

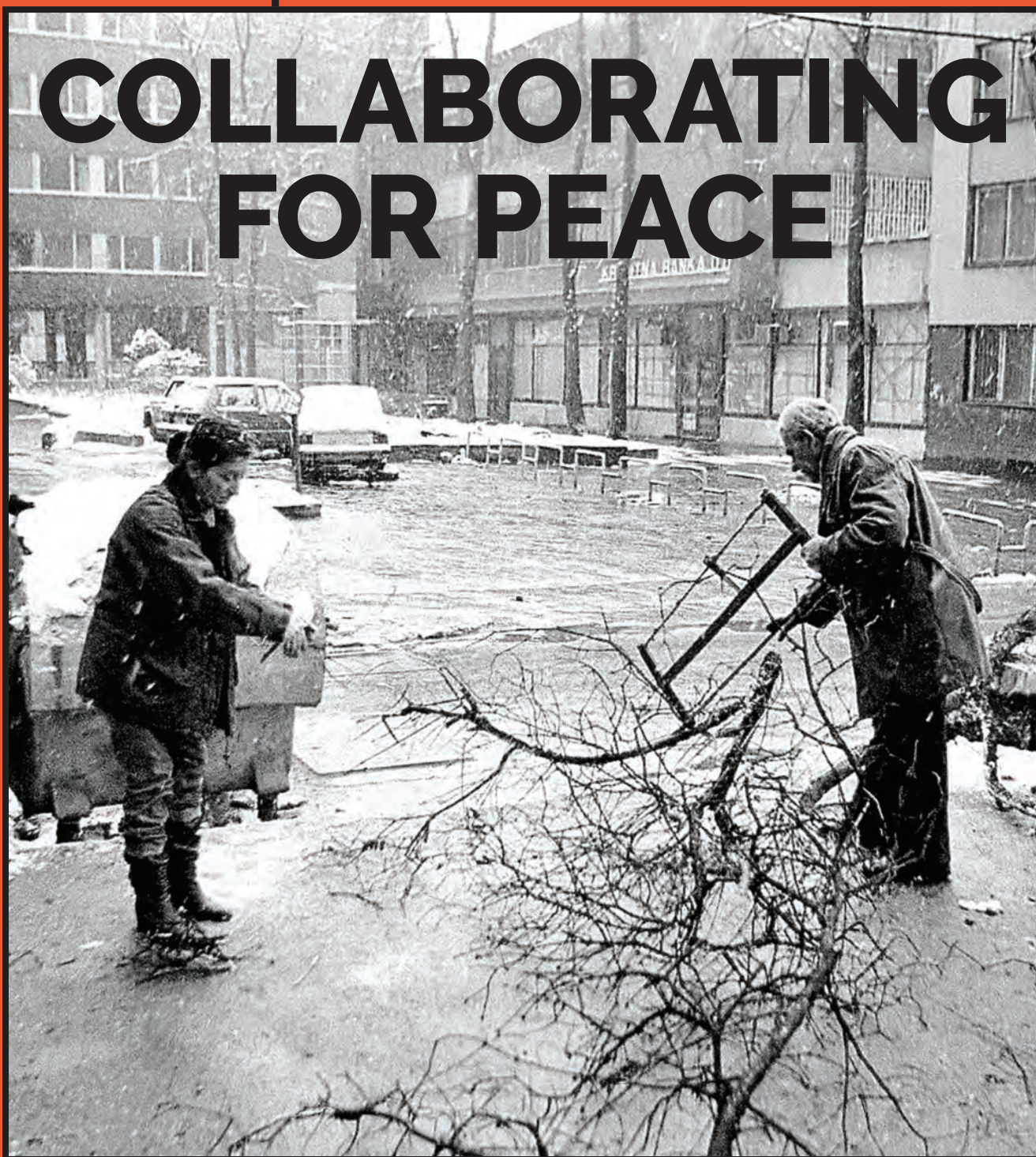
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PERSPECTIVES

ON HISTORY

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ON THE COVER

As war raged in Yugoslavia, Sarajevo residents braved the bitter winter of 1992. As their country fell apart traumatically, a group of forward-thinking, multi-ethnic historians from Yugoslavia and other nations came together in Germany to write curriculum for the high school classrooms that would emerge after the fighting ceased. They knew it would be a difficult sell, and it was. But their hopes for history teaching have borne remarkable fruit.

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ALLISON MILLER

TOWNHOUSE NOTES

Do Small Liberal Arts Colleges Have a Future?



The news is not good for many small liberal arts colleges (SLACs). I'm not talking about the Williamses of the world, or the Swarthmores, or the Amhersts—all of which have endowments of over \$2 billion. I mean tuition-driven schools like Bennett College and Hampshire College, both of which face problems with accreditation due to fiscal anemia, among other factors. Already this year, several SLACs in the Northeast have announced closures, including the College of New Rochelle, Green Mountain College, and the College of St. Joseph. In one high-profile case, Mount Ida College attempted to merge with UMass, a deal that fell apart. There's even well-publicized speculation that half of all US colleges—not just SLACs—won't survive much longer.

It's worth asking what this trend means for the student population these schools serve, as well as the faculty who commit to them. I went to Sarah Lawrence College, which is another tuition-driven private SLAC. Its endowment now stands at \$112 *million*, with a total undergraduate enrollment of about 1,400. It's (still) one of the most expensive schools in the country, with tuition plus room and board at about \$69,000. But the college is considerably more inclusive of students who don't fit its "rich kid" stereotype than I would have guessed based on my own memories of the place: about 17 percent of students receive Pell Grants, a standard proxy for class status.

At a time when anxiety about the future and student-loan debt (totaling \$1.5 trillion nationally) make the value of a liberal arts education harder to articulate, small colleges have tried emphasizing their mission and character in strategic plans and marketing to parents and students. The uniqueness of Bennett (one of two historically black colleges for women) and Hampshire (where students design their course of study in consultation with faculty), however, can't by itself fight the larger forces at work. Though its finances are more stable, Sarah Lawrence resembles Hampshire in

particular, with self-directed inquiry at the heart of its academic structure. Its small seminars require independent studies, called conference projects; each course feels like two rolled into one. For faculty, this means concentrated interaction with a relatively small group of students and a great deal of intellectual nimbleness. For students, it requires self-direction and intellectual self-confidence.

While Sarah Lawrence would have you believe that individual inquiry is a form of liberation, more often, what feels like liberation at such institutions is being part of a specific community. Sarah Lawrence students (and some faculty) tend toward the eccentric and accepting. When I was there, there was a highly visible queer population, which in the early 1990s was rare. The College of New Rochelle was one of a dwindling number of Catholic women's colleges. Bennett women, like students at other historically black colleges and universities, describe feeling "safe" within their college community, certainly a sense that's hard to maintain in today's political climate.

Can small private colleges weather the storm? Projected demographics don't favor tuition-driven regional colleges, especially in the Northeast, where the population of traditional students is expected to shrink dramatically in the near future. We have supposedly recovered from the great recession, but with wages stagnant and debt on the rise, more middle-class families are skittish about committing money to an education that's not linked to preparation for a specific career. But when colleges close, communities do, too. I send Bennett and Hampshire sincere hopes. **P**

Allison Miller (Sarah Lawrence Coll. '95) is editor of Perspectives. She tweets @Chiopticon.



TO THE EDITOR

Making a case for tenure in digital history or public history is a difficult path. Making a case for tenure in digital, public history may be the most difficult. These forms of scholarship do not lend themselves to established assessment structures, hence the AHA's 2015 Guidelines for the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship by Historians. The forms of their arguments challenge the way the field produces knowledge, which is why a set of 27 scholars developed the Digital History & Argument White Paper of 2017. Additionally, the forms of labor that make such projects possible are often collaborative and cross boundaries within and across institutions, hence the focus on co-authorship and teams. Such conditions can make committing fully to digital, public history a precarious project when it comes to tenure. It is why defaulting to producing a book in order to shore up tenure is a completely reasonable project.

To suggest that a book *and* a multi-institutional, large-scale, multi-year DH project with substantial funding from a foundation is a case for tenure in digital, public history should be deeply alarming ("Getting Tenure with Digital History: How One Scholar Made His Case," April). A book published by an academic press should be sufficient for a faculty member to receive tenure in a department wedded to traditional assessment structures. A leadership role such as a co-director in a large-scale DH project peer-reviewed through external grants and articles should be sufficient to receive tenure in a department committed to supporting new forms of scholarship. To need both is a ratcheting up of expectations and academic output that makes the bar so high that this case actually risks hurting digital historians. Who beyond those at a highly resourced R-1 would be positioned to produce a book and a large-scale, nationally recognized DH project? More importantly, why would we want this to be a reasonable expectation of scholarly output in the field?

The case presented in LaDale Winling's article is anything but a case for tenure for digital historians. It actually makes a

digital history project an addition to a book, which therefore still centers the book as the main form of scholarship in the field. Matt Delmont wrote in *Perspectives* in 2016, "I am tired of offering graduate students and untenured faculty the same advice I would have received a decade ago: 'Finish the book and get tenure before doing a digital project.'" If we were to follow Winling's case, we would have to say, "Finish the book *and* digital project and get tenure," and then focus entirely on digital projects. This would definitely be a step backward.

LAUREN TILTON
University of Richmond

LADALE WINLING RESPONDS

I am in full agreement with Professor Tilton's caution that we must not merely ratchet up expectations by adding digital scholarship to existing standards of print scholarship. There must be an incremental process of institutional change to incorporate digital publication in evaluations of tenure and promotion.

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JOHN R. MCNEILL

JARGON IN HISTORY WRITING SHUTS OUT THE PUBLIC

The Point Isn't to Sound Smart. The Point Is to Communicate.



“D iscursively imbricated ontologies . . .”
Hunh? The student who wrote this phrase is set to graduate this month. I wish him well, even if

I suspect he has no more idea what his words mean than I do—and I haven’t the vaguest. If he learned nothing else in my class, I hope he learned that it doesn’t make anyone sound smart to write strings of fancy words.

One of the things I like about history is that it can be written clearly, in language any literate person can understand. I don’t enjoy having to puzzle out meanings as if reading a foreign language I don’t know properly. It is much harder for biomedical scientists or atomic physicists to write clearly for professional publication, not because of deficiencies in their skill sets, but because their disciplines are so technical, so dependent on knowledge far outside the realm of ordinary citizens. A century ago the New Zealander and Nobel laureate physicist Ernest Rutherford allegedly claimed that “all good science can be explained to a bar[tender].” We have better ways today to refer to uninitiated audiences, and I hope we no longer condescend to bartenders, but the sentiment behind his remark remains an admirable ambition.

Most sciences fall short. Internal communication among specialists in most sciences is more efficient when it uses technical jargon. If geologists, for example, avoided referring to the Cretaceous-Paleogene boundary because few others understand the term (it’s the boundary in rock layers associated with the extinction of dinosaurs 66 million years ago), they would have to resort to lengthy workarounds.

The same is true, with a pernicious twist, in some other professions. Tax attorneys and lawyers, for example, share a common interest in devising and using obscure language that laypersons cannot understand. That way, fewer people can file their taxes without hiring specialists. Documents clotted with jargon are good for business.

For historians, the opposite is true. It is in our collective interest for everyone to read and enjoy history. Nowadays, that seems as true as it has ever been. History is one of the few disciplines that allows efficient communication among specialists in ordinary language. That is good fortune we should cherish.

I’m 64 and finished my PhD in 1981. My generation of historians is, I hope, leaving a legacy of good work. But we are also leaving a blight on the craft of history. We pioneered—or at the very least normalized—the use of relentlessly abstract and obscure prose, often in imitation of models once current in literary criticism and philosophy. I consider that practice undemocratic, unhelpful to the prospects for our discipline, and a poor example for smart but impressionable students, such as the one quoted above.

My generation of historians is, I hope, leaving a legacy of good work. But we are also leaving a blight on the craft of history.

Obscure language is undemocratic: it reaches only a few initiates and excludes the great majority of readers. It alienates audiences needlessly, which no one concerned with the standing of the humanities in our society can welcome. It sometimes makes readers feel dumb, especially young ones, because they can’t understand it. Some of them think, wrongly, that writing that way makes authors appear smart.

Over the decades, I have enjoyed cordial arguments with colleagues who do not share my faith in the value of ordinary language. One told me, for example, that it is impossible to express novel ideas without novel language. I remain unpersuaded. I think historians can easily offer

revolutionary ideas in ordinary language. An example I recall from my student days is A.J.P. Taylor's argument—wrongheaded, I thought—in *The Origins of the Second World War*, published in 1961. He made a radically revisionist argument in brisk, simple sentences. I still think that argument, which portrayed Hitler's foreign policy in the 1930s as consistent with the traditions of modern German aims, is wrong. But I also still think his prose is lucid and lean. I wish my students could write like that. I wish I could.

Another argument, which I find slightly more persuasive, is that there is no reason every historian should write accessibly as long as some do. That way, a wider public, including students who don't like to be made to feel dimwitted, will still find some enjoyable history. And at the same time, those historians who prefer to communicate in codes may do so with one another. My sympathy with this position extends only so far.

Obscure language alienates audiences needlessly, which no one concerned with the standing of the humanities in our society can welcome.

First, my sympathies for liberty require me to accept this position. I don't want anyone, even me, telling historians how they *must* write. But I have no objection to anyone telling historians how they *should* write.

Second, I think it's fine to write of "the long 19th century," even if that phrase baffles citizens who know very well that every century is the same length. That seems, to me at least, a gentle form of jargon, its meaning easily inferred from context. I think it's also fine to write in coded language in specialized journals, just as astrophysicists and neuroscientists (and tax accountants) do. But I think it is unwise to do so in general history journals, or in books or digital forums, where wider readership is a plausible possibility. Some science journals in recent years have taken to requiring that authors prepare not only an abstract but a summary in plain language. The point of the requirement is not to make science articles accessible to Rutherford's bartender, although that is an added benefit, but to other scientists with other specializations.

In this era of emphasis on STEM education, scientists have less reason than historians to worry about their audiences. My sense is—and has been for decades—that historians' claim on the public imagination, and the public purse, is tenuous. Why should society at large reward us for our pursuits when we won't cure cancer or reduce the cost of solar power? I hope the day will never come when general history journals need to require a summary in plain language as well as an abstract—because we don't enjoy the same prestige and security that some other disciplines have.

My faith in the value of ordinary language for historians is confirmed every now and then by search committee work in a multidisciplinary unit of my university. We often end up short-listing candidates from several disciplines. Economists never win these jobs. It is too hard for them to explain their work, in job letters and job talks, in terms that non-economists can understand. Political scientists sometimes win. Historians win more often, precisely because so many can so easily explain their work to so many colleagues who have no history education. That is, again, good fortune we should cherish.

Enough whinin' 'bout my generation, to misquote the Who. I draw the line somewhere between "the long 19th century" and "discursively imbricated ontologies," and lot closer to the former than to the latter. Where would you draw it, if you would draw it at all?

PS: In a recent column, I discussed the advisability of the AHA continuing to host job interviews at its annual meeting, and invited responses. As of early May, several dozen people have registered their views, which I have passed on to the Professional Division. The division will offer a recommendation to the AHA Council on this matter in the first week of June. Thanks to all those who weighed in. The responses are not, of course, a statistically valid poll. But for what it's worth, sentiment is running strongly against continuing to host interviews. **P**

John R. McNeill is president of the AHA.

JAMES GROSSMAN AND EDWARD LIEBOW

ON THE RECENT EXECUTIVE ORDER ON “FREE INQUIRY” IN HIGHER EDUCATION



President Donald Trump’s executive order of March 21 on “free inquiry, transparency, and accountability in colleges and universities” is a textbook example of a classic negotiating ploy—misdirection. While our attention is directed to dealing with a few sensational instances of campus disruptions (“free inquiry”), the executive order provisions that deserve close scrutiny relate to “transparency and accountability.” On the surface, each of these is an admirable desideratum. In this case, however, they are entry points to a pernicious agenda that subordinates learning to earning.

Section 4 of the executive order directs the secretary of education to establish reporting mechanisms as part of an expanded College Scorecard for *program-level* earnings and student loan default rates. We are all for expanding transparency in higher education, and a federal role in the provision of useful information to prospective students and other stakeholders is as appropriate as in any other area of American life. The issue is the definition of “value.” One should raise eyebrows at institutions that claim to offer students an education valuable to career pathways, but leave a substantial proportion of those students unable to repay the debt necessary to finance what little education they actually receive. But to equate earnings with value is another matter altogether, one that implies that the ministry, teaching, social work, and other forms of public service are somehow less valuable than pathways toward wealth.

The Trump administration is hardly alone in tying “accountability” to an implicit assumption that “success” means a high salary. We’ve all seen the charts and graphs depicting simplistic juxtapositions of college majors and earnings data. Incorporating this narrow definition of success into an executive order, however, vaults this amoral social ethos into public policy. The message to students and other stakeholders is bizarre at best, as it devalues the very occupations that are at once poorly compensated and yet essential to civic culture, democracy, and spiritual development.

The executive order, however, does get at least one thing right: the potential benefits of tying the student debt problem to the issue of post-graduation compensation. Institutions that don’t provide education commensurate with cost, and that aggressively market debt financing of such education, should indeed pay the price—a policy that could reduce overall student debt loads, eliminating such institutions from the system. But we can also reduce those burdens by demonstrating society’s gratitude to those who serve the public good despite relatively low compensation. There is precedent for a reasonable and prudent debt-forgiveness program. We’ve done it before; let’s do it again.

One should raise eyebrows at institutions that claim to offer students an education valuable to career pathways, but leave a substantial proportion of those students unable to repay the debt necessary to finance it.

Public service aside, it is also worth a closer look at the data. Some majors prepare students for jobs, others for careers. Training in the social sciences and humanities tend toward the latter, with earnings curves to match. As the economy has recovered from the Great Recession, unemployment rates have fallen for all college graduates, and humanities/social science majors are employed at rates comparable to their peers in other major fields of study. Humanities/social science majors find employment in a wide variety of careers, and are, as their careers progress, quite likely to be managers in their selected fields. A few years out of college, humanities and social science majors outperform majors in fields like business management and



President Trump speaks to an audience at the White House before signing an executive order for "Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities."

The White House/Flickr

accounting, for example. And over the course of a lifetime, as a recent Brookings Institution analysis shows, the top 10 percent of earners in history and philosophy beat out those in computer science.

Evaluating institutions based on short-term earnings data does have some useful functions, as many students do not have the luxury of long-term career horizons. But one size does not fit all, and many students are well advised to avoid succumbing to misleading stereotypes about "job-ready" majors.

Indeed, the societal payoffs from investing in humanities and social sciences on campus go far beyond jobs and salaries. Graduates from these fields are well prepared to continue for additional professional training in law, medicine, business, and public service. They are well prepared to reflect on the breadth and complexity of the problems we face in the 21st century, and they play a key role in developing culturally sensitive strategies in a world that is increasingly animated by cross-cultural contacts. And directly out of school, graduates go to work, improving health-care and educational systems, working toward environmental sustainability, protecting cultural

heritage, reducing global inequalities, and increasing awareness of the many forms of households and families that raise our children and take care of our elderly. Humanities/social science graduates start green businesses that enable more sustainable resource use, user-friendly design, environmental quality and sustainability, improved international balance of trade, and energy independence.

Focusing on specific knowledge rather than skills runs contrary to current employment trends in the private sector. Companies are now looking for candidates who bring to the table critical thinking, analytical ability, cultural understanding, effective communication, and an overall ability to engage with diverse audiences, markets, and collaborators. While applauding goals of transparency and accountability, we encourage scorekeepers to find better ways to tally than counting salary dollars. **P**

James Grossman is executive director of the American Historical Association. He tweets @JimGrossmanAHA. Edward Liebow is executive director of the American Anthropological Association. He tweets @Liebow4.

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COMMUNICATION REVOLUTION

ARPANET and the Development of the Internet, 50 Years Later

Where did the internet come from? If you guessed ARPANET, or the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network, you would be in agreement with most popular and journalistic accounts of how the internet was created. And, to an extent, you would be right. A packet-switching network that connected computers across the United States in the late 20th century, ARPANET, as Camille Paloque-Bergès and Valérie Schafer wrote in the introduction to a special issue of *Internet Histories* published earlier this year, is commonly “celebrated as the ancestor of the Internet.” (For the uninitiated, packet switching involves breaking up data into smaller parts that are sent over a network and then put back together at the other end.)

It was over ARPANET, in October 1969, that programmers in labs at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Stanford University

exchanged the first computer-to-computer message: “LO” (an unintentionally truncated form of L-O-G-I-N). But 50 years later, as the world gears up to commemorate the anniversary of that first message, historians of technology say there’s more to the story of the creation of the internet than the development of ARPANET. Instead, they point to networks built either elsewhere in the United States or around the world that also played key roles in the history of computer networking. ARPANET is still important, but is no longer the starting reference point in the history of the internet as it once used to be, they say.

Scholars are also veering away from “great man” narratives focusing on the biographies of inventors, often white men, that accompany the retelling of internet history. Instead, they’re calling for an expanded effort to include women and people of color as well as those who used the early network or who helped keep it functioning. This attention to diversity, scholars say, will bring forth more nuanced

perspectives on the history of the internet and illuminate aspects of its importance that go beyond the technical.

The internet is related to but distinct from the World Wide Web. A simple, technical way to define the internet is as a global network connecting computers, phones, printers, and other devices—a “network of networks” as Andrew Russell (SUNY Polytechnic

and society at Virginia Tech and author of *Inventing the Internet* (1999), one of the first histories of ARPANET and the internet.

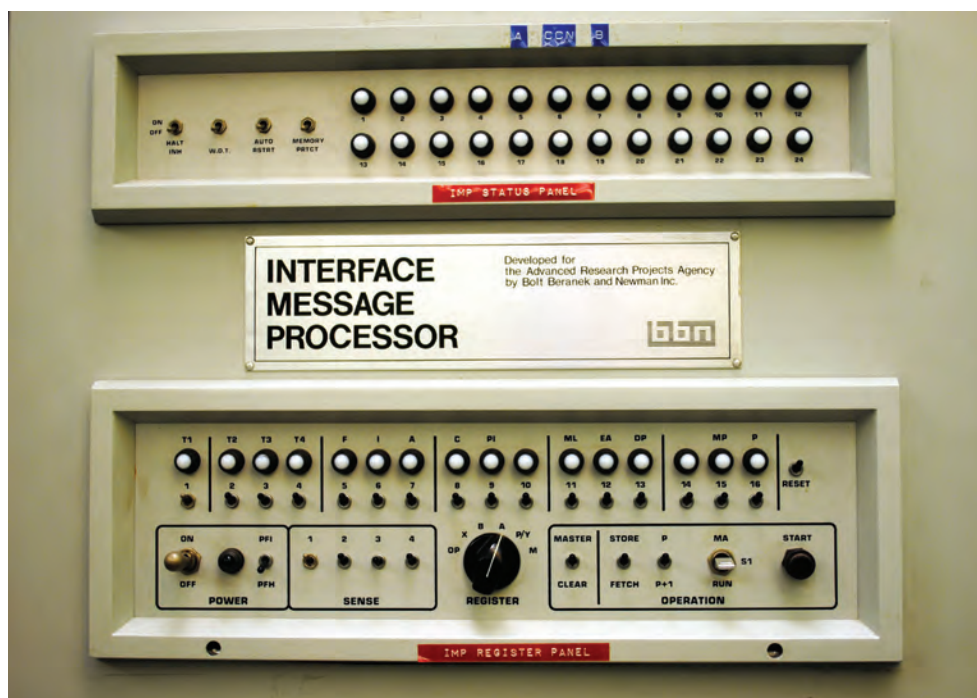
Many popular accounts of the development of the internet follow a “linear progression,” with ARPANET as the point of origin, Russell explains. This “narrow history,” he says, traces events from the creation of ARPANET in the 1960s to the

ARPANET is no longer the starting reference point in the history of the internet.

Inst.) described in an email. The World Wide Web, on the other hand, is a collection of web pages that are accessed via the internet. ARPANET was developed by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency at the Department of Defense. The network, launched in the late 1960s, was created “not for direct military use, but to connect their civilian researchers who were at different universities,” explains Janet Abbate, professor of science, technology,

delineation of the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (sets of rules for how data can be shared over the internet) to the development of the web to “commercialization in the 90s.”

But scholarly histories have moved on. Recent work, for example, has focused on the development of networks other than ARPANET. In *Cybernetic Revolutionaries: Technology and Politics in Allende’s Chile* (2011), Eden Medina



The Interface Message Processor connected UCLA to ARPANET, and relayed the first message between UCLA and Stanford.

FastLizard4/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 3.0

(Indiana Univ.) writes about the development of Project Cybersyn in Chile. The purpose of the project, Medina explained to *Perspectives*, was to help Salvador Allende’s socialist government “nationalize the most important industries of the economy.” According to Medina, the government wanted to use a computer system to gather and visualize data, and design “new communication channels” that would enable it “to make management decisions on a national scale.” The project began in 1971 and ran until 1973, concurrent with the development of ARPANET but completely independent of it.

Medina argues that examining Project Cybersyn reveals

the history of computer networking as a “global history.” “When people think about computer networks and the internet, very quickly they think of it as a US technology,” she says, “but there were these other networking efforts that were taking place at around the same time.” Scholars are also researching the development of networks in other countries, such as France and the USSR. Benjamin Peters, for example, in *How Not to Network a Nation: The Uneasy History of the Soviet Internet* (2016), documents the Soviet Union’s unsuccessful attempts to develop a nationwide computer network around the same time ARPANET was being built. Russell and Valérie Schafer

have also highlighted the significance of the Cyclades project, which sought to influence the development of computer communication in France. Although this French computer network was never directly connected to ARPANET, engineers on both projects communicated with each other frequently. The Cyclades project ended in 1979 due to financial and political concerns but had lasting effects on the type of network on which the internet is based.

Scholars have also started looking at other neglected aspects of internet history. Traditional histories of technology focus on innovators, the people who pioneer new technological systems. But

Russell, who’s also the chair of the Special Interest Group for Computers, Information, and Society (SIGCIS) in the Society for the History of Technology, thinks the idea that there should be a “multiplicity of perspectives and origin stories and sources and interpretations” when it comes to the history of technology is now “mainstream” among scholars. He observes that in the SIGCIS community, “it’s harder and harder to tell the old-fashioned, biography-driven, great man stories.” Newer scholars are more interested in researching “the connections between computing and society, what role users had in repurposing computers, phenomena like maintenance and infrastructure in different settings, and repair in different settings,” he adds.

To tell some of these stories, Russell co-founded, with Lee Vinsel (Virginia Tech), the Maintainers movement, which highlights the contributions and significance of “maintainers”—those who perform the work of maintenance, repair, and upkeep of the infrastructure that keeps society running. “Making a large technological system like the ARPANET work,” for example, explains Russell, “really depended on ARPA’s and the contractors’ ability to keep things running.” The Maintainers movement has spawned conversations, articles, workshops, conferences, and a community of scholars that, according to its blog, is

interested in asking why we “neglect both maintenance and Maintainers, the people who keep our societies going.” “We talk about the internet as this transformational innovation, but the fact is that without all of this maintenance work . . . the infrastructure would have never existed to get the internet to the point where it can be a reliable disruptive force,” says Russell.

Abbate notes that there are other aspects of the history of ARPANET and the internet that have also been “conspicuously left out.” Lynn Conway, a pioneer in computer-chip design, argues that the scientific contributions of women and people of color have been erased from the historical record because they don’t often fit the profile of people expected to be the innovators. As Paloque-Bergès and Schafer write, “ARPANET still remains largely absent” from the main scholarly “contributions to gender-conscious histories of computing and networking.” When Abbate was writing *Inventing the Internet*, for example, she kept asking herself, “Where are the women? What’s going on here?” She eventually wrote a second book, *Recoding Gender: Women’s Changing Participation in Computing* (2012), focusing on women’s involvement in computer science and programming in the second half of the 20th century.

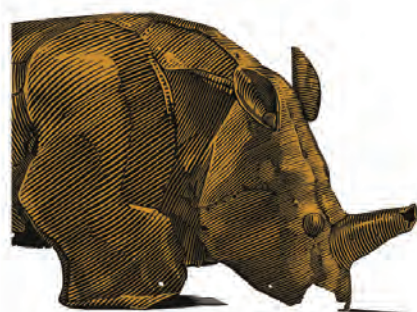
Despite this repositioning of ARPANET and the people

who developed it, scholars still emphasize its significance. Abbate describes ARPANET as the “backbone, the original place for the American Internet.” She points to the defense department’s choice to solve the problem of how to connect their researchers at different universities across the United States with “a messy, heterogeneous system, instead of something that would be simple and standardized,” as influential in shaping future funding models for research. ARPANET was influential in other ways, too. Sandra Braman (Texas A&M Univ.), in a 2010 article for *Information, Communication & Society*,

describes how in the early stages of development, computer scientists working on ARPANET, many of them graduate students, “realized that they needed to document their discussions, the information being shared, and the decisions about network design that were being made.” These requests for comments (RFCs), as they came to be known, continue to be used today in the technology and internet communities. Abbate characterizes the RFCs as “a democratizing communication mode,” promoting the idea that “everyone can contribute” and that the community of researchers is “not hierarchal.”

Fifty years on, ARPANET’s significance ultimately depends on perspective. When looked at from the standpoint of developing “hardware and the infrastructure,” says Abbate, “ARPANET seems very big in that history.” But “if you look at things like human activity [and] use,” she continues, “ARPANET is a smaller piece in a bigger history of human communication and technologically mediated communities.” **P**

Zoë Jackson is editorial assistant at the AHA.



THE GOLDEN RHINOCEROS

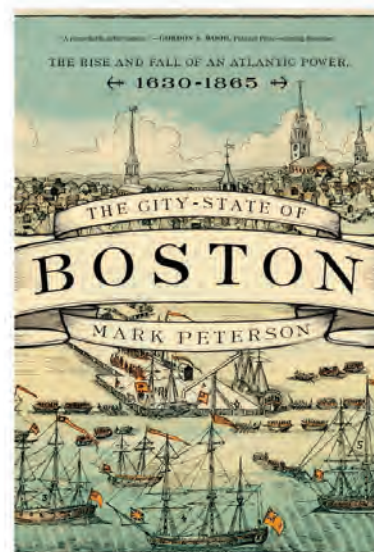
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DATA OVERLOAD

Web Archives and the Challenges of Scale

Imagine future historians studying the public discourse on autism in the early 21st century. They sift through an archive as vast as anything we know today, but they must contend with born-digital sources—blogs written by people with autism, for example, or the websites of advocacy organizations and government agencies, not to mention video, audio, and social media content, all gathered from across the web. The extent of this archive means that the traditional methods of doing historical research will no longer be relevant, at least for this project. Historians will have to use new techniques and digital tools to interrogate the archive. The scale of pertinent sources, the technical skills required to analyze them, and the need to assess what was and wasn't collected by the archivists who processed these materials in the first place will raise a host of challenges.

As the web becomes ever more integrated into our

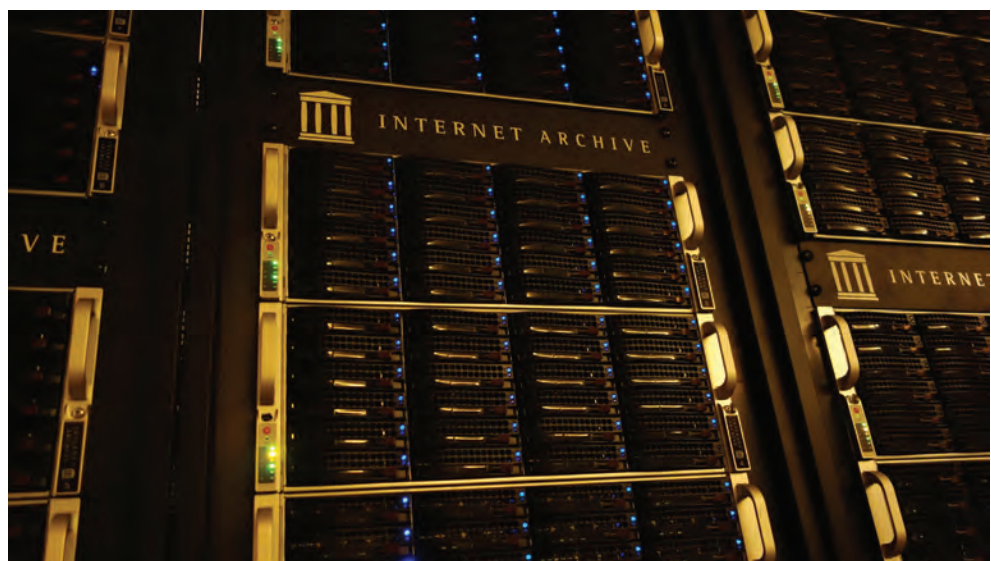
lives, numerous entities, such as the Library of Congress and the Internet Archive, have begun archiving it. But these new web archives contain so much data that historians have begun reconsidering research methods, skills, and epistemology. In fact, few historians now possess the requisite qualifications to perform professional research in web sources.

In March 2019, participants in a “datathon” held at George Washington University in Washington, DC, got

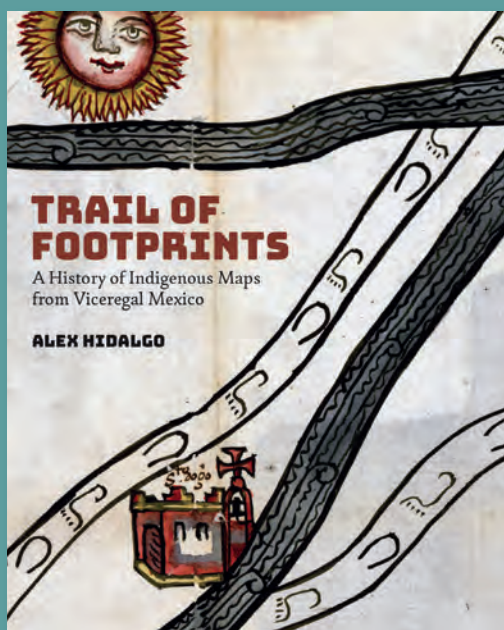
a taste of what research with born-digital web archives could look like. The event was organized by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded Archives Unleashed Project, which, according to its website, “aims to make petabytes of historical internet content accessible to scholars and others interested in researching the recent past.” The project’s goal is to lower barriers to working with large-scale web archives by creating accessible tools and a web-based interface with

which to use them. The datathon brought together librarians, archivists, computer scientists, and researchers from a variety of disciplines, including the humanities and social sciences, to explore web archives on a wide range of topics.

At datathons, people can broadly experiment with specific datasets, asking and answering questions about them. The Archives Unleashed Project has hosted datathons since 2016, to explore the possibilities that



The Internet Archive has preserved over 350 billion webpages using the PetaBox storage system. One PetaBox stores one petabyte of information.
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web archives present for research. A “big challenge for this project,” explains Ian Milligan, principal investigator of Archives Unleashed, is determining “where should the project end and the researcher take over.” In other words, how can the project ensure that it sufficiently prepares archival custodians and researchers to continue to be able do this work in the future? Through these data-thons, Archives Unleashed strives to create communities of users for the tools it’s creating and build expertise in using web archives and sources.

At the datathon in Washington, the project team provided pre-selected collections of

web sources, and participants chose which materials they wanted to work with. Topics included the Washington, DC-area punk music scene, web content from former Soviet Bloc countries, and the #MeToo movement. Participants identified the questions they wanted to ask of the sources, used analytical tools from the Archives Unleashed Toolkit to explore the data, and presented their findings.

One group explored the non-textual elements—images, audio, video—in the 48 gigabytes of the DC Punk Archive that they had been given to work with. With a tool in the Archives Unleashed Toolkit, they

extracted over 10,000 digital objects from the collection, then determined file types in order to identify the types of materials they were working with. Expecting to find mostly audio and videos of concerts, the group also discovered tickets, posters, flyers, album covers, photographs of artists, and more—objects that would be vital to telling the history of the scene. Another team, working with the former Soviet bloc websites, analyzed those sites’ outgoing links to understand which other sites around the world were important within the content of their collection.

Another team explored sites from the #MeToo Digital

Media Collection, which is being gathered by Harvard University’s Schlesinger Library as part of a project to comprehensively document the movement. Several participants approached the harvested material from an archival perspective, asking questions like: Is the collection capturing what’s necessary in order to be useful to researchers now and in the future? What are the assessment criteria that should be used to ensure that the collection has archival value? How do you document those decisions and ensure that the resulting archives are usable?

These are questions that archivists have always asked in

making decisions about records and other archival materials. But web archiving includes its own problems of scale, preservation, privacy, and copyright. The Internet Archive began preserving sites from the World Wide Web in 1996. Since then it has archived nearly 350 billion web pages. The memory required to store all of this content is well in excess of 15 petabytes. (Your computer at home probably has about a thousand gigabytes of hard drive storage; one petabyte is a little over one million gigabytes.) Users of the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine can explore a treasure trove of websites, including the entire GeoCities network; over 1,600 versions of *alcore.com*—the website of the former vice president—dating back to 1998; and the earliest US federal government web pages. The majority of this content remains untapped by historians.

And the Internet Archive is not the only institution capturing knowledge existing on the web; traditional institutions are also involved in this effort. The DC Punk Archive is the work of special-collections librarians at the District of Columbia Public Library. National libraries and legal-deposit libraries also do this archival labor, with a growing number of countries passing non-print legal-deposit laws, which mandate the collection of sites within national domains, such as *.fr* or *.no* in

Europe. The British Library has worked with the United Kingdom's network of deposit libraries to routinely archive the entire *.uk* web domain, required by a 2013 law that complemented the long tradition of legal deposit of print materials in national libraries.

Working with the Internet Archive, the Library of Congress has also been creating archives of websites in the public interest since 2000. The library currently collects, per month, between 20,000 and 25,000 gigabytes of content on a wide range of topics, the sites of all legislative branches of the US federal government and a selection of those maintained by executive agencies, and some international websites, such as those covering general elections around the world and major political and social upheavals. In a phone interview, Abigail Grotke, web archiving team lead at the Library of Congress, explained how reference librarians and overseas operations officers with subject-matter expertise provide guidance on which web archive collections the library should create and maintain, and on “the urgent events” that should be documented and preserved as they happen.

According to Grotke, the Library of Congress always obtains permission from a site's owners before “crawling”—a term derived from the use of a piece of software called a web crawler that

systematically browses and collects data from websites. While this adds complexity to the task and requires that the library be much more selective about what it collects, Grotke says that it also allows its collecting to be more “focused, and deeper.” Since no collecting work can capture everything on the web, decisions always need to be made about where a crawl stops. Attention to details like these will ensure that historians can explore what's preserved in these vast collections of data. Still, glean-ing meaningful information from these sources will require historians to use new tools.

Many of the barriers to using these archives are simply a result of scale—the archives are just too big to provide good results from keyword searches or even to browse through. As a result, analytical tools are necessary. Web archiving crawls create files in the WARC format, an international standard that has been adopted by libraries and other web archiving organizations. WARC files preserve the content of a website in addition to other archival information, such as when the content was collected. The Archives Unleashed Toolkit (available for free on the project's website, at archivesunleashed.org/aut/) used in the datathon includes scripts (little programs that do discrete tasks) to sort and manage the data and meta-data in WARC files.

The toolkit allows users to, for example, strip out everything but the main content, eliminating secondary information such as website navigation and ads. Other scripts in the toolkit allow users to see what is included in the archive they are working with. Users can also filter by language, group sites in a collection by the date on which they were crawled, or find all names of individuals, organizations, or places in a group of sites. These techniques do require some basic knowledge of how websites work, but they don't necessitate years of training.

While the web itself is of recent enough inception that only a small subset of historians who study contemporary history are currently using it as a source, more will need to be prepared to do so in the coming years. As one datathon participant put it, software programs such as the Archives Unleashed Toolkit provide the means for “trying to understand your dataset before you dive into it.” As we get further from the early days of the web, and with so much of our history recorded there, historians, now more than ever, need to know how to work with these materials. **P**

Seth Denbo is director of scholarly communication and digital initiatives at the AHA. He tweets @seth_denbo.

PAUL BRAFF

ARE ALL GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCES CREATED EQUAL?

For Attendees from Other Campuses, Not Always

As faculty advisers and mentors emphasize, graduate students need to learn how to present their work as a part of professionalization. Since delivering a paper at the AHA annual meeting or other large conferences can intimidate even experienced speakers, graduate student conferences can be great places to get feedback on ideas and to practice articulating arguments. But this raises the question: What makes for a good graduate student conference?

There are many such conferences throughout the academic year. I count 33 that I know of, and most of these are in the area where I live; there are many more scattered across the country. But not all are equally helpful, at least not in the same way. Just because a school is “elite” does not mean its conference will be more useful to the beginning graduate student than that of a smaller program. The truth is, some graduate student conferences are more worthwhile to participants than others. And that might not be evident to ambitious students early in their studies.

The process of participating in a graduate student conference starts with the call for papers. CFPs typically ask for abstracts, give the date of the conference, and note that papers on a wide

range of topics will be considered. But CFPs don’t always reveal key details that would help people who want to submit proposals. For example, many do not note the particular areas in which the conference will specialize or its target audience. For example, CFPs could mention that a conference encourages master’s students in particular to participate. A conference for such students is valuable since they have different needs and goals from those pursuing a PhD. Furthermore, students in doctoral programs could then contact the organizers to help them judge how appropriate it would be for them to apply, and adjust their expectations accordingly. Such early information could also enable the selection committee to save time in evaluating proposals.

Organizing a conference also includes making decisions about how many panels and sessions there should be. In my experience, a “less is more” approach generally is helpful. The more panels there are, the greater the division of the audience. If there’s only one or at most two panels per session, the rooms will be fuller. A lack of audience members diminishes the experience of presenting, since fewer questions might be asked and discussion might be limited to a few opinions. Thus, minimizing the number of panels per session, but increasing the number of sessions, could ensure a greater number of participants, improving a conference’s overall utility.

When it comes to the panels themselves, not to mention the general spirit of the conference, faculty buy-in is essential. At some graduate student conferences, professors might stop by to see an advisee speak, but functions like chairing panels or commenting on papers might be left to graduate students. This could be due to a range of issues, including time availability, departmental expectations of professors, and the way graduate students and faculty interact professionally in the program. But this absence can leave a negative impression on graduate students from outside the program, if they came expecting otherwise.

Some graduate student conferences are more worthwhile to participants than others. And that might not be evident to students.

This is not to demean the contributions of graduate students, who can provide useful and insightful feedback. But receiving comments from someone who is well advanced in their academic career and has experience with the process of writing and defending a dissertation provides added value. At graduate student conferences, many

presenters cull their presentations from their own dissertations and theses, so the insights of an expert can be highly productive, whether it is related to the writing process or subject expertise. But too often, information about faculty participation is only evident after the conference-goers have committed to attending, and sometimes not until they show up. If at all possible, then, organizers should make clear to the prospective participants just who will be reading and discussing their work. In this context, a lack of faculty participation raises questions about the departmental culture of the host institution and the involvement of faculty not only in supporting their own students, but in improving the work of the academy as a whole. Unless carefully explained, absence implies a lack of interest.

Just as at large conferences, atmosphere and ambience play a large role in the participants' overall enjoyment. Space is one concern. While classrooms make good choices for panels, proper spaces for receptions and meals take more thought. Part of what a conference does is, for better or worse, to show off the university. While this may not be a serious concern for the students who already attend the school, a conference is an opportunity to introduce the university to others. A conference provides the history department and the university itself with the prospect of attracting master's students to their PhD program, for example, or simply leaving a positive memory. Accordingly, depending on their budgets, conference organizers should consider working with their departments to host meals in more striking locales (and department chairs and directors of graduate studies should be open to the discussion). Most schools have a connection with a hotel, faculty club, or local restaurant that can make what can be an exhausting experience one that is well-remembered.



Presenting a paper as a graduate student at a large conference like the AHA annual meeting can be intimidating. Grad student conferences can be a good alternative.

Marc Monaghan

A related concern is how students who go to schools outside the hosting university are treated. To the greatest extent possible, conference organizers should make special efforts to welcome visiting students. It is easy for students to fall back on the familiar and interact among themselves, essentially forming a clique. Too often, visiting students and hosting students are in separate groups at receptions and meals, with any professors in attendance interacting primarily with the latter group. The effort of organizers to make visitors feel at home, to get to know them, and to introduce them to other students and professors with like interests, creates a more enjoyable and welcoming experience. And not least, it also enhances professional networks as well as the skills needed to form them.

From a graduate student perspective, another element of hospitality is important. As anyone who has been to a conference knows, it's hard to sit through an 8:00 a.m. panel without a cup of coffee and a doughnut or bagel. The same is true for the fourth panel of

the day, where a little sugary pick-me-up can help galvanize and refocus the mind. Such concerns might seem like the last thing organizers should think about. After all, shouldn't the main focus of any conference be on sharing research? Yet grumbling stomachs have a way of limiting the productivity of a panel. If the audience is hungry and thinking about food, they might ask few questions, doing a disservice to the work that panelists put in.

We need a better system to ensure that graduate students get the most out of these opportunities to present their work. Given the limited amount of funding for travel, lodging, and registration that graduate students receive, not to mention the fact that their means are limited to begin with, there needs to be more information available to allow them to make informed choices about which conferences to attend.

Organizers should first of all think more about the purpose of a conference, as should the faculty who

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support the organizers. If the goal for participants is to network and practice for a large conference, then professors need to attend and interact, not only with their own students, but also with others who are presenting. This is an opportunity to expand a network and perhaps even entice an outside reader to join one's committee.

Programs that cannot afford to help students by subsidizing a research-oriented conference could focus on a different element of professionalization. Public speaking, for example, is a skill directly related to teaching and the world beyond academia, but it does not come easily for all graduate students. Honing public speaking skills is therefore a worthy purpose for a conference and may be as important to a particular graduate student as garnering feedback on research. Or maybe organizers envision

a conference at which graduate students can establish a network for themselves, rather than trying to get the attention of tenured professors. These goals are worthy, too, so organizers should communicate them to those contemplating attending as early as possible.

It may be that conference organizers can establish a network among one another, sharing tips on writing CFPs, fundraising, and other common issues. Additionally, advisers should learn more, via their own networks, about how graduate student conferences work at other schools. They should make sure to ask students about their experiences at annual conferences, especially concerning faculty engagement and the quality of feedback received, as well as other elements of professionalization. As discussed earlier, advisers' lack of

information affects the students who do attend, who often have little idea about what they're getting into until they see the program.

Departments and faculty should think carefully about how they support graduate student conference organizers, and organizers should articulate realistically the purpose of their conference and what they can offer attendees, starting with the CFP. If these two groups work in tandem, they can ensure an enjoyable and productive conference for all. 

Paul Braff is a PhD candidate in American history at Temple University. His research focuses on African American history and public health during the 20th century. He is an AmeriCorps Education Award recipient and a former research fellow at the Consortium for History of Science, Technology, and Medicine.

CHRISTINA KOULOURI

TEACHING ON THE “BALKAN EXPRESS”

A Collaborative Attempt to Write History for Reconciliation



In the bitter winter of 1992, Sarajevo residents were under siege. While war raged in Yugoslavia, a group of historians sensed that nationalist histories were a danger to the future of a multi-ethnic Balkan Peninsula.

Christian Maréchal/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 3.0

IN THE 1980s, while still a student in Athens, I visited Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, a country that at the time belonged to the so-called Eastern Bloc. Our guide took us to the Georgi Dimitrov Mausoleum. It was built in 1949, in the style of Lenin's Mausoleum in Moscow, to house the embalmed body of the Bulgarian Communist leader. In vain did I search for it during my recent visit there. It had been demolished in 1999, so that there would be no material *topos* of the previous Communist regime around which those yearning for its return could rally. In Tirana, the capital of Albania, a country that had decreed atheism compulsory in 1967, an imposing mosque has been built at the town center, within walking distance of the standing Catholic and Greek Orthodox cathedrals. Grim is the image of Sarajevo, the once-cosmopolitan Yugoslav metropolis, still bearing signs of its devastating siege during the Bosnian War, which lasted from April 5, 1992, to February 29, 1996.

Throughout these “stations” of what may be thought of metaphorically as the “Balkan Express”—after the legendary Paris-to-Istanbul Orient Express—one comes across the painful and dramatic effects of historical change, its vivid memory but also its concealment, the trauma of transition, the politics of memory, and the difficulties associated with coming to terms with the past. Here, the past is caustic, toxic, and ambivalent, the present haunted by post-traumatic stories that erode historical memory.

Historians in southeast Europe have been at the forefront of reflecting on these issues, in order to manage presentist readings of the past. The teaching of history is often part of a hegemonic narrative that emanates from central authorities. It may be tightly controlled by state agencies, such as ministries of education—but there may also be room for off-center voices and alternative readings. Educators have to learn how to teach a controversial and sensitive past in multi-ethnic classes whose students bear memories of the conflict. It is crucial that history teaching transcend ethnocentric education in countries where nationalist rivalries are resurrected ad infinitum.

Before attempting to respond to these challenges, let us define which region of Europe we are talking about and the conventions of historical education within it. The “Balkans” have—as does “Europe”—unclear boundaries, especially when the word is used not as a simple geographical term but as a reference to identity. If we see the Balkans as a “historical region,” they comprise the entire Balkan Peninsula, from Istanbul and Athens to Ljubljana and Bucharest. This region, sometimes known by the neutral term southeast Europe, has a common past, stretching back centuries. Its

history includes cohabitation, in the context of the multi-ethnic Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, and conflict, be it the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, the First and Second World Wars, or, more recently, the divisions of the Cold War.

Particularly traumatic were the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. The massive destruction of towns and monuments, hundreds of thousands of dead, ethnic cleansing, and displacement of millions—all reminded us that the repulsive face of war has reappeared many times in 20th-century Europe. For Balkan historians, alarm bells rang as soon as war enveloped the region. Even as the Yugoslav Wars were raging, Croat and Serbian historians launched “Dialogues of Historians,” a series of 10 international gatherings under the auspices of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, which, between 1998 and 2005, brought together 165 scholars from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the United States. In 1999, on the initiative of the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE), the Joint History Project (JHP) also got underway. Its aim was to record the state of affairs on the teaching of history across the Balkans, and then to propose changes in curricula through the publication of alternative educational materials for high school students.

The CDRSEE was an NGO founded in 1998 in Greece by businessmen and diplomats of southeast European countries to promote reconciliation, democracy, and economic development in a region still ravaged by the war. They made history education one of their top priorities and invited historians from the region to develop projects for revising textbooks and curricula. A group of more than 30 historians representing all the countries in the region, mainly academics who were experts in contemporary history and history education, responded to the challenge and formed the History Education Committee, which carried out the JHP.

Such initiatives were grounded in the certainty that continuing to teach the nationalistic history of the sort that dominated not only the classroom but the public sphere would undermine any prospect of peaceful coexistence and would do little to prevent the outbreak of new wars. Nationalistic histories, furthermore, propped up the widespread discourse of nationalism and populism, helping to enable the rise of far-right rhetoric and threatening the cohesion of all Balkan societies, within and without the former Yugoslavia.

The JHP's plan to revise the teaching of history through civil society stakeholders was certainly utopian. In this region, the educational system operates under the rigid

control of government agencies; textbooks are approved by departments of education on the basis of rigid curricular requirements, and teachers enjoy precious little autonomy. In Greece, for example, there is one textbook per subject and per class, approved and produced by the Ministry of Education and distributed free of charge to public schools, that dominates teaching. But even in countries where free-market reform allowed multiple school textbooks after years of state monopoly, and where pedagogical methods and new technologies (including computers, internet access, and digital documents) were modernized, the gist of teaching is still purely ethnocentric: national, European, and, to a lesser extent, world history are taught, yet the narrative is structured around the national “we.” “History wars” regularly break out with the appearance of new textbooks—a phenomenon that is not exclusive to the Balkans, of course, but that still highlights the direct link between the teaching of history and issues of national identity.

I coordinated the JHP from the very beginning. Working constructively with a large group of academic historians and high school teachers, we attempted to offer a sound alternative to the way history is taught.¹ We had three principal aims: to strengthen students’ historical consciousness and critical-thinking skills through a narrative showing multiple perspectives on historical developments in the Balkans from the 14th century to 2008; to challenge the self-contained, self-absorbed, and inward-looking narrative of national histories that selectively exclude neighbors and marginalize “others”; and to offer a paradigm of collaboration for historians coming from countries that until very recently were at war with each other, and where history was deployed to make war seem legitimate and just.

The means we employed were traditional. We published six workbooks, titled *Teaching Modern and Contemporary Southeast European History: Alternative Educational Materials* (2005 and 2016). Compendia of textual and visual sources on aspects of political and military history, as well as social, economic, and cultural history, they are available as both electronic and print publications. (Many educators in the Balkans have no access to computers in the classroom and must work with photocopies.) While we were writing them, we made sure to incorporate the views of educators with experience in the classroom. From what they told us, we concluded that they would prefer to have a set of templates to work with (and on). In high schools across the Balkans, educators cannot dedicate more than a few teaching hours to history. Besides, all need training to become proficient in using a wide array of new and unfamiliar sources. For this reason, following initial publication in English, all of the JHP’s workbooks were

translated into the various languages of the Balkans. Then, where the pertinent state authorities granted us permission, we organized a number of teacher-training seminars.

Reception of the workbooks among the public and state authorities ranged from constructive enthusiasm to outward hostility. Still, conspiracy theories were invented to account for what was castigated as an attempt to rewrite history, and contributors were targeted as instruments of unspecified global agencies seeking to destroy national identity. Inflammatory articles in the press and social media, as well as verbal abuse on TV outlets, confirm that the workbooks were innovative and, indeed, a meaningful and substantial contribution to historical education. The response of state agencies across the Balkans could probably be described as off-putting. Yet there was some success: in the republics of Albania, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Northern Macedonia, officials occasionally did authorize distribution of the workbooks in schools and teacher training in using them. More importantly, however, the comments of some 10,000 teachers who took part in the training seminars show that they considered the enterprise to be worthwhile. Unsurprisingly, they did not fail to point to a number of difficulties they came across, due principally to the opposition of their students’ parents.

Fourteen years after their first appearance, the workbooks continue to be the subject of discussions not only in the Balkans but also internationally, where they are considered an instructive example of transformative pedagogy for peace-building.² Most importantly, however, they continue to be tested in the classroom, seen for what they are: an innovative endeavor in the possibilities of the teaching of history.

Christina Koulouri is a professor in modern and contemporary history at the Department of Political Science and History, Panteion University of Political and Social Sciences (Athens, Greece). She is the author of several books and articles on the teaching of history, national identity, public history, and the history of sport, and is the editor of six workbooks (alternative educational materials) for the teaching of modern and contemporary history in southeast Europe. P

NOTES

1. For editors, source committee members, and contributors, <http://cdrsec.org/projects/education-projects/joint-history-project/editors-source-committee-members-contributors>; to download the workbooks, <http://cdrsec.org/publications/education>.
2. For example, see *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation: Reconsidering Joint Textbook Projects*, ed. K.V. Korostelina and S. Lässig (2013), 69–89.

MEIRAH SHEDLO

LEARNING HOLOCAUST HISTORY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Students Document Survivors' Testimony with a New Curriculum



Dalia Sieger, a former student at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women, interviews Holocaust survivor Moshe Avital. Tova Rosenberg, founder of Names, Not Numbers, stands to the left.

Meirah Shedlo

"**HAVE TAKEN** courses on the Holocaust in the past," Chana shared with me, "but none as . . . meaningful as this course." Chana, a student at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women, was referring to our Holocaust documentary filmmaking course offered in spring 2018 in partnership with Names, Not Numbers—an oral-history program and curriculum. For more than a decade, the organization has facilitated projects across the United States, Israel, and Canada for over 6,000 students to experience Holocaust history by conducting interviews, filming survivor testimonies, and editing footage into a professional film. While the curriculum is designed primarily for use in middle and high school classrooms, I collaborated with program founder Tova Rosenberg to adapt it for a college-level Jewish history honors course for our own students.

Throughout the course, students learned from historians and documentary filmmakers alike, and developed the skills to conduct and edit their own interviews of Holocaust survivors. The experience was transformative. Although all participants were Jewish, their prior experience with

Students gained both a new technical skill set and a greater appreciation for the historical process.

Holocaust history varied—some had grandparents who had been directly affected, while others, many of Sephardic descent, had relatives who were not. But through the course, all developed a deeper engagement with the history in a way that often enhanced or even challenged their initial perspectives. The students created a historical record through filmmaking, connected with courageous survivors, and became advocates against hate and intolerance.

This unique course attracted 19 students from across the college, many majoring in other disciplines. As an academic-programs coordinator, I crafted an educational experience for our students that synthesized historical lectures from Mordecai Paldiel, who was the primary instructor, and filmmaking and special guest workshops facilitated by Rosenberg and her team. I coordinated logistics and programming, and, drawing on my own background in history, guided the students throughout the course.

At the beginning of the semester, we created five student teams and paired them each with a survivor—friends and contacts of Paldiel and Rosenberg—with diverse geographic

origins (from Germany to Greece) and survivor experiences (from concentration camps to months in hiding). After an array of lectures, workshops, technical skills sessions, and a trip to the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City, each team conducted and filmed a two-hour interview with the survivor they had been paired with. Students then collaborated with their teams to select about 20 minutes of footage for their final films, all of which are now archived at institutions such as Yad Vashem and our own university library. In addition, Names, Not Numbers filmmaker Michael Puro, himself a former history major, created a film that documented the students' filmmaking process and reflections. The course culminated with a film screening and a dinner honoring the participants. Students also delivered oral presentations in which they reflected on the experience.

Through this experiential learning opportunity, students gained both a new technical skill set—"the filmmaking was one of my favorite parts of the class!" a student raved to me—and a greater appreciation for the historical process. In addition to learning videography techniques from Puro, students also developed key historical skills. They created the historical narrative, rather than absorbing an existing account from a book. The students used their interview questions, which emerged from their own research and were not prescribed to them, to elicit unique testimony. Finally, students learned that the task of the historian is to interpret a collection of perspectives and individual experiences, then to shape them into a historical narrative or argument.

Experts in the field introduced the students to important interpretive techniques, complementing Paldiel's lectures. Notably, students learned how to formulate questions and effectively conduct an interview from film experts including Michael Berenbaum, Holocaust scholar and documentary filmmaker, and renowned documentarians Lynn Novick and Sarah Botstein of *The Vietnam War*.

Berenbaum, for example, shared his own experiences as an interviewer with the students. When a survivor explained the grief of finding his mother's discarded shoes in the camp, rather than asking about the survivor's feelings (which were rather self-evident), Berenbaum instead inquired: "How did you know they were your mother's?" He described the survivor's eyes widening, as though seeing the shoes again, before recalling further stories of his mother wearing the shoes in happier times. A student cited this anecdote, recalling it months later, as a revelatory moment. It was our duty, she said to me, to help the audience relate to events from a survivor's perspective, and to think creatively about questions that engender meaningful testimony.

A student also told me that Novick and Botstein's presentation had been "earth-shattering"—their commentary on *The Vietnam War* had ignited her interest in documentary filmmaking. (She plans to pursue an internship in the field.) The presenters underscored the importance of listening to the survivors and building trust, allowing conversations to go off script if necessary and reacting in real time to capture true emotions.

The experts' advice informed student work during the editing process, guiding their decisions about which stories to incorporate into the historical record. One student described her team's process of homing in on the survivor's interpretation of her experiences: once they recognized that the survivor's main message involved hope in the face of terror, they focused on selecting film clips for their final documentary that would communicate her intention with authenticity.

While the integration of the professor's standard history lectures with the filmmaking portions of the course occasionally proved challenging, the expert guidance was so crucial to enhancing the final films that, in the future, we would incorporate the filming technique sessions earlier in the term, and streamline the process to allow students to maximize their experience interacting with each presenter.


In addition to doing the work of the historian, students also formed personal connections with those who had lived the history. The importance of individual experience is reflected in the title of the course: Holocaust survivors must not be reduced to the numbers tattooed on their arms; they are people with rich inner lives and stories. Our workshops emphasized being sensitive to their experiences and helped students approach the project with empathy. As a student shared in Puro's film, "There is a totally different experience hearing about the Holocaust from the mouth of someone who went through it rather than from the pages of [a] textbook—it really brings the story to life in a way I've never heard before." The emotional element creates a more compelling film, while enhancing students' long-term learning and memory. Speaking with students months after the course concluded, I found that many still recalled details of the survivors' stories and even material from the lectures and workshops, especially as they related to that intimate sharing of testimony.

Many students expressed a sense of duty emerging from their relationship with the survivors. One stated in Puro's film, "I view it as my obligation to tell Sonia's story." Students were moved not only by the substance of the conversation,

but also by the survivors' emotions. Nearly every student I consulted with after the semester hoped to develop a lasting relationship with the survivor they were working with. Some suggested facilitating additional opportunities, beyond the interview itself, in future courses to establish a rapport with the survivors.

The course also had a larger purpose: to advocate for the dignity of all people. Ultimately, the course was successful in that in addition to teaching students to engage meaningfully with history, it also inspired them to pursue justice and to understand the importance of challenging future atrocities. Students shared how the course inspired them to feel greater empathy toward victims of other genocides and instilled in them a desire to act. For students at a Jewish institution, the Holocaust is a natural entry point, one mused, to consider others' experiences. Another student noted parallels between the experiences of Syrian refugees and those of the survivors we worked with. Yet another discerned the potential dangers of drawing analogies—the horror of the Holocaust was singular in many ways, she pointed out, while recognizing many survivors' drive to advocate for others' rights, based on their own experiences. Many survivors emphasized this message; in a note to me, one hoped the project "will be remembered as a cry: never again . . . to any human group."

Students formed personal connections with those who had lived the history.

Since the number of survivors dwindles with each passing year, our students recognized the time-sensitive nature of their work and were deeply inspired by it. Studying history, documenting history, and committing to shape the history currently unfolding for the better, our students learned the names behind the numbers and had an experience they won't soon forget. As a survivor explained to the students in her interview: "If not we, who is going to tell you about it? And if not now, when?" 

Meirah Shedlo is an academic adviser and special projects manager at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women.

WHY RULING CLASSES FAIL

In the June Issue of the American Historical Review

The June issue of the *American Historical Review* features an “AHR Exchange” on the impermanence of class rule. **Jonathan Dewald** (Univ. at Buffalo) takes up the question of why ruling classes fail, with a reconsideration of the example of the French Revolution. Can a class, secure in its power and legitimacy, suddenly be swept from the scene by revolutionary transformation? In “Rethinking the 1 Percent,” Dewald argues that, in fact, the French nobility’s social and economic position in the 18th century was much weaker than has been suggested in recent historical writing. For a century prior to the upheaval of the 1770s, he points out, nobles’ landed revenue fell, and in the last generation before 1789, they sold a significant amount of property. Over the same period, the state reduced its support and increased its demands. Partly as a result of these financial and political pressures, the nobility’s numbers shrank over the 18th century. These changes, Dewald insists, help explain the nobles’ inability to control events as the revolutionary crisis unfolded after 1789.

Dewald’s argument is engaged by three scholars—two French historians and a historian of China. The latter, **Nicolas Tackett** (Univ. of California, Berkeley) considers the questions raised by Dewald by applying them to his own research area, medieval China’s Tang dynasty (618–907 CE). Tackett proposes conceptualizing the elite not merely as a static social class, but rather as a network of families better positioned than any other group to survive the erosion of institutions that once offered protection, the emergence of rival elites, and even the development of a revolutionary social movement. In medieval China, Tackett maintains, the eventual demise of the aristocracy—like that of many elites in world history—came as a consequence not of revolutionary change but rather of catastrophic violence spanning two decades at the turn of the 10th century.

Timothy Tackett (Univ. of California, Irvine), a distinguished scholar of the Old Regime, the Revolution, and the Terror, offers his own reactions to Dewald’s article. While underlining the importance of Dewald’s synthesis of recent

research on the socio-economic evolution of the French nobility, he questions how helpful it is in explaining the putative “collapse” of the nobility in 1789 or the “framing” of the early Revolution. Most tellingly, Tackett wonders if “the French of the late eighteenth century—or any people in any period—assessed their situation in terms of multi-secular economic trends, or whether they viewed the world above all on the basis of what had transpired in their own and perhaps their parents’ lifetime.” Finally, **Gail Bossenga** (Elizabethtown Coll.), a scholar of the Old Regime, argues that deep entanglement with—and dependence on—the state made the nobility vulnerable when war and financial crisis made their privileges unsustainable.

The “AHR Exchange” is accompanied by three research articles that consider 20th-century internationalism. In “Communicable Disease: Information, Health, and Globalization in the Interwar Period,” **Heidi J. S. Tworek** (Univ. of British Columbia) explores globalization through a study of the interwar League of Nations Health Organization (LNHO). Tworek uses the relatively late development of the international health network to show how and why information globalized at a different pace than migration and trade. In a period of intensified nationalism, the LNHO organized an infrastructure based on new ship-to-shore wireless technology around colonial networks and port cities. Tracing such infrastructures, Tworek contends, can help historians overcome artificial divides between the national, international, imperial, and global.

David Motadel (London School of Economics), in “The Global Authoritarian Moment and the Revolt against Empire,” looks at the same era, but from a different angle. His article sheds light on the history of anti-imperialism in the 1930s and 1940s, when global authoritarianism was surging. In particular, Motadel looks at the evolving relations between anticolonial nationalists and the Nazi regime. War-time Berlin, Motadel claims, became a hub of global anti-imperial revolutionary activism. German officials worked to catalyze anti-imperial movements, reaching out to subjects

"Peoples of the Caucasus! We liberate you from the Bolshevik yoke!" (top). "Start working now! You will work for yourselves and your homeland!" (bottom). This 1943 German propaganda poster depicts a cheerful, ethnically diverse group of Caucasians in local attire being "liberated" by the German army, visualized as a Wehrmacht soldier blowing a bugle. As German troops marched into the Caucasus, these posters were put up across the region to win over the local population. The Germans spread similar propaganda across Central and South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, promising national self-determination and postwar sovereignty in an effort to mobilize national liberation movements against the Allies. In "The Global Authoritarian Moment and the Revolt against Empire," David Motadel traces the paths of nationalists from the Global South who turned to Hitler's regime during the war years. At the height of the conflict, scores of these revolutionaries flocked to Germany, among them Indians, Arabs, and Central Asians, forming a nationalist international against the old world order. *German Federal Archives, Image Plak 003-040-027.*



of the British and French empires and minorities of the Soviet Union. We tend to imagine exile politics as inherently internationalist and progressive. But Motadel's research illuminates a countertendency: interwar anticolonial nationalists, in search of an alternative to (Wilsonian) liberalism and socialism, turned to the rising authoritarian states that stood for the primacy of the nation and a new world order based on ethnonationalism, not multiethnic empires.

Finally, **Abdel Razzaq Takriti** (Univ. of Houston), in "Colonial Coups and the War on Popular Sovereignty," takes us into the postcolonial struggles for sovereignty in the Gulf States of the Middle East. He finds that the perpetuation of imperial power rested on "colonial coups" in Sharjah (1965), Abu Dhabi (1966), and Oman (1970). These transfers of power, Takriti argues, depended far more on British machinations to favor one group over another than they did on internal power struggles.

The June issue also includes two contributions, both dealing with questions raised by the postcolonial experience, to our new "History Unclassified" section. In the first, **Thomas Meaney** (Max Planck Society in Göttingen) reconstructs a missing link in Frantz Fanon's life and death. Based on his exclusive interview with C. Oliver Iselin, the CIA agent who oversaw Fanon's hospitalization in the United States in 1961, Meaney's essay suggests that Iselin's memories of decolonization reflect the wider arc of how American attitudes evolved and congealed toward the Third World. The second "History Unclassified" essay, by **Rachel Gillett** (Utrecht Univ.), offers her personal account of singing in a concert of restored Napoleonic music. Even while offering a reminder

that the past can be "made audible," Gillett notes her growing discomfort with the imperial implications of "proclaiming Napoleon's greatness and glory."

Finally, in addition to our regular array of featured reviews, the June issue also includes a set of reflections about the fascinating recent documentary film *Bisbee '17*. In 1917, the isolated Arizona copper-mining town of Bisbee became the site of a radical strike and subsequent vigilante roundup of over 1,000 strikers and their supporters, who were then "deported" to the New Mexico desert. Filmmaker Robert Greene revisits this event by interviewing the descendants of Bisbee residents on both sides of the barricades, and by asking his interlocutors to reenact this signal event in their community's history. The result, as the five scholars who consider Greene's achievement show, is an unusual visual meditation on the intersection of memory, history, violence, and community. **P**

Alex Lichtenstein is editor of the American Historical Review. His most recent book, co-authored with his brother, photojournalist Andrew Lichtenstein, is Marked, Unmarked, Remembered: A Geography of American Memory (2017).



Henry S. Bausum

1924–2019

Historian of Modern Europe and Editor;
AHA Member

Henry S. Bausum, a professor and historian who was drawn into editing through service for the AHA, died on January 5, 2019, at his home in Beloit, Wisconsin. He was 94. Although born before the Great Depression, that economic turmoil and the tumult of World War II shaped his life in enduring ways. He gained the confidence to tackle technical puzzles after working alongside his canny and resourceful father on their family farm, and his service with the Army Air Corps earned him access to higher education through the GI Bill.

Bausum began college by enrolling in the dairy program at the University of Maryland, but despite his studies, “one cow looked the same to me as another,” as he later put it. He soon found himself more engaged by an introductory history course, setting him on the path that took him from Maryland to Boston, where he spent a year studying theology at Andover Newton Theological School and gained an MA in history from Boston University, before heading to the University of Chicago, where he earned his doctorate. By then, Bausum had married Dolores Brister of Pineville, Louisiana, and become the father of a son, David. Years later, the couple added a daughter, Ann, to their family.

It was during his quarter-century of teaching at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), which began in 1964, that Bausum discovered an aptitude and love for editing. His first experience grew out of a pair of conferences he hosted there in 1974 regarding the future of introductory history instruction. Selected key historians gathered to discuss the topic, including William H. McNeill, whom Bausum had known at Chicago and who was then serving as vice president of the AHA Teaching Division. McNeill subsequently suggested that the organization establish a monthly newsletter column on the topic of history pedagogy and recommended Bausum and historian Myron Marty as coeditors.

Their work debuted in the September 1974 issue of the *AHA Newsletter*, forerunner of *Perspectives on History*, under the banner “Innovation in Undergraduate History.” Later the series

became known as “Teaching History Today.” Marty dubbed his partner “Barebones Bausum” for his ability to reduce long passages to their essential core. Bausum remained in the post for 10 years, after which he edited a collection of selected columns for publication by the AHA in 1985 under the title *Teaching History Today*.

The next year, Bausum introduced a spring seminar at VMI on the subject of military leadership that annually brought 10 prominent scholars on the subject to campus for a series of weekly lectures. Embracing emerging technologies, he used an optical scanner to convert prepared remarks into computer files and edited the text for subsequent publication. His three volumes of *Military Leadership and Command: The John Biggs Cincinnati Lectures* were published in 1986, 1987, and 1988.

As he neared retirement, Bausum proposed that the Society for Military History (then known as the American Military Institute) name him editor of its journal and move its editorial offices to VMI, which they did. The publication became known as the *Journal of Military History* during his 10-year tenure and remains at VMI to this day. Once again, the former farmer innovated, using computer technology to manage the society’s mailing list, book reviews, and the flow of manuscripts through a newly instituted peer-review process. His son, a mathematician with considerable computer-science savvy, played an instrumental role in this modernization. Bausum applied similar innovations to *Air Power History* magazine, the quarterly journal of the Air Force Historical Foundation, a publication that he edited from 1991 to 1993.

In 2000, the Bausums retired to Beloit, to be closer to their daughter and her children. For the next 18 years, the couple traveled, exercised, and gardened with equal passion. Bausum is survived by his wife of 71 years, who was herself a gifted editor, author, and scholar. Other survivors include his two children, a daughter-in-law, two grandsons, a married step-grandson, a step-great-granddaughter, and a younger sister.

Out of gratitude for the enduring role that the AHA played in Bausum’s life, the family encourages memorial gifts be made in his name to the organization.

Ann Bausum

Independent historian, Rock County, Wisconsin

Photo: Sam Boutelle



T.K. Hunter

1956–2018

Historian of the 18th-Century Atlantic

T.K. Hunter, an Atlantic, legal, and art historian, died suddenly of congestive heart failure and multi-organ damage on December 17, 2018, in New York City. She was born there on July 4, 1956, to Grace Wood Hunter, a paralegal, and Herman Meade Hunter, a mathematician.

Thea Kai Hunter began her education at Barnard College, earning her BA in biology and art history in 1978. In 1996, she earned an MA in art history from Hunter College, specializing in early American and African American painting. At Columbia University, she received another MA, in history, in 1998, and completed her PhD in 2005. Her adviser, Eric Foner, speaking at a memorial service at Columbia in January, praised her as a pioneer in the transatlantic study of American law and slavery.

Hunter's dissertation, "Publishing Freedom, Winning Arguments: *Somerset*, Natural Rights and Massachusetts Freedom Cases, 1772–1836," explored the landmark case of *James Somerset* in 1772, which determined that an enslaved person brought to England from the colonies could not be forced to return. Hunter established that people of African descent not only made claims to individual liberty but transformed Enlightenment principles in the process, bolstering the pursuit of freedom for African-descended people throughout the Atlantic world. She won fellowships at the University of Glasgow and the Massachusetts Historical Society, and consulted, as a graduate student, on the "Revolution" episode of the PBS series *Africans in America* (1999).

A beautiful writer, Hunter's publications included "Geographies of Liberty," in *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, edited by John Stauffer and Timothy Patrick McCarthy (2006), and "Transatlantic Negotiations: Lord Mansfield, Liberty and *Somerset*," in *Texas Wesleyan Law Review* (2007). Before her death, she was co-editing (with McCarthy, Jim Downs, and Erica Armstrong Dunbar) *The Politics of History: A New Generation of American Historians Writes Back*, forthcoming from Columbia University Press. As a storyteller, her mentor was the young-adult fiction writer

Madeleine L'Engle. As a longtime member of L'Engle's Manhattan writers group, Hunter wrote historical and other kinds of fiction. Her professional and personal papers are being organized for donation to the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, at the Radcliffe Center for Advanced Study at Harvard University.

Hunter's last research project took her back to art history. Examining the work of contemporary artist Titus Kaphar, she considered how his paintings force a reconsideration of the versions of historical events that we take for granted. She began this research as a faculty fellow in 2017–18 at the City College of New York's Simon H. Rifkind Center for the Humanities and the Arts. She was especially proud to be the first adjunct instructor given this honor.

As a teacher, Hunter spent most of her career as a part-time instructor. After resigning a tenure-track assistant professorship at Western Connecticut State University in 2006, during the last 12 years of her life she taught a wide variety of history and art history courses at Princeton University, Columbia, Montclair State University, the Horace Mann School, Manhattan College, Brooklyn College, the New School, and the City College of New York.

As her friend Jim Downs remembers, "Thea would always say that she had three advanced degrees, trained under one of the leading historians in the country, and enjoyed both research and teaching but could not understand why she could not get a full-time job that would have given her the chance to write her book and to pursue her other research projects."

Hunter's students at the New School and at City College nominated her for distinguished teaching awards. One of them wrote on a memorial website, in January after winter break, "I am devastated to learn this news today. Professor Hunter was deliciously interesting and taught with her heart and soul. She was one of the best. What wrenching news." In addition to her many friends and students, Hunter is survived by her older brother, Dr. Eric L. Hunter, of Providence, Rhode Island.

Her friends have established a GoFundMe account to raise money for a scholarship to be created in her name: <https://www.gofundme.com/help-thea-hunter>.

Adrienne Monteith Petty
College of William and Mary

Scott A. Sandage
Carnegie Mellon University



Glen Jeansonne

1947–2018

Historical Biographer

Glen Jeansonne, a distinguished historical biographer, died in August 2018, three years after retiring from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM), where he had served as a popular professor of history for over 35 years.

Raised in New Roads, Louisiana, Glen earned a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. He completed graduate studies under William Ivy Hair at Florida State University. Hair, a fellow Louisianan, solidified Glen's interest in the history of the South. Glen's first book, *Race, Religion, and Politics: The Louisiana Gubernatorial Elections of 1959–60* (1977), stemmed from his master's thesis. His PhD dissertation was published as *Leander Perez: Boss of the Delta* (1977).

Gerald L. K. Smith: Minister of Hate (1988) sealed Glen's reputation as a meticulous researcher and dispassionate biographer, unafraid to turn the historical lens on American political extremism and demagoguery. For his biography of Smith, a follower of Huey Long and notorious anti-Semite, Glen received a Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award, given annually for leading scholarship on bigotry in the United States. Glen's next major biography was *Messiah of the Masses: Huey P. Long and the Great Depression* (1993).

Glen maintained a broad interest in the history of Louisiana throughout his career. In addition to early service as an associate editor of *Louisiana History*, he edited (with Light Townsend Cummins) *A Guide to the History of Louisiana* (1982). From the 1970s through his final years, Glen worked with various filmmakers on documentaries, notably those centered on Perez and Long. In 2000, Glen's lifetime contributions to Louisiana history earned him election as a fellow of the Louisiana Historical Association.

In the 1990s, Glen turned briefly to collective biography. His *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II* (1996) helped pioneer historical study of women's roles in American conservatism. But presidential history dominated

Glen's final decades. *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Fighting Quaker, 1928–1933* (2012) helped lead the recent reassessment of the 31st president. He completed his full-length biography, *Herbert Hoover: A Life* (2016), during his retirement. Personal challenges, including a search for a compatible religious home, undoubtedly influenced Glen's understanding of Hoover and other biographical subjects. Explaining Glen's success, his colleagues recall the months he spent researching in archives and writing in his home office, as he brought one carefully crafted biography after another to fruition.

Glen, moreover, was a distinguished teacher. He joined the UWM Department of History in 1978, after three years as an assistant professor at Williams College. His popular courses centered on 20th-century American history and historical biography. He enjoyed the rare honor of receiving a UWM Career Research Award as well as two coveted teaching awards: the UWM Undergraduate Teaching Award (based on student and peer review) and the UWM Alumni Association Teaching Award. Since, for the majority of Glen's tenure, UWM did not offer a PhD in history, Glen served as major professor for over 70 master's students, avidly following their careers and rejoicing at their achievements.

Glen published fourteen books, two edited collections, a hundred book reviews, and scores of scholarly and popular essays. His books include two survey texts: *Transformation and Reaction: America, 1921–1945* (1994) and (with David Luhrssen) *A Time of Paradox: America from the Cold War to the Third Millennium, 1945–Present* (2006). Glen collaborated with Luhrssen, one of his master's students, on a modest biographical study of Barack Obama (2009) and many other projects. Resolved to bring history to a wide audience, Glen—often with Luhrssen—penned over a dozen articles for such magazines as *History Today* and *Louisiana Cultural Vistas*.

Glen reveled in puns and other forms of humor. He published a few satirical pieces, such as “You Can Write a Book—or You Can Roast One” (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2000). During the lean years at UWM, he often quipped that he decided to go into history because “that’s where the money is.”

Surviving Glen are his daughters Leah (Eyal) Yaakov and Ariella Pace Jeansonne, their mother Sharon Pace, other relatives, and friends.

Joseph Rodriguez and Helena Pycior
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee



Joseph C. Miller

1939–2019

Historian of World
Slavery; Former AHA
President

Joseph Calder Miller, 79, professor emeritus at the University of Virginia and former president of the American Historical Association, died in Charlottesville, Virginia, on March 12, 2019, from cancer. Miller held the T. Cary Johnson Jr. Chair in History and served as dean of arts and sciences (1990–95) at the University of Virginia. In addition to his presidency of the AHA (1998), he served as president of the African Studies Association (2005–06) and was one of the editors of the *Journal of African History* from 1990 to 1997. In 2018, he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Miller was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the son of a local businessman. After earning a BA from Wesleyan University in 1961 and an MBA at Northwestern University, he returned to Cedar Rapids to go into business. He soon decided to pursue an academic career and was accepted into the Program in Comparative Tropical History at the University of Wisconsin, where he studied with Jan Vansina. He received his MA in 1967 and his PhD in 1972; his thesis was published as *Kings and Kinsmen: Early Mbundu States in Angola* (1976). The book made an important contribution to the study of state formation and innovatively viewed oral traditions symbolically rather than literally. In 1972, he joined the faculty of the University of Virginia, where spent the next 46 years.

Miller's most important work was *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830* (1988), a massive study of the Portuguese African empire, the internal dynamics of Portugal's African partners, and the slave trade's links to Europe and Brazil. In this and in subsequent works, Miller brought to the study of slavery an appreciation of currency, debt, credit, markets, prices, and factors of supply. He often commented on how his MBA studies shaped his understanding of economic variables in historical change. *Way of Death* is one of the most exhaustive studies of the slave trade ever written; it won the Herskovits Prize of the African Studies Association for the best book in African studies in 1989.

Miller participated in countless conferences in all parts of the world and produced a stream of articles, book chapters, and edited books. In 2005, he was invited to give the first David Brion Davis Lectures at Yale University's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. Published as *The Problem of Slavery as History: A Global Approach* (2012), the lectures pulled together many of his reflections on the 30,000-year history of slavery. Miller rejected the idea that slavery was a static institution in favor of one that focused not on slavery, but on slaving, which Miller treated as a process that constantly changed. He also produced a major bibliography, *Slavery and Slaving in World History* (1985), which had over 10,000 entries when first published and has been expanded in different forms over the years. At the time of his death, Miller was working on a global history of slavery.

Despite the demands of a busy career, Miller always found time for others. In October 2018, a colloquium was held in his honor at Harvard University, where many spoke of his generosity as a teacher, mentor, and colleague, his ability to communicate his passion for history, his skill as an editor, and his willingness to give of himself. Young scholars talked of how welcoming he was. "I have never met a scholar so intelligent, humble, and generous," wrote one. Another spoke of his "infectious love of teaching and a passion for delving into history's intellectual complexities."

Joe Miller is survived by his wife, Mary Catherine Wimer, who with two of his children, Julia Miller and Calder Miller, were at his bedside when he died. He also leaves a son, John Miller, and was preceded in death by his daughter Laura Miller. Among his other surviving family members are his brother and sister-in-law, James and Marlene Miller, and their family, as well as his ex-wife, Janet Miller.

Kenda Mutongi
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Martin Klein
University of Toronto (emeritus)



Elisabeth Israels Perry

1939–2018

Historian of Women and
Politics; AHA Member

Elisabeth Israels Perry, a feminist political historian widely admired for her formidable research and vivid prose, and for restoring women's activism to the broad currents of progressive politics in the first half of the 20th century, died on November 11, 2018. Her final book, *After the Vote: Feminist Politics in La Guardia's New York*, completed while she struggled with several forms of cancer, was just published by Oxford University Press.

Elisabeth was born in New York City on March 29, 1939, the daughter of Carlos Israels and Irma Commanday. Although she lived in many places over her long life, intellectually she never fully left the great metropolis in which she was born. She began her career as a historian of the French reformation; as an undergraduate, she studied at Bard College, Brandeis University, and the University of California, Los Angeles, receiving her BA in 1960. She pursued graduate studies in history at UCLA; a Fulbright award sent her to Paris. She received her PhD in 1967, publishing her doctoral research as *From Theology to History: French Religious Controversy and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes* (1973).

In the 1980s, she shifted to US history, embracing the challenge of exploring the life and political circumstances of her grandmother, a titanic figure in New York City politics whose career had been overshadowed by the famous men with whom she collaborated. *Belle Moskowitz: Feminine Politics and the Exercise of Power in the Age of Alfred E. Smith* (1987) restored Moskowitz to her rightful position as one of the builders of modern New York and a trailblazer for women and political life in the 20th century.

Reviewers noted Perry's "indefatigable and extensive research," her "thoughtful and critical historical analysis," her sensitivity to the interaction of the personal and the political, and her construction of "an elegant narrative framework." These descriptions are also characteristic of *After the Vote*, which charts the political triumphs and challenges of New York women like her grandmother and those

who followed her as they fought for suffrage, then moved into the political life of the city and state, fighting patriarchal obstacles all the way.

Elisabeth began her professorial career at the University of Colorado Boulder in 1967. The next year, she was one of two faculty members who publicly refused to sign a loyalty oath there and later resigned her professorship, returning to California after two years. There she met Lewis Perry, a recently divorced professor of American history at SUNY Buffalo, who had flown across the country to spend time with his son, Curtis. There, two friends set them up on a blind date. They would be married 48 years.

In the decades that followed, Elisabeth and Lewis would have two children, Susanna and David, while often struggling to overcome the professional challenges of a dual-career academic marriage and the sexist realities of the culture of higher education. Still, she and Lewis persevered. They moved to Bloomington, Indiana, in 1979, when Lewis became editor of the *Journal of American History* and a professor at Indiana University. Elisabeth took visiting positions at the University of Cincinnati, the University of Iowa, and Brooklyn College.

Elisabeth Perry was a notable teacher. She directed seven National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminars in women's history for schoolteachers. At St. Louis University, where she held a joint appointment with Lewis Perry as the John Francis Bannon Professor of History, she served as interim chair of women's studies and as faculty adviser for a student production of *The Vagina Monologues*.

Elisabeth Perry served as president of the Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era in 1998–2000. Her career included four years as director of the MA Program in Women's History at Sarah Lawrence College and seven years as director of the Humanities Program at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

She is survived by her husband and three children, her four brothers, and her loving dogs, Heidi and Rusty. Her papers will be archived at the Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History at Smith College. Her family welcomes memorial donations in her name to the League of Women Voters of New York City or to any organization dedicated to advancing the cause of feminist politics.

David Perry
University of Minnesota

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