Professors with these skills will be better teachers, and more responsible citizens of an institution and practitioners of a discipline.

Each of the four partner universities has developed a unique plan for enhancing aspects of their doctoral curricula in ways that give students maximum scope to learn and to make their own professional choices without sacrificing scholarly rigor. While each pilot will be led by a senior faculty member, the AHA is not asking faculty members themselves to retrain or develop new expertise. Rather, each pilot, and all of

the AHA's national project activities, will be focused on cultivating students' own agency as they engage in the kinds of training, experiences, and exploration that excite them and broaden their career choices. The AHA and the partner programs will put their efforts into activities that help open the history departments more fully to opportunities for their students to engage productively with the broader world.

The AHA will perform four main roles in this initiative: instigator, coordinator, clearinghouse of information, and strategic center of activities for history graduate students in history departments beyond the four pilots. In addition to coordinating the efforts of the pilot programs, the AHA will start or expand a range of activities and publications (see sidebar for details).

In the first stage of this initiative, already underway, AHA officers and colleagues located and learned from history PhDs working across a vast spectrum of occupations. We found historians working everywhere from investment banking and marketing to public policy, both inside and outside of government. They are thriving in nonprofit administration and human resources, and in management consulting and journalism. Inside the university as well, our doctoral alumni turn up in every imaginable job. They work in development offices, career and placement centers, and digital humanities centers, and as student counselors and budget specialists. These scholars have one thing in common: they have found success beyond the professoriate.

But most of these historians have had to find their own way, without substantial guidance or support; and few have remained part of a community of historians to which they could make substantial contributions. We want to learn from their experiences, and make it easier for future generations to find their way to rewarding careers. We want to redefine success as a historian in a way that takes account of all the possibilities. In the end, we hope, it will become clear that historians, whatever their career choices, take their training and their habits of mind with them into the workplace—and that those who leave the academy, as well as those who stay, have good reason to remain active members of the community of historians.

Julia Brookins *is the AHA's special projects coordinator.* ***James Grossman*** *is the executive director of the AHA.*

The AHA's Career Diversity Project

Thanks to the recent Mellon Foundation grant, the AHA will be offering several programs, activities, and publications related to career diversity, including:

- Sessions, workshops, and job fairs at the annual meetings from 2015 to 2017 (and beyond, we hope) designed to help graduate students broaden their career horizons and increase awareness of the initiative and the resources it offers;
- A "virtual mentoring" program in which a graduate student interested in a particular line of work can contact the AHA and be matched up with a history PhD who has volunteered to communicate with students via e-mail about occupational pathways and useful preparation. We already are building a substantial database of mentors;
- A speakers bureau for history departments. We have already received requests from history departments for assistance in planning professionalization workshops and courses. In particular, we are seeing a new demand for people with history doctorates who are willing to discuss their career paths. We will continue to make referrals to departments, and we will use a portion of the project budget to send speakers to schools that can't pay travel expenses;
- A competitive grant for individual departments of up to $4,000 for innovative projects relating to this initiative;
- Online community spaces to foster engaged discussions on the issues central to this initiative. Some students have already found such resources at Versatile PhD, Academia.edu, and the "Vitae" section of the online *Chronicle of Higher Education*. None of these, however, is discipline-specific, which is essential to the productive trading of ideas and resources;
- Expansion of the What I Do series, which features brief interviews showcasing the actual work of history PhDs employed outside the professoriate (see page 30 in this issue for more on this series);
- Ongoing research on the career destinations of history PhDs, with data broken down by institution and other variables useful to prospective graduate students and the programs themselves;
- A set of online and print resources—for prospective history graduate students, current students, faculty members, and directors of graduate study—that explores the curricular and professional possibilities of a history doctoral program. These will include web-based conversations, pamphlets, and interviews of historians working in various environments;
- A meeting for directors of graduate study at the AHA annual meeting to offer a progress report and enable attendees to query our four participating institutions about their projects.

The Ethical Historian

Notes and Queries on Professional Conduct

The Ethical Historian features the Professional Division's reactions to the ethical and professional questions it regularly receives. We welcome suggestions for this column, which may be sent to the division members listed below at PD@historians.org. The Professional Division will not reveal in this column the identities, or identifying characteristics, of individuals or institutions involved.

Over the years, quite a few candidates have contacted the AHA's Professional Division, concerned that a prospective employer is pressuring them to make what they see as an unreasonably quick decision on accepting or rejecting the offer of a faculty position. And though we hear from bewildered candidates who feel pressured for a quick decision, search committees tell us that they are keen to make a hire but also fearful that if the search should fail, the department may lose the position altogether. It should come as no surprise that these two needs—that of the applicant who hopes to have choices, and that of the department which needs to fill its position—do not always mesh. What is to be done?

Job season is always a stressful time for candidates, as it is for departments with jobs available. Both groups have invested tremendous energy and labor in this process, and though there is inevitably a power imbalance that favors those doing the hiring, their concerns and the pressures they may face internally do need to be taken into account too. When it comes to deadlines on job offers, both parties have good claims and justifiable anxieties.

Still, candidates need to be given time to weigh what is, undoubtedly, a huge decision that could affect a significant portion of their lives and perhaps those of their families as well. For the fortunate candidate with more than one prospect on the horizon, the possibility of a choice is hugely attractive, and the idea of walking away before knowing the outcome of a campus visit is hard. Not surprisingly, such candidates would prefer to maximize their options, amassing multiple job offers to help them negotiate salary and benefits, give them choices, and—let's not forget—make them feel good about their work.

While the institution making the offer has the upper hand, the concerns that precipitate its pushing for a decision are not without substance. Obviously, an institution hopes to hire the candidate it regards as the best fit, so the sooner it can sign that person up, the better. Unfilled faculty lines are not automatically guaranteed and often fall victim to cost cutting, hence the anxiousness often displayed by departments when making an offer. A failed search is always disappointing: it's bad for morale, it's a hit to the institutional pocketbook, and there's that lingering fear that there might not be a second chance.

It is our contention, however, that while these pressures exist and are important, quibbling over small units of time is unlikely to make much of a difference (for the most part we are talking about not weeks and weeks, but a few extra days until another institution decides or another interview round is completed).

While there is no perfect solution that will harmonize these competing instincts, the AAUP and the AHA both recommend that candidates should be given at least two weeks to decide whether they will accept an offer. In March 2007, the AHA Council issued its Guidelines for Job Offers in History, a document that, following AAUP recommendations, urges departments to ensure that candidates are given a minimum of two weeks *after receiving a written offer* in which to render their decision. As the guidelines point out, job candidates may well want to consult mentors and family members before deciding, and may also have further questions that need to be resolved before they feel they can commit. Once a candidate accepts a position, however, that acceptance should be considered binding on both parties.

Departments should be responsive to reasonable requests from candidates for an extension of the minimum two weeks when possible. Certainly such requests should never be ignored, nor should offers ever be withdrawn because a candidate has made such a request. Candidates have every right to make such a request and should not be penalized for doing so.

If a department, in making an offer, allows the candidate less than the recommended two weeks, candidates should, in a nonconfrontational manner, politely make the department chair aware of AHA and AAUP guidelines (see below). If that seems daunting, as it well might to a freshly minted candidate, then most advisers are well positioned to intervene on behalf of the candidate. Don't hesitate to ask for help in that way if you're a job seeker worried about the risk of offending the department that made the offer.

The job search is a stressful process, especially for the candidate but also for the department mounting the search. Both parties have a lot to gain, and a modicum of goodwill and reasonable expectations on both sides will always move things along. Offering at minimum a full two weeks to prospective colleagues, so that they may make a reasonable and informed decision, is only sensible and fair, and we urge departments to observe this important best practice. We also ask candidates to be sensitive to departmental concerns, to be honest about their intentions, and to avoid unnecessarily lengthy decision making whenever possible. The result will be happier hires and happy starts to new careers.

The AHA's Professional Division collects and disseminates information about employment opportunities and helps ensure equal opportunities for all historians as well as helping set guidelines for professional ethics. Members of the division are ***Catherine Epstein*** *(Amherst College),* ***Mary Louise R oberts*** *(University of Wisconsin–Madison),* ***Andrew Jon Rotter*** *(Colgate University), and* ***Philippa Levine*** *(University of Texas at Austin, and vice president, Professional Division).*

AHA Guidelines for Job Offers in History can be found online at ***bit.ly/1lmkbEY****. The AAUP's Ethics of Recruitment and Faculty Appointments can be found at* ***bit.ly/1lmkuQ1****.*

Layers of Culture

Byzantine Artifacts in Heaven and Earth

Shatha Almutawa

Why would a Christian carve a cross on the forehead of a sculpture of Aphrodite? Why would a Muslim ruler ask that Turkish captions be written in the Greek illustrated manuscript about Alexander the Great's life? And how did a pirate's treasures, including earrings decorated with Arabic names, ultimately end up in Greece? These are only some of the questions that might arise in the mind of a visitor to the exhibit *Heaven and Earth: Byzantine Illumination at the Cultural Crossroads* at the Getty Villa in Los Angeles through August 25, 2014. Byzantine treasures such as the icon of the Virgin Hodegetria have been loaned by the Greek government to US museums in 2013, and were first on display in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. After leaving the Getty, they will be on display at the Art Institute of Chicago in the fall.

The exhibit contains sculptures, icons, manuscripts, and artifacts made between the first century CE and the second half of the 15th century. They point to the great diversity of the Byzantine Empire, the cultural exchanges between pagan Greeks, Eastern and Western Christians, and Muslims. Glenn Peers, professor of early medieval and Byzantine art at the University of Texas at Austin, said in an interview that Byzantine embassies went out to the Muslim world, contributing to Byzantine encounters with Muslim culture. He added that students from Constantinople traveled to Persia and Iraq to further their education.

The head of Aphrodite, which was probably made in the first century, was maimed by a Christian who carved a cross on its forehead and damaged its eyes. The Christian destruction of Greek sculptures began in Late Antiquity, when the statue of the cult of Cronus was broken into pieces, then reused to build a cross, and the pagan temple known as the Serapeum was destroyed with its idols in Alexandria.[1] In the third and fourth centuries CE, crosses were carved on the heads of other sculptures in Alexandria and on the breastplate armor of a statue of Marcus Aurelius. A sixth-century biography of Severus, the patriarch of Antioch, describes the "trial" and burning of Greek statues. At this event, idols were exhibited and the pagan priest of the Temple of Isis was questioned about their use. Historians such as Troels Myrup Kristensen suggest that the carving of the cross on a statue might serve as a "ritual act of baptism or as a means of accepting the pagan image into a Christian life."[2] In essence, then, the blinded Aphrodite was saved from destruction by the cross that was carved on her forehead.

National Archaeological Museum, Athens

When Greek sculptures fell into Christian hands in the Byzantine Empire, many were destroyed. This head of Aphrodite might have survived because a Christian carved a cross on its forehead, thus figuratively baptizing it.

The exhibit brings into question the idea that Christian and non-Christian cultures were isolated in the Byzantine period between 330 and 1453. Centuries before the age of globalization, Muslims and Christians were exchanging aesthetic sensibilities and borrowing narratives and ornaments from each other, with influences going both ways.

An example of the blending of cultures is a closure panel separating the altar area from the main area of a church. Made in Corinth around the year 1000, this panel is decorated with meaningless inscriptions that imitate Arabic script. Art historian Aneta Georgievska-Shine said in a phone interview that the trend of using pseudo-Arabic scripts to decorate Christian art continued into the Renaissance era. Paintings of the Virgin Mary portrayed her enthroned, with a carpet decorated by such inscriptions beneath her feet. In other paintings the trim of her veil is decorated with pseudo-Kufic inscriptions. In some cases, these allusions were intended to emphasize that Islam was conquered or at the margins of the Byzantine Empire, while in other cases they were acts of appreciative borrowing.

Christianity itself was not a single culture. There were major differences in theology and practice between Eastern and Western Christianity in the Byzantine period. Andreas Pavias's *Icon of the Crucifixion* combines Eastern and Western Christian elements and "a whole history of Christian doctrine," Susan Ashbrook Harvey, professor of religious studies at Brown University, said in a phone interview. The icon's depiction of faces is typical of Eastern icons; those who are abusing Jesus are not portrayed with ugly, distorted faces, as they are often depicted in Western Christian art from the same period. But

the icon contains some Western elements as well, such as the portrayal of Mary Magdalene in red, with her hair unbound, holding the cross and weeping. In Eastern Orthodox portrayals, Mary Magdalene would normally not be portrayed as a prostitute, and she would appear with the women surrounding the Virgin Mary.

At the time it was made, this icon, like other icons from the Byzantine period, would not have been seen as an aesthetic object to be admired but never touched. The exhibit does not portray to the visitor how much the items on display were used—touched, kissed, and otherwise utilized in everyday life, whether secular or religious. Peers mentioned that museum guards at Byzantine exhibits are especially vigilant because devout visitors often try to kiss the icons. These icons were meant to be interacted with in that way, but their placement in exhibits, and their status as valuable historic objects, is what museum visitors often see instead.

Peers, who stresses the importance of the body in Eastern Christian theology and outlook, curated the exhibit *Byzantine Things in the World* at the Menil Collection in Houston. His goal was to change perceptions of these objects by pairing Byzantine pieces with artifacts from African and American cultures and changing other viewing conditions. Peers is now thinking about his next exhibit of Byzantine art, one that will focus on the arts of Trebizond, and he is currently searching for a venue to host it.

Shatha Almutawa is associate editor of Perspectives on History.

A close examination of Andreas Pavias's Icon of the Crucifixion *will appear on our blog,* AHA Today *(**blog.historians.org**). Join the discussion about this and other icons on AHA Communities' Byzantine History forum (**communities.historians.org**).*

Notes

1. Troels Myrup Kristensen, "Religious Conflict in Late Antique Alexandria: Christian Responses to 'Pagan' Statues in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries CE," in *Alexandria: A Cultural and Religious Melting Pot* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2009), 158–75.

2. Kristensen, 167.

Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post Byzantine Studies, Venice

The Greek Romance of Alexander the Great *from the 14th century contains Old Anatolian Turkish captions added after 1461, allowing the Ottoman sultan, possibly Mehmed II, to understand the events depicted in the 250 illustrations in this manuscript. In the Ottoman captions, Alexander the Great is given the title* Hazret-i, *which was reserved for saints and prophets. These captions were added to the Byzantine illustrations originally made for an emperor of Trebizond. First written in the second century, the Alexander Romance became the inspiration for many narratives about Alexander the Great. In his paper "The Trebizond Alexander Romance (Venice Hellenic Institute Codex Gr. 5)," in the* Journal of Turkish Studies *36 (2011), Dimitri Kastritsis writes that "the Ottoman captions are informed by the content of the Greek ones, but go much further in interpreting them in accordance to Ottoman cultural norms and literary conventions.*

Orphan Work Conversation Continues

Digitization Efforts Running Up against Murky Copyright Issues

Seth Denbo

On March 10 and 11, the United States Copyright Office held roundtables on mass digitization and orphan works—books, photographs, works of art, and other intellectual property for which the rights holder cannot be found. Debate on the question of the legal standing of reproductions of orphan works and their copyright status has been ongoing for almost a decade. As early as 2006, a Copyright Office report made the extent of the problem clear and proposed draft language for legislation. Bills were introduced to Congress in 2006 and 2008 that aimed to address the issue of orphan works, but to date no legislation has been passed.

Valuable primary sources, images, and published works for which the copyright owner cannot be determined or found pose problems for institutions that want to provide the access that historians and other researchers need, and for individual scholars who want to use an orphan work as source material in their own publications. In the case of works such as these, cultural resources can be underutilized if legal restrictions on orphan works constrain digitization and online access. Opening up access can also provide means for finding rights holders and discovering the provenance of unattributed items, a valuable endeavor for historians and owners alike.

While it's difficult to estimate the scale of the problem, it is clear that access to orphan works is a major concern affecting the reproduction of millions of works worldwide. Of the approximately 2 million books published in the US between 1920 and 2000 approximately 30 percent are potentially orphan works. The British Library estimates that as much as 40 percent of its entire collection (including a variety of media) is orphan works. The problem is particularly acute with photographs. In the case of unpublished images held in museum, library, and archive collections, fewer than 1 percent are accompanied by information on the rights holder.[1]

The roundtables in March were the most recent in a series of public events to gather information and allow various interested parties to comment in a bid to move toward a solution that would break the longstanding deadlock on the issue. Attendees at the roundtable included content guilds, such as the Authors Guild, which advocate for rights holders. The content guilds tend to argue for stricter regulation, which they argue protects their members from "widespread digital theft."[2] The other side of the argument is provided by advocates of libraries, other nonprofit organizations, and digital libraries like HathiTrust that see the current restrictions as stifling use of these valuable cultural works and argue for the public benefit of strengthened "fair use." The College Art Association, the learned society for art historians (for whom copyright restrictions can be a significant barrier to scholarship), has argued that legislation should "provide a safe harbor for not-for-profit cultural institutions, engaged in non-commercial activities, that had exercised . . . care and that took steps to cease the infringement."[3]

While orphan works existed before the web, the problem has become acute due to mass digitization by Google Books and smaller-scale operations by cultural institutions. So it is no surprise that this issue is closely related to the questions addressed in the case *Authors Guild v. Google*, which was decided in November and is now being appealed. The judge's ruling repeatedly invoked the question of what constitutes fair use, which is of direct relevance to historians and scholarship, to support his case that mass digitization is a public benefit.

Thus, any future legislation on orphan works that limits the fair use of material for scholarly purposes has the potential to interfere with the work done by researchers, for whom many of these works are potentially primary source material. Since copyright infringement can result in significant damages, nonprofit cultural organizations can ill afford to take risks of this kind. Unfortunately, the issue pits authors and their representatives against the librarians with whom they should be allies, and the debate is often emotive and polarized. The Copyright Office had an open period during which they accepted written comments on the issues covered at the roundtables with a view to considering potential legislative solutions, so progress on this issue may be possible.

Seth Denbo is the AHA's director of scholarly communication and digital initiatives.

Notes

1. Michael Cairns, "580,388 Orphan Works—Give or Take," *Personanondata*, posted September 9, 2009, accessed April 4, 2014, bit.ly/OhNeuw. Tilman Leuder, "The 'Orphan Works' Challenge" (paper presented at the 2010 Fordham IP Conference), accessed March 30, 2014, bit.ly/1i2clJP.

2. "Authors' Orphan Works Reply: The Libraries and Google Have No Right to 'Roll the Dice with the World's Literary Property'," *Authors Guild Blog*, posted June 25, 2013, accessed March 31, 2014, bit.ly/1i2cygb.

3. "CAA Participates in Roundtables on 'Orphan Works and Mass Digitization'," *College Art Association News*, posted March 26, 2014. accessed March 31, 2014, bit.ly/1i2cD3v.

Orphan Work Defined

An "orphan work" is an original work of authorship for which a good faith, prospective user cannot readily identify and/or locate the copyright owner(s) in a situation where permission from the copyright owner(s) is necessary as a matter of law.

—Copyright Office Notice of Inquiry, Orphan Works and Mass Digitization, 77 FR 64555 (Oct. 22, 2012)

The definition given above is available at (1.usa.gov/1i2bUPI). See also the Federal Register announcement of the roundtables (1.usa.gov/1i2bads), which includes valuable background, information, and links to relevant reports and decisions.

Historical Advisory Committee Reports on Declassification Progress

State Department and National Archives Have Eliminated Backlogs

Allen Mikaelian

The Historical Advisory Committee to the Department of State (HAC) has praised both the State Department's Office of the Historian and the National Archives and Records Administration for making significant progress in eliminating backlogs from their areas of responsibility.

According to the HAC's annual report, the Office of the Historian (HO) made "robust progress" in 2013 toward more timely publication of the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series. And the National Archives' National Declassification Center (NDC) "exceeded the HAC's expectations" by moving through a backlog of some 350 million pages by a December 31, 2013, deadline.

However, despite this progress, the HAC remains skeptical that the HO will be able to publish volumes covering the Nixon and Carter administrations within the required time frame. The HAC is also concerned about researcher access to declassified documents, and the report claims an "urgent need" for responsible agencies to rethink declassification guidelines, due to the fact that approximately 40 percent of the documents in the backlog will remain classified.

The FRUS book series is the main outlet for publication of official State Department documents and has often been criticized for leaving out significant portions of events, most particularly those that involve US covert activities. Since 1991, the department has been required by law to publish volumes no later than 30 years after the events they cover, and the HAC has been responsible for overseeing, advising on, and reporting on the series. The HO published seven volumes in 2013, including the long-delayed and highly problematic volume *Congo, 1960–1968*; the volume on the SALT II treaty; and five volumes covering the Carter administration.

But the HAC appears to be most enthusiastic about the rate of declassification of volumes achieved by the HO (10 volumes in 2013) and the fact that this rate has been sustained long enough to eliminate the backlog of 30 volumes that had been completed but not declassified. This bodes well, the HAC reports, for an increased rate of publication in future years and makes it possible to anticipate that 2014 will see the publication of a retrospective on Iran and Chile, 1969–1973. Like the volume on Congo, these volumes had to navigate significant issues pertaining to covert action.

The HAC maintains, as it has in past years, that there is a bottleneck at the High-Level Panel (HLP), a committee made up of representatives from the State Department, the National Security Agency, and the Central Intelligence Agency that reviews declassification of highly sensitive issues. Material referred to this panel is often delayed a year or more, according to the HAC. There have been encouraging signs of increased cooperation at this level, the annual report claims, but the sheer number of upcoming volumes that will require HLP resolution threatens to overwhelm the process.

Turning to the issues of declassification of documents for the National Archives, the HAC notes "with pleasure" that a significant backlog has been retired. A 2009 executive order (EO 13526) had mandated automatic declassification of any document older than 25 years (unless the classifying agency withheld it for a particular reason), and earlier HAC reports had expressed concern that a December 31, 2013, deadline would

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Declassification in Past Issues of Perspectives on History

Richard Immerman, Kenneth Osgood, and Carly Goodman, "A National Treasure at the Brink: Survey Highlights Historians' Love of, and Frustration with, the National Archives." April 2014. bit.ly/1qeMox9.

Marian J. Barber, "Reinvigorating FRUS: The Historian's Office at the State Department and the Foreign Relations Series." March 2014. bit.ly/1fXQV3L.

Debbie Ann Doyle, "AHA Supports Release of Watergate Documents: Asks for Unsealing of Grand Jury Records Regarding US v. Liddy." January 2014. bit.ly/1kDyC3w.

Lee White, "Recasting Declassification: Agencies and Advisory Boards Seeking Public Input." January 2014. bit.ly/Ot2cOu.

Allen Mikaelian, "Historical Advisory Committee Reports on Declassification Bottlenecks." September 2013. bit.ly/1mVCmyP.

Lee White, "Transparency, Declassification, and the Obama Presidency." September 2012. bit.ly/1mVCvlK.

Veterans, Civilians, and the "Dangerous Gap"

NEH's Standing Together *Initiative to Address the Experience of War*

Allen Mikaelian

At a National Endowment for the Humanities event launching the *Standing Together* initiative, filmmaker JulieHera DeStephano spoke of the "dangerous gap in understanding" between those who have served in war and those who have not. Tommy Sowers, assistant secretary for public and intergovernmental affairs in the US Department of Veterans Affairs, spoke of this gap in terms of the tiny portion of the US population who have served (less than 1 percent). And Captain Robert Timberg, a former marine who was grievously wounded in Vietnam, attempted to describe his efforts to bridge that gap, and understand what was "essentially human" about "how I decided not to die," words he read from his memoir while trying unsuccessfully to hold back tears.

The *Standing Together* initiative has started with NEH funding of five pilot programs that "use humanities scholarship to examine war and its aftermath." The NEH hopes that the humanities can narrow the dangerous gap mentioned by DeStephano, even while acknowledging that those who have not experienced war cannot fully know what veterans know. It does this for the benefit of veterans, whose postwar transitions will be facilitated by these programs, but also to inform those who have not served.

The Talking Service Project will use the anthology *Standing Down: From Warrior to Civilian* as the basis for discussion groups. Literature and Medicine for Veterans targets those who provide medical care to returning veterans and uses readings in the humanities to help develop understanding of wartime experiences and veterans' needs. YouStories is a theater program that uses classical Greek drama to demonstrate the commonality of wartime experiences across time.

The Warrior-Scholar Project, piloted at Yale and expanding to Harvard and the University of Michigan, gives veterans a two-week "academic boot camp" to help with the transition from the military world to the "fundamentally different social and cultural environment" on campus. The Yale project uses Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, Thucydides, and Herodotus to help develop study skills. And at Northeastern University's NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks, the Military History Workshop will demonstrate to military historians the possibilities of digital research methodologies like geographic information systems, network analysis, and deep mapping. The project hopes to open new vistas for, and awaken new interest in, the military as a subject for historians.

Credit: JulieHera DeStephano

Film crew working on Journey to Normal: Women of War Come Home.

The NEH is also highlighting a number of other projects that involve veterans in its report to Congress. The Navy UDT-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, received support for preservation and restoration of artifacts, including objects, personal papers, and institutional records. The commemoration and preservation of the SEALs' history has taken on renewed importance: their high-profile raid on Osama bin Laden's compound is well-known. Less so are the heavy losses they have suffered in Afghanistan. The project 100 Faces of War Experience features portraits of and essays by veterans. Portraits included in this work in progress have been exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery, the Rayburn House Office Building, and the Massachusetts State House. The first exhibition of the completed project is scheduled to be held at the National Veterans Art Museum in Chicago between November 2014 and May 2015.

Another initiative receiving NEH support, *Journey to Normal: Women of War Come Home* documents the transitions of

women veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Producer/director JulieHera DeStefano spoke at the April launch of the initiative about how her interest in women veterans' homecomings led her to a long embedding with a unit in Afghanistan. When a returned veteran noted that no one can understand the transition from war to civilian life without experience of a war zone, DeStefano decided to make the journey. The result is a feature film that will be released in 2014, but this is only one part of the project. An online, searchable video archive will feature the film's complete Afghanistan interviews for researchers and may be, according to DeStefano, the largest existing archive of interviews with women veterans.

The NEH, on the initiative website, states, "Modern wars take place on such a large scale that one person's experiences can seem lost in the numbers." Historians in this magazine often reflect on developing empathy and understanding of individual experiences, along with the need to connect these experiences to broader societal shifts (see the October 2013 issue in particular). Closing gaps in understanding, especially for those who weren't there is, after all, what historians do.

And even though history is only a small part of this initiative, Tommy Sowers, who received his PhD from the Department of Government at the London School of Economics, singled out the discipline to make his point about how the Department of Veterans Affairs and its constituency had a special connection to the humanities. "History," he noted during his remarks at the NEH's launch, "is a part of us. It is who we are."

Allen Mikaelian is the editor of Perspectives on History.

The initiative's homepage is at www.neh.gov/veterans/standing-together.

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not be met for the millions of pages of documents delayed by problems with initial reviews. However, as noted by the HAC and the NDC, the 352 million pages that constituted the backlog have been processed.

Still, declassification does not necessarily mean the documents are as readily available as documents that were never classified or that have been declassified for some time. Regarding the backlog of 352 million pages, the NDC's latest report (1.usa.gov/1mXZyiX) states that, as of December 31, 2013, some 130.3 million documents have been declassified and have completed all processing, and 77.3 million have been "released to the public." However, these records may be subject to additional review for privacy concerns, and although researchers may request documents that require such review, they should be prepared for a wait of several months. Recently declassified records are unlikely to have finding aids or even catalog entries, but archivists have access to information about these records, and NARA encourages researchers to consult with an archivist about records that might be available but do not yet appear in the catalog. According to Megan Phillips, NARA's external affairs liaison, "Historians do not need to wait *passively* for processing, but can actively request the records that they want to see."

Allen Mikaelian is the editor of Perspectives on History.

The entire HAC annual report can be read online at www.historians.org/2014-HAC.

Expanding Our Efforts

Campaigns for History and the Humanities, on and beyond the Hill

Lee White

President Obama ruffled feathers in the humanities community when, at an event promoting vocational training early this year, he said, "folks can make a lot more, potentially, with skilled manufacturing or the trades than they might with an art history degree."

While the president later apologized for his comment, it nonetheless reinforced an unfortunate stereotype regarding the perceived lack of relevance of a humanities degree in the "real world." And it echoes a number of comments made by politicians in recent years questioning the value of humanities degrees. In 2011, Florida Governor Rick Scott proposed shifting higher education funding into STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects and told the *Miami Herald-Tribune*, "If I'm going to take money from a citizen to put into education, then I'm going to take that money to create jobs. So I want that money to go to degrees where people can get jobs in this state. Is it a vital interest of the state to have more anthropologists? I don't think so."

And today, as I draft this column, Congressman Paul Ryan (R-WI) released a proposed fiscal year 2015 Republican budget package calling for an end to federal subsidies for the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The statement accompanying the budget justifies this move by claiming, "The activities and content funded by these agencies go beyond the core mission of the federal government. These agencies can raise funds from private-sector patrons, which will also free them from any risk of political interference."

Nearly a year ago, the Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences released a report, *The Heart of the Matter*, on the role and importance of the humanities in national life. While it received a great deal of media attention and provoked a spirited conversation among pundits and academics, it is clear, from the comments of the president and others, that there is still much more work to be done to raise the level of consciousness about the vital role humanities and social science play in society.

Our colleagues at the National Humanities Alliance (NHA) continue to do yeoman's work in making the case for the value of the humanities and advocating for funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities. In early March, the NHA's annual Humanities Day had well over 100 participants making visits to Capitol Hill advocating for funding not just for the NEH, but for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Library of Congress, the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need program, and Title VI/Fulbright-Hays education programs.

Over the past few years, a number of projects and studies have highlighted the importance of the need for investment in history. Three examples show the diversity of the work being done by national organizations in this regard. Since 2011, the AHA's Tuning project has been working to "articulate the disciplinary core of historical study and to define what a student should understand and be able to do at the completion of a history degree program." In 2011, National History Day issued a report showing how students participating in the program outperformed their peers who did not. And *Imperiled Promise,* a report from the Organization of American Historians examined the practice and presentation of American history by the National Park Service at its sites.

As we reported last month, the National Coalition for History was instrumental in the creation of a new Congressional History Caucus and is now working toward the creation of a similar organization in the Senate.

Over the past 18 months, an exciting new grassroots movement, the History Relevance Campaign (HRC), has emerged from a series of small, informal discussions among historians in careers across the discipline, on the "branding" of history. Tim Grove, one of the founders of the HRC, described this in an article posted on Public History Commons (publichistorycommons.org):

> History, like any other discipline, has a brand. In this context it is defined as the way people perceive the value of history. If this perception is negative, how do we change it? How do we demonstrate the value? At the moment STEM has a very strong brand. History does not. Or if it does, the history brand or image is diffuse and too often negative.

The HRC's organizers want to make it clear that the campaign is not controlled by a single history organization, and that it is not a lobbying group aimed at federal, state, and local policy makers, but rather that it is designed to "raise the profile of history in the general public." Also, "its intent is not to minimize Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) but to show that history skills are just as important and that balance should be a goal for curriculum."

Over the past few months, the HRC has held sessions at the annual meetings of both the AHA and the National Council on Public History. The HRC has created a LinkedIn group that is open to all, and they urge you to join in the conversation and become involved in this important effort over the coming months.

Lee White is the executive director of the National Coalition for History.

AHA on Document Collection Requirements

Wide Access Need Not Compete with Quality Production

Seth Denbo

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) is the arm of the National Archives that disperses grant funds to "promote the preservation and use of America's documentary heritage." Since its inception in 1964, the commission has funded over 4,000 projects at state and local archives, higher education institutions, libraries, historical societies, and other nonprofits. In conjunction with institutions that house the staff of these projects, and publishers that produce the volumes, microfilms, and digital editions, funding from the NHPRC has supported preservation, documentary editing, and many important publications.

The NHPRC recently published draft proposals for a major overhaul of grant programs on its blog *Annotation* (blogs.archives.gov/nhprc). The proposed new grants will be available in six categories, including Access to Historical Records, Literacy & Engagement with Historical Records, Online Publishing of Historical Records, Publishing Historical Records Online, State Board Programming Grants, and State Government Electronic Records.

The AHA wrote to Archivist of the United States David Ferriero and posted comments on *Annotation*, and the NHPRC received a large number of comments and letters from individuals and other organizations. The shape of the new programs and the activities they will support have raised tensions between the rigorous and often costly demands of the editorial process and the need for broad access that digitization can provide. Many comments express concern about whether the proposed programs, with their requirement for comprehensive free digital access, will support the valuable work the NHPRC has enabled in the past. Others lauded the emphasis on digitization and programs to help state archives deal with the deluge of digital government records.

Seth Denbo is the AHA's director of scholarly communication and digital initiatives.

A version of this article appeared on the AHA Today *blog (blog.historians.org).*

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Organized 1884 Incorporated by the Congress 1889

Mr. David S. Ferriero
Archivist of the United States
National Archives and Records Administration
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408

Dear Mr. Ferriero:

The American Historical Association takes note of NARA's proposed draft guidelines that require NHPRC grantees to "publish online editions and provide free online access." We agree that broad dissemination of these essential documents is imperative, and hence support the requirement that grant proposals to NHPRC include plans for digital publication. We are less certain that either historical scholarship or public culture is well served by a rigid requirement that such dissemination be free of charge.

NHPRC funding has encouraged and supported the valuable and painstaking documentary editing work that has made collections of carefully edited primary sources available to historians, educators, and the public. The publications are of inestimable value to the nation and support the public culture and citizenship that is vital for sustaining democracy. The AHA is pleased to see proposed changes that will even further broaden the presence of these documents in American public culture, but it is equally imperative to maintain the quality of historical scholarship that is essential to the utility of these materials.

The collections that users encounter are not mere digitized compilations of documents contained in the nation's vaults. Archivists, editors, publishers, and the institutions and funders who make their work possible contribute essential expertise. Which version of a speech was the final draft? Was a letter actually received? How much would awareness of a contemporary rhetorical convention substantially affect understanding of its author's meaning? Our responsibility to the men and women who created the original primary source materials, and to the public for whom these papers are history, heritage, and cultural inheritance, requires attentiveness to these kinds of questions.

The ultimate question to be asked here is how we can ensure that these documentary editions continue to be produced with appropriate expertise and reach the widest audience. The digital revolution provides not only new means for producing and providing access, but also new opportunities for historical scholarship in the production of these projects. The world in which we research, write, and disseminate our work is changing, and expanding online publishing of historical records increases their utility, value, and appeal.

Similarly, the needs of digital government present challenges to state archives. The creation of government records in digital form can be vital for engaged citizenship, but also raises challenges for their preservation and use. To that end the AHA also supports the NHPRC's move to provide funding to state archives in preserving and providing access to electronic government records.

Digital publication of all NHPRC projects will broaden access. The proposed transition period of four years, as well as funding to support the move to digital, will help projects to build sustainable digital resources, but that access involves new ongoing costs for elements such as preserving the digital files and creation of vital metadata. The expense of producing these works in either print or digital is significant, and publishers must be able to recoup their investment.

At the same time, these edited documents are a public good, and there are reasonable obligations that accompany public funding. Publishers can, for example, be reasonably required to complement a subscription model for digital publication with free access to secondary school students and teachers. This is not a matter of balancing diverging interests: everyone involved in the ecosystem—the institutions at which projects are based, the publishers, the archivists, the editors, and the funders—have an obligation to encourage both wide circulation and sustainable models of high-quality production.

Sincerely,

James Grossman
Executive Director

400 A Street, SE, Washington, D.C. 20003 | 202-544-2422 | aha@historians.org | www.historians.org

Why Not Spend New Year's Eve in New York?

Debbie Ann Doyle

The AHA's 129th annual meeting will take place in New York, New York, from Friday, January 2, through Monday, January 5, 2015. Rooms in the meeting hotels will be available at AHA's deeply discounted rate on New Year's Eve—why not plan to spend the holiday in the city that never sleeps?

If you have never watched the ball drop in Times Square, it is worth bundling up and joining the crowd of approximately one million people watching the annual spectacle. Celebrating the New Year in Times Square has been a tradition since the turn of the 20th century, when the *New York Times* began sponsoring a celebration from its headquarters building at 42nd Street and Broadway. Decades of radio and television coverage have made the ball drop an American tradition. The meeting hotels are both within easy walking distance of Times Square; the Sheraton is located right inside the recommended viewing area on 7th Avenue between 52nd and 53rd Streets. See the Times Square Alliance website, www.timessquarenyc.org, for details.

If watching the ball drop is too touristy for you, or if you hate crowds or cold weather, there are numerous other possibilities for celebrating New Year's Eve in New York. Options are as diverse as the city. Of special interest to historians, the Merchant's House Museum near Washington Square holds an annual New Year's Day open house interpreting 19th-century New Year's traditions (www.merchantshouse.org). An annual four-mile midnight run through Central Park and a bike ride from Washington Square to Central Park provide options for the athletic. Other options include the annual New Year's Eve Concert for Peace at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in Morningside Heights, cruises to watch the fireworks from New York Harbor, and daytime programming at the city's children's museums. Check out the online roundups of 2014 events at the websites of *New York* magazine (nymag.com) and *Time Out New York* (timeout.com) to get an idea of the possibilities.

New York Times Photo Archives

A crowd gathers on Times Square for updates on the Jack Dempsey-Georges Carpentier fight in 1921.

The meeting hotels are the New York Hilton Midtown (1335 Avenue of the Americas/Sixth Avenue), which will serve as headquarters, and the nearby Sheraton New York Times Square (811 7th Avenue), which will be the co-headquarters. Rates will be $149 a night for a single room and $169 a night for a double. Please note that all rooms are subject to nightly sales and occupancy tax. A limited number of rooms will be available at these rates three days before and after the official meeting dates of January 2–5, 2015. Detailed information about reserving a room at the AHA's meeting rates will be published in *Perspectives on History* and on the AHA website in mid-September. Attendees must register for the annual meeting to receive discounted hotel rates.

Debbie Ann Doyle is the AHA's coordinator of committees and meetings.

Annual Meeting Hotels

New York Hilton Midtown, 1335 Avenue of the Americas at Sixth Avenue

Sheraton New York Times Square, 811 7th Avenue

Rates: **$149** a night for a single room and **$169** a night for a double.

Making History Matter

The Past, Present, and Future of the NHC

Dane Kennedy and Amanda Moniz

We as historians know that a knowledge of history matters. All of us can cite instances, both in our personal lives and in the public arena, when an ignorance of the past or its willful neglect has caused unhappy if not disastrous consequences. An understanding of history and appreciation of the insights it offers would seem especially helpful in policy debates and the public arena more generally. Yet historians rarely have much of an opportunity to provide their professional expertise in these contexts. This has been one of the objectives of the National History Center since its inception nearly a decade ago. An offshoot of the American Historical Association, the center has established a visible and vigorous presence in Washington DC and across the country.

The programs sponsored by the National History Center include the Washington History Seminar, Congressional Briefings on Capitol Hill, a foreign affairs lecture series in New York City, the Reinterpreting History book series, and the International Decolonization Seminar, which is entering its ninth and penultimate year. The center has established partnerships with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Library of Congress, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Senate and House Historical Offices, Oxford University Press, and USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. Many of the events it sponsors are available by podcast, and some have been broadcast on C-SPAN.

The Washington History Seminar, held weekly during the academic year, meets at the Woodrow Wilson Center and attracts audiences of policy makers, government historians, and academic historians. One recent seminar, presented by Mark Atwood Lawrence of the University of Texas at Austin, featured a lively discussion of how politicians and government officials have used historical analogies about the Vietnam War in their policy making. Participants commented on how important it is to move beyond historical thinking by analogy, encouraging deeper historical understanding of contemporary issues.

The Congressional Briefings series provides another opportunity for historians to talk with policy makers. Last year, for example, the National History Center presented a briefing on the historical role of Congress in the formulation of immigration policy. Professors Tyler Anbinder of George Washington University, Alan Kraut of American University, and Mae Ngai of Columbia University discussed immigration from the early days of the Republic to today, with AHA Executive Director James Grossman moderating. C-SPAN 3's *American History TV* aired the briefing, bringing these historians' insights to a broader audience.

With the generous financial support of the Mellon Foundation, the center has for each of the past eight years brought 15 early-career scholars to Washington, DC for the International Decolonization Seminar. Participants from Australia, Britain, France, India, Italy, Singapore, the United States, and a number of other countries have spent the steamy month of July engaged in individual research projects and group discussions under the direction of a team of faculty led by Wm. Roger Louis. The seminar has helped establish the history of decolonization as a distinct and vibrant field of study, evidenced both by the flood of scholarship that its participants have produced and by the development of the H-Decol Listserv to support the broader exchange of ideas.

Our purpose in providing a few examples of the various programs and activities of the National History Center is threefold. The first is to remind all members of the AHA that the center exists to encourage the dissemination of historical knowledge and insights to the broader public and to establish collaborations with those institutions that share our interest in promoting history as a means of making sense of the world we inhabit. We encourage all of you to share your expertise, volunteer your efforts, and contribute your resources to the advancement of these aims.

Our second purpose is to recognize the remarkable record of achievement by the center's original leaders. The center would not exist without the vision and enterprise of Wm. Roger Louis, the founding director of the center, and James Banner, who originally proposed the center and served as its first treasurer. It also took the hard work and patience of Miriam Cunningham and Marian Barber, the center's first two administrators, to make it such an active and successful institution.

Finally, we write to introduce ourselves, the new director and assistant director of the center. Dane Kennedy, who assumes the role of director, has been involved in various aspects of the center's activities. He has been a member of the Decolonization Seminar's faculty since it was founded. He has attended many of the Washington History Seminar presentations over the years and has even given a presentation himself. And he has edited a volume for the center's Reinterpreting History series with Oxford University Press. Amanda Moniz brings broad experience in the history profession to her new position. A historian of humanitarianism in the Age of Revolution, she has taught at area universities and also pursues a public history project exploring the American past through food history. Both of us are pleased and honored to have this opportunity to oversee the operations of the center. We hope in future columns to have more to say about its current activities and future direction. You can learn more at www.nationalhistorycenter.org. We welcome your suggestions, advice, and offers of assistance.

Dane Kennedy, *the Elmer Louis Kayser Professor of History and International Affairs at the George Washington University, is the new director of the National History Center.* ***Amanda Moniz*** *is the new assistant director of the National History Center.*

The Assassin's Perspective

Teaching History with Video Games

Nicolas Trépanier

So how much of *Assassin's Creed* is, like… true?" The voice grows more hesitant as the student realizes how silly he must look asking about a video game in the middle of a serious college history course.

Many of us have had this experience: a question pops up about some historical tidbit encountered in a video game, and we instructors cannot offer much of a reply except to list all the things the game got wrong. That's assuming we know the game in question, of course.

I got tired of being stuck in such a dismissive mode, especially because I know that many students come to college interested in history precisely because they've played historically themed video games. A course about the Crusades, the American Revolution, or the Napoleonic wars might sound especially interesting for one who has *been* there. As teachers of history, doesn't that give us something to work with?

After designing and twice teaching a course about representations of history in video games, the historical inaccuracies of *Napoleon: Total War* or *Civilization IV* are as obvious to me as ever. But I also realize that, even more than I expected, using video games is a very efficient way to let undergraduates engage with historiography and leave them with a sophisticated, critical perspective that is likely to remain alive long after they graduate.

From Screen to Classroom

The Nizâris—or Assassins, as they are known in the West—were a minor Shi'i sect that became a significant political player in the Middle East around the time of the Crusades. They inspired the first of a very successful series of video games, whose later installments have explored Renaissance Italy, the Ottoman Empire, the American Revolutionary War, and, most recently, the Golden Age of Piracy in the Caribbean. But the Nizâris are also the subject of a historiographical tradition that is marked by highly negative depictions in primary sources (written by Sunni opponents and perplexed European travelers), orientalist tropes (Bernard Lewis, the nemesis of theorist Edward Said, wrote what remains the best-selling book on the subject), and postorientalist revisionism.

Looking at the first game in the series, set in 1191, some might argue that the most historians can do is to list the game's (numerous) inaccuracies, and leave it at that. As I found out teaching this course, they would be missing an exceptional opportunity to show students that history is not merely "what happened," but rather the result of research, source criticism, and debates in theoretical approaches.

Yes, "historical" video games are filled with inaccuracies. Yet more than a limitation, these inaccuracies can serve as a pretext for discussion.

The course I designed for the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College at the University of Mississippi is a seminar that requires students to play a few historically themed video games while they read academic articles related to the period or topic that is central to the game. When selecting the games my students have to play, I took care to draw from a variety of genres, because the historical component does not play the same part everywhere. Thus action-adventure games, like *Assassin's Creed*, offer a relatively static view of the time period they use as a backdrop, whereas empire-management games, like those of the *Total War* series, attempt to simulate sociopolitical and economic processes in a more dynamic fashion. Furthermore, games that are at least a few years old are preferable both because of their relatively low price (unlike many recent games that can be as expensive as—the horror!—a college textbook) and because of their compatibility with older-model laptops; the latter is a plus when the latest gaming consoles sell for around $500.

Students prefer the latest titles, of course, but they have more freedom in the second half of the semester, when an individual research project requires them to pair one or several games of their choice to a question of historiographical significance. Thus my students have written papers on topics ranging from political intrigues or church architecture in Renaissance Italy to popular ideas of nature in early-20th-century America, and from conflicting cultural perspectives on war in the time of Cortés to the motivations behind Viking raids.

Dealing with Inaccuracies

Yes, "historical" video games are filled with inaccuracies. Yet more than a limitation, these inaccuracies can serve as a pretext for discussion. For example, what factors, beyond sheer ignorance, caused these inaccuracies in the first place? How do various cultural influences, such as the conventions of cinema, shape the way in which they present history? How do they relate to ethical and commercial considerations? It is rather striking to see how far, for example, the creators of the original *Assassin's Creed* went to remove any religious contents from a game inspired by a group that an earlier generation of historians presented as Islamic terrorists. Indeed, merely raising these questions often pushed classroom discussions toward the relationship between these inaccuracies and ongoing historiographical debates—for example, by looking at how scholars today criticize older scholarship on the Nizâris and by trying to identify the historians whose works might have guided the choices of game designers.

By the end of the semester, the students had become keenly aware that the term of comparison, when evaluating the reliability of historically themed video games, is not "real,

objective history," but rather the constantly debated and sometimes contradictory outcome of historiographical research. This seminar therefore succeeded, more efficiently than most undergraduate courses, in bringing students closer to the work that historians do, not just as teachers, but also as scholarly researchers.

In the process, the students also broke down the concept of "historical inaccuracy" into a variety of subcategories, such as aesthetics (the visual appearance of buildings in Jerusalem under Saladin), passive narrative elements (scenes that provide background and pretext to the assassins' actions) and psychology (asking, for example, if the punishment/reward system built into the game mechanics corresponds to the cultural context of the medieval Levant), all the while taking into account the unique characteristics of video games as a medium, from the three-dimensional environment they let us explore to their essential mandate of creating a fun experience.

Ubisoft

Crusader-era Jerusalem, as seen in Assassin's Creed.

Benefits

The most obvious benefit of this seminar was the excitement it created among the students, who rarely get to talk video games in the classroom. But it also gave them an alternative way to engage with academic publications. A typical undergraduate history course is defined by a given body of knowledge, typically a chronological narrative that represents a scholarly consensus. Its double objective is to convey this knowledge to students while training them in a number of transferable intellectual skills along the way. When things go well, undergraduates come out of the course knowing more about the War of Spanish succession or the institution of slavery, and with improved thinking and writing abilities. In the end, however, few students truly realize the multitude of debates that have led to the creation of that body of historical knowledge.

In this seminar, the video games that students played before coming to class provided the central organizing principle. Concretely, this allowed us to devote our entire discussion time to the complexity and nuance of the historians' sources, methods, and interpretations. Indeed, the level of discussion rose organically as the weeks went by, and before long the students were referring to the scope, tone, approach, and arguments presented in the various articles, and invoking considerations about methodological challenges, competing theoretical approaches, and other ongoing debates. The engagement they had with the historiography, in short, rose to a level that I cannot recall seeing among undergraduates.

The critical perspective that students acquired in this seminar might also have more lasting potential than the average history course. Video games tend to be more popular among younger demographics, it is true, but this is a matter of generation rather than age. As such, it is likely that video games featuring the Crusades will keep entering the lives of some of them long after they've sold their textbooks on eBay. And indeed, staff members at the Honors College have told me that, while they are used to hearing students discuss video games in the hallways, participants in this seminar were the first ones they heard adopting a decidedly academic tone and debating issues such as computer modeling of social change in the conversations they had between classes.

Finally, the course brought these undergraduates to the cutting edge of scholarly research and debate, creating quite a bit of excitement and some unique opportunities. Thus the next time I offer this course, my students will read a peer-reviewed article that was originally written for this course.[1]

Beyond the Limitations

Some will be shocked by the idea of a course on video games in college, and for good reason. As a medium, video games are subject to limitations that make them incapable of conveying the full nuance and complexity of good historiography. But it is possible to recognize these limitations and still engage with the medium constructively, in a way that motivates students and complements (though, of course, should never replace) the mainstream curriculum. And as for whether *Assassin's Creed* offers a truthful portrayal of history—well, this is a question worth a few weeks of discussion.

Nicolas Trépanier is an assistant professor of history at the University of Mississippi. His first academic monograph, Foodways and Daily Life in Medieval Anatolia: A New Social History, *will be published by the University of Texas Press in fall 2014.*

Note

1. Joshua Holdenried with Nicolas Trépanier, "Dominance and the Aztec Empire: Representations in *Age of Empires II* and *Medieval II: Total War*," in Matthew Kapell and Andrew Elliott, eds., *Representations of History in Videogames* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, pp. 107–19). Incidentally, we should note the alarmingly marginal place that historians take in discussions on the relationship between history and video games. For example, only one-third of the contributors to this edited volume have their primary disciplinary affiliation in history. But as the first book to directly address the topic of representation of history in video games, it also offers a potentially important starting point for historians interested in chiming in. The editors of the book have put together a website; playingwiththepast.com.

Looking at What's Wrong to See What's Right

Teaching Slavery in Africa through Film

Paul Bjerk

For several years I have taught a class on slavery in Africa, which is far from my specialty but an important topic for American students and a necessary counterpoint to the ingrained moral tropes that dominate our historical perception of slavery. From Alex Haley's *Roots* to Steve McQueen's cinematic adaptation of Solomon Northup's memoir *12 Years a Slave*, American depictions of slavery are generally concerned with a particular experience of enslavement as the discursive antithesis to freedom. Breaking from this equation is a necessary first step toward understanding not only slavery but also social organization in precolonial Africa, which was built on patron-client networks bound by obligations of labor, protection, and exchange. Slavery encompassed many types of relationships, almost none of them conforming to the chattel slavery model of the Americas. Films focused on the African context of slavery prompt students to be open to the unfamiliar, and to think more skeptically about that most familiar of forms, the feature film.

The challenge is to help students appreciate the profoundly different moral and cosmological worlds of precolonial African societies while questioning exoticized portrayals. Watching three films critically, students confront visions of African slaving kingdoms and try to sort out accuracy from anachronism. The approach works only when students do the readings, and discussion is necessary before and after each film. With the readings, students find that all the films are unreliable portrayals of history in various ways. But the films prompt the students to read scholarly histories more attentively and visualize how historical agents might have acted in their cultural contexts. As one student put it, "by looking at what is wrong, you see what is right."

The three films are Ousmane Sembène's *Ceddo* (Senegal, 1977), Roger Gnoan M'bala's *Adanggaman* (Ivory Coast, 2000), and Werner Herzog's *Cobra Verde* (Germany, 1987). All three were filmed in Africa on historically accurate sets with African actors, depicting themes evident in course readings. *Ceddo*'s caustic portrayal of Islamic revolution is perhaps the most controversial film in the controversial career of Africa's most celebrated filmmaker. *Adanggaman* is an imaginative depiction of the crisis of conscience facing African villagers caught up in a Dahomean slave raid. *Cobra Verde* is based on anthropologist Bruce Chatwin's feverish novel *The Viceroy of Ouida*. The first half is filmed in credible Brazilian locations before shifting to Ghana's Elmina Castle, which stands in for a European trading post in Ouidah.

Amka Films Productions

A soldier in Dahomey's royal guard, depicted in Adanggaman.

The films present a chronological sequence of themes from the Atlantic disruption of the trans-Saharan trade to the proscribed trade of the 19th century. The sequence allows students to build the critical tools necessary to watch as scholars of history rather than fans of cinema. After viewing each film, the students debate its internal logic, the accuracy of its historical setting, its basis of historical interpretation, and the ethics of its cinematic presentation, especially the manipulation of viewers toward certain biases. These categories overlap, but they provide structure for an informal debate that seeks to uncover the unspoken thesis driving each film. The students then write historical critiques of the films with reference to their readings.

During the first week I have the class come up with a universal definition of slavery. This quickly proves that something we took to be cut-and-dried is actually almost impossible to pin down. Initial attempts to describe slaves in terms of property fall short, and no phrase can fully encompass the varieties of coercion that slaves confronted. Perhaps the simplest definition of a slave was the best: "someone forced to do the hard labor no one wants to do." During the semester they read excerpts from theoretical works and come around to expansive new insights into slavery as alienation, as social death, and (unexpectedly) as potential kinship.

I use the kingdom of Dahomey (in what is now Benin) as a case study that students research for a final paper. For two centuries, the slave-trading kingdom exported nearly 10,000 captives a year and is remembered for its female military corps. Students read Edna Bay's *Wives of the Leopard*, which provides continually surprising cultural insight and analysis of Dahomey's history. Most importantly, her work frees us from the garish fixation on "Amazon warriors" to understand how this militaristic kingdom was governed from a palace compound dominated by royal women. Robin Law's *Ouidah*, illuminating Dahomey's main port of export, complements Bay's cultural focus with its methodical analysis of the city's political economy and the people who ran it. Finally, James Sweet's recent *Domingos Álvares* follows a dissident Dahomean healer across the Atlantic Ocean to Brazil and thence to Portuguese inquisition dungeons. This ties together the last quarter of the class, which deals with the presence of African culture in the Americas and the memories that still percolate across the regions affected by the traumatic trade in people.

The first film I show the class is Sembène's *Ceddo*. The *ceddo* were slave soldiers in precolonial times, and the term now has pejorative connotations in modern Senegal. Sembène

reconstructs them as indigenous defenders of tradition against Islamic incursion. The screenplay is written like a stage play, and the plot is driven by conversations deeply embedded in the matrilineal politics of Wolof kingdoms uncomfortably balancing relationships between Islam, local religions, and the Atlantic economy. The characters' machinations are nearly unintelligible to the students, and this is intentional. The film puts the students off balance and opens their imaginations to unfamiliar cultural and political systems. However, their readings reveal that Sembène's radical critique of religious extremism in politics portrays Islam in an unfairly negative light.

In reality, Islam was seen as a refuge for those fleeing *ceddo* tyranny—rather than vice versa, as in the film. Sembène's anti-Islamic bias is easy to discern if the students read Adama Guèye's chapter in Sylviane Diouf's volume, but for those who don't, the imam's declaration of *jihad* troublingly affirms stereotypes that are particularly toxic in the world today. With the readings, however, the film becomes a lesson in the ease with which a filmmaker can distort historical memory, and the challenges scholars face in disputing historical fictions.

If I were to show one movie only, it would be M'bala's *Adanggaman*. With its unambiguous condemnation of Dahomey's slave-raiding origins and highly moral protagonist resisting slavery under impossible circumstances, *Adanggaman* paints a sympathetic moral world in a precolonial social setting. Compared to the other two films, its weaknesses are more benignly theoretical. Students with some background in social history can recognize the anachronistic aspirations of the hero, with his modern sense of "freedom" as unfettered autonomy and his equally modern devotion to romantic love. M'bala's strength lies in his credible portrayal of local African resistance, which echoes the essays in Diouf's volume, and his feminist subplots that humanize Dahomey's infamous brigade of female warriors. Other details, like the hero's conflict with his father and his willingness to trade places with his enslaved mother, echo theoretical readings on domestic economies and the local exchange of dependent clients that prefaced the capitalist slave trade. Students (and teachers) might also appreciate insightful commentary on the film by CUNY world history professor Fritz Umbach, which is included with the DVD.

I show Herzog's *Cobra Verde* last because its prurient gaze is potentially even more toxic than Sembène's easily disputed take on religion. Building on class debate, one student perceptively noted that the use of an immoral main character gives license to play out a slaver's fantasy of savagery, sexuality, and power. Herzog's caricatures thrill by confirming some of the oldest stereotypes deployed by European explorers and exploiters of Africa. He gets away with it only because his criminal protagonist so clearly represents the morally stunted voice of a slave trader like Robert Norris.

Without scholarly critique, it is easy to mistake Herzog's exoticism for reality because the story is loosely based on a historical Brazilian slave trader named Francisco de Souza. De Souza settled in the Eurafrican community at Ouidah and eventually aided a coup d'état in Dahomey that made him an influential officer in the court of King Gezo. After much historically apt spectacle and intrigue, we are left with an exhausted slaver whose cinematic end is far more miserable than that of the real de Souza, who was buried as a Dahomean prince. By this time in the course students have the critical tools and historical knowledge to evaluate Herzog's reckless ambition, and perhaps take note of the film's moral anchor: the antihero's knowing comment that "slavery was no misunderstanding; it was a crime."

Ceddo, *Adanggaman,* and *Cobra Verde* help students envision the cultural context of slavery in Africa, allowing them to set aside the more familiar ways we remember slavery in the American setting. With readings guiding them toward critical evaluation of the films, students can debate the dangers of historical revision in popular culture, and in the process learn something about how the slave trade actually worked in Africa.

Technical note: It is difficult to find Ceddo *with English subtitles, but an English subtitle set (.srt file) is available on various sites online and can be integrated using a process like that described in* ***http://www.d-addicts.com/forum/viewtopic_39044.htm****.*

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Disrupting Discussion Rituals in the History Classroom

Andrew M. Koke

Last spring, I noticed a disappointing change in one of my history courses' discussion segments. Although the conversations had been outstanding at first, about midway through the semester our discussions lost momentum. Fewer hands went up to answer my questions and students held fewer interactions. They were watching more and participating less, the opposite of the classroom culture I wanted. In discussing this phenomenon with other colleagues, I learned that my classrooms were not unique in this regard.

History as a discipline is premised on a necessary dialectic that allows multiple voices to state, challenge, and clarify until a new product is reached. Professional historians do this in our writing, reviewing, and conferences. This process is critical to understanding history, but my classroom discussions had lost it. With my frequent intercession in class discussions, I had initially created a positive inertia, but those intercessions came with a cost. My students possessed what Robert B. Bain calls a "ritualized and traditional deference" to authority that hamstrung their own student-led inquiries. History classrooms, Bain argues, are places where students easily slip into a ritual of unquestioning acceptance; after all, students often reason that history is simply what happened, that this professor is an expert, and therefore discussion is over before it begins.[1] In my effort to promote discussion, I had continually promoted myself as the authority in the room, a familiar ritual for my students that reinforced their reliance on me for answers.

I turned to the Decoding the Disciplines analytical model to help me think about improving my student discussions.[2] Decoding was useful because it helped identify the discipline-specific practice I wanted my students to learn. Unlike my classroom discussions, historians discuss topics a certain way: we rarely discuss the facts; rather we discuss the meaning of the facts. That is to say, rather than have a ritual of accepting authority, we have a ritual of questioning and contextualizing the authority inherent in any text.[3] As a further mark of professionalization, we contribute and analyze aloud those contributions, we give space for others to speak, we civilly ask questions and seek to clarify, we organically come to a broader and better understanding than we had initially. All of this is ideal and part of being an historian—and a far cry from what my students were doing in my classes independently.

Photo by Herry Lawford (http://www.flickr.com/photos/herry), CC-BY 2.0.

Dance of Democracy *by Mansoor Ali, Saatchi Gallery, London, 2008. The once-discarded chairs in this installation are not attached, but are part of a delicate balancing act.*

I can lead them to something resembling the ideal. I can work my classroom like a conductor asking for more from the back row; I can put in the energy and am gratified when it works. But in these circumstances, I am reinforcing that familiar ritual toward authority, and students come to depend on my constant interjections and clarifications.

The Decoding model helped me develop a new technique in my classroom discussions, one that would permit students to talk about historical meaning while also exhibiting professional habits. My students (21 freshmen) would be involved in a discussion in which I *would not talk* for 10 minutes.[4] These "unguided discussions" were bracketed by two other discussion sessions. First, students discussed a complex question for about five minutes in small groups. This initial talk helped students clarify their thoughts and gain confidence. Part two was the central 10-minute discussion. After reminding them of the need for civility, I told them to begin, and I did not speak again, or give physical cues such as nodding agreement, for the duration. Instead, I wrote furiously and filled out a rubric I designed based on four elements: who spoke (contribution), who responded to whom (interaction), who tried to speak but was unable (lack of verbal space), and who offered thoughtful observations or clarifications (content). Part three was a metadiscussion, in which I shared what I observed and we talked about the experience. I praised them for the great moments, such as bringing the conversation back to topic or insightful interactions. And I noted the poor moments, such as the tangents and missed opportunities to allow someone to speak. We closed by returning to the insightful comments and exploring them further.

My class had just read excerpts of Gary Nash, Charlotte Crabtree, and Ross Dunn's *History on Trial*, so I designed my first unguided discussion around the role of a

government in history education. The first question the class discussed was general, harking back to their high-school days: "To what extent should public education include matters typically taught by parents, such as hygiene, sexual safety, and manners?" This question produced a great deal of discussion, mostly about sex, but students spent significant time off-topic, and two students dominated the conversation. It was a good example for showing them how the assessment worked and how they would need to stay on task, make space for everyone, and fully answer the question. Despite the missteps, the dialectic I was hoping for occurred. Students started by suggesting the state should not be involved in parenting, but through dialogue they came to agree that some state oversight was necessary because parenting skills varied widely.

The second question involved our reading: "Why would a government care about the history education its citizens receive?" The resulting discussion was a roller coaster of lows and highs. There were times I wanted to interject, such as when "brainwashing" in communist countries came up, but students eventually challenged such statements on their own. There were times when I saw hands go up and no space was made for the contribution, but more than 70 percent of the class contributed to some degree. More importantly, the class raised the salient issues I had hoped for and to which I returned during the metadiscussion.

My students discussed whether it is in a nation's best interest to raise its children to understand national history in a certain way; they questioned the degree to which professional historians should inform national teaching standards; they wondered if brainwashing children was inevitable in education, and then worked on defining that term. I was pleased. My students had provided a ton of material to revisit. And they did the work: they had challenged initial reactions, clarified significant issues, raised questions, conducted themselves civilly, and elicited contributions from students who did not normally speak.

In the metadiscussion, my students reported that the unguided discussion was both interesting and stressful. Several students thought it was easier to challenge or question their peers than to engage with me. Many also agreed that it was hard to keep the discussion on task and difficult to pivot from one thread of discussion to another. One noted it was hard to concurrently keep track of the thrust of the discussion, who wanted to speak, and what needed further discussion. They all agreed the 10 minutes went very quickly and asked for more time. However, I would hesitate to recommend more time—10 minutes generated a great deal of content.

I continued to use this technique throughout the rest of the semester, and discussions changed completely. Students became more forthcoming and more willing to answer for themselves, rather than letting another talk for them. Multiple hands were raised in response to any given question, allowing student interactions without my constant feedback. Occasionally students would ask each other for clarification rather than expecting me to explain. As I continued to keep track of the discussions with the rubric, I recorded discussions with more than 90 percent participation and greater student-led dialectic work. The quality of the content, however, remained approximately the same, and it was outside the scope of my rubric to determine improvement in this area. These unguided discussions have now become a regular technique in my classrooms from the opening week, allowing me to show my expectations for class participation and encourage student-led discussion.

Disrupting rituals is not easy, and some students resist doing more work and leaving familiar and comfortable patterns within the history classroom. It is an integral part of thinking like a historian, however, to continually think critically about authority sources, whether that is a text, a comment from another student, or an instructor. When we organize student-led discussions in thoughtful ways, we can lessen reliance on the instructor, thereby encouraging students to be more active and thoughtful in classroom discussion.

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Decoding History

Since 2005 the History Learning Project (HLP) has been using the Decoding the Disciplines approach to improve learning in college history courses. With support from Indiana University and the Teagle and Spencer Foundations, the HLP team—led by Arlene Diaz, Joan Middendorf, David Pace, and Leah Shopkow—has conducted extensive interviews with historians to make explicit the basic mental operations that students must master to succeed in the discipline. This group, assisted by colleagues in the Indiana University History Department, has developed strategies for effectively sharing these operations with students and for overcoming emotional bottlenecks to learning history, and is in the final stages of completing a monograph on its work. More about the HLP may be found at www.iub.edu/~hlp.

Notes

1. Robert B. Bain, "Rounding Up Unusual Suspects: Facing the Authority Hidden in the History Classroom," *Teachers College Record* 108 (2006): 2080–114.

2. Arlene Diaz, Joan Middendorf, David Pace, and Leah Shopkow of Indiana University have published widely on the Decoding model. For a bibliography, see www.decodingthedisciplines.org.

3. See Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Crafting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001).

4. Silence in pedagogy has been discussed elsewhere; for example: Erin E. Templeton's "Silence Is Golden…," in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 27, 2010), available online at chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/silence-is-golden/22936. I added to this technique feedback and metadiscussion to train young historians.

Improving Wikipedia

Notes from an Informed Skeptic

Stephen W. Campbell

As an American historian who studies the political economy of the antebellum period, I have always been fascinated by the panic of 1837—a financial cataclysm that is, according to one recent book, deserving of the term "America's First Great Depression." During the 2012–13 winter break, I typed "Panic of 1837" in the Wikipedia search field and found a disjointed entry listing only a few secondary sources. This was vexing, to put it mildly. The editors of Wikipedia had flagged the entry for biased or incomplete information and solicited a "specialist" in US history for improvements.

I took it upon myself to improve the entry, and in the process I discovered important details behind Wikipedia's Neutral Point of View (NPOV) policy, the ideologically charged subcultures that often tamper with these entries, and a potential explanation for why I was able to rehabilitate the entry successfully. As recently as two years ago, I was a strident Wikipedia critic, having become frustrated by too many Wikipedia-derived answers on student exams. But as I'll show further, I have grown more optimistic about Wikipedia's mission and believe that it embodies many of the values that academics hold dear.

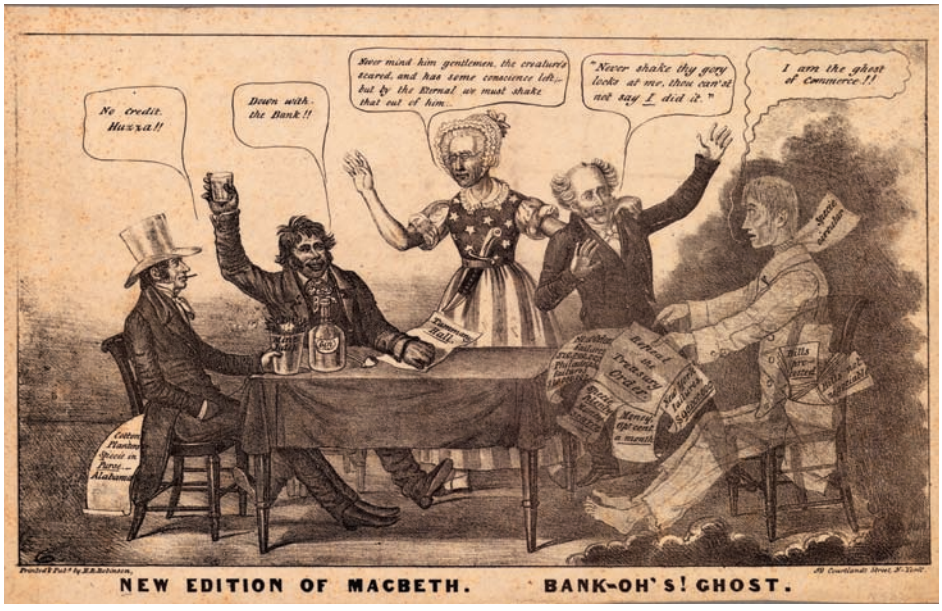
Among scholars there is a diverse spectrum of thought on Wikipedia's utility. Former AHA President William Cronon saw mostly positives in encouraging historians to contribute more to Wikipedia, while Timothy Messer-Kruse's ordeal underscores the pitfalls of a website that does not distinguish between expert opinion and that of the layperson and whose policy of verifiability precludes content based solely on inaccessible primary sources—making him a vocal Wikipedia critic.[1] My position falls somewhere in between.

As I examined Wikipedia's Panic of 1837 entry more closely, I noticed that practically all of the authors cited in the reference section were hard-line libertarians. The lone "external reference" was an informally written, selectively sourced paper written by an obscure historian who did not list his credentials and which was delivered at a conference hosted by the Ludwig Von Mises Institute (LVMI), an Alabama-based think tank unaffiliated with any university or independent process of peer review.

Named after the Austrian School economist, Ludwig Von Mises (1881–1973), the organization sponsors research fellows who tout laissez-faire economics and the business-cycle theories of Friedrich Hayek. Various Von Mises fellows have eviscerated Abraham Lincoln, championed the gold standard, and romanticized the Old South while glossing over slavery. The group categorically rejects, according to its website, all forms of state regulation as dangerous to "the science of liberty." This seemed simplistic. Most historians recognize that "liberty," in fact, has multiple meanings. Access to health insurance, environmental protection, and civil rights all provide "liberty" but rely on state involvement.

I spent several days of my winter break adding content and references to the site, and the editors of Wikipedia, presumably having approved my alterations, took down the flag that referred to bias and incomplete information. As to why this experience proved successful, the answer may lie in Wikipedia's policy on neutral point of view (NPOV): contributors should strive to "not give a false impression of parity, or give undue weight to a particular view."[2] However accomplished Hayek was as an economist, the Von Mises interpretation was still in the minority.

The manner in which I edited may have also explained why I did not find myself immersed in a time-consuming editorial war. I more than doubled the number of monographs and peer-reviewed journal articles in the reference section and deleted very little of the preexisting text even if I deemed it suspect. Instead, I restructured the prose to make it more readable. This



Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society

A popular political cartoon, circa 1837, blames Andrew Jackson's hard-money policies for causing the panic. "The Ghost of Commerce," or "Bank-oh"—a witty allusion to the Shakespearean character—confronts a fear-stricken and defensive Martin Van Buren, depicted here as "Lady MacBeth." An archetypal Irish Democrat from Tammany Hall and southern planter (far left) applaud.

formula may not always work, but historians should try as much as possible to write in a descriptive manner on Wikipedia, not an analytical one, though admittedly this is counterintuitive to much of our training and the lines between these categories are not discrete.

Wikipedia skeptics make many valid points. There is no editor-in-chief who makes a final call on content. Collective wisdom may reinforce certain innate biases or prove erroneous over time. This was the problem that Messer-Kruse rightfully exposed in his deep explorations into the Haymarket Square bombing—even when an expert contributor, like Messer-Kruse, crafts a sound argument based on solid evidence, Wikipedia's volunteer editors still might stonewall or downplay the new "minority" viewpoint. Then there is the potential for the very existence of Wikipedia to devalue the artistry and labor of teaching and publishing. A few years ago, I wrote an entry for an encyclopedia project on American slavery with a well-known reference publisher. The editor informed me, after I had completed the piece, that the project would be discontinued indefinitely, in part because of competition from Wikipedia.

Perhaps no other issue has proved more controversial than Wikipedia's foundational pillar of neutrality. Skeptics wonder if this goal is even possible or desirable.[3] In describing its policy, which dovetails with the interlocking emphases on "verifiability" and "no original research," Wikipedia states that it aims to *describe* debates, but not *engage* in them. Here is where historians balk. The moment we select a research topic and array certain facts together in a particular order, we have unwittingly engaged in a debate. In addition, facts themselves are never truly neutral since they are always understood within a larger ideological context.[4]

What is most surprising among Wikipedia's policies, however, is how the site takes a sophisticated approach to many of these philosophical issues. Wikipedia editors emphasize that *neutrality* is not the same as *objectivity*. The site eschews pseudoscience, avoids false equivalency and upholds the standards of peer review, and in assessing the validity of competing arguments, it considers the argument's prevalence in scholarly sources, not among the general public. Wikipedia's policy even recognizes that we cannot take neutrality to its fullest possible extent because attempts to eliminate bias completely may sacrifice meaning.[5] These are all standards that academics should applaud. Wikipedia's editors eventually responded positively to Messer-Kruse's complaints, and while it may never adequately incorporate the latest, cutting-edge research known among scholarly circles, the beauty of the site is that it contains the tools for its own improvement.

With the recognition that some of these issues will never go away entirely, I call on historians to dedicate their precious few hours of spare time to improving Wikipedia; as an incentive, I call on administrators to integrate Wikipedia contributions into the publication requirements for tenure. Recently minted PhDs currently face an existential job crisis with the vaunted goal of obtaining a full-time, tenured professorship proving more and more elusive. And here might be a way to enhance one's CV in preparation for the next job interview. The specifics may require fine-tuning. Perhaps historians could identify themselves publicly on Wikipedia, save their contributions, and be credited if Wikipedia maintains their corrections. Publishing openly might reduce trolling since anonymity often shields Internet users from the repercussions of nasty comments. Wikipedia entries should be a supplement, not a replacement, to traditional monographs and articles, and tenure committees might consider a certain ratio of digital articles to traditional ones—maybe four or five successful Wikipedia entries for every traditional journal article. One of the long-standing criticisms of monographs is that they suit only a narrow, specialized audience, gathering dust on quiet library shelves. Perhaps Wikipedia is the ideal venue for broadcasting our own research expertise to a larger public, which, theoretically, should improve public discourse and historical thinking. Many in the hard sciences already take electronic publications into account, and as others have suggested, we risk being marginalized as a discipline if we do not join in.[6]

At the time of this writing, approximately a third of the text and half of the citations on the Panic of 1837 entry are mine. I had to shelve this valuable project because the new semester was starting, which was unfortunate because the entry could still use tinkering, but at least I had provided some scaffolding for other experts. The site has 58 "page watchers," and the "view history" section shows many deletions that have been reinserted—perhaps an indication of the persistent, incorrigible nature of Wikipedia partisans. Students, economic history enthusiasts, and the general public, however, will hopefully obtain better historical information as Wikipedia continues to improve.

Stephen W. Campbell is a lecturer at Pasadena City College. His doctoral dissertation, completed in 2013 at UC Santa Barbara, analyzes the intersection of newspapers, financial institutions, and state-building in the antebellum era.

Notes

1. William Cronon, "Scholarly Authority in a Wikified World," *Perspectives on History*, February 2012, accessed April 23, 2013, http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2012/1202/Scholarly-Authority-in-a-Wikified-World.cfm. *On The Media*, "The Professor Versus Wikipedia," March 9, 2012, accessed February 27, 2014, http://www.onthemedia.org/story/191440-professor-versus-wikipedia/transcript/.

2. Wikipedia: Neutral Point of View, accessed December 26, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Neutral_point_of_view.

3. Jeremy Brown and Benedicte Melanie Olsen, "Using Wikipedia in the Undergraduate Classroom to Learn How to Write about Recent History," *Perspectives on History* 50, April 2012, accessed April 23, 2013, http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2012/1204/Teaching-Tiananmen.cfm.

4. Martha Nichols and Lorraine Berry, "What Should We Do About Wikipedia?" *Talking on Writing*, May 20, 2013, accessed December 27, 2013, http://talkingwriting.com/what-should-we-do-about-wikipedia.

5. Wikipedia: Neutral Point of View.

6. Lori Byrd Phillips and Dominic McDevitt-Parks, "Historians in Wikipedia: Building an Open, Collaborative History," *Perspectives on History*, December 2012, accessed April 26, 2013, http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2012/1212/Historians-in-Wikipedia.cfm.

What I Learned at AHA 2014

A Mentor's Perspective

Lauren Apter Bairnsfather

I was an official participant in two organized activities at the annual meeting in January: Interviewing in the Job Market in the Twenty-First Century, and the Career Fair, a new addition to the annual meeting program. These two events marked a shift in my experience of the annual meeting. In 2013, I was part of a panel about jobs in academic administration that followed a fairly traditional format; in 2014, I was in the trenches as a participant in a workshop, a mock interviewer, and a Career Fair mentor.

Interviewing in the Job Market in the Twenty-First Century offered PhD candidates an opportunity to converse with historians in a variety of jobs, including faculty members at tier-one research institutions, small liberal arts colleges, and community colleges; administrators in museums and archives; and researchers in think tanks. I was the lone representative of alternative academic careers in universities. We met in a large, open room, with at least 15 tables, and with one to three interviewers per table. The room was packed! At the start of the event, interviewees filled the seats at the tables for academic jobs. Midway through the session, participants were invited to change tables. Only three people total came to my table, although there were crowds at the tables with museum and archives professionals.

Toward the end of the session, interviewers were invited to share advice with the room. Overwhelmingly, this advice related to interviewing for faculty jobs. As such, it was off-topic for most other kinds of jobs. A faculty interview involves a multiday visit to campus, a job talk, perhaps a teaching demonstration, and discussion of the applicant's current and future research. An interview for a position like mine in university administration, outside of the professoriate, involves none of these things. More likely it involves one or more interviews with representatives from the human resources office and your potential supervisor.

When it was my turn to share advice, I urged job seekers to remember that they are also interviewing prospective employers and to think about fit. "During an interview," I said, "ask yourself: Do I want to live in this house?" The silence in the room spoke volumes. The unspoken message was that in the competitive academic job market, you don't have the luxury of asking such questions. While I understood that, it was clear that I had missed an opportunity to speak honestly about choosing to seek nonfaculty work, one advantage of which is that you can prioritize location, work situation, and lifestyle. The feeling of either one career path or the other—faculty or nonfaculty—was strong in the room during the interview workshop. Based on the minimal interest I saw for my type of work, I planned to take reading material with me to the Career Fair, expecting a quiet four hours.

The Career Fair exhibited the diversity of nonfaculty work and gave AHA meeting attendees an opportunity to explore their options, without reservations. Mentors like myself set up along four rows of tables. While the interview workshop had featured historians in various lines of work, the Career Fair featured organizations, institutions, and companies that employ historians. And I was in for a surprise—I had a steady stream of visitors to my table during every moment of the fair.

I spoke with early-stage graduate students, PhD candidates under pressure to find a first job, assistant professors dissatisfied with the experience—or facing tenure denial. Some were hoping to expand their career options; others were desperate to escape from an unhappy situation. While conversing with the many visitors to my table, certain questions figured prominently:

How do I find job listings for that kind of job?

There is no comprehensive clearinghouse for careers in academic administration. Start by picking a geographical area, and look at websites of colleges and universities there. Get in touch with your mentors and build your professional network through informational interviews and social media. VersatilePhD.com is a fertile online community, with meet-up groups forming in many cities, and it is free to AHA members.

How do I make a compelling application for a nonfaculty job?

Apply for a job only if you can imagine yourself in it. It is difficult to write a compelling cover letter when you have not convinced yourself that the job is a fit for you. Use your skills in examining documents to read the position description. Does the employer need someone to manage projects? Or perhaps a person who can synthesize large amounts of information and communicate findings to a broad audience? It is more than likely that you can do all these things and many more. Use keywords from position descriptions in your cover letter and resume. Unless your research is directly related to the job, don't write about it in a cover letter, though of course, if it is relevant, use your research to connect yourself to the job opportunity.

How much should I talk about my research in an interview?

Remember that staff members, not faculty, will be interviewing you, and the most important thing is to demonstrate your ability to do the job. Do your research about the people who will be interviewing you. Be curious, humble, and respectful. Be careful not to give the impression that the job is your second choice or a plan B. That is a good way to ensure that you will not get an offer.

Can I work in academic administration and remain active in research and teaching?

When you are offered a position in academic administration, before you accept, negotiate to teach a course, if this is

important to you. Yes, you can remain active in research—you will do this during your free evenings and weekends. While I have not revised my dissertation for publication, many of the historians I have met through my involvement with the AHA work in university administration and also publish scholarly work.

If I don't have time to do my own research, will I miss it?

I discovered quickly in my first post-PhD job that I am interested in whatever topic I am researching. But yes, there are things that I miss about scholarly research on topics of my choosing. Yet taking a job outside of the professoriate does not mean giving up life as a scholar. We can all be grateful to the AHA for embracing various career paths and setting a tone of inclusivity.

Photo by Marc Monaghan

Mentors greet visitors at the AHA's first Career Fair, held during the annual meeting in Washington, DC.

Could you do your job without having a doctorate?

This question preoccupied many of the visitors to my table. The preferred qualifications for my job included a PhD in a liberal arts field, but this is not true of all jobs in academic administration. I use my doctorate at work when I design research projects. It also helps in my communication with faculty members. It is important to bear in mind that many accomplished staff members do not have advanced degrees, and they likely know more than you about how the university works. Jobs in academic administration are about teamwork. You will work closely with your colleagues. From my perspective, this is a major perk of the job.

The conversations I had at the Career Fair exemplify the professional and personal struggles within our discipline. Perhaps my table at the interview workshop was too public a space for young scholars to reveal an interest in nonfaculty jobs. My experience at the fair demonstrated the need to have outlets for these conversations, free from judgment.

Lauren Apter Bairnsfather (@DrLaurenA) earned her PhD in history from the University of Texas at Austin and now is an institutional research analyst for the university.

Tweet your comments and observations to @DrLaurenA, or join the conversation at the Career Diversity for Historians group (bit.ly/1gfdxYS) on AHA Communities.

What I Do

Historians Talk about Their Work

For the past nine months we have been talking to historians who work outside the academy and posting the videos on the AHA's YouTube channel. Our most recent installment, a conversation with Rachel Reinhard, brings the number of videos to six, and presents a good opportunity to revisit this project. The videos can be found at ***www.historians.org/perspectives/what-i-do****.*

Carol Geary Schneider, president, Association of American Colleges & Universities

What Do You Do?

Lincoln Bramwell, chief historian, National Park Service: [It's] like being a department chair, trying to explain to leaders and showing [them] there is a value to this. There is a value to history.

LuAnn Jones, historian, Park Service Program, National Park Service: In the past three years I have organized three week-long oral history trainings that I have held in different parts of the country for people who are interested in [getting] better at the planning and implementation of oral history projects. A lot of what I do too is working with interdisciplinary teams and really bringing the perspective and skills of historical thinking to the table.

John Lawrence, former staff member, US House of Representatives: I worked on Capitol Hill for 38 years; the last eight I was chief of staff for Speaker and House [of Representatives Democratic] Leader Nancy Pelosi.

Carol Geary Schneider, president, Association of American Colleges & Universities: A lot of our work has to do with public positioning and advocacy and articulation of what a liberal education is about, why the humanities and history are essential to it.

Stephen Aron, chair, Institute for the Study of the American West: What we wanted to do was to really think about a research center that would be entwined with the work of a museum and that would bridge the divide that had grown up between the academy and the world and public history, but even more between the universities, and the research that goes on there, and museums.

Rachel B. Reinhard, director, UC Berkeley History-Social Science Project: Our mission is to serve as a bridge between the university and K–12 classrooms and to support the professional development of K–12 instruction.

On Being a Historian Outside the Academy

Bramwell: It's more of a business model, where you are constantly connecting and trying

What I Do:

A Conversation with Rachel Reinhard

Rachel Reinhard talks to What I Do about her role as the director of the UC Berkeley History-Social Science Project, which serves, she says, "as a bridge between the university and K–12 classrooms, and to support the professional development of K–12 instruction."

Reinhard was an elementary school teacher before she went to UC Berkeley to get her PhD in history. Hired by the History-Social Science Project under a Teaching American History grant to return to K–12 classrooms and, she adds, "really informed [my work] when I became a professor myself. I was working with students who wanted to be history teachers, and I used a lot of what I learned from the History-Social Science Project."

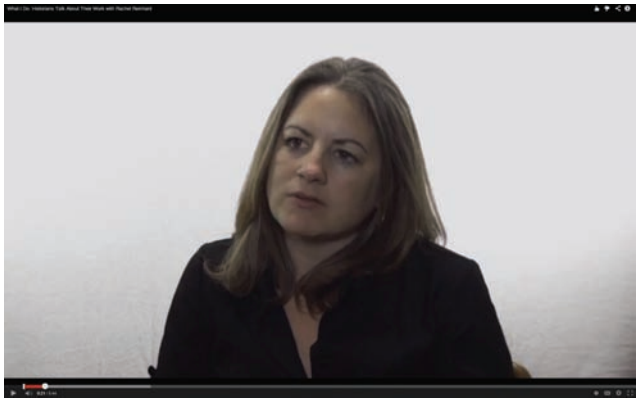
Reinhard, after several years as a professor, is located at Berkeley, and often finds herself in the role of a mentor to PhD students. She calls this an "unanticipated joy," while noting that "when you're getting a PhD, particularly at an R-1 institution, you don't have a sense of what's possible outside of what is being modeled for you."

Watch Rachel Reinhard's video at www.historians.org/perspectives/what-i-do.

to work on things…. It's unpredictable at times.

Jones: I feel in many ways that I have transferred how I thought of myself in terms of teaching research and service as an academic into this particular arena.

Lawrence: As historians we know it's not always… yes-no, true-false. You know, there's a lot of gray. And law and statutes don't do well with gray. They need to know [that] this is allowed/this isn't allowed. So at some point you've got to make that pivot.



Rachel B. Reinhard, director, UC Berkeley History-Social Science Project

Schneider: Historians are trained to think about: What is the interplay of competing interests? . . . Where can we find commonalities? The same way that you look for some organizing themes when you're doing historical analysis, I'm looking for organizing themes to move change forward.

Aron: I hope that in the next generation of students the divide will be less meaningful, that all historians in some ways will learn to be more public in what they do and how they do it and appreciate the audience we reach and the necessity of learning to communicate with a broader public.

Reinhard: I worked with the History-Social Science Project in grad school; I was struck by how good the work was and how supported the teachers felt. The teachers who are involved with the project felt really elevated and respected and strengthened in their instruction.

Advice for Graduate Students

Bramwell: If you're interested in any aspect of history and think about doing something outside of academia with it—get involved with that activity or organization or subfield or whatever it may be. Just get involved.

Jones: I used to tell my graduate students I thought it was really important for them to cross-train like we cross-train when we exercise…. And getting some public history training, an internship, a summer job, or something like that, even if it's just something small, shows employers that you are interested in a variety of ways of doing history.

Aron: When I started, I really knew little. I had not been trained in museum studies. I had no background in material culture. Like most historians, I tended to view images or material objects as things you might include as illustrative afterthoughts…. Really learn how to use material culture; use the interpretation of visual imagery not just as a slapped-on afterthought, but really make it central to the kind of interpretive work we do.

The quotations above have been lightly edited for clarity.

On "Why Caribbean History Matters"

To the Editor:

My only critique of Lillian Guerra's article (*Perspectives*, March 2014) is that it did not go far enough in underscoring the historical importance of the region. For anyone teaching or trying to understand world history, the study of the Caribbean is essential. There really was no more important part of the globe in the early-modern world economy than the Caribbean. In 1763, for example, England considered ceding its control over Canada to France in exchange for keeping just one island, Guadeloupe. That is how important sugar and slavery were to the world economy at that time. One could also add the geopolitical and economic significance of the Caribbean as one of the most significant sea-lanes since 1500. It was through its ports and waters that New World gold and silver traveled to Spain or attracted pirates from Spain's rivals at the time. With Atlantic history emerging as one of the most compelling fields of historical study in the last several decades, it is amazing that one still needs to ask the question: why does Caribbean history matter? But ask it, we must do.

Thomas August, PhD
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Where Does Peer Review Fit in a Digital Age?

To the Editor:

In the March issue of the *Atlantic*, Megan Garber wrote about a scientific discovery that raised eyebrows because it was shared via social media before undergoing the peer-review process. This is big—and not only in the scientific realm. The idea of bypassing peer review to share ideas with a broad audience poses a question historians must also consider: Does peer review make sense in a digital age?

Not everything is meant for the general public. A good majority of scholarly writing is, and should be, aimed at professionals in the field for the obvious reason of adding to the conversation. But what if we want to bring that conversation to a larger audience and expand our reach? The Internet has increased the demand for instant gratification and real-time information. Taking into consideration the length of time it takes to publish, the reach of publication, and the innovations in online (free) publishing, we must assess the relevance of peer review in a digital age.

We already know that the digital age has made way for new avenues for the distribution of information and that anyone with a Wi-Fi connection can "publish" anytime they please. Historians and other humanities professionals haven't been left out in the cold on this trend. The truth is, we can publish anything we want, anytime we want, and all we have to do is log on to Twitter or our personal blogs to do so.

As students we learned the value of peer-reviewed material, and as working historians and educators we continue to inculcate the importance of scholarly standards. Unfortunately, while social media and Internet sources can often decrease the retention of material, since information that is easily found is also easily forgotten, these sources tend to be the preference of broad audiences due to their engaging tone. According to a report by the Yale University Library, web sources typically receive up to millions of hits, whereas library databases containing refereed publications are usually hit in the dozens and occasionally into the thousands. Peer-reviewed source materials are not necessary to understand how things work or why something happened. All a person has to do is pull out their smartphones and the world is at their fingertips.

Clearly, the danger in this type of quick knowledge consumption is that if the information general readers are looking at isn't coming from scholars, it's likely coming from someone without the credentials to be discussing it in the first place. This brings me back to my initial question regarding the relevancy of peer review in a digital world.

On one hand, the idea of publishing scholarly information without following the traditions of our colleagues and predecessors seems counterintuitive. Why would we publish something that hasn't been held up to certain standards set forth by experts in our field? On the other hand, the idea of waiting months to find out if your paper will be published in a journal that will likely only reach a small audience seems preposterous, because the general public and our students aren't going to shell out money for subscriptions to niche publications. In fact, the broad audiences who are missing out on so many incredible theories, ideas, and findings by our historical community are more likely to use sources like Twitter, Facebook, and other social media outlets to find the bits of information they need before they move on to something else more engaging. We have a short attention span, thanks to Google.

I cannot say the peer-review structure must be abolished, as the system has been an integral part of historical research and will likely continue to be, but I would argue that the role it plays needs to be rethought and reformed to match trends in the digital age. It's difficult to say whether this situation is good or bad, but historians are now left with the task of deciphering our place in the digital world. Does eschewing tradition in favor of a wider reach also mean sacrificing quality of information? In other words, how do we bridge the gap between niche and mainstream in order to bring our findings to the masses while still maintaining the prestige of academic standards set forth and carried out by our predecessors and colleagues?

Caitlin Luetger
College of DuPage

On "Teaching Middle Eastern History"

To the Editor:

In response to my statement "the Christians of Anatolia did not decline from well over 90 percent of the population before Turkish conquest to only about 20 percent on the eve of WWI because they flourished" (*Perspectives on History*, December 2013), Professor Yasar needlessly writes that the "Turkish conquest of Anatolia began in 1071." As a historian whose research includes the medieval period, of course I know that the Turkish conquest of Anatolia began in the 11th century, and that the demographic decline of Anatolian Christians was the result of "processes that transpired over nearly 1,000 years," including the process of what Yasar calls "Turkish colonization." Yasar erroneously assumed that my reference to "Turkish conquest" referred only to the Ottoman conquest; in fact, it referred to the conquest of Anatolia by the various Turkish dynasties. But the argument that the Christian population in Anatolia had already started to decline under the Seljuks does not prove that it flourished under the Ottomans, as Yasar claimed. On the contrary, the fact that the proportion of Ottoman Christians continued to decline under the *millet* system of the "classical age of the Ottoman Empire," with its "institutionalized space of autonomy," is important for historians to acknowledge honestly. It proves that such autonomy, if accompanied by systematic discrimination and other inequities, does not necessarily lead to flourishing. And I certainly did not confuse "Turkish colonization of Anatolia" with "religious persecution of Christians," as Yasar implies, because I never used the expression "persecution of Christians." On the contrary, I argued that the fact that Christians in Anatolia underwent such drastic decline under Turkish rule, despite not experiencing "extreme intolerance," including systematic persecution, proves that a subordinated population need not experience "extreme intolerance" to decline rather than flourish.

Yasar argues that because "parts of the Balkans" remained "majority Christian" under Ottoman rule this renders "invalid" my straightforward point that a subordinated population that experiences substantial decrease relative to the dominating population by definition is not flourishing. But the fact that the proportion of Ottoman Christians in one region declined less than elsewhere certainly does not prove that they flourished anywhere. A number of factors contributed to different regional rates of demographic decline, but decline is still decline, and should not be presented as a case of flourishing. Put simply, if Christians under Ottoman rule had flourished as much as Yasar claimed, there would have been no significant decline in their proportion of the population. Recent study indicates that under Ottoman rule the proportion of Balkan Christians decreased overall by about 40 percent, and in Albanian-speaking areas Christians decreased from majority to minority status, in a decline almost as great as that experienced by Christians in Anatolia, where Turkish conquest began many centuries earlier.

Yasar labels Anatolian Christian decline under Ottoman rule "minor," but he highlights, as an example of Ottoman Christians' "institutionalized autonomy," that in the 14th to 17th centuries "some Christian churches carried out missionary activities among Muslims." Because Ottoman rulers in this period imposed severe penalties on Muslims who converted to other religions, missions to Ottoman Muslims cannot have been meaningful, and, in fact, very few converted to Christianity. Compared to the substantial decrease of the proportion of Christians in the empire, Christians' proselytizing Ottoman Muslims truly was a minor phenomenon. If, however, Yasar means that under Ottoman rule some Western churches proselytized Eastern Christians, this does not prove that Christians flourished under Ottoman rule, for these activities did not halt the substantial overall decline of their share of the empire's population.

Dr. Alice Whealey
Pacifica, California

On "The Social in the Machine"

To the Editor:

The March 2014 issue of *Perspectives on History* includes the article "The Social in the Machine: How Historians of Technology Look Beyond the Object," by Barbara Hahn. The article opens up whole new vistas, not just in the history of science and technology, but in the future of history as a form of engagement among historians and the world in general.

Hahn focuses on one particular "model" of constructivism that she says has "percolated" through the history of technology from its "hot spot" in social studies of science and technology. That model is "actor-network theory" (ANT). Based in the work of Bruno Latour, Michele Callon, John Law, and others, ANT has a central focus on actors and actions as process—a good match for the history of technology, I think. And the particular focus of ANT for the past 35 years has been science and technology for the simple reason, say those involved in ANT, that once you can describe the so called "higher forms" of knowledge and action in terms of the processes that make (build or construct) them, other "lower forms" must be made via similar processes.

It's my intent here to contribute a few additional comments on what Hahn has so ably written, to fill in the holes, you might say. First, technological objects are indeed objects, like the many other objects whose interactions make the world today, the world yesterday, the world tomorrow; in fact, history is one of those objects. Objects are made through interactions with other objects. So we should not get comfortable with the idea that either humans (humanism) or history (determinism) have

an existence outside of the ongoing interactions that make the world and all objects in it. For most people, including historians, this can be disconcerting. Most want more durability and certainty.

The above is important because only by beginning with it can we have a chance of glimpsing the multiple interactive processes that make all the things (people, rules, studies, tools, economies, etc.) that constitute our ways of life, including our history and the study of history, and their meanings. Technology is a process of construction, the study of technology is a process of construction, and the meanings of both are processes of construction. In this regard, whether it's technology or science, both are processes, just different ones. And I'm fairly certain the processes have crossed and will cross again. This can prompt an important form of intellectual caution: the sense that all knowledge is shaped, contingent, and in some other world could be otherwise. If someone tells us a certain arrangement "must be so," we may or may not believe what we have been told. But we will certainly cling fast to the sense that what is seemingly so "natural" could be otherwise.

ANT is not a model. Nor is it a theory, a methodology, or a philosophy. It is rather a sensitivity, or actually a group of sensitivities. Nor does ANT reject the dualities that come down to us. But ANT wants to know how the dualities are made. Macro/micro, historical/ahistorical, good/bad. They are made. And they are made by agents. And agents include all actors that make a difference, that are involved in the work, human and nonhuman. This places one of the more common dichotomies used by historians—"cause/effect"—in a new light. ANT's position on this dichotomy is that of William James: there are lots of causes and effects that can be assigned to a series of interactions, during and after these interactions. There is thus no true, correct, or genuine cause or effect, no essential cause or effect. Hahn hints at this in her article, but never quite gets there.

Finally, I agree fully with Hahn's statement "there are very few historical studies that would not benefit from close attention to the history of technology—and not merely for what investigators might learn about particular mechanisms." But please don't assume going into such work that you know what the major terms are or how they were made. History, technology, mechanism—they all will be built and rebuilt in the studies, and historians will be among the agents that build and rebuild them. But not the only agents.

Kenneth R. Zimmerman, PhD
The History Business, Inc.

Outstanding AHA Committee Appointments Finalized for 2014 Service

The March issue of *Perspectives on History* listed the Association's committee structure for 2014. The following appointments complete outstanding openings and indicate replacements of committee members who have resigned.

George Louis Beer Book Prize Committee (European international since 1895): Padraic Kenney (Indiana Univ.) replaces Gunter Bischof (Univ. of New Orleans).

Leo Gershoy Book Award Committee (17th- and 18th-century western Europe): Magda Teter (Wesleyan Univ.).

Joan Kelly Book Prize Committee (women's history and feminist theory): (1) Antoinette Burton (Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) replaces Tiffany Gill (Univ. of Delaware), and (2) Kathleen Brown (Univ. of Pennsylvania) replaces Philippa Levine (Univ. of Texas at Austin), who withdrew upon her election as vice president, Professional Division.

James Harvey Robinson Prize Committee (teaching aid): James Harris (St. Margaret's Episcopal School, San Juan Capistrano, Calif.).

Wesley-Logan Book Prize Committee (African diaspora): Melina Pappademos (Univ. of Connecticut) replaces Stephanie Shaw (Ohio State Univ.).

In addition, the Economic History Association appointed Peter B. Meyer (US Bureau of Labor Statistics) to serve as its representative on the **Fellowship in Aerospace History**.

—Sharon K. Tune

Wrong Again

Allen Mikaelian

One of the conversations we've been following as it develops in the pages of *Perspectives* involves historians' responses to inaccuracies. When an account of the past is dead wrong, what should be done? Historical errors are legion. We must regularly suffer through errors of fact or interpretation, errors resulting from faulty premises, from a hidden agenda, from a desire for a more compelling narrative, or from sheer sloppiness. The more you know, the more you notice. We notice them in movies, in video games, in students' utterances, and on Wikipedia, which has become synonymous with error in some circles.

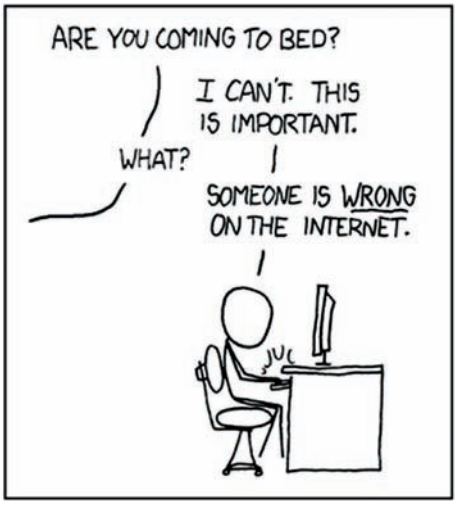
Two years ago, William Cronon caused a stir with his column for *Perspectives*, "Scholarly Authority in a Wikified World" (February 2012), in which he advised, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." Historians should not shy away from Wikipedia, he wrote, although it "sometimes harbors howling errors, even outright fraud." Despite all the problems with the encyclopedia, it points toward a world where traditional boundaries are nonexistent and the academic historian can engage with, and learn from, the amateur. Not long after (December 2012), *Perspectives* published an essay by Lori Byrd Phillips and Dominic McDevitt-Parks on Wikipedia that offered a model of *open authority*, a "combination of expertise and transparent collaboration."

While Wikipedia articles are shot through with errors, Cronon, Phillips, and McDevitt-Parks effectively asked historians to set their sights on something more important—collaboration and communication with those outside the discipline. But the mistakes remain, as does the important question of what to do with them and how this collaboration would work.

Stephen Campbell's article in this issue offers solid practical suggestions for historians who want to follow Cronon's advice. Campbell's article engages directly with some of the most problematic Wikipedia policies and puts them to use. He edited an article and, instead of deleting passages wholesale, restructured them in a way calculated to avoid a "time-consuming editorial war." He worked more as an editor than an author, a collaborator rather than an expert, even as he used his expertise and scholarship. His corrections demonstrated what is best about the discipline—not merely what was wrong about the previous editors' facts.

Also in this issue, Nicolas Trépanier writes, "I got tired of being stuck in such a dismissive mode" when it came to students asking questions about video games inspired, however loosely, by historical events—because something in them had clearly sparked their interest and imagination. Historically based video games present historians with a choice: "list the game's (numerous) inaccuracies, and leave it at that" or talk about *why* the game is wrong, and "show students that history is not merely 'what happened,' but rather the result of research, source criticism, and debates in theoretical approaches."

As one of Paul Bjerk's students put it, "By looking at what is wrong, you see what is right." The student was in Bjerk's class on slavery in Africa, and had watched films that showcased one or another way of being wrong (and a few ways of being right) about that history. Each presented nonhistorical premises applied to a historical narrative, efficiently demonstrating the importance of "the unspoken thesis driving each film." The extensive readings Bjerk assigned informed the critiques of the films, but the critiques of the films also show how to think about the scholarship.



"Duty Calls" by Randall Munroe, xkcd, xkcd.com/386.

In different ways, these historians have reconfigured historical authority, as did Andrew M. Koke after he recognized that his students had adopted deference as a classroom strategy. Koke looked to Robert Bain's ideas about hidden authority and "ritualized and traditional deference" to open up his classroom discussions, and also found help in the Decoding the Disciplines model, which has been applied to history classrooms by the History Learning Project at Indiana University. Decoding the Disciplines encourages teachers to show students specific thought processes and activities that make the discipline what it is. It aims to show not just what historians *know* but what they do and how they think.

Kenneth Pomeranz had a compelling column on a related idea last year. In "Advanced History for Beginners" he argued, "If historians merely 'complement' other disciplines by adding cautionary notes, our place in the curriculum will be small." Likewise, if the main cultural function of historians is to lambaste errors, our place in the culture will be small. The teachers and researchers in this issue have found ways of engaging with material rife with errors to bring out what is most exciting about doing history (and correct the errors along the way). But doing so has meant putting aside, momentarily, the reflexive impulse to speak from authority and stamp out errors the moment they arise in order to model the thinking and activities that will allow audiences to arrive at the right answers on their own.

Allen Mikaelian is the editor of Perspectives on History.

To locate an advertisement, go first to the regional section. Within each region, schools are listed alphabetically: first by state, then city, institution, department, and academic field. More job ads can be found at http://www.historians.org/jobads

Ad Policy Statement

Job discrimination is illegal, and open hiring on the basis of merit depends on fair practice in recruitment, thereby ensuring that all professionally qualified persons may obtain appropriate opportunities. The AHA will not accept a job listing that (1) contains wording that either directly or indirectly links sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, ideology, political affiliation, age, disability, or marital status to a specific job offer; or (2) contains wording requiring applicants to submit special materials for the sole purpose of identifying the applicant's sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, ideology, political affiliation, veteran status, age, disability, or marital status.

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The AHA retains the right to refuse or edit all discriminatory statements from copy submitted to the Association that is not consistent with these guidelines or with the principles of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The AHA accepts advertisements from academic institutions whose administrations are under censure by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), but requires that this fact be clearly stated. Refer to www.aaup.org/our-programs/academic-freedom/censure-list for more information.

The AHA recommends that all employers adhere to the following guidelines: (1) All positions for historians should be advertised in the job ads section of *Perspectives* or the AHA website. If hiring institutions intend to interview at the AHA annual meeting, they should make every effort to advertise in the *Perspectives* issues for the fall months. (2) Advertisements for positions should contain specific information regarding qualifications and clear indication as to whether a position has actually been authorized or is contingent upon budgetary or other administrative considerations. (3) Candidates should seek interviews only for those jobs for which they are qualified, and under no circumstances should they misrepresent their training or their qualifications. To do otherwise is unprofessional and wastes the time and energy of everyone concerned. (4) All applications and inquiries for a position should be acknowledged promptly and courteously (within two weeks of receipt, if possible), and each applicant should be informed as to the initial action on the application or inquiry. No final decision should be made without considering all applications received before the closing date. (5) At all stages of a search, affirmative action/equal opportunity guidelines should be respected, as well as the professional and personal integrity of candidates and interviewers. (6) As candidates are eliminated, they should be notified promptly and courteously. Some hiring institutions notify all candidates when their search is completed. Unsuccessful candidates may wish to ask how their chances might have been improved. Hiring institutions often respond helpfully to such inquiries but they are not obliged to disclose the reasoning leading to their ultimate choices.

For further details on best practices in hiring and academic employment, see the AHA's Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct, www.historians.org/standards; Guidelines for the Hiring Process, www.historians.org/hiring; and Policy on Advertisements, www.historians.org/adpolicy.

Foreign

Israel

Fulbright Israel Postdoctoral Fellowships. The **United States-Israel Educational Foundation** (USIEF), the Fulbright commission for Israel, plans to offer eight fellowships to American postdoctoral researchers in support of work to be carried out at Israeli universities during the course of the 2015–16 to 2016–17 academic years. The US Postdoctoral Fellowship Program is open to candidates in all academic disciplines. Holders of tenure-track positions are not eligible to apply. Individuals who have already begun research activities in Israel prior to the application date are not eligible. Program grants total $40,000, $20,000 per academic year. Program Fellows must be accepted as postdoctoral researchers by Israeli host institutions, which agree to provide them with a standard postdoctoral grant, which they will receive in addition to their Fulbright Fellowship. Thus, the total financial support received by Program Fellows is likely to be in the range of at least $35,000–$40,000 per year. Applications for 2015–16 to 2016–17 Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowships must be submitted to the Council for International Exchange of Scholars by August 1, 2014. The full program announcement is available at http://bit.ly/OXKLGE. Potential candidates may contact Ms. Judy Stavsky, Deputy Director, USIEF (jstavsky@fulbright.org.il; +972-3-517-2392) for advice and assistance.

New England

Massachusetts

Africa. The Department of History at **Tufts University** is hiring a part-time lecturer to teach one course on African history each semester fall 2014 and spring 2015. PhD and strong college-level teaching experience preferred. Send letter of application, CV, and sample course syllabi, and have two confidential letters of reference sent, by e-mail to jeanne.penvenne@tufts.edu or hard copy to Prof. Jeanne Marie Penvenne, History Dept., Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155. Review of applications begins immediately and will continue until the position is filled. Tufts University is an AA/EOE. We are committed to increasing the diversity of our faculty. Members of underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

China. The Department of History at **Tufts University** invites applications for a part-time lecturer position in Chinese history for AY 2014–15, to teach one course a semester: a premodern survey of China in the fall semester and a survey of modern China in the spring. Specialists in all periods are welcome to apply. PhD and strong college-level teaching experience preferred. Send letter of application, CV, and sample course syllabi, and have two confidential letters of reference sent, to Prof. Beatrice Manz, Dept. of History, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155. E-mail: beatrice.manz@tufts.edu. Review of applications will begin April 15, 2014, and will continue until the position is filled. Tufts University is an AA/EOE. We are committed to increasing the diversity of our faculty. Members of underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

Mid-Atlantic

New Jersey

Editor/Papers of Thomas Jefferson. The Papers of Thomas Jefferson in the History Department at **Princeton University** seeks an assistant or associate editor to join its staff. Under the direction of General Editor James P. McClure and in partnership with Princeton University Press, the project's team of editors is preparing the full, authoritative, printed and electronic edition of Jefferson's public and private papers through his two terms as president. Responsibilities of the position include (but are not limited to) preparation of textual and explanatory annotation, verification of transcriptions of early 19th-century manuscripts, and historical research. The ability to work both independently and as a member of a collaborative team is essential. Starting rank in the university's Professional Research Staff will be Associate Research Scholar; salary and title (Assistant Editor or Associate Editor) are dependent on qualifications. Applicants must apply online at https://jobs.princeton.edu (Req. #1400215) with a cover letter, a CV, a brief writing sample (15 pages maximum), and contact information for three references. Review of applications will begin on May 20, 2014. Essential Qualifications: PhD in history or a related field (in hand by the time of appointment); excellent research and writing skills; ability to work in a collaborative environment. Preferred Qualifications: Experience in documentary editing; research experience and knowledge of primary and secondary sources in the history of the early American republic and the Atlantic world in the early 19th century; knowledge of text encoding (XML and TEI); reading knowledge of French, Spanish, or Italian. Princeton University is an EOE. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. This position is subject to the university's background check policy.

Southeast

Virginia

Assistant/Associate Editor/George Washington. The Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington at **George Washington's Mount**

Vernon seeks applicants for the position of assistant or associate editor of the Papers of George Washington documentary editing project. The editor will work full-time at the National Library within the editorial system and under the editorial direction of the Papers of George Washington documentary editing project based at the University of Virginia. The editor initially will be responsible for transcription and annotation of documents, and other editorial responsibilities for the Presidential Series, covering the latter stages of Washington's presidency, and will later move on to editing volumes of the Revolutionary War Series. Other duties will be assigned by the Founding Director of the National Library and may include possible editorial assistance on various Mount Vernon research projects; development of library and/or education materials related to the life, legacy, and leadership of George Washington; and participation in scholarly events, and outreach programs sponsored by Mount Vernon and the National Library. Knowledge of modern standards of documentary editing, knowledge of George Washington and early American history, and experience in documentary editing, and PhD in American history or a related field preferred. Please apply by uploading cover letter, CV, and article or chapter-length writing sample at http://bit.ly/PpedFn. Three confidential letters of recommendation should be sent electronically to LibraryMail@mountvernon.org. Mount Vernon is an EOE.

Great Lakes

Indiana, Ohio

Middle East. DePauw University, Department of History. Applications invited for one-year position in Middle Eastern history beginning August 2014. Rank and salary commensurate with experience. PhD preferred; ABD considered. Commitment to undergraduate teaching in liberal arts setting essential. Teaching responsibilities include two-semester introductory Middle Eastern survey and thematic courses in areas of expertise. Prior teaching experience required. For information about department, visit http://www.depauw.edu/academics/departments-programs/history/. Submit written letter of application, CV, three letters of recommendation, transcripts, statement of teaching areas and philosophy, and research interests to Barbara Whitehead, Chair, Dept. of History, DePauw University, PO Box 37, Greencastle, IN 46135-0037. Electronic applications will be accepted at historysearch@depauw.edu. Review of applications begins immediately and continues until position is filled. DePauw is an EOE. Women and members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.

Ancient/World/Europe. Cincinnati Country Day School is seeking an Upper School history teacher to offer courses in ancient, world, and European history. Teaching experience and a master's degree in history or better are preferred. We are looking for candidates who support an interdisciplinary approach to history, the ability to integrate technology into the classroom, and a willingness to contribute to the community outside of the classroom, including coaching. Interested candidates should send a resume and cover letter to Stephanie Luebbers, Head of Upper School, at luebberss@countryday.net.

Rocky Mountains

Colorado

China/Japan. The History Department at the **University of Colorado, Colorado Springs** invites applications for a tenure-track assistant professor to teach East Asian history from the 17th to the 20th century, with a preference for political and/or intellectual history in China and/or Japan. Teaching requirements will include survey courses in Chinese and Japanese history, specialized upper-division courses, and participation in the department's graduate (MA) program. PhD in East Asian history in hand by June 15, 2014. Please visit http://www.jobsatcu.com/postings/79487.

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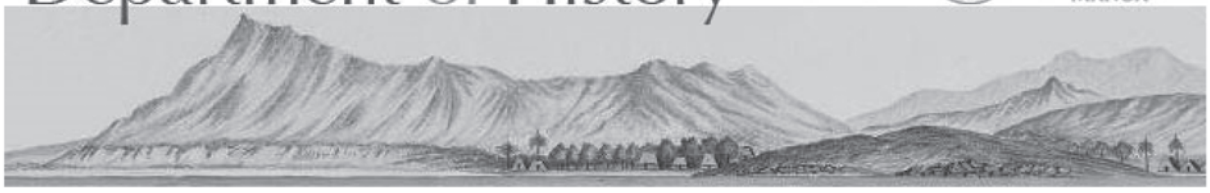

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