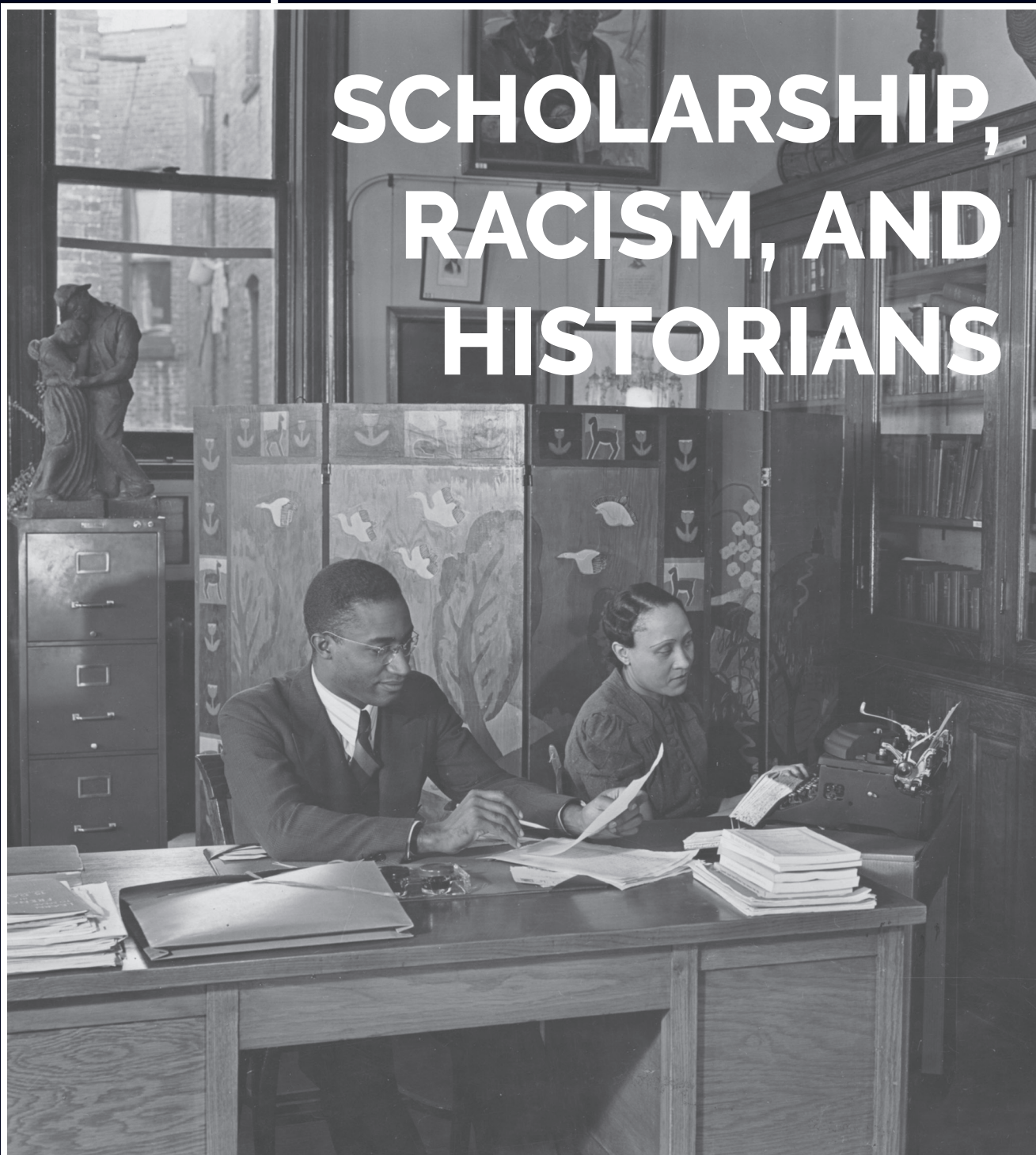


*The newsmagazine of the American Historical Association*

# PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

Volume 59: 2  
February 2021

## SCHOLARSHIP, RACISM, AND HISTORIANS





AMERICAN  
HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION

135th ANNUAL MEETING  
**NEW ORLEANS**  
JANUARY 6-9, 2022

## Call for Proposals for the 135th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association

**The AHA's annual meeting is the largest yearly gathering of historians in the United States.**

All historians are welcome and encouraged to submit proposals. The AHA also invites historically focused proposals from colleagues in related disciplines and from AHA affiliated societies. The Program Committee will consider all proposals that advance the study, teaching, and public presentation of history.

The Association seeks submissions on the histories of all places, periods, people, and topics; on the uses of diverse sources and methods, including digital history; and on theory and the uses of history itself in a wide variety of venues.

**We invite proposals for sessions in a variety of formats and encourage lively interaction among presenters and with the audience.**

### Session Proposals

Sessions last for 90 minutes. Most sessions will be limited to four speakers plus a chair. The Program Committee will accept proposals for complete sessions only. We encourage organizers to build panels that bring together diverse perspectives.

### Poster Proposals

The meeting will feature a poster session to allow historians to share their research through visual materials. Proposals for single, individual presentations may be submitted as posters.

.....

The Program Committee welcomes proposals from all historians, whatever their institutional affiliation or status, and historians working outside the United States. With the exception of foreign scholars and those from other disciplines, all persons appearing on the program must be members of the AHA, although membership is not required to submit a proposal. All participants must register for the meeting when registration opens. The Association aspires to represent the full diversity of its membership at the annual meeting.

**Electronic submission only, by midnight PST on February 15, 2021**

Before applying, please review the annual meeting guidelines  
and more information at [historians.org/proposals](https://historians.org/proposals).

**Questions about policies, modes of presentation, and the electronic submission process?**

Contact [annualmeeting@historians.org](mailto:annualmeeting@historians.org).

**Questions about the content of proposals?**

Contact Program Committee chair Mark Ravina, University of Texas, Austin ([ravinaaha2022@gmail.com](mailto:ravinaaha2022@gmail.com))  
and co-chair Margaret Salazar-Porzio, National Museum of American History ([salazar-porzio@si.edu](mailto:salazar-porzio@si.edu)).



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## ON THE COVER

This month, the executive director's column describes the AHA's new initiative to document and reckon with its role in the dissemination and legitimization of racist historical scholarship. As part of that project, the AHA will address questions about how the Association contributed to the neglect of work by scholars of color. In "Diversity Demands Struggle," David A. Varel chronicles how historian Lawrence Reddick fought to center the work and perspectives of Black historians in the mid-20th century. The AHA is committed to understanding its role in the evolution and persistence of American racism and to identifying what it can do going forward.

*Courtesy of the Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library Archives. Public domain*

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News magazine of the

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ASHLEY E. BOWEN

## TOWNHOUSE NOTES

*Finding My People at the Annual Meeting*

I’ve found my people!” I exclaimed upon returning from my first AHA annual meeting. Hyped up on history, with too little sleep, new books picked up in the exhibit hall, possibilities for collaboration, and my first meeting with a potential publisher, I returned from Atlanta in 2016 reenergized and focused on my last year of graduate school. Late-stage dissertation work is lonely, at best, and outright isolating and depressing at worst. The chance to present research to my peers, gain useful and respectful feedback on it, and generally nerd out was more valuable than I anticipated.

I recognize that my experience at that annual meeting was, perhaps for a graduate student, unusual. We met in Atlanta that year, so I didn’t have to brave polar vortexes and snow (as I would in Denver and Washington, DC, in subsequent years). I wasn’t on the job market, so I avoided the particular brand of existential dread and performance anxiety that comes along with that (though the AHA has since stopped hosting job interviews). My panel chair was incredibly generous with his time and feedback before the meeting, making sure that, as a first-time presenter, I was prepared and supported.

Joining the AHA staff and attending the meeting in that capacity was something I looked forward to this year. I hoped to meet all of you, shake your hands, and learn about your work. I wanted to explain what *Perspectives on History* is and why you should pitch us. Most importantly, I was excited to drink coffee in Seattle with all you wonderful history nerds and remember why it is that I’ve dedicated my career to history.

Typically, the February issue covers the annual meeting, showcasing everything from attendees’ history-themed tattoos to panels, workshops, and plenary sessions. In 2021, we are instead covering Virtual AHA throughout the year as meetings manager Debbie Ann Doyle and her team work to produce fabulous, informative webinars, workshops, receptions, and other events in a fully online environment. Virtual AHA is not a replacement for the annual meeting

but a yearlong platform of online opportunities to bring together communities of historians, build professional relationships, discuss scholarship, and engage in professional and career development. The work of Debbie and her team has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I am reminded, yet again, why historians are “my people.”

We may be calling the series of webinars and other events Virtual AHA because it is all happening online, but there is nothing virtual about the work scholars are presenting, the valuable advice they’re dispensing, or the connections being made. Likewise, there’s nothing virtual about the very real discounts on books available through the Virtual Exhibit Hall. Though Zoom fatigue is absolutely real, I’ve nevertheless found myself inspired by my colleagues’ scholarship and motivated to complete some of my own projects as a result of their presentations.

While I do miss the hallway chatter between sessions and the swag available in the exhibit hall (I recently had to *buy my own pens!*), my footwear is even more sensible this year: I’ve been wearing slippers for most of the sessions I’ve attended. More important than general comfort, though, is the accessibility of Virtual AHA. It is free and AHA membership is not required to participate. Additionally, the team is working hard to ensure that all staff-produced webinars have automated live captioning, and captioning is available for other events by request. Hopefully, in a year when so much has been lost, these efforts enable more historians to come together.

We closed our coverage last year with “On to Seattle!” Although we’re barely halfway through Virtual AHA, I want to close by saying, “On to New Orleans!” The beignets will taste that much sweeter when we’re all together again in 2022. Until then, please continue to join us at Virtual AHA events this winter and spring. P

*Ashley E. Bowen is the editor of Perspectives on History. She tweets @AEBowenPhD.*



# Grants for AHA members

The AHA is pleased to support the study and exploration of history through our annual research grants program.

Learn more at [historians.org/grants](http://historians.org/grants).

The deadline for all research grant applications is February 15.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU *LAUGHED OUT LOUD* WHILE READING A GOOD HISTORY BOOK?

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"A veteran activist uses history as a road map to a more progressive future"  
— Kirkus Reviews

## How to Trick People into Doing the Right Thing

BYRON KENNARD

Social progress is achieved not just by leaders who are wise and *virtuous*, but by leaders who are wise and *devious*.

That's the awful truth, and it's one of history's best kept secrets. Deviousness, after all, is reprehensible and beneath the contempt of people who are decent and moral, isn't it?

With insightful anecdotes and historical notes, Kennard's book defends deviousness as an indispensable way for public-minded leaders to navigate democracy's fundamental flaws -- a public that's selfish and shortsighted, ignorant and gullible, too quick to despise that which is different, and too prone to deny bad news even when verified by hard scientific evidence.



# RANSACKING DEMOCRACY

*AHA Statement on the Events of January 6*

The American Historical Association condemns the actions of those who, on January 6, stormed the United States Capitol, the seat of the nation's legislature, the heart of its democratic form of governance. This assault on the very principle of representative democracy received recent explicit and indirect support from the White House and from certain senators and representatives themselves. Not since 1814, when the British looted and burned the Capitol, has the United States witnessed such a blatant attack on the "People's House."

We deplore the inflammatory rhetoric of all the political leaders who have refused to accept the legitimacy of the results of the 2020 election and thereby incited the mob.

Everything has a history. What happened at the Capitol is part of a historical process. Over the past few years, cynical politicians have nurtured and manipulated for their own bigoted and self-interested purposes the sensibilities of the rioters. We deplore the inflammatory rhetoric of all the political leaders who have refused to accept the legitimacy of the results of the 2020 election and thereby incited the mob—and this on the day when the nation reported 3,865 COVID-19 deaths, the highest number reported in a single day since the pandemic began.

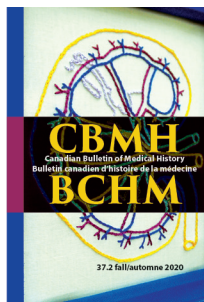
We note with dismay the iconography of the banners carried by the mob—the flag with the visage of the president emblazoned on it, as if loyalty were due an individual and not the rule of law, and the flag of the Confederacy, signaling violence and sedition. Not by

coincidence, those people who attacked the Capitol have been described by the current president and his advisers as "great patriots" and "American patriots." The rioters were neither.

A day that began with two significant "firsts"—the election of Georgia's first African American senator and that state's first Jewish senator—ended with Congress performing its duties according to the Constitution. Yet during the day we witnessed the unprecedented spectacle of a group of Americans desecrating the sacred space of the nation's Capitol, and terrorizing everyone in it.

As historians, we call upon our fellow citizens and elected representatives to abide by the law and tell the truth. Our democracy demands nothing less of ourselves and of our leaders. **P**

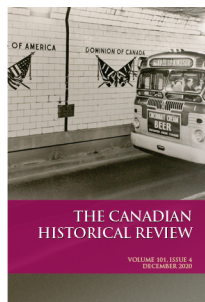
*Approved by the AHA Council on January 8, 2021. For a full list of signatories, please see the online version of this statement.*



### CANADIAN BULLETIN OF MEDICAL HISTORY

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CBMH is the leading national journal for the history of medicine, health, and biomedical science, situating historical scholarship within local, regional, and international contexts.



### THE CANADIAN HISTORICAL REVIEW

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Offering comprehensive analysis of the events that have shaped Canada, CHR publishes articles that examine Canadian history from multicultural and multidisciplinary perspectives.



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### CANADIAN JOURNAL OF HISTORY

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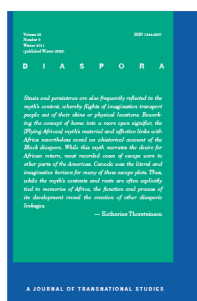
Publishing in both English and French, CJH features articles and reviews geared to all professional historians, as well as to anyone interested in expert historical scholarship.



### CANADIAN REVIEW OF AMERICAN STUDIES

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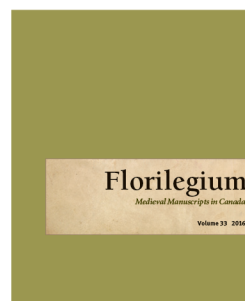
As the leading American studies journal outside the United States, CRAS aims to further multi- and interdisciplinary analyses of US culture and social relations between the US and Canada.



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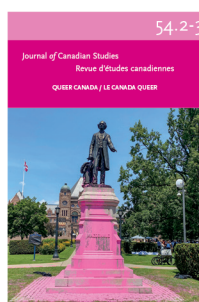
Comparative in nature, GSI includes articles and reviews as well as regular features to engage and immerse readers in current news and activities in the field of genocide and human rights studies.



### INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CANADIAN STUDIES

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IJCS offers a comprehensive window into the global study of Canada.



### JOURNAL OF CANADIAN STUDIES

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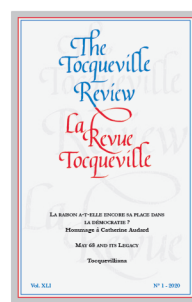
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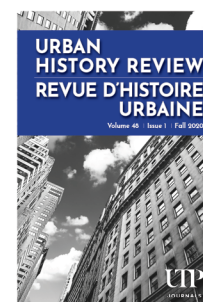
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JACQUELINE JONES

## WHY STUDY YOU-KNOW-WHAT?

*Our Reasons for Doing What We Do*



**W**hy study history? The answers depend on who asks the question and who ventures a reply.

We all have our own reasons for doing what we do. I came to a study of history via a curiosity about my hometown, a village in New Castle County, Delaware. I also appreciated the aesthetics of doing archival research and the sheer enjoyment of assembling a coherent story from disparate, scattered pieces of evidence. Everybody loves a good story, one with a beginning, a middle, and an end. And we crave encounters with characters, in the past as in the present, men and women who are fascinating in their own way, whether admirable or repellant. The readers of *Perspectives* well know that on a personal level, the act of crafting these stories, to enlighten and entertain, can be immensely satisfying.

Yet even if we historians have our reasons for studying the past, we often find ourselves needing to make the case to people not in the discipline—our students, museum visitors, grant officers at funding agencies, readers of newspaper op-eds, corporate executives, heads of government agencies, budget-conscious deans and provosts. We might be good at “doing” history, but are we good at convincing other people that learning about history is worthwhile?

Standing before a class of 400 undergraduates in a US history introductory course on the first day of the semester, I have always felt compelled to give my students some good reasons to be there. In Texas, the state legislature requires that all public university undergraduates take two courses in US history. Anyone who has ever taught a required course knows it’s a challenge. The instructor must (try to) get students engaged in a topic that some have little interest in and others actively despise. I always thought I owed it to the skeptics to make a pitch and try to convince them that learning about the United States since 1865 was worth their time.

I often began by reciting the reasons why an understanding of history is good for you. Over 20 years ago, Peter Stearns offered an elegant rumination on the value of a history education: history helps us understand people and societies; history helps us understand change and how the society we live in came to be; history contributes to moral understanding; history provides identity; studying history is essential for good citizenship; a study of history helps to develop essential skills; and history is useful in the world of work.

We might be good at “doing” history, but are we good at convincing other people that learning about history is worthwhile?

Last fall, Stearns updated his essay to account for changes in the economy, higher education, and the discipline over the last quarter century or so. Today, he notes, any discussion of the value of the discipline needs to highlight the kinds of jobs available to history majors; we cannot simply ignore our students’ well-founded concern for their future. We must give them license to study and enjoy history without the worry that they will never be able to make a living if they do so in a serious way. To that end, my department at the University of Texas at Austin has developed a web page called “What History Majors Do,” and the AHA also has a section on its website called “Careers for History Majors.”

In his updated essay, Stearns also suggests that we must stress how historical data can help us to understand the diverse, dynamic world we are living in now—a history that informs the present. In recent decades, the study of history has expanded in terms of content, methodologies,

and digital tools to provide context for complex contemporary issues, from racial ideologies and the global economy to pandemics and politics. I recall my daughter coming home from high school one afternoon, throwing her schoolbooks on the kitchen table, and announcing her history homework assignment for the evening with considerable dread and disgust. This 16-year-old, so focused on the here and now, had a hard time wrapping her head around the idea that people and events in the past could or should matter to her. “It’s history—get over it, Mom!” she exclaimed. By linking historical knowledge to the ideas and things people care about today, we might have a better chance of convincing a larger audience that what we do is socially useful work.

We can make the case that the study of history is an outlet for creative expression.

What other arguments might resonate with the resistant or the indifferent? The late civil rights activist and US representative John Lewis (1940–2020) wrote an essay that he asked be published the day of his funeral (July 17, 2020). In it, he wrote about the history of reformers and radicals and their strategies for change:

You must also study and learn the lessons of history because humanity has been involved in this soul-wrenching, existential struggle for a very long time. People on every continent have stood in your shoes, through decades and centuries before you. The truth does not change, and that is why the answers worked out long ago can help you find solutions to the challenges of our time.

Lewis was making the case that an understanding of historic fights for justice is a precondition for meaningful social change.

Still, not everyone is interested in social movements. And most students are focused on another area of study in any case, with their sights set firmly on careers such as nursing, forest management, pharmacy, law, or journalism. Here we might make the case to them—and to college and university administrators—that all occupations have a history. One’s vocation can be enhanced and enriched by an appreciation for the way it has developed over time, and for the people in the past who helped to shape it into what it is today.

Finally, we can make the case that the study of history is an outlet for creative expression—literary, visual, and aural. It is a privilege and a challenge to be able to write or teach or craft exhibits with a particular audience in mind. Some students find their way to history via assignments that draw on their particular talents—as budding writers or filmmakers, as visual learners or musicians. As historians, we have an opportunity to seek innovative means to report on what we have found in the archives or other kinds of repositories of information about the past.

Returning to that big undergraduate history survey course: No instructor can convince a resistant, even resentful student on the first day of class that an understanding of history opens up exciting new realms of knowledge and experience. Students have to arrive at the conclusion on their own over the course of the semester. As the weeks go by, they might begin to focus on a particular piece of the historical enterprise that intrigues them—an appreciation for the history of their own communities and cultures, for the words of people who lived in the past, for historical evidence and different interpretations of it, for the different ways we bring history to life, for the pieces of a mystery that is the great human drama. And certainly if we can convey to other people the excitement that drew us historians to the discipline to begin with, we need not offer a laundry list of the reasons why the study of history is good for all of us.

In the end, we make our best case when we describe our own journey as historians, for there are as many compelling responses to the question “Why study history?” as there are people who ask and historians who answer. **P**

*Jacqueline Jones is the president of the AHA.*



SARAH WEICKSEL AND JAMES GROSSMAN

## RACIST HISTORIES AND THE AHA



The AHA has begun an initiative to document and reckon with the Association's role in the dissemination and legitimization of racist historical scholarship that has had a deep and lasting influence on public culture. What damage has the AHA done? What responsibilities and obligations, and to whom, need to be identified, for historians in general and the AHA in particular? What should and can the AHA and historians do going forward? Before we figure out where to go, we need to understand where we have been. The AHA needs to account for the people, practices, events, and policies that brought us to where we are, both as a professional association and as a leading force in the practice of history in the United States.

Founded in 1884 as a professional membership organization, the AHA was incorporated by Congress in 1889 for the promotion of historical studies. The discipline's professionalization occurred during a decade that was rife with exclusionary practices preceding the enactment of Jim Crow laws and that saw further assault on Indigenous people's rights through the passage of the Dawes Act. At the 1893 AHA annual meeting, Frederick Jackson Turner articulated his "frontier thesis," published as one of the most influential articles in the history of the discipline—and one that virtually ignored the presence of African Americans in the nation's supposedly formative process and cast Indigenous people largely as obstacles. The AHA's origins are intertwined with this racist and exclusionary historical context.

In its *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct*, the Association states:

Historians strive constantly to improve our collective and diverse understanding of the past through a complex process of critical dialogue—with each other, with the wider public, and with the historical record—in which we explore former lives and diverse worlds in search of answers to the most compelling questions of our own time and place.

This "process of critical dialogue" with one's own past, as a nation, an association, or any other entity, is essential to institutional integrity—with regard not only to racism, but to other aspects of thought, culture, and sensibility as well.

We will begin by investigating and documenting the Association's role in generating, disseminating, legitimating, and promoting histories that have helped contribute to the evolution and institutionalization of racist ideas, racial discrimination, and racist violence in the United States. Support of racist scholarship has its complement in participation in racist practices. We frequently refer to the AHA as having three levers to initiate change: the powers to legitimate, to convene, and to inspire. This initiative will assess the Association's engagement in racist practices in these contexts. We aspire to something better, and we must inspire our colleagues to think about what can and should be done with what we learn from this exploration.

We have identified three areas for research into the Association's practices and its promotion of racist scholarship: the dissemination of scholarship; institutional practices and governance; and prizes.

### Dissemination of Scholarship

How did the Association legitimate scholarship that justified (or silently accepted) elements of American history that are central to national development and that are at the same time both derivatives of racist public culture and policy, and building blocks of systemic racism itself? This includes, for example, the forced removal of Indigenous people, enslavement, the terrorism of Reconstruction's overthrow, the regime of Jim Crow, and the evolution of inequalities in areas such as wealth, income, educational opportunity, health, and treatment by law enforcement.

What roles have the Association's annual meeting and publications, including the *American Historical Review*, played

in legitimating racist scholarship? How has the Association's legitimation and promotion of such scholarship influenced its dissemination through the teaching of history not only in classrooms, but also in such venues as museums, parks, and memorials?

How has exclusion of categories of scholars limited their opportunities while at the same time impoverishing the work of the discipline? For example, how did the Association contribute to the overshadowing or outright dismissal of work by Black historians like Lawrence Reddick, highlighted in David Varel's article in this issue?

### **Institutional Practices and Governance**

How and when has the Association been complicit in the practice of racial segregation and other forms of discrimination in its role as a convener? Has the Association engaged in, or accepted, exclusionary or discriminatory practices through its programming, collaborations, business relationships, or other activities? Have there been exclusionary structures that have prevented qualified people of color from participating in AHA leadership or committees? How have these practices changed over time? How has activism within the discipline affected the Association's work?

### **Prizes**

How have prizes awarded by the AHA perpetuated notions of the American past that excluded marginalized populations or portrayed them in ways that distorted their lived experiences? It will not be possible to probe the actual deliberations of grant and prize committees, and we are not yet certain whether it will be possible to determine whether scholars of color were underrepresented on these committees relative to their proportion in the membership. Research into the content of prizewinning publications, however, should enable us to determine the extent to which racist scholarship was honored and hence legitimated and promoted by the AHA.

Why should the AHA undertake this project now? As the layers of systemic racism that Black Americans and others have been aware of for generations have finally reached the broader public consciousness, institutions have become increasingly aware of the imperative of confronting their own roles in perpetuating racist policies. The AHA referenced this in its *Statement on the History of Racist Violence in the United States*. For example, US colleges and universities have been exploring their racist histories for two decades, often with a special focus on entanglements with slavery.

To a considerable extent, a university's work in this regard points in obvious directions: sources of endowment, construction by enslaved workers, building names and monuments, segregation, and discrimination.

The AHA is not implicated in the same obvious ways. We have no named structures. Our origins do not coincide with the period of enslaved labor in the United States, and it is unlikely that the AHA ever used convict labor or its equivalent. Yet, for roughly eight decades between the AHA's founding and the federal prohibition of discrimination in public accommodations, the Association hosted annual meetings and other events. It functioned as a membership organization headquartered in Washington, DC, where segregation was both illegal and common for seven decades. Through decades of meetings and publications, the Association provided a platform for deeply racist historical scholarship.

Narrow, biased, and ideologically driven historical work can cast a long shadow once it is embedded in popular culture.

This scholarship is significant. It continues to have an impact, shaping public policy in various contexts. Many otherwise admirable efforts to address inequality, ranging from mortgage subsidies to social insurance, were influenced by racist thinking about the past or, at best, a blindness to the implications of racism on assumptions and structures. Moreover, narrow, biased, and ideologically driven historical work can cast a long shadow once it is embedded in popular culture. Even the most meticulously researched interpretations of historical evidence can struggle to displace narratives that have been discredited among scholars but persist in common discourse. The underlying racism of past historical work that the AHA legitimated has largely disappeared from the disciplinary surface with the passage of time and new historical scholarship, but lingers in popular culture and in institutional frameworks.

By undertaking this project, the AHA seeks to understand and document the complexity of its role in the evolution and persistence of American racism in order for the organization, and for historians, to use our knowledge and professional resources to chart pathways to a more just and equitable future. **P**

*Sarah Weicksel is director of research and publications at the AHA; she tweets @SarahWeicksel. James Grossman is executive director of the AHA; he tweets @JimGrossmanAHA.*



GABRIELLA VIRGINIA FOLSOM

## ADVOCACY BRIEFS

*AHA Champions Historians' Work, Free Speech, Funding, and Archival Access*

**D**uring the uncertainty of a global pandemic, a tumultuous election cycle, and increasing scrutiny of historians and their efforts, the AHA remains committed to advocating for historians, their invaluable work, and its centrality to the understanding of current events. In December and January, the AHA issued statements and letters defending a terminated faculty member, promoting access to records in archives at home and abroad, encouraging funding for historians, and bringing historical perspective to the heinous acts of domestic terrorism at the Capitol.

### AHA Expresses Concern Regarding Termination of History Professor

On December 22, the AHA sent a letter to the chancellor and provost of the University of Mississippi expressing concern about the university's decision not to renew the contract of Garrett Felber, assistant professor of history, and the possibility that Professor Felber's activism relating to racism and incarceration might have affected a decision on his employment status. The letter also raised questions of procedure regarding this disciplinary action, citing the AHA's *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct*.

### AHA Joins Coalition to Save National Archives Facility in Seattle

On January 4, the AHA joined the Washington state attorney general's office; the state of Oregon; 29 tribes, tribal entities, and Indigenous communities from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska; and eight community organizations, historic preservation organizations, and museums in filing a lawsuit "to halt the federal government's unlawful and procedurally deficient sale of the National Archives at Seattle facility." The government plans to transfer the Seattle facility's records, most of which have not been digitized, to archive centers in Kansas City, Missouri, and Riverside, California—rendering public access to the records difficult, if not impossible, for millions of users.

### AHA Expresses Solidarity with Mexican Historians

On January 4, the AHA issued a statement expressing solidarity with "professional historians affected by the extreme and arguably punitive fiscal retrenchment affecting Mexico's system of higher education." The AHA "reminds decision makers that the habits of mind and knowledge that derive from the study of history have never been more important and deserving of adequate funding than at the present moment."

### AHA Statement on Ransacking Democracy

On January 8, the AHA issued a statement condemning "the actions of those who, on January 6, stormed the United States Capitol, the seat of the nation's legislature, the heart of its democratic form of governance." The AHA deplores the "inflammatory rhetoric of all the political leaders who have refused to accept the legitimacy of the results of the 2020 election and thereby incited the mob." As of January 20, 61 organizations have signed onto the statement. See page 4 for the full statement. **P**

*Gabriella Virginia Folsom is the communications and operations assistant at the AHA. She tweets @gefolsom.*

# Eugen Weber Book Prize

The Department of History at UCLA encourages submissions for the 2022 Eugen Weber Book Prize in French History. A prize for the best book in modern French history (post 1815) over the previous two years, this award is named for eminent French historian Eugen Weber (1925-2007). Professor Weber served on the History faculty at UCLA from 1956 until 1993 and was renowned as a teacher and scholar for being able to bring the French and European past to life.

The Eugen Weber Book Prize in French History brings a cash award of \$15,000 and the winner will be announced at the American Historical Association annual meeting in January 2022. The author will be invited to visit UCLA to speak about his or her work and receive the prize during the spring of 2022.

Books eligible for the 2022 prize are those written in English or French and published in 2019 or 2020.

**The deadline for submissions is June 1, 2021. Submission information is available at <https://history.ucla.edu/content/eugen-weber-book-prize>.**



The 2020 Eugen Weber Book Prize was awarded to Christine Haynes, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, for her book *Our Friends the Enemies: The Occupation of France After Napoleon* (Harvard, 2018), a highly original analysis of the occupation of France following the Napoleonic wars.

Honorable Mention was awarded to James E. Connolly, University College London, for *The Experience of the Occupation in the Nord, 1914-1918: Living with the Enemy in First World War France* (Manchester University Press, 2018), a well-crafted study of the German occupation in the Nord during World War I.

For more information, visit <http://history.ucla.edu>.



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BETH DEBOLD

## RECONCILING PROFESSIONAL RIFTS

*Can Historians and Archivists Understand One Another Better?*

I was a brand-new master's student entering a history program in the fall of 2019, and my cohort was warned in no uncertain terms about the lack of job prospects. Although I entered the program to improve my skills for a job I already have, I was interested to see how the academic job market would be presented. My professors gave us a balanced and honest account of this reality, tempered with cautious encouragement.

From my perspective, the outlook is grim. Last year's AHA Jobs Report (*Perspectives on History*, February 2020) concludes that "We are now entering our second decade of anemic academic hiring, during which thousands of early-career historians have experienced disappointment, anger, and despair at the limited number of entry points into stable faculty employment." Experts are examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education, and universities

are making indefensible decisions to cut humanities programs. Although a few students in my program have left, I still see most of my cohort in class, but only a few are aiming for future careers in higher education.

This master's degree will be my second. I earned my first, a master's of science in library science, in 2013, and I have worked in libraries and archives since. Along with many of my colleagues, I decided to pursue a



Historians, archivists, and librarians will benefit if they are able to know one another better, and make arguments across professional roles for each other's value.

*Eric Brandt/Flickr/CC BY 2.0*



second graduate degree in a subject discipline because I felt it would improve my own scholarship as well as my ability to assist patrons who use the collections I help steward. I thought that my career path might be seen by my classmates and professors as a potential example for other aspiring young historians, and so I entered the program ready to offer information, advice, and mutual brainstorming to peers who might want to pursue careers like mine. Having worked in libraries for some time already, I was also aware I would likely need to explain the details of my work in depth and often—especially to anyone new to cultural heritage work. Most people who hear my job title, assistant curator at an independent special collections library, aren't really sure what I do all day. But I was still surprised by the lack of knowledge among professional historians about the kind of training most library and archives jobs require, and the readiness with which many professors suggest these careers to their students without providing crucial context.

Although there are many different kinds of careers in cultural heritage organizations available to historians, becoming a librarian or archivist requires an understanding of archival theory and library science, plus the skills and experience to put that knowledge into practice. Archivists must be able to select, appraise, arrange, describe, and provide access to primary sources, and justify their decisions by rooting them in professional theory. They must have a strong knowledge of professionally set standards of description, and they must be able to think about records in relation to other sources, their original intent, and whether or not they should even be saved. Likewise, special collections librarians and

curators are educated in preservation standards for rare books, paper, and artwork; collection development methodologies; how to conduct reference interviews; and how to catalog materials in an accessible and ethical manner. A master's degree in library or information science entails the successful completion of coursework in all of these areas, in addition to completing lengthy internships or part-time work. It is becoming more difficult to obtain a job as a librarian or archivist with experience alone—most job descriptions now require this degree.

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Historians are rightly quick to note the transferability of a professional historian's skill set, but as with all things, there are limits. While librarians and archivists are aware that we do not always possess the subject knowledge of a historian specializing in a particular period or person, it often feels as though many historians do not understand or value our training and skills as equal to theirs. The labor that goes into maintaining and building cultural heritage collections is intellectual, rigorous, and requires specific knowledge and training beyond what is offered in most history programs. I am far from the first to note the dissonant views historians and archivists have of one another. Francis X. Blouin and William G.

Rosenberg's book *Processing the Past* raised the alarm in 2011 about the fate of the cultural heritage sector if such professional divisions were allowed to continue. Michelle Caswell, associate professor of Archival Studies at UCLA, approaches the problem more bluntly, opining that "archivists have been relegated to the realm of practice, their work deskilled, their labor devalued, their expertise unacknowledged."

The many pieces published by librarians, archivists, and museum workers on this issue, combined with frequent stories about disrespect and mistreatment in interactions with researchers, make clear that there is a real problem with how professional historians relate to archivists' jobs, work, and institutions—and many historians seem to be unaware of this.

I believe that the answer, at least in part, is to integrate the work of galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM) professionals more deeply into academic spaces. This has already begun happening at schools where public history is required of all history majors, in dual-degree programs, and in interdisciplinary workshops or courses like those offered by the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia. Despite all of these intersections, we still seem to be looking past one another's professional identities, instead of outward together in the same direction. It is time to imagine the next level of engagement we can have with each other's professional lives, and how we can better present such career possibilities to students.

The AHA's recent efforts toward building Career Diversity initiatives, along with programs like the American Council of Learned Societies' Public Fellows Program, suggest that

historians and other academics are hard at work reshaping how the discipline relates to the world outside of academia. In 2019, the AHA's James Grossman and Emily Swafford penned "The Purpose-Driven PhD," a piece representative of such efforts. They discussed the ways history departments are pivoting to help students learn more about where they might find employment and success outside of higher education. I'm someone who is still mostly outside the academy, however, and it is striking to me that such initiatives still appear to treat the jobs crisis historians are experiencing as a problem for historians to solve. Recent efforts to place graduate students in internships are an important start, but they often do not go far enough in reimagining the kind of training that historians receive. These are, too often, seen as additions to a students' training rather than as an integral part of their development as historians. While departments may be adding interdisciplinary training and attempting to "make the case" for the value a professional historian can bring to a nonacademic workplace, there is little effort to reach out and build relationships with archivists, curators, and others. A truly interdisciplinary initiative, in which representatives from these workplaces can offer constructive criticism and make suggestions about how history programs might need to change in order for historians to be successful in other careers, would go a long way both toward repairing strained relationships *and* preparing students for success.

From my perspective as a working special collections professional, historians have been too slow to collaborate with librarians and archivists. It's important to note that, like jobs in higher education, library and

archives jobs are also becoming increasingly difficult to find. We are all in a hiring crisis, together. My point in this piece is not to draw property lines between who gets what jobs in such a moment of crisis—ultimately, administrators across the board are the ones building this false scarcity, when professors, librarians, and archivists alike are facing dwindling numbers of positions but not a reduction in expected output. We will all benefit if we are able to know one another better, and make arguments across professional roles for each other's value.

From my perspective,  
historians have been  
too slow to  
collaborate with  
librarians and  
archivists.

My advice to historians is to take advantage of colleagues working in libraries and archives—but as peers with robust, valuable experience and unique perspectives. Bring us in to speak with classes; involve us in career panels and podcasts; and consider sitting down with a local School of Library & Information Science (or other related professional disciplines) to create genuinely interdisciplinary programming. Work with your college archivist to co-teach a class using primary sources. Read and cite the work that librarians and archivists are publishing in digital humanities and primary source literacy, and through exhibitions and curatorial work. Take some time to attend the talks of professional organizations also interested in addressing the shared challenges libraries, archives, and historians all face. Take advantage of training offered at institutions like the

Rare Book School, the Society of the History of Authorship, Readership, and Printing (SHARP), and the Bibliographical Society of America, all of which place librarians, archivists, and historians next to one another in professional spaces.

If we want to change how and where trained historians succeed professionally, the changes need to begin with how new historians are trained, but not only in the types of training that are offered or in locating new kinds of internships. It must also begin with how different cultural heritage and humanities professions acknowledge one another's work and imagine our collaborative possibilities. **P**

*Beth DeBold is the assistant curator of collections at the Folger Shakespeare Library and a master's student in history at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She tweets at @eliza\_audacis. All views are her own, and not representative of her employer.*

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DAVID A. VAREL

# DIVERSITY DEMANDS STRUGGLE

*Lessons from Lawrence Reddick's Crusade for Black History*



Lawrence Reddick with an assistant at the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature in the early 1940s.  
*Courtesy of the Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library Archives. Public domain*

**BLACK LIVES MATTER.** Over the last year, both the idea and the movement have awakened a new consciousness in many Americans. The historical profession, however, has long understood that Black lives matter, and indeed much of the vibrancy and dynamism of scholarship over the last half century can be traced to this recognition. Yet the historical discipline, too, was late to foreground race and the African American experience, and the way it did so was deeply problematic. This history is a cautionary tale that we should bear in mind, even as this thriving subfield has emerged as one of the most sophisticated and diverse within the profession.

There is no better guide into this troubled history than the long-neglected life and thought of Lawrence Dunbar Reddick (1910–95). Reddick was one of a generation of scholars working during the Jim Crow era who laid the groundwork for modern Black history. But these historians' contributions and critical perspectives have long been marginalized to everyone's detriment.

Centralizing the Black experience in the 1970s occurred only after two generations of Black scholars had laboriously built up the field, developed scholarly journals, collected and organized primary sources, and devised interpretive breakthroughs. The problem was that the history discipline, like American society generally, was still deeply segregated during the mid-20th century, so Black scholars' pioneering efforts were all but ignored.

The history discipline was still deeply segregated during the mid-20th century, so Black scholars' pioneering efforts were all but ignored.

Then, finally, white historians became interested in Black history and brought a perception of legitimacy to the field. Notable early examples include Herbert Aptheker, August Meier, and Kenneth Stampp, but the watershed came in the 1960s and 1970s. Inspired by the civil rights movement and encouraged by their advisers to investigate the origins of racial caste and Black protest, white scholars in the 1970s published a proliferation of landmark studies, especially on slavery. In 1974 alone, these included Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll*; Ira Berlin's *Slaves without Masters*; Peter H. Wood's *Black Majority*; and Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman's notorious *Time on the Cross*. The fact that all of these scholars were white men underlines how the process

by which the historical profession came to prioritize African American history was enmeshed in the larger racial (and gender) inequalities of the time.

Reddick was uniquely situated to critique this New Black History. As a little-known but indefatigable Black historian, he helped to build up Black history and put it in service to the larger freedom struggle. Reddick was part of Carter G. Woodson's inner circle of Black historians in the 1930s and earned his PhD in history from the University of Chicago in 1939. He served as a curator of the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature, History, and Prints in the 1940s. As an activist, he participated in the Double Victory campaign during World War II and the decolonization movement thereafter. A co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, he served on its board of directors and as its historian for decades, and he mentored Martin Luther King Jr. In 1970, Reddick assumed a tenured appointment in the history department at Temple University. From that perch, he launched a scathing critique of the New Black History and the institutional racism that underpinned it.

Although Reddick had long criticized white control over Black subjects, the breaking point came in 1974 with the publication of *Time on the Cross*. Using flawed statistical analysis, Fogel and Engerman argued that American slavery was not so terrible, reinforcing the Lost Cause narrative. The book was widely rebuked by historians and had little lasting influence, except as a case study in history gone awry. Far more influential were the more nuanced studies of slavery and its aftermath by white scholars such as Genovese, Wood, Berlin, Stampp, Leon Litwack, and Lawrence Levine, as well as Black scholars such as John Blassingame and Sterling Stuckey. Yet, as a Bancroft Prize-winning trade book praised in high-profile periodicals, *Time on the Cross* had a sizable public impact.

Reddick responded with a stinging rebuke of the *New York Review of Books* for handing over its review of the book to white scholar C. Vann Woodward. They published his "Complaint," in which he wrote, "Why does *The New York Review* so consistently turn over books on the Black experience to non-Black reviewers? . . . Is it another indication of 'liberal' racism that there are no recognizable names of Blacks on *The New York Review's* editorial board?" Reddick could have targeted his criticism on the narrower issue of Woodward's lack of expertise on either slavery or Black history, but, tellingly, he focused instead on Woodward's whiteness. This reflected the sensibilities of the Black Power era, when the systematic exclusion of Black people from positions of power was a foremost concern. Such criticisms were, of course, controversial, and they put Reddick at odds

with contemporaries such as John Hope Franklin, his Fisk University classmate and a leading scholar of Black history, who prioritized a color-blind approach to scholarship.

In April 1975, Reddick helped organize a conference at Queens College, where predominantly Black intellectuals strategized over how to critique the “white takeover of Black history,” as Reddick dubbed it. Black scholars, including economist Julian Ellison and historian Vincent Harding, convened with white figures such as Herbert Aptheker to stridently rebuke some of the new books. Despite their differences, Harding criticized them all as an attempt “to deny slavery, to deny the ‘burden of slavery.’” The group claimed that the real problem lay in the structures in academia and publishing that led to this bumper crop of white-authored books.

Two months before the conference, the *New York Times* published an interview with Reddick in which he articulated these criticisms for a public audience. He explained how generations of white historians had ignored sources from African Americans themselves when writing histories of slavery and other topics. Slave narratives, Colored Conventions, and Works Progress Administration interviews of formerly enslaved people were all bypassed in favor of sources such as plantation records. His point was clear: Black scholars knew better. They were the true experts on these topics, and they were the ones who had safeguarded and archived Black sources for generations. Accordingly, they should be positioned institutionally, as professors and other professionals, to preside over the study of Black people.

Reddick’s case was made stronger by the fact that even those white historians who were incorporating Black sources did so only on the heels of Black scholars. For instance, the WPA slave narratives were fundamental to the work of Genovese, George P. Rawick, and many others. But absent among the praise heaped upon these scholars’ books was a recognition of the work done by the Black scholars who had not merely inaugurated the gathering of the sources but had long ago developed pioneering interpretations of them.

Reddick’s 1937 state-of-the-field essay in the *Journal of Negro History* demonstrates this. It proposed new studies of slavery that explored enslaved people’s resistance and viewed the institution “through the eyes of the bondsman himself.” Those ideas did not become prevalent among white scholars for another three decades. Segregation had effectively cordoned off these insights from the mainstream profession, diminishing scholarship for a generation. Indeed, white historian David Brion Davis, whose *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*

(1966) netted him a Pulitzer Prize, later confessed to being oblivious to Black historians’ work during the 1950s.

Given all this, it’s not hard to understand Reddick and other Black historians’ frustrations in the 1970s. Now that the wall of segregation in the profession had been breached, white scholars, as Reddick saw it, still monopolized positions of authority. Only now they were using that authority not to marginalize the field, but—perhaps worse—to preside over its study. Black history positions were opening at universities, and research grants were being awarded, but not enough of these jobs and grants went to Black scholars, in Reddick’s view.

## Although Reddick lost plenty of battles, in many ways he won the war.

Although Reddick lost plenty of these battles, in many ways he won the war. Black scholars refused to surrender Black history to others, and they became the leaders of the field by the 1980s. This was nowhere more apparent than in the landmark conference that resulted in the important book *The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future* (1986). Here Reddick interacted with Darlene Clark Hine, Thomas C. Holt, James D. Anderson, and others among the next generation of Black scholars who would remake the landscape of Black history in the United States.

Thanks to their efforts, Black history is now on strong footing, with a deep bench of Black historians available to fill the majority of tenure-track positions in the field. But once again stasis and backsliding has accompanied the progress. The adjunctification of the professoriate generally and the failure of other historical fields to recruit African Americans has undermined broader progress. The historical discipline remains insufficiently diverse (racially, socioeconomically, and otherwise), and thus susceptible to the same types of flawed interpretations and institutional inequities that governed university life during Reddick’s time.

To confront these challenges, we will need to engage in ceaseless struggle, as Reddick and his generation of Black scholars have proven. We can start by making this “lost generation” lost no more. **P**

*David A. Varel is an adjunct professor of history at Metropolitan State University of Denver and the author of two books, most recently The Scholar and the Struggle: Lawrence Reddick’s Crusade for Black History and Black Power (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2020).*



SCOTT FRALIN AND JESSICA TAYLOR

# THE STORY DOESN'T FIT IN A GRID

*Remote Research, Curation, and Design in The Land Speaks*



*The Land Speaks*, a Virginia Tech Libraries exhibition focused on the Monacan Indian Nation and the James River, chronicles recent developments in historic preservation, environmental justice, and tribal history.

*Thea Ganoel/Wikimedia Commons/public domain*

**R**ASSAWEK, THE HISTORIC capital of the Monacan Indian Nation, juts into the quiet water at the confluence of the Rivanna and James Rivers in Virginia's foothills. Early American historians know this place, occupied by Native people for thousands of years, from John Smith's 1612 visit. Today the site has reappeared in the historical record, at the confluence of developments in historic preservation, environmental justice, and tribal history. In 2016, the James River Water Authority proposed construction of a compressor station on the site to support nearby commercial development; after achieving federal recognition in 2018, the Monacan Indian Nation (MIN) fought back.

Every campus has a Rassawek, or two, nearby. As educators working at the intersection of public history, politics, and exhibit design, we wanted to work with Monacan people and academics to explore how Native protection of southeastern lands provides context for the Monacan legal campaign for Rassawek. In autumn 2019, faculty in the history and political science departments at nearby Virginia Tech met with Scott Fralin in the University Libraries to develop *The Land Speaks: The Monacan Nation and Politics of Memory*, an online exhibition launched in May 2020. We wanted to educate visitors about MIN's history and draw attention to their fight for Rassawek, highlighting Monacan strategies for surviving colonization from early exploration to the Jim Crow era.

Graduate students in Politics of Memory, a class taught by historian Jessica Taylor and political scientists Audrey Reeves and Desiree Poets, collaborated with other scholars and members of MIN to conduct research, draft content, and mount an exhibition. Researching Monacan ancestral land meant researching the region that hosts Virginia Tech and its students. The history of southwestern Virginia features overlapping fights for environmental justice—against pipelines, fracking, and related health disparities. Students grappled with Rassawek's geographic immediacy, the tangled nature of Virginia politics, and the continued presence of both Native people and colonization in Appalachia and the South.

In January 2020, our team started work on an exhibition that depended on space, a full sensory experience, and visitors. In our early brainstorming sessions, we proposed marking the footprint of a Monacan lodge on the exhibit floor and using 3D-printed artifacts, so visitors could feel the texture of ceramics made by Monacan women hundreds of years ago. We wanted to install headphones so visitors could listen to oral histories and set up touch-screen kiosks featuring the latest news on the Save Rassawek campaign.

Throughout the exhibit's development, Monacan people and places provided students with insight into the region and controversies. In February, students and instructors took a van to Monacan headquarters in Amherst County. Chief Kenneth Branham led students through the Monacan Ancestral Museum and pointed out contributions from tribal members: photographs, written testimonies, and art that remains central to how their collective story is told. During the ride back, students discussed how the conversation and artifacts resonated with their diverse interests and where the stories Branham shared could fit into the exhibit. They learned that much of the intellectual investment and initial writing in an exhibition occurs during informal encounters and brainstorming sessions.

## Every campus has a Rassawek, or two, nearby.

We were committed to stakeholder investment in exhibit development, and members of MIN did contribute their time and expertise to the exhibition. However, we chose to complete the project without requesting formal collaboration with MIN. We made this decision after consulting with non-Native Virginia Tech faculty who already had established working relationships with MIN. They heard our concerns about drawing on Monacan leaderships' limited time and resources during ongoing litigation as well as our anxiety that the exhibition's content might unintentionally misrepresent the Nation's goals for Rassawek. As with concurrent Virginia Tech history projects, the exhibition drew on preexisting conversations between Monacan individuals, faculty, and students. None of our collaborators occupied formal tribal leadership positions at the time. They joined the team as content experts, offering advice to students on sensitive subjects like segregation and burial sites, and pointing out omissions and research avenues. Virginia Tech alumnus and former MIN tribal administrator Rufus Elliott, who consulted on the project, explained, "It is possible to examine an issue, in context, and not consult with the tribal government but rather consult with tribal activists and knowledge keepers. I think academia fails when it does not consult with either."

Community input reinforced that the exhibit's purpose and content was decided by many voices. Throughout the semester, Elliott and others provided real-time feedback on exhibit drafts. While honing presentation skills, students reinforced respectful dialogue about difficult topics and learned to incorporate criticism from peers, faculty, and stakeholders.

When COVID-19 shuttered the university, the exhibition team faced hard choices. Tribe members across the state and country were economically affected, and MIN declared a state of emergency and closed their offices. Students, faculty, and collaborators rightly focused on their own needs. By April, it was clear that our plans could not move forward. The decision to “pivot to digital” was not easy, and it was disappointing to shelve our plans for the physical exhibition. But while this pivoting period was one of the most fraught and trying of the spring, it also provided a small source of comfort because this was one thing that was not canceled, not postponed. We found that many of the basics of a good physical exhibit—a meaningful and timely focus, student investment, and transparent collaborations—made for a good online exhibit.

When we decided to take the exhibit online, our first step was to think about what online visitors needed from the exhibition.

With collaborators at a distance, students integrated input in new ways, on new timelines, and learned how to be persistent, assertive, and professional. They collaborated in ways familiar to anyone now working in a remote office—drafting text in a Google Doc where collaborators commented and made changes. Tribal elder Vicky Ferguson offered thoughts about a near-final section on historic foodways, for example, directing a resourceful student to archaeology reports for new evidence. The exchange reinforced the students’ troubleshooting abilities in a format where the edits themselves are easy. Even published, the exhibit remained a work in progress with adjustments to language (e.g., “town,” not “village”), and the addition of the latest news on the Save Rassawek campaign and a 3D model (completed by a student after final exams). The format accommodated our ever-changing timelines and put current content in front of viewers.

When we decided to take the exhibit online, our first step was to think about what online visitors needed from the exhibition. We knew what the content was, thanks to the students, but how should it be displayed on the internet? To try to find the perfect balance of research and inspiration, we looked at a lot of online exhibitions—everything from Solomia Kravets’s Andy Warhol exhibition to the US Navy’s online history exhibitions—and platforms from WordPress to Scalar. It is easy for online exhibitions to look the same: a collection of digital items, maybe organized in a

grid or on subpages, with lots of text and small pictures, using a platform like Omeka. Those exhibits are often expansive, comprehensive, and appropriate for their content, but ours was different. As soon as the team decided to go online, Scott began looking for a way to set it apart from so many others. Unlike many exhibitions, this one told the story of the Monacan people from the 1500s until the present day. That story doesn’t fit in a grid or under a rigid hierarchy. It has to ebb and flow and be easy to take in.

*The Land Speaks*’ digital exhibit mimics the experience of a physical exhibit where possible. It is contained on a single web page, much like an exhibit might be in a single room, and the sections are separated by full-page visuals that indicate the end of a section and give the virtual visitor a pause and a chance to reflect, much as you might while walking through an exhibit. These visual breaks help pace visitors as they move through the exhibit and prevent them from feeling overwhelmed. In lieu of having artifacts for visitors to view or handle, we created 3D models to show the size and scale of recognizable features of a Monacan landscape from hundreds of years ago. The 3D models of a burial mound and Monacan house were created by a student from Virginia Tech’s Creative Technologies major under Scott’s supervision. Online, the exhibition remains live longer than it would in the library and can attract more users.

The exhibit, as a template for adaptable community projects, has promoted ongoing collaborations with Native people on and off campus, including a born-digital exhibit related to Virginia Tech’s Indigenous history planned for spring 2021. The controversy over Rassawek touches on themes of justice and environmental stewardship following a thousand years of Monacan history. The exhibition asks that students and viewers also enter the fray for the long haul. *The Land Speaks* provides a textured, cohesive story placing regional politics in Native history. Pulling on a single thread, while keeping political contexts and the audience in mind, reveals the endangered places and connected struggles that collectively define the region. **P**

*Scott Fralin is exhibit program manager and learning environments librarian at Virginia Tech; he tweets @safralin. Jessica Taylor is an assistant professor of oral and public history at Virginia Tech.*



DYLAN RUEDIGER

# THE 2021 AHA JOBS REPORT

*2019–20 Data Show Relative Stability in the Year before COVID*



The continued trickle of academic jobs in 2019–20 has made the AHA's annual jobs report rather somber reading.  
*spodzone/Flickr/CC BY-NC-ND 2.0*

**OVER THE PAST** several years, the academic job market for historians has shown clear signs of reaching equilibrium. This stabilization was welcome news compared to the freefall of 2008–10, but the continuation of historically low levels of academic hiring has made the AHA's annual jobs report rather somber reading. Job ads placed with the AHA Career Center in 2019–20 confirmed the trend toward a new normal. When H-Net advertisements are included, the postsecondary faculty job market for historians grew a modest 0.9 percent last year, fueled by a 7 percent rise in tenure-track positions.

The pandemic has made it all too easy to imagine that what could have been interpreted as a hopeful sign might instead mark a false floor.

This is welcome news, but the economic shock of the pandemic has made it all too easy to imagine that what could have been interpreted as a hopeful sign might instead mark a false floor. Thanks to COVID-19, faculty hiring this fall collapsed in both humanities and STEM fields. The long-term effects of the pandemic remain unknown, but in the short term, higher education has been rocked by news of program closures, enrollment declines, and faculty layoffs. The specter of these trends cannot but inform how we read this year's report, which documents a new normal that might already be a thing of the past.

## 2019–20 by the Numbers

Last year, the AHA Career Center hosted 512 advertisements for approximately 538 full-time positions, exactly the same number as in 2018–19—a statistical coincidence that reinforces the perception, explored in last year's jobs report, that academic hiring in the discipline was finally stabilizing. The composition of these positions likewise resembled last year's report. The number of tenured and tenure-track openings were unchanged, as were the number of positions

outside the professoriate. Full-time contingent faculty positions fell from 92 to 72, but those losses were offset by an increase in the number of postdocs advertised, which rose from 79 to 99 (Fig. 1).

Together, the AHA Career Center and H-Net advertised 697 faculty positions open to historians, 534 of them on the tenure track. Two-thirds of these tenure-track positions were located in history departments, with the remainder spread across religious studies, women's and gender studies, African American studies, and other interdisciplinary fields. The two job boards hosted ads for an additional 124 positions open to historians beyond the professoriate and several hundred postdoctoral positions, many of which encouraged applicants from across (and in a few cases beyond) the humanities and social sciences. In total, the 2019–20 advertising year saw approximately 1,095 positions either specifically designated for historians or for which history PhDs were eligible, advertised on H-Net or the AHA Career Center.

## Academic Hiring Trends

As has been the case in recent years, academic hiring was disproportionately tilted toward research universities. Fifty-five percent of all advertised faculty positions (tenure-track and non-tenure-track) were at institutions designated by the Carnegie Classification system as research universities, as were most of the available postdoctoral fellowships. Further analysis shows an even greater concentration of hiring among a handful of institutions: the 131 institutions classified as “doctoral universities—very high research activity” (known as R1s) accounted for 41 percent of new tenure-track hiring, 39 percent of contingent hiring, and 56 percent of postdocs advertised on H-Net or the AHA Career Center. When institutions located outside the United States (which do not have Carnegie Classifications) are excluded, the outsized presence of research universities in the domestic academic job market becomes even more clear. At US institutions, 51 percent of tenure-track, 44 percent of non-tenure-track, and 76 percent of postdocs were advertised by R1s. Our data doesn't extend back far enough to know whether this is a trend or a blip, but if it continues, it risks leaving many liberal arts colleges and regional

Job Board	Contingent Faculty	Tenure-Track Faculty	Postdocs and Fellows	Beyond Professoriate
AHA	72	316	99	51
H-NET	91	218	175	73
Combined Total	163	534	274	124

Fig. 1: Number of unique advertisements for full-time positions.



universities—institutions that have historically hired significant numbers of historians—on the margins in academic hiring.

The academic job market is also now very much an international one. Just shy of one in five full-time faculty positions and roughly one in four postdocs were advertised by institutions located outside the United States, including foreign satellite campuses of US-based institutions. While some historians view such positions as welcome opportunities to live and research abroad, the large percentage of academic jobs that require international mobility further restrict the options available to many PhDs.

As usual, applicant pools for tenure-track positions were large and talented. As one respondent to our annual survey of job advertisers noted, “Competition is fierce, and it is difficult to select only a few candidates from a very qualified applicant pool. Overall, the situation is dire, with historians—in a range of fields—finding few options and opportunities to pursue their research and teaching interests.” Our survey backs up this perception. We collected application data for 80 assistant professor searches: they had a median of 82 and a mean of 108 applicants. These figures are slightly higher than last year’s, though perhaps lower than conventional wisdom would suggest. Huge pools are not uncommon, but the range of applicants is large; this year’s pools ranged from a modest 14 all the way to 419. Our survey attracted fewer responses about other types of academic hires, but among those who provided data, non-tenure-track positions (primarily lecturer and visiting assistant professor jobs) and postdocs attracted fewer than half as many applicants as tenure-track positions do, on average.

The AHA asks advertisers to identify the primary field of job listings, whether for faculty positions, postdocs, or positions outside the academy. This year’s breakdown by field followed familiar patterns. The number of US history positions held steady, continuing to make up approximately a quarter of all job listings, while hiring for European history positions continued its long-term decline. As recently as 2015, European positions made up 15 percent of all job postings; last year, they fell to just 7 percent—a total of just 38 jobs. The decreasing number of openings in European history has been well documented, while the smaller decrease in advertisements for Asian, African, and Middle Eastern history positions since 2015 has attracted less attention. Some of these declines might be more apparent than real: this report relies on self-reporting for data on field, and the boundaries between geographically defined jobs, thematic

positions, world/global history, and the “multiple” and “open” field choices—both of them growing in popularity—are sometimes unclear.

Across fields, new PhDs continued to face narrow windows for finding tenure-track positions. Of the 58 assistant professor hires about which we have relevant data, 32 were awarded to PhDs no more than one academic year beyond completing their degree. The supermajority of those (22) had graduated less than a year before being hired or did not yet have their PhD in hand. These numbers conform to recent patterns in academic hiring for assistant professor positions, which have favored very recent PhD recipients. Over the past three academic hiring cycles, 53 percent of the 162 assistant professor hires about which we have data were no more than one year out from finishing their degree. Past this point, job candidates became steadily less likely to be hired as assistant professors (Fig. 2).

The reasons for this remain somewhat unclear: It might stem from biases toward new PhDs on the part of hiring

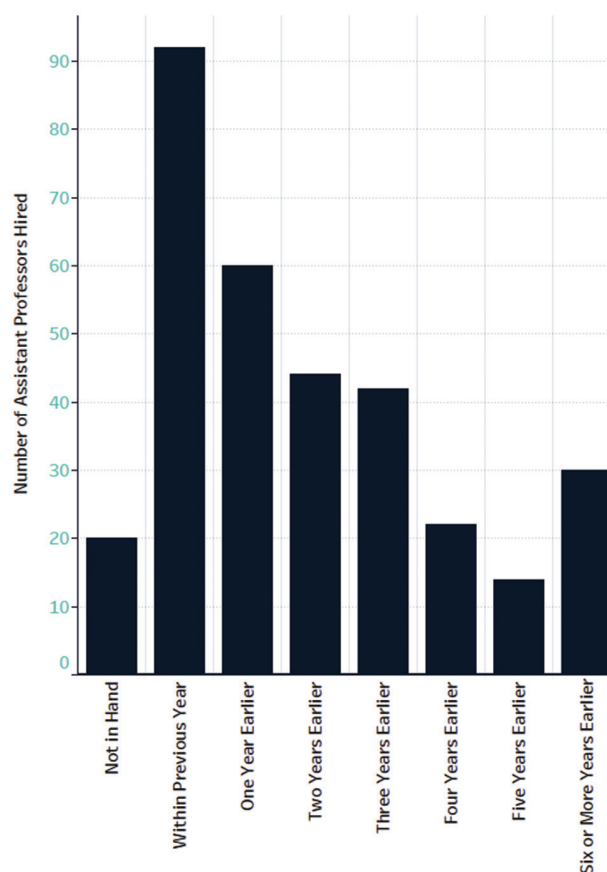


Fig. 2: Years removed from PhD of new assistant professor hires, 2018–20.

committees. It might also reflect the smaller numbers of applicants who are still pursuing tenure-track positions several years after completing their degrees. While the academic job market clearly favors new PhDs, it is worth noting that the number of assistant professors hired more than five years after completing their PhD has continued to slowly grow over the past several decades. In the late 1990s, just 5 percent of new assistant professors were more than five years from receiving their doctorate; that figure is now at 14 percent over the past three cycles.

## Number of PhDs Awarded Continues to Drop

As has been the case for the past several years, the number of history PhDs awarded declined last year. According to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED), 986 individuals were awarded history PhDs in 2019, a 1.7 percent decline from 2018, and the first time in over a decade that fewer than 1,000 individuals earned history PhDs. PhDs awarded in the discipline have now dropped by 16.9 percent since 2014, the recent peak year for new PhDs. SED data indicate that the number of PhDs awarded in European

history and American history has decreased by 36 and 26 percent, respectively, since 2014. The number of PhDs awarded in African history has also dropped substantially. In contrast, the numbers in Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern history and history of science have been more stable. Changing scholarly interests could account for some of these shifts, but it is also possible that students and admissions committees might be reacting to hiring trends in academic fields (Fig. 3).

For the first time in over a decade,  
fewer than 1,000 individuals  
earned history PhDs.

## New Directions

The annual jobs report is one of the AHA's most heavily used resources because it provides current, historically contextualized information about professional opportunities within the academy, the place where most history PhDs hope to build careers and the traditional foundation of the

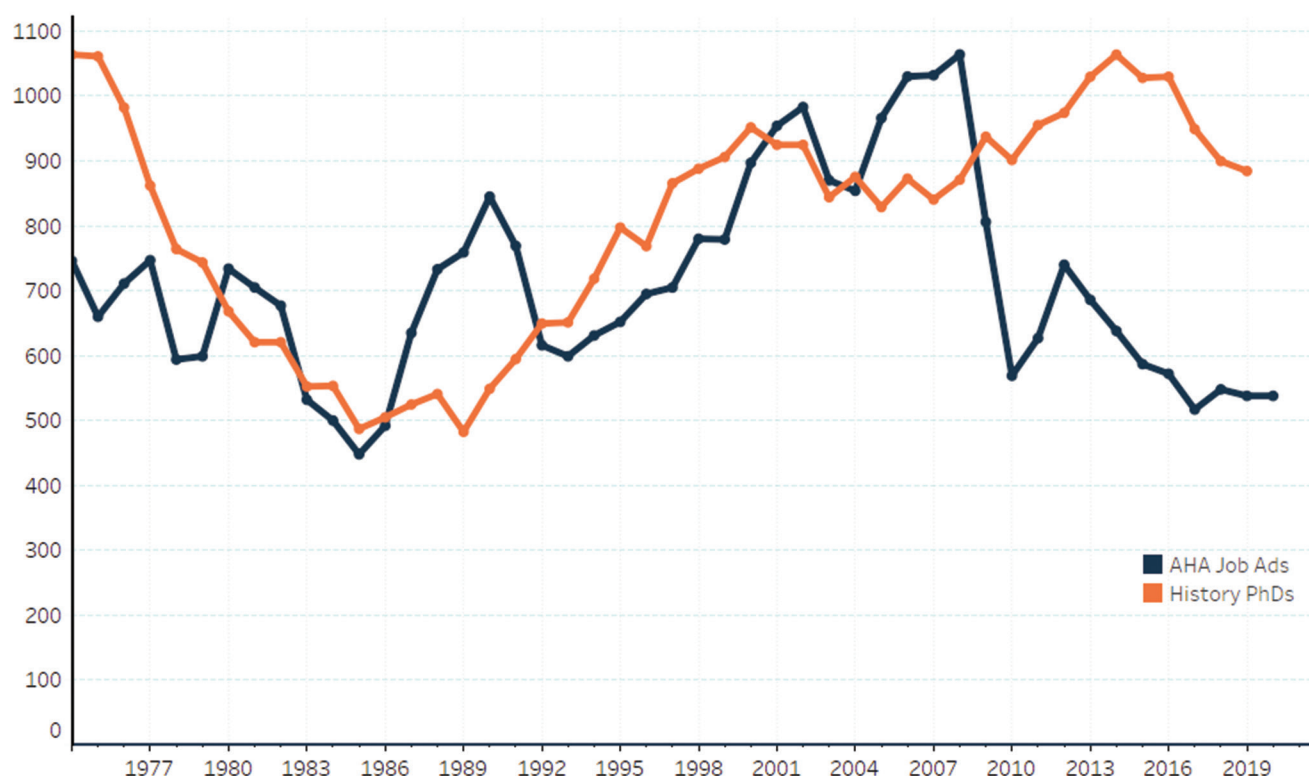


Fig. 3: Advertised job openings and new history PhDs awarded.



discipline. But the world from which the jobs report grew has changed. Though still capable of capturing trends, the primary purpose for which it was always intended, it is often read as though it were cataloging absolute numbers. Its signature graphic—the dual-line graph of AHA job ads and new PhDs—visually reinforces outmoded assumptions that the career paths of history PhDs ought to be restricted to academia and reduces the experiences of members of our community to a horse race between two diverging lines. The likelihood of further structural changes in academic job markets and shifts in the size and composition of the discipline within doctoral programs magnify the need for a new approach.

Beginning next year, the AHA jobs report will be split into two data-driven pieces.

Beginning next year, the AHA jobs report will be split into two data-driven pieces designed to increase our coverage of trends inside graduate programs *and* the academic job market. In the fall, we'll release a detailed account of the 2020–21 hiring cycle, a change in publication timeline that will get vital information about the academic hiring

environment into the hands of interested readers in advance of the 2021–22 hiring cycle. In the winter, we'll report on trends in graduate education in the discipline, a new companion to our reporting on undergraduate majors and enrollments. This report will make fuller use of federal and AHA data to not only track the numbers of new MA and PhD recipients in the discipline, but also better attend to shifts in fields, program size, demographics, and the career paths available to new PhDs. During what look likely to be more troubled times ahead for the discipline, the humanities, and higher education, we will need rich data about faculty hiring and the internal processes and characteristics of graduate programs in order to advocate for the future of our community of historians. **P**

*Dylan Ruediger is the coordinator of Career Diversity for Historians and institutional research at the AHA. He tweets @dylan\_ruediger.*

## Recently Published Online in *Perspectives Daily*



Dave Weigel/The Washington Post

### Vikings, Crusaders, Confederates

**Matthew Gabriele**

Why was there so much medieval imagery at the assault on the US Capitol?

### A Starting Point

**Kevin Boyle and James Grossman**

The braided relationship between history and civics will make January 6 a central concern in educational venues across the country.

### On the Peaceful Transfer of Power

**Sara Georgini**

Historians can read plenty of pointed lessons in the presidential election of 1800, a surprisingly uncivil brawl between two aging revolutionaries.

Plus Member Spotlights, Grants of the Week, and more!

*historians.org/PerspectivesDaily*

# Virtual | AHA

**Virtual AHA** is a series of online opportunities to bring together communities of historians, build professional relationships, discuss scholarship, and engage in professional and career development. A service to our members as they navigate the current emergency, Virtual AHA provides a forum for discussing common issues, building research networks, and broadening and maintaining our professional community in dire circumstances. It also provides resources for online teaching and other professional and career development. We are creating various kinds of content to help historians connect, while helping us learn more about what our members want and need.

Virtual AHA will run through June 2021. Virtual AHA incorporates the AHA Colloquium, our name for content drawn from the canceled 2021 annual meeting. It also includes an online teaching forum, career development workshops, a series of History Behind the Headlines webinars, National History Center programming, and more. These programs are free, and AHA membership is not required to register. Many of the webinars will be available for later viewing on the AHA's YouTube channel.

See [historians.org/VirtualAHA](https://historians.org/VirtualAHA) for details. Download the Virtual AHA app at [guidebook.com/g/virtualaha](https://guidebook.com/g/virtualaha) for the latest schedule updates and links.

## Virtual Exhibit Hall

The AHA Virtual Exhibit Hall will be available online through June 2021. The Virtual Exhibit Hall provides an opportunity to learn about the latest historical scholarship, take advantage of publisher discounts, and network with editors and press staff. If you normally look forward to the exhibits at the annual meeting, the Virtual Exhibit Hall offers a similar experience from the comfort of your home. Best of all, no name badge is necessary: the Exhibit Hall is free and open to the public. Check it out at [historians.org/ExhibitHall](https://historians.org/ExhibitHall).

## Programming Content Streams

- **AHA Colloquium:** Bringing together communities of historians who ordinarily meet face-to-face at our annual meeting through web-based programming. Visit [historians.org/Colloquium](https://historians.org/Colloquium) for a full list of staff- and participant-produced content.
- **History Behind the Headlines:** Featuring prominent historians discussing the histories behind current events and the importance of history and historical thinking to public policy and culture.
- **Online Teaching Forum:** Helping historians plan for teaching in online and hybrid environments.
- **Virtual Career Development:** Emphasizing career exploration and skill development for graduate students and early career historians.
- **Virtual Seminars for Department Chairs:** Supporting department chairs through the transitions and uncertainties resulting from COVID-19. Webinars will be small-group discussions (capped at 10 participants) and will be facilitated by an experienced department chair.
- **National History Center Congressional Briefings:** Briefings by leading historians on past events and policies that shape the issues facing Congress today.
- **Washington History Seminar:** Facilitating understanding of contemporary affairs in light of historical knowledge from a variety of perspectives. A joint venture of the National History Center of the AHA and the History and Public Policy Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

## Upcoming Events

Visit [historians.org/VirtualAHA](https://historians.org/VirtualAHA) for details on these and other events that will be scheduled between now and February.

<b>February 9</b>	AHA Colloquium— <i>Shifting How History Is Taught: A Dialogue to Inspire Instructional Innovation in Secondary and Higher Education</i>
<b>February 11</b>	AHA Colloquium— <i>Teaching Premodern Women and Gender</i>
<b>February 12</b>	AHA Colloquium— <i>Affective Internationalism: Inserting Emotion into Histories of International Governance</i>
<b>February 16</b>	AHA Colloquium— <i>Future Directions in Research and Training for Digital History</i>
<b>February 18</b>	AHA Colloquium— <i>History Gateways: What I'm Doing Differently in My History Introductory Course</i>
<b>February 19</b>	Career Development— <i>How to Think and Talk about Your Transferable Skills: A Professional Development Workshop with Derek Attig</i>
<b>February 23</b>	AHA Colloquium— <i>"Our Country Is Full": Roots and Consequences of America's 1921 Immigration Act 100 Years Later</i>
<b>February 25</b>	AHA Colloquium— <i>Thinking Catastrophe Times</i>

## In Case You Missed It

The following recordings are available on the AHA's YouTube channel at [youtube.com/historians.org](https://youtube.com/historians.org).

### Online Teaching Forum

- Teaching History This Fall: Strategies and Tools for Learning and Equity
- Dual and Concurrent Enrollment in History: Strengthening Programs and Learning
- History Gateways: "Many Thousands Failed" in 2020: A Conversation with Drew Koch
- History TAs in the Time of COVID
- Deep Thoughts: Metacognition and Teaching History
- The Role of Higher Ed in AP History Courses and Exams

### Career Development

- What Is Grad School Really Like?
- Careers for Historians in the Tech Industry
- Making the Most of Your Postdoc

### AHA Colloquium

- Doing Research during COVID-19
- The Crisis of Democracy
- History and Historians in Response to COVID-19 (three-event series): Plagues Past and Present; Containing Contagion; Infection and Inequality

### History Behind the Headlines

- Presidential Debates in Historical Perspective
- History Behind the Headlines: Historians Reflect on the 2020 Election


### Washington History Seminar

- Recordings are available on the National History Center's YouTube channel.

Many January Session events will be posted on the AHA YouTube channel. See [historians.org/VirtualJanuary](https://historians.org/VirtualJanuary).

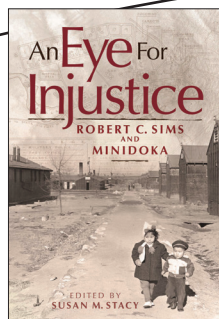
## Further Information about the AHA Colloquium for Those Accepted for the 2021 Program

People originally scheduled to be on the 2021 program have a variety of options for sharing their work. Keep an eye on [historians.org/VirtualAHA](https://historians.org/VirtualAHA) for regular updates.

A PDF program, documenting all sessions accepted by the AHA Program Committee and the affiliated societies, is posted on the AHA website at [historians.org/program](https://historians.org/program) so that participants can validate their expected participation for their CVs. Anyone who was expecting to deliver a prepared presentation will have the opportunity to post written remarks on the AHA website. 



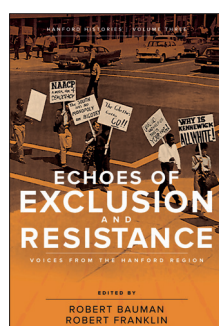
# ILLUMINATING WESTERN HISTORY



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Covering topics from print journalism, activism, nuclear testing, and science and education to health physics, environmental cleanup, and kitsch, essays collected by the Hanford History Project illuminate facets of the Manhattan Project earlier scholars left unexplored and reveal how its legacy lives on.

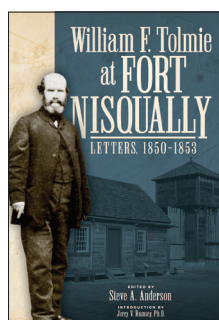
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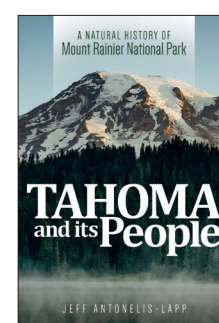
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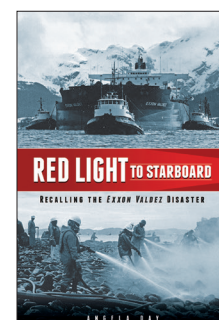
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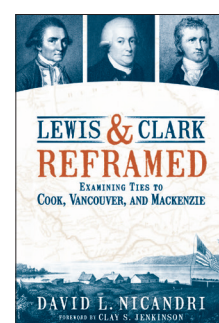
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## **Lewis and Clark Reframed** *Examining Ties to Cook, Vancouver, and Mackenzie* David L. Nicandri Foreword by Clay S. Jenkinson

Nicandri examines the expedition beyond the Rocky Mountains, placing curious and seemingly inexplicable aspects into a broader historical context, and demonstrating how earlier explorers and fur traders influenced the American captains.

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# ACTIONS BY THE AHA COUNCIL

*June 2020 to January 2021*

Through email communications from June 17 to December 23, 2020, and at meetings from January 4–8, 2021, the Council of the American Historical Association took the following actions:

- Approved endorsing a congressional resolution recognizing the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, introduced by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA).
- Established the Historians Relief Fund to provide \$500 emergency grants for un- and underemployed historians who have been financially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Sent a letter to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement strongly objecting to “modifications” declaring that foreign “students attending schools operating entirely online may not take a full online course load and remain in the United States.”
- Signed onto a statement initiated by the Association for Asian Studies that expresses deep concern over the People’s Republic of China’s new security legislation that severely curtails the freedoms guaranteed in Hong Kong’s Basic Law, the Sino-British Joint Declaration, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- Approved the *Statement on Historical Research during COVID-19*.
- Appointed Mark Bradley (Univ. of Chicago) to serve a five-year term as editor of the *American Historical Review* beginning August 2021.
- Approved the *Statement on Department Closures and Faculty Firings*, which recognizes the economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting decline in higher education revenues, but asserts that the AHA has assisted and will continue to assist history departments in making the case for the imperative of historical learning and thinking in higher education.
- Endorsed a joint statement authored by the American Council of Learned Societies on COVID-19 and the role of the humanities and social sciences, which calls on all leaders of institutions of higher education to uphold the central importance of the humanities and social sciences when making important decisions about the future of their institutions.
- Established, with an endowment gift from the Agentives Fund, two new prizes in honor of the late Congressman John Lewis: the John Lewis Award for Public Service to the Discipline of History, awarded to a nonhistorian, which would replace the existing Roosevelt-Wilson Award, and the John Lewis Award for History and Social Justice, awarded to a historian.
- Sent a letter to the Québec Ministry of Culture in regards to the Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice archive and library in Montréal, expressing “grave concern for the future preservation, maintenance, and accessibility” of the historically significant archives and collections at Saint-Sulpice, following the recent termination of the professional staff charged with overseeing these collections.
- Sent a letter of support for the Smithsonian American Women’s History Museum Act (S. 959), introduced by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA).
- Appointed Pablo Gómez (Univ. of Wisconsin–Madison) to the 2022 Program Committee to fill a recent vacancy.
- Approved the *Statement on the Recent “White House Conference on American History,”* deploring the tendentious use of history and history education to stoke politically motivated culture wars.

- Signed on to two comments posted to the National Archives and Records Commission website in response to a proposed records schedule that would classify a set of Customs and Border Patrol records as “temporary,” allowing their destruction within as quickly as four years.
- Approved the *Statement Urging Retraction of Executive Order Prohibiting the Inclusion of “Divisive Concepts” in Employee Training Sessions*, stating that the order was “neither necessary nor useful.”
- Approved the revised FY21 budget.
- Sent a letter to the chair of the Supreme Court of Karelia on behalf of Yuri Dmitriev, a Russian local historian exploring crimes of the Stalin era, sentenced to 13 years in prison based on unsubstantiated charges.
- Sent a letter to the president of Collin College on behalf of AHA member Dr. Lora Burnett, requesting that the college respect “the right of historians to express their opinions as private citizens without fear of institutional discipline.”
- Approved the *Statement Concerning Access to French Archives*, expressing concern regarding changes in French policy on the declassification of documents from 1940 to 1970.
- Sent a letter to the US Senate Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, requesting that the subcommittee reconsider its vote to eliminate funding for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.
- Sent a letter to the president and trustees of Guilford College, urging them to reconsider the elimination of the history program and termination of one tenure-track and two tenured history faculty members.
- Sent a letter to the Arkansas Division of Higher Education, expressing concern about a legislative request to academic units in the Arkansas university system seeking to collect data on the teaching of “The 1619 Project” and “Critical Race Theory” at public higher education institutions in Arkansas.
- Approved joining the National Security Archive, the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, and Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington as plaintiffs in a lawsuit intended to prevent valuable presidential records from being irretrievably lost. The plaintiffs seek to ensure that the current administration and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) comply with the charge of the Presidential Records Act to preserve “complete copies” of presidential records, including relevant metadata of digital materials.
- Endorsed the Educating for Democracy Act of 2020, which would provide \$1 billion per year for the next five fiscal years to improve the teaching of history and civics in our nation’s schools.
- Approved AHA participation as a co-plaintiff in a lawsuit filed by Washington State Attorney General Ben Ferguson to prevent the federal government’s “unlawful and procedurally improper” sale of the NARA facility in Seattle, expected in early 2021.
- Sent a letter to the chancellor and provost at the University of Mississippi, expressing concern about the university’s decision not to renew the contract of Garrett Felber, assistant professor of history, noting the possibility that Professor Felber’s termination might have related to his activism regarding racism and incarceration.
- Submitted a comment in support of a campaign to enable commenting on footnotes in Microsoft Word using the Review function and encouraged AHA members to comment.
- Approved minutes of the June 2020 Council meetings.
- Approved the interim minutes of the Council from June through December 2020.
- Approved the 2021 AHA committee appointments.
- Adopted an *Endorsements Policy* for determining when to endorse, sponsor, or support other projects or organizations.
- Approved the *Statement Supporting Historians in Mexico*, expressing solidarity with “professional historians affected by the extreme and arguably punitive fiscal retrenchment affecting Mexico’s system of higher education.”
- Established *Guidelines for Acknowledgment of Collaborators*.
- Established a policy that AHA editorial procedures will not include suggestions that authors disclose their demographic information.



- Approved discounted institutional membership rates for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Tribal Colleges and Universities, in addition to individual memberships for faculty and students at those institutions.
- Approved a proposal that the AHA collaborate with Indigenous community members and scholars to create a land acknowledgment for the AHA's Washington, DC, headquarters at 400 A St. SE that will be posted in appropriate venues.
- Allocated funds from the Association's operating account to provide a cash prize for the AHA's Equity Awards beginning in fiscal year 2022.
- Approved naming guidelines for the *AHA Prizes Policy* to help ensure that gifts are managed in a consistent manner and that donors are provided with equitable, consistent, and appropriate recognition and stewardship for their support.
- Established, with an endowment gift from the Ebrey family and friends, the Patricia Buckley Ebrey Prize to be awarded annually for an outstanding book on the history prior to 1800 of China proper, Vietnam, Chinese Central Asia, Mongolia, Manchuria, Korea, or Japan.
- Received the AHA FY2019–20 audit.
- Approved the *Annual Budget and Operating Reserve Policy*.
- Approved the 2021 Honorary Foreign Member (to be identified publicly at a later date).
- Extended the term of the Digital History Working Group committee by three years, through January 2024.
- Appointed Akin Ogundiran (Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte) as chair and Molly Warsh (Univ. of Pittsburgh) as co-chair of the 2023 Program Committee.
- Approved adding the following language to section 5.1.b of the *Annual Meeting Guidelines*: "Chairs should be able to effectively manage discussion and, if necessary, work to defuse controversy, particularly when it is veering into what might be considered unprofessional."
- Approved *Ransacking Democracy*, a statement condemning the actions of those who, on January 6, attacked the United States Capitol, the seat of the nation's legislature and the heart of its democratic form of governance.
- Approved updates to the *AHA Staff Social Media Policy*. P

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## Jeffrey Cox

1947–2020

Historian of Britain;  
AHA Member

Jeffrey Cox, a historian of Britain and religion, died on February 9, 2020. He was 72 years old.

Jeff treasured his Texas roots and subscribed to his hometown newspaper for his entire life. During one college summer, his experience as a Southern Baptist missionary in Vietnam transformed his political and religious views. In the 1980s, he joined the Society of Friends (Quakers) and was an active member of the Iowa City Friends Meeting.

During his graduation from Rice University, Jeff gave an anti-Vietnam War address, a sharp shift from his family's political stance. After earning his PhD from Harvard University in 1978, he joined the University of Iowa (UI) history department, where he remained until his death. His first book, *The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth, 1870–1930* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), is a detailed social and institutional history of the declining importance of churches but persistence of diverse religious faiths in a pluralist marketplace of ideas. Here he embraced a large question that would continue to inform his scholarship: his challenge to the idea that modernity deprived religion of social force. “I learned from him,” a former student observed recently, “to think about religion as a category of analysis,” along with categories such as race, class, and gender.

Jeff's intellectual curiosity knocked over arbitrary disciplinary boundaries. For *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818–1940* (Stanford Univ. Press, 2002), he learned Hindi and Urdu and revealed that British missionary hospitals, schools, and other institutions in India were likely to be multiracial institutions, empowered by white missionary women and nonwhite female and male converts. Often from lower and untouchable castes, these converts found dignity in Christian belief. Jeff examined what he called “the uneasy and unpredictable relationship between the British empire and British religion” in *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700* (Routledge, 2008). Over the years, he was a major facilitator of international inquiry

into problems of religion and empire, the processes and scope of secularization, and the place of Western religion in the cultural contexts of colonial and postcolonial societies. At the time of his death, Jeff was working on a comparative analysis of religious education in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

As a teacher, Jeff's commitment to sustaining and revising the large survey course for undergraduates (most recently titled *The West and the World*) was exemplary. He understood the value of introducing undergraduates to the history of the modern world and teaching them the historical literacy that would serve them well as citizens in a democratic society.

Integral to Jeff's work as a scholar and teacher was his civic activism within the university and the wider community. As department chair, he nurtured the mutual respect, intellectual curiosity, and disdain for hierarchy that had long characterized the department. As president of the faculty senate, he defended academic freedom, genuinely shared governance, and argued against arming campus police. As a leader in the UI chapter of the American Association of University Professors, Jeff supported colleagues who experienced unfair promotion review. His energy was central to town-gown progress in treating student alcohol abuse as a health, not criminal, problem, and he was a forceful advocate for state funding of public higher education.

Jeff also had a prominent and influential voice in the community. As chair of the Johnson County Democratic Party, he tirelessly recruited candidates for local office, and his vision for progressive change contributed to making Iowa City a better place for over 40 years. He co-edited a widely read statewide newsletter, *The Prairie Progressive*, and he helped persuade Bernie Sanders to make his 2016 presidential run in the Iowa caucuses. Jeff's final essay, “The Disastrous Iowa Caucuses Were Just the Beginning,” was published posthumously in *The Nation*.

Jeff's children, Eleanor (Flossie) Cox and David Cox, survive him, as does his wife, Lois Cox, professor of law at the UI College of Law. At their wedding 48 years ago, Matthew Arnold's “Dover Beach” was read by a friend; at his memorial in February 2020, Lois bravely recited it alone.

Linda K. Kerber, Shelton Stromquist,  
and Katherine H. Tachau  
*University of Iowa (emeriti)*

*Photo courtesy University of Iowa History Department of History*





## Faye E. Dudden

1948–2020

Historian of Women

Faye E. Dudden, Charles A. Dana Professor of History emerita, passed away on October 16, 2020, after an 18-month struggle with glioblastoma. She was 72 years old. Faye joined the Colgate University Department of History in 1997, after 14 years at Union College. She remained at Colgate until her retirement in 2016.

Faye grew up on a farm in Camillus, New York. She earned her bachelor's degree from Cornell University, like her mother before her, and her master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Rochester, where she studied with Christopher Lasch and Mary Young.

Faye typifies the generation of women historians who made a place for themselves in a male-dominated profession because of their determination and excellence. Much of her work focused on the region in which she lived; her first book, *Serving Women: Household Service in Nineteenth-Century America* (Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1983), assessed the relationships between rural New York farm women and the young women “help” they hired. With this book, she became part of two groups of scholars, the Upstate New York Women's History Conference and the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, who were instrumental in establishing the field of women's history in the 1970s. In 1994, she published *Women and the American Theatre: Actresses and Audiences, 1790–1870* (Yale Univ. Press), which won the George Freedley Memorial Award. In this book, Faye documented the critical change in theatre from an aural culture, emphasizing voice, to a visual culture, emphasizing the body—a shift that has shaped female experience in the modern era.

Much of her teaching and research came to focus on the history of the women's rights movement in the United States. Her last book, *Fighting Chance: The Struggle over Woman Suffrage and Black Suffrage in Reconstruction America* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), explored the different possibilities of this era before detailing the bitter falling-out between the

advocates of woman suffrage and Black suffrage. A final article, “Women's Rights Advocates and Abortion Laws” (*Journal of Women's History*, 2019), complicated the contemporary “pro-life” claim that the founding mothers of women's rights supported anti-abortion laws and is a clear statement against the misuse of women's history by today's anti-abortion forces.

Faye was the recipient of grants from the American Antiquarian Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, and Colgate University. She was a tireless mentor to young faculty and scholars, an inspiring teacher, and a highly regarded colleague. She served as Colgate department chair from 2000 to 2005 and as a member of the Promotion and Tenure Committee from 2013 to 2015, and she twice directed the London History Study Group.

Faye was direct, no-nonsense, and even blunt, with a wonderful smile and sense of generosity. With common sense and a wicked sense of humor, she deflated the pretensions of others and had no pretensions herself. She had high standards for teaching and scholarship and was dedicated to her students, the department, her colleagues, and the university. Even on winter roads, she drove too fast to campus from her Syracuse home; she couldn't wait to get to her office. And she was an outstanding, field-changing historian, one of a handful who shaped the writing of US women's history over the past 50 years.

Faye's talents and enthusiasms extended well beyond the academy. She and Marshall Blake, her husband of 44 years, nurtured many cats and enjoyed travel, especially to Italy and Mexico. Faye was an avid cook, as precise about her recipes as she was in her research, and she was a master gardener. Her plants spilled down the hillsides behind her home in Syracuse and at the early 19th-century farmhouse in Eaton, New York, that she and Marshall lovingly restored. Faye's botanical donations over the years now grace the gardens of her many friends in upstate New York and New England. We have lost a remarkable historian, a dear friend, and a wise and generous human being.

Joan Jacobs Brumberg  
*Cornell University (emerita)*

Andrew Rotter  
*Colgate University*

*Photo courtesy Colgate University*



## Frank A. Kafker

1931–2020

Historian of France;  
AHA 50-Year Member

Frank A. Kafker died in Dedham, Massachusetts, on April 1, 2020, from complications associated with Parkinson's disease. A distinguished professor of French history, he devoted his career to studying the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, often through the lenses of the *Encyclopédie* and the *encyclopédistes*. During the postwar expansion of universities and heightened interest in history, his work helped bring focus to the social dimensions of history and the power of collaborative scholarship.

Among scholars of the Enlightenment, Kafker was a leading light, and his life experiences shaped his work. Born in Brooklyn to a family of Russian Jewish immigrants during the Great Depression, he came of age just after World War II, when the Enlightenment and French Revolution ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity carried special meaning and power. He met his wife, Serena, at Samuel Tilden High School in Brooklyn when he was 16 and she was 15, and they were true partners in life and scholarship ever after.

Kafker studied history at Columbia University, earning his BA in 1953 and his MA in 1954. He developed a lasting passion for French history while taking a course with Ralph Bowen, the renowned biographer of Denis Diderot, on the French Enlightenment and French Revolution. Bowen encouraged him to pursue these topics further, recommending that he undertake a doctorate under Columbia professor Jacques Barzun.

Kafker received a Fulbright scholarship for study in France from 1954 to 1955, where he conducted research for his dissertation, "The Encyclopedists and the French Revolution." During his Fulbright year, Kafker developed his signature scholarly style: identifying and using extensive primary resources to understand historical actors in humanistic and sociological terms, and to uncover their goals, social contexts, and motivations. He earned his PhD from Columbia in 1961 and began his academic career at the University of Cincinnati in 1962.

Kafker's works on the *encyclopédistes*, the *Encyclopédie*, and other encyclopedias are among the most-cited on those topics. He subsequently published pioneering books with the series Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century (now known as Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment), including *Notable Encyclopedias of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Nine Predecessors of the Encyclopédie* (Liverpool Univ. Press, 1981); *The Encyclopedists as Individuals: A Biographical Dictionary of the Authors of the Encyclopédie* (Liverpool Univ. Press, 1988) with Serena L. Kafker; *The Encyclopedists as a Group: A Collective Bibliography of the Authors of the Encyclopédie* (Liverpool Univ. Press, 1996); and *Notable Encyclopedias of the Late Eighteenth Century: Eleven Successors of the Encyclopédie* (Liverpool Univ. Press, 1993). He later contributed to and co-edited a volume on the first editions of another important encyclopedia, *The Early Britannica: The Growth of an Outstanding Encyclopedia* (Liverpool Univ. Press, 2009). Kafker extended his careful scholarship to encouraging and advancing the work of others, serving as editor of the journal *French Historical Studies* from 1985 to 1992.

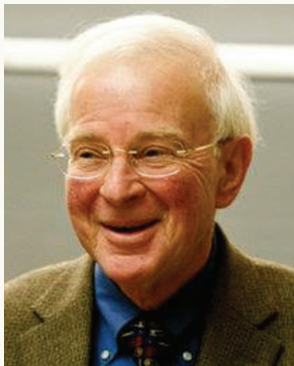
Among students of European history, Kafker was widely known for his co-authored works, *The French Revolution: Conflicting Interpretations* with James Laux (Random House, 1976) and *Napoleon and His Times* with Darlene Gay Levy (R. E. Krieger Publishing Co., 1989). These collections of primary and secondary sources were and remain used as windows into the French Revolution and Napoleonic period for undergraduate students. For many, they served as introductions into the nature of historical debate and history as a discipline.

At the University of Cincinnati, where he served as a faculty member for 36 years until his retirement in 1998, Kafker was beloved by students and colleagues alike. He stressed the importance of careful scholarship, dedication to primary sources, consideration of divergent perspectives, and collaboration. Moreover, he shaped the approaches and launched the careers of numerous doctoral graduates. He often quoted Voltaire, whose famous remark "Only among people of good can friendship exist, since the perverse people only have accomplices, the interested people have partners, the political people have supporters, the people of royalty have courtiers, only good people have friends" perfectly captured his approach to life.

Frank Kafker was a gentleman, a scholar, and a man of many friends. He is survived by Serena, his sons Scott and Roger, their wives, four grandsons, and a sister.

Dennis A. Trinkle  
Ball State University

*Photo courtesy Serena Kafker*



## Richard Polenberg

1937–2020

Historian of the  
United States

Richard Polenberg, historian of modern America, died on November 26, 2020, in Ithaca, New York. He served as the Goldwin Smith Professor of American History and the Marie Underhill Noll Professor of History Emeritus at Cornell University, where he taught from 1966 to 2011. A pillar of the Jewish community in Ithaca, he also served three times as president of Temple Beth-El.

Born in 1937, Dick Polenberg received his BA from Brooklyn College in 1959, where he worked under John Hope Franklin, and his PhD from Columbia University in 1964, where he studied with William E. Leuchtenburg. Following the direction of these distinguished scholars, Polenberg produced a wealth of impressive scholarship over his long and productive career.

His research shined much-needed light into obscured corners of American political and legal development, from his first book, *Reorganizing Roosevelt's Government* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1966), through his late-career constitutional studies *Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, the Supreme Court, and Free Speech* (Viking Press, 1987) and *The World of Benjamin Cardozo: Personal Values and the Judicial Process* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1997). While Polenberg's innovative work in these fields drew considerable praise and prizes—*Fighting Faiths* won the American Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award, among others—he was better known for his impressive works of synthesis, in which he used his prodigious gifts for narrative and analysis to bring the past alive for generations of students and general audiences. His early masterpieces *War and Society: The United States, 1941–1945* (Lippincott, 1972) and *One Nation Divisible: Class, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States since 1938* (Viking Press, 1980) were long mainstays in undergraduate lecture courses. A more recent publication, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933–1945* (Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2000), remains one to this day.

In retirement, Polenberg returned to his lifelong love of music, especially folk and blues. He hosted a blues program on

Cornell's online station Slope Radio and, to his everlasting pride, performed with Pete Seeger at Seeger's home on the Hudson River in 2009. Polenberg often lectured about him and other musicians he admired, performing their songs as he did. These interests inspired his final publication, *Hear My Sad Story: The True Tales That Inspired "Stagolee," "John Henry," and Other Traditional American Folk Songs* (Cornell Univ. Press, 2015).

Beyond his accomplished record as a researcher and writer, Polenberg was a gifted lecturer and an incredibly popular teacher at Cornell. His lecture courses often enrolled more than 1,000 students each semester, forcing the university to schedule his classes in large concert halls. Not surprisingly, he won the university's Clark Award for Distinguished Teaching and the admiration of countless Cornellians. His passion for teaching carried over into his retirement, when he taught for several years at the Auburn Correctional Facility as part of Cornell's Prison Education Program. He found the experience incredibly rewarding, and the letters he treasured from his students there show they did as well.

Polenberg was also a devoted mentor and generous teacher of graduate students, including me. His graduate seminars were an utter joy, for him as much as for us, and his presence in our lives a constant source of calm and encouragement. The word "mensch" invariably comes up in conversations about him, with memories of a thoughtful gesture or a well-timed kindness brought forth. He truly delighted in the experiences of academia—the research, the writing, and most of all, the teaching—and seemed in slight awe of the fact that he was lucky enough to spend time with us, whether we were professors, prisoners, or Pete Seeger.

There's a maxim in academia that always reminds me of him: "We're all smart here; distinguish yourself by being kind." While he was certainly a distinguished scholar and officially a distinguished teacher, it was in this special regard that Dick Polenberg truly distinguished himself.

It seems somewhat fitting that he passed away on Thanksgiving Day, after a lifetime giving thanks that he was able to do this work. So many of us give thanks that we were able to share a small part of his life as well.

Kevin M. Kruse  
Princeton University

*Photo courtesy Michael Polenberg*



# AHA CAREER CENTER

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## COLBY COLLEGE Waterville, ME

**Tenure-Track Assistant or Associate Professor, History of the Atlantic World.** The Department of History at Colby College invites applications for a tenure/tenure-track assistant or associate professor of the history of the Atlantic world, within a global context beginning September 1, 2021. The department is a community of engaged teacher-scholars who teach a diverse array of courses from surveys to specialized seminars grounded in our research. We are searching for a teacher-scholar with a focus on the Atlantic World, preferably in the early modern era. The department is open to expertise on all themes, including (but not exclusively) intellectual history, histories of race, gender, and sexuality, and histories of trans-Atlantic slavery, migration, trade, and empire. Reflecting the department's increasing focus on global history, the candidate's research and teaching interests should speak to global contexts, positioning the worlds constituted around the Atlantic in comparative perspective. The department is especially interested in scholars whose work is not focused on North America. The successful candidate will also be expected to teach HI 276, Patterns and Processes in World History. We are particularly interested in hearing from candidates who will bring to the classroom experiences, identities, ideas, and ways of engaging that will resonate with History's, and Colby's, increasingly diverse student body. We are searching for candidates with

great potential to be innovative, effective, and inclusive teachers of history at Colby, who may be willing to make use of resources made available by the Colby Museum of Art, Special Collections, and the Mule Works Innovation Lab. The Colby History Department is committed to professional development and the future advancement of all its members. In evaluating this potential, we will give particular weight to candidates who have successfully designed and taught their own courses. PhD preferred, but ABD will be considered. Please submit a cover letter; CV; three confidential letters of recommendation; a representative sample of current scholarship, e.g., reprints of recently published work, and statements of teaching philosophy and research interests that demonstrates commitment to the value of diversity and to inclusive teaching via Interfolio at <http://apply.interfolio.com/81132>. Review of applications will begin on January 11, 2021, and will continue until the position is filled. Questions about this search should be directed to [historysearch@colby.edu](mailto:historysearch@colby.edu).

**Tenure-Track Assistant Professor, East Asian History.** The Department of History at Colby College invites applications for a tenure-track assistant professor of East Asian history, within a global context beginning September 1, 2021. The department is a community of engaged teacher-scholars who teach a diverse array of courses from surveys to specialized seminars grounded in our research. We are searching for a teacher-scholar specialized in East Asian (China, Japan, or Korea) history, with a preferred focus on gender and sexuality or race. The successful candidate

will be an enthusiastic and engaged teacher and a dedicated scholar, committed to their research. Reflecting the department's own increasing focus on global history, the candidate's research and teaching interests should speak to global contexts, positioning their research within comparative, transregional perspectives. The position is open to scholars of any historical period, with a preference for candidates who would be able to offer courses on both the early and modern eras. The successful candidate will also be expected to teach HI 276, Patterns and Processes in World History. We are particularly interested in hearing from candidates who will bring to the classroom experiences, identities, ideas, and ways of engaging that will resonate with the increasingly diverse student body at Colby and in the History Department. We are searching for candidates with great potential to be innovative, effective, and inclusive teachers of history at Colby, who may be willing to make use of resources made available by the Colby Museum of Art, Special Collections, and the Mule Works Innovation Lab. The Colby History Department is committed to professional development and the future advancement of all its members. In evaluating this potential, we will give particular weight to candidates who have successfully designed and taught their own courses. PhD preferred, but ABD will be considered. Please submit a cover letter; CV; three confidential letters of recommendation; a representative sample of current scholarship, e.g., reprints of recently published work, and statements of teaching philosophy and research interests that demonstrates commitment to the value of diversity and to inclusive teaching via Interfolio at

<http://apply.interfolio.com/81137>. Review of applications will begin on January 11 and will continue until the position is filled. Questions about this search should be directed to: [historysearch@colby.edu](mailto:historysearch@colby.edu).

### AD POLICY STATEMENT

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

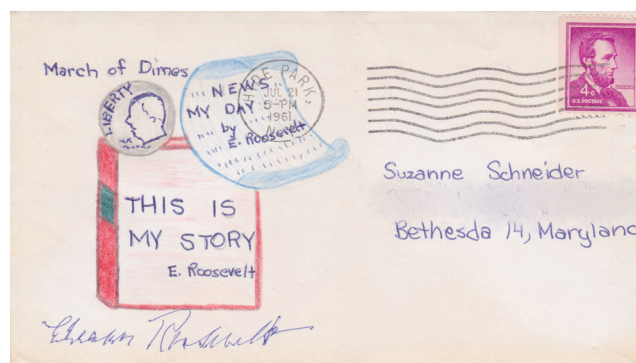
The AHA does make an exception to these criteria in three unique cases: (1) open listings for minority vita banks that are clearly not linked with specific jobs, fields, or specializations; (2) ads that require religious identification or affiliation for consideration for the position, a preference that is allowed to religious institutions under federal law; and (3) fellowship advertisements.

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

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

ALEXANDRA F. LEVY

# ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S ILLUSTRATED ENVELOPE



As a child, my mother, Suzanne Schneider, loved to receive letters. Not one for ordinary pen pals, she exchanged notes with the likes of Harry Truman, Carl Sandburg, and Leonard Bernstein. Starting around age 11, she wrote to political leaders, writers, and other luminaries. Inspired by her father's collection of first-day covers, or envelopes with stamps postmarked on their first day of issue, she created her own personalized "covers" for each person whose autograph she hoped to collect, thereby combining two popular hobbies—stamp and autograph collecting. She would illustrate an envelope with drawings representing the recipient's life—books, the presidential seal, a state flag—and request that the recipient sign the envelope and mail it back to her. Many did; for others, such as Queen Elizabeth II, assistants wrote polite letters back, explaining that they received too many autograph requests to comply.

I don't remember how old I was when I discovered her collection. As a budding historian even then, I was enthralled by this bridge to the past. I loved, under my mother's watchful eye, to browse carefully through the collection, asking her what it was like to receive letters from former presidents and world leaders. I also found her illustrations revealing. Each cover taught me about the person whose autograph she had sought, and what she had considered compelling about each person at the time.

We both consider the gem of her collection to be Eleanor Roosevelt's cover. The former First Lady signed the envelope and had it postmarked from Hyde Park, New York, the Roosevelts' hometown, in July 1961, less than 18 months before she died. Her shaky signature suggests that she found it challenging to write as easily as she once did; I imagine that at one time her fingers must have flown across the page or typewriter to produce news columns and letters.

My young mother illustrated the envelope with iconography that represented Roosevelt's work as an author and philanthropist: the March of Dimes, Roosevelt's memoir, and her "My Day" news columns. When selecting illustrations for her envelopes, my mother would often ask her parents about the individual's achievements. The cover, then, offers some insight into how my grandparents viewed Roosevelt—not simply as a former First Lady, but as an independent thinker and leader in her own right.

The envelope and Roosevelt's legacy read differently to me today than they did when I first encountered them as a child. Then, I knew that Roosevelt had served ably as First Lady during a tumultuous time in American history. The cover inspired me to delve further into her career and learn more about Roosevelt's writings and public service. Now, I appreciate more than ever her work as a diplomat, leader, and activist.

Watching my two-year-old daughter pull board books off our shelves, I wonder whether my mother's collection will hold the same power for her, and if the Roosevelt envelope will interest her. Though the cover depicts only a sliver of Roosevelt's achievements, to me it represents the fullness of her life and the perils of narrowly defining one person's legacy. When my mother saved Roosevelt's signature on an envelope decorated with symbols of her life outside of the White House, she created a family treasure that commemorates Eleanor Roosevelt for all her accomplishments. **P**

*Alexandra F. Levy is the AHA's web and social media coordinator. She tweets @AlexandraFL21.*

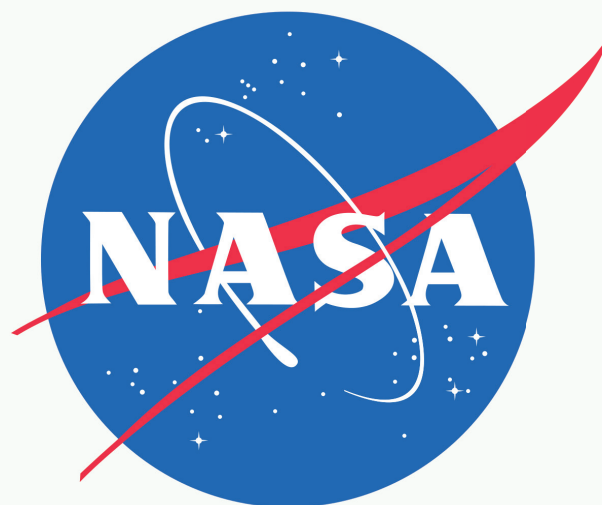
*Photo courtesy Suzanne Schneider*

## J. Franklin Jameson Fellowship

Apply for 2-3 months of research at the Library of Congress with a stipend of \$5,000. PhD must have been awarded within the past seven years.



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## Fellowships in Aerospace History

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Preference given to early career historians.



# Introducing the John Lewis Awards from the American Historical Association

*Thanks to a generous  
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## **John Lewis Award for Public Service to the Discipline of History**

Established in 2021, the prize is offered annually to recognize individuals outside the ranks of professional historians who have made a significant contribution to the study, teaching, and public understanding of history, in the interest of social justice. The prize is named in memory of John Lewis (1940–2020), civil rights leader who served in the United States House of Representatives and who advanced the cause of social justice by “simultaneously reminding Americans of our history and challenging us to build on it to make the nation better.” The prize replaces the Association’s Roosevelt-Wilson Award for Public Service, which was presented to Congressman Lewis in 2006.

Nominations must be submitted by April 1, 2021.

## **John Lewis Award for History and Social Justice**

Established in 2021, the prize is offered annually to recognize a historian for leadership and sustained engagement at the intersection of historical work and social justice. The prize is named in memory of John Lewis (1940–2020), civil rights leader who served in the United States House of Representatives and who advanced the cause of social justice by “simultaneously reminding Americans of our history and challenging us to build on it to make the nation better.”

Nominations must be submitted by May 15, 2021.

For more information, visit [historians.org/prizes](https://historians.org/prizes)