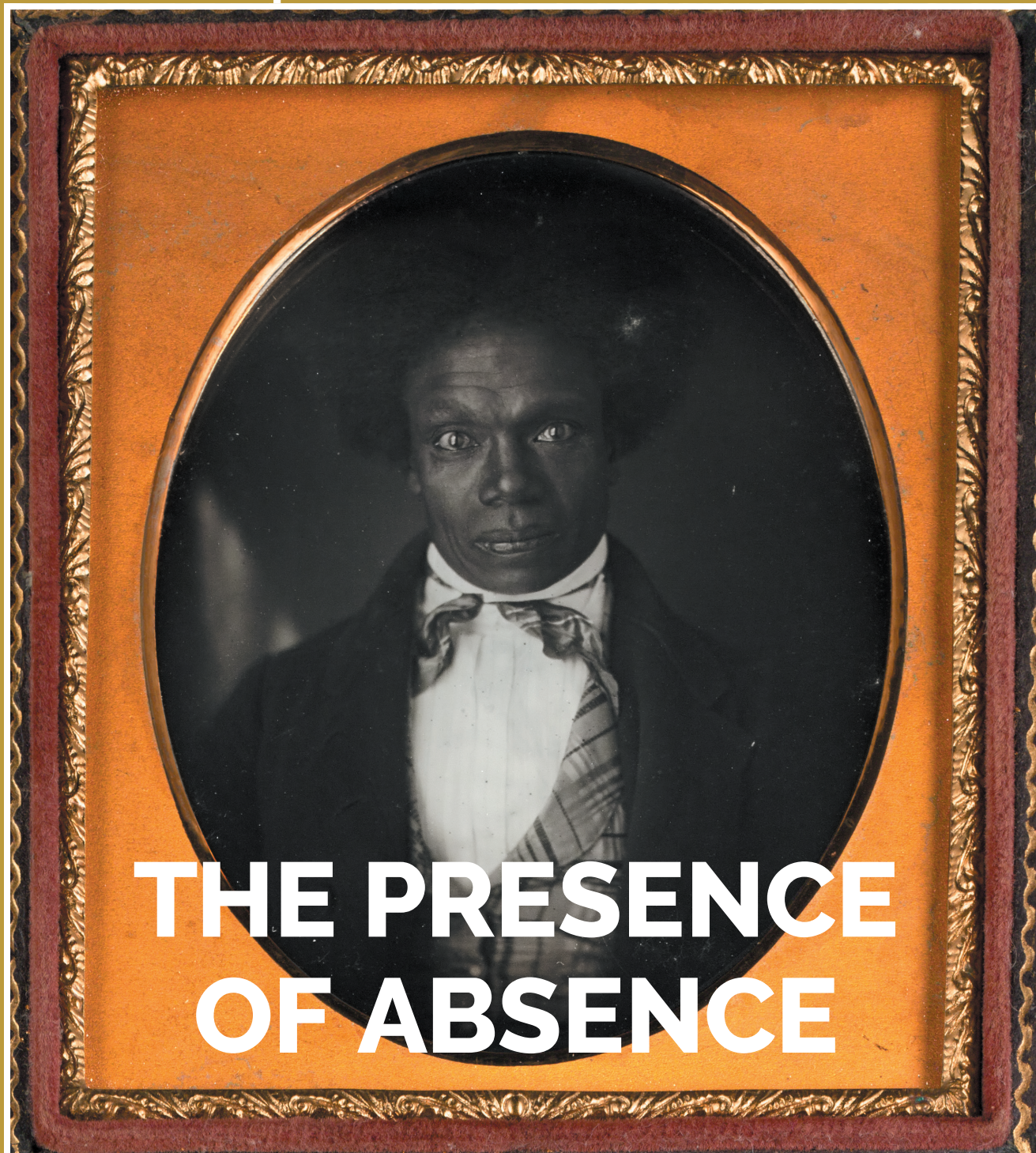


*The newsmagazine of the American Historical Association*

# PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

Volume 60: 1  
January 2022





# AHA Awards



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## ON THE COVER

It's an odd turn of phrase, for one to say that they can sense that something is missing. They cannot, after all, see, smell, taste, hear, or touch an absence. In this issue, two authors work to sense, articulate, and address a missing presence. In "Missing Women," Bridget Riley explores how she uses a podcast assignment to tackle the gender imbalance in middle school social studies textbooks. Brian Piper considers how an unnamed Black man used the visual and tactile nature of a daguerreotype to assert his presence when "so much of America's visual culture distorted or denied his existence." Recognizing the presence of these absences raises the question: what are the other missing pieces in history?

*Felix Moissenet, Portrait of a Man, ca. 1852. Daguerreotype, 3¼ × 2¾ inches. New Orleans Museum of Art, Museum Purchase, Maya and James Brace Fund, 2013.22. Available to view by appointment.*

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News magazine of the  
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LAURA ANSLEY

## TOWNHOUSE NOTES

*Making a More Readable and Accessible Publication*



What good is a magazine that someone cannot read? Our staff takes pride in the fact that *Perspectives on History*, now entering its 60th year, is an accessible publication. We hope that our articles can be enjoyed by everyone from high school students to emeritus faculty, those with a passing interest in history to experts who have studied the subject for a lifetime. It's wonderful to hear from readers through letters to the editor, emails, tweets, and comments online. The variety of *Perspectives* readers—from professional historians to students to hobbyists—sets us apart from many other history publications.

There was one area, however, where *Perspectives* failed to reach our goal of readability. When we received multiple emails from AHA members noting difficulty reading *Perspectives on History* in print, we had to act. These readers noted two problems: the light teal color used throughout the magazine design and the thin fonts used in the body of the articles, both of which readers found difficult to read on the magazine's glossy paper. Though we received only a handful of these emails, it is a real problem—and for every person who took time to reach out, there are likely others who had the same issues but either didn't reach out or gave up on reading *Perspectives* altogether.

Accessibility cannot be an afterthought for any publication. It is a key part of our job as publishing professionals. But this is a particular problem for a publication like *Perspectives*. If we are not serving all historians, including those with low or limited vision, we are failing. The changes that follow represent just the start in improving accessibility of the print magazine and its website, not the end point. But we hope these subtle changes will have an immediate and noticeable impact.

Readers may already have noticed one change in these pages. Beginning with the September 2021 issue, we updated the color of the teal used in print to a darker shade (HEX #37aa9c,

for the curious). The teal used in AHA branding is a vibrant, bright color, but it didn't provide enough contrast with the glossy white page. The new teal should make for easier reading. The harder update was the font, which required consultation with design firm Pure+Applied. With their help, we settled on Swift as our new font. While Baskerville was aesthetically beautiful, the thin light lines were simply too small for many readers. Starting with this issue of *Perspectives*, the body of the articles will be typeset in Swift, a font that should be a bit thicker and clearer on glossy paper.

Online, digital communications coordinator Alexandra F. Levy is assessing the AHA website for overall accessibility and making improvements and updates where we can. In the next few years, the AHA plans to redesign the website, with the goal of ensuring the website fully adheres to the latest accessibility standards. Until then, we hope that Alex's efforts are making the *Perspectives* site more usable in the short term. We are excited to improve the website and to include more readers in our online publications.

This fall, I attended a Society of Scholarly Publishing webinar on accessibility. Violaine Iglesias, CEO of Cadmore Media, reminded attendees of why accessibility must be a priority in everything we do. From her talk, I took away three main points about improving accessibility: It is the right thing to do. It is about people, not just technology. And you have to start somewhere. With those ideas in mind, we're starting by modifying the color and font of the magazine. We do hope readers will let us know what else we can do to make *Perspectives on History* accessible to all readers. Because without you, who are we doing this for? **P**

Laura Ansley is managing editor of the AHA. She tweets @lmansley.



## TO THE EDITOR

While welcoming dissent from all quarters, I am surely not the only historian taken aback by the two letters to the editor published in the November 2021 issue of *Perspectives*.

One writer mischaracterizes honest, empirical analyses of racism and antiracists and abolition of slavery as somehow secondary to larger world historical forces which are alleged to have—willy-nilly—been part of “a host of complex factors spanning the evolving needs of modernity that cannot be woven smugly into a good-guys-versus-bad-guys narrative.” This is not news but “needs of modernity” included slavery and yes, there are “bad guys” in history.

Similarly, the other writer notes historians ought not “express their opinion” in the classroom. Really? Once facts are verified and out in the conversation, why would

one’s professor “never say out loud when teaching a class” that “Hitler, Stalin, and Vlad the Impaler were bad people”? This letter then rambles on vacuously (excuse the pun) about “vaccine hesitancy” and elites without really making a point, except to demonstrate the writer’s own lack of respect for reliable data by citing Facebook sources regarding alleged academics’ opposition to vaccines.

Without being paranoid, one wonders if *Perspectives* is being targeted, or rather “punked,” by trolls.

TY GELTMAKER  
West Hollywood, CA

## EDITOR’S RESPONSE:

We are always pleased to hear from engaged readers. We ask that any further discussion of these letters, and the articles they addressed, be taken to the AHA’s Member Forum at [communities.historians.org](https://communities.historians.org).

# 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](https://historians.org/grants).

The deadline for all research grant applications is February 15.



JAMES H. SWEET

# FROM INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO DIVISIVE CONCEPTS

## *A Reflection*

I started first grade in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1973. Two years earlier, the US Supreme Court's decision in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* enforced racial integration in public schools through mandatory busing. As a six-year-old, I was oblivious to the political rancor that surrounded the decision. From elementary school through my high school graduation, roughly 40 percent of my classmates were African American, with one or two Chinese, Filipino, Indian, and Mexican students in most classes.

More importantly, I grew up with African American role models—principals, teachers, counselors, and coaches. My fourth-grade teacher, Otelia Borden, challenged me intellectually every day and pushed me to think about issues of racial, gender, and class equality, without ever naming them as such. She was the best teacher I ever had, setting norms for my ideas about education when I was just nine years old. From seventh to twelfth grade, I had nearly a dozen Black teachers—in English, biology, chemistry (but sadly not history!). In short, I grew up with the expectation that my intellectual worlds would be racially and socially diverse. When I reached college, I learned how segregated education could be. This awakened my historical and political consciousness on the issues that became my life's work, but the die had been cast much earlier. Attending Charlotte public schools in the 1970s and 1980s shaped everything I would become, both personally and professionally.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System began dismantling mandatory busing in 1992, and the system of “school choice” that eventually replaced it resegregated Charlotte's schools. The elementary school I attended in the 1970s is now 85 percent Latino and 9 percent African American. Charlotte is not alone in school resegregation. Despite the fact that white children are no longer a majority among school-age kids in America, the typical white student attends a school where 69 percent of their classmates are also white. This demography is also reflected in those who teach these white children. Today, I can ask a University of

Wisconsin–Madison history class of one hundred undergraduate students how many of them ever had a teacher other than a white teacher for their entire K–12 years, and only five or six students will raise their hands. This stuns me. But it also reminds me how privileged I was to learn from such a broad diversity of peers and mentors.

Over the past two years, more than half of American states have introduced legislation or taken other steps that would restrict teaching the history of racism in public schools. Lawmakers and parents argue that teaching these “divisive concepts” provokes guilt and trauma in young learners, especially white children. Often lost in these debates is the stark demographic reality that *whatever* is being taught to white students is in public schools where, on average, teachers are almost exclusively white and more than two-thirds of their classmates are white. How could white students feel traumatized in such racially homogenous social environments?

Attending Charlotte public schools shaped everything I would become.

Teaching the histories of racism, sexism, and homophobia is not divisive; it is unifying, especially in a time when we are becoming ever more segregated. Those trafficking in white fear conveniently ignore that the country systematically excluded Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos for most of its history. For African Americans, these exclusions took various legal forms, from slavery to disfranchisement, Jim Crow to redlining. These were not divisive “concepts” that hurt students' feelings at school. They were legal boundaries that prevented African Americans from enjoying full citizenship. The resegregation of public schools in places like Charlotte was a continuation of that legal tradition of exclusion.



Ironically, critics of “divisive concepts” fail to recognize the implicit embrace of the nation in frameworks like critical race theory. To criticize the political and legal history of the nation as racist is an overture for change. It is not a prelude to treason or secession. As vibrant and raucous as ethnic studies have been over the past 50 years, they have been nothing if not loyal to the promise of the nation. The stubborn insistence on minority inclusion in the face of systematic exclusion is a testament to an extraordinary, if wary, patriotism.

## African Americans were agents of their own internal histories and politics.

To be clear, some scholars have called for separate concepts, methods, and modes of analysis. Long before the 1619 Project, African American historians including Sterling Stuckey, Colin Palmer, and Michael Gomez outlined new chronological watersheds and topical approaches that focused on the history of African Americans as a people, rather than as members of a nation-state. The logic of such approaches is entirely sound. The history of a people defined as property, denied basic human rights, and excluded from full citizenship could never be a duplicate history of the nation and those who controlled it. African Americans were more than mere supporting actors in the making of “colonial,” “revolutionary,” and “antebellum” US histories. They were agents of their own internal histories and politics. Understanding these histories is fundamental not only to African Americans as an “identity group” but also to our conceptions of the nation.

To use 1619 as an example, historians disagree on how to characterize the first “20 and odd” Africans who arrived in Jamestown. Some view them as sharing far more in common with other Angolans in the Americas than with their English enslavers. These scholars frame Jamestown as just one node in the shared histories of roughly 250,000 Angolans who arrived in Latin America and the Caribbean between 1600 and 1625. Others characterize the Jamestown Africans as the first of thousands of diverse Africans who followed in the first century of slavery in British North America, guided culturally and politically by their African pasts. It was not until around 1730 that North America’s African population began to reproduce a Creole African American population. Finally, there are scholars who, like Nikole Hannah-Jones, view the Jamestown Africans as incipient Americans. The 1619 Project characterizes the experiences of those first Africans as “the beginning of American slavery.”

Critics lambasted Hannah-Jones for the provocative claim that 1619 is the true beginning of American history. One can quibble with her reduction of American history to Anglo-American history (Spanish settlers owned African slaves in Florida in the 16th century). However, 1619 is widely accepted by scholars as the start of slavery in British North America. And Hannah-Jones’s assertion of 1619 as the beginning of “American” history, as opposed to 1776, is in accordance with ongoing debates over the meanings of particular moments in defining the histories of nations, peoples, eras, and so on. This is precisely the kind of interpretive work historians do.

Hannah-Jones’s interpretation is a radical act of national unification, a claim on the nation’s history that defies African American exclusion. Throughout her essay, Hannah-Jones foregrounds her roots in rural Iowa, her military veteran father, and even her allegiance to the American flag. On the question of the flag, Hannah-Jones lingers, recalling her youthful embarrassment at her father’s insistence on flying the stars and stripes. Only through historical study does she recognize her father’s patriotism as a form of racial claims-making. For Milton Hannah, flying the flag was an invitation to recognize African American contributions to building the nation, just like his daughter’s essay. Rather than accept her invitation, Hannah-Jones’s detractors derisively dismiss her as sowing division. One wonders whether those same critics would see her father’s flag flying as driven by divisive concepts. If so, the nation is in a perilous state that even public schools probably cannot fix.

To sum up, I’ll return to Ms. Borden’s fourth-grade classroom. Like many children, we started every day with the Pledge of Allegiance. A small American flag stood above one corner of the blackboard, mostly unnoticed except during our school-wide morning routine. After the bell rang, we all stood, put our hands over our hearts, and recited the pledge. Most of us did so with appropriate reverence, but as the year wore on, a handful of kids started opting out, either sleeping or sitting quietly. As she did every morning, Ms. Borden stood at the front of the room, hands clasped, head bowed, eyes closed. When I finally got up the courage to ask why she let kids skip the pledge, she smiled at me patiently and said, “Not everyone sees the flag the same way.” Ms. Borden then put her arm around me, ushered me back to my desk, and encouraged me to keep grinding on my nine-times tables. **P**

*James H. Sweet is president of the AHA.*



JAMES GROSSMAN AND WALDO E. MARTIN

## A TRIBUTE TO LEON LITWACK

On August 15, 2021, a gathering in a small backyard in Berkeley, California, commemorated the remarkable life of Leon F. Litwack. In true COVID-era fashion, a few hundred more watched via Zoom. Family, neighbors, friends, former students, and colleagues shared recollections, ranging from the 1940s to the weeks preceding Leon's death on August 5 at the age of 91.

There was a lot to recall. Leon's notion of "being a historian" was not only about writing books, although he wrote more than his share. *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Univ. of Chicago, 1961) was a pathbreaking study that perceptively probed the antebellum tension between Black freedom struggles and Northern-style anti-Black racism; it was still being assigned in undergraduate courses a half century after publication. *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (Knopf, 1979), a magisterial exploration of Black emancipation during the Civil War and Reconstruction, won a Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, and Francis Parkman Prize. He followed with compelling examinations of "freedom's first generation" in *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (Knopf, 1998) and of the modern Black freedom struggle in *How Free Is Free? The Long Death of Jim Crow* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2009). He co-authored a popular textbook, *The United States* (4th to 6th eds., 1976–86) and edited or co-edited influential collections of primary and secondary sources on the American labor movement, Reconstruction, and African American leadership.

Equally important was his work in the classroom and in public life. Leon taught approximately 30,000 undergraduate students at the University of California, Berkeley, and every one of his graduate students knew early on that we had to be prepared to teach the US history survey. He also created one film and three multimedia shows and supported proposals by his graduate students to experiment in these genres, especially as part of our preparation to teach history in different ways and in different places. He lectured opposite Shelby Foote on the *Delta Queen* and consulted on more than a



dozen films, exhibitions, and publication projects. The tradition of musical performance at the Organization of American Historians' annual meeting began with Leon's presidency in 1987, with a program featuring Tracy Nelson and James "Son" Thomas.

This breadth of perspective and interests exuded an understanding that historical thinking could not be separated from engagement with contemporary culture (especially music) and politics. To understand the past, one had to be intensely present in the moment, indulging in and learning from the worlds around us. This meant, to Leon's students, that although our work was important (to him, as well as to us), our *work* was not *us*.

This is what historians do.  
We listen. We listen to voices,  
and we listen to silences.

And our work was not *about* us. Writing history requires learning about other people, understanding them, and letting their voices and sensibilities be heard. Not "giving them voice," as some reviews of *Been in the Storm So Long* observed, usually in admiration. They *had* a voice; Leon provided them with a microphone and the audience with a framework. He learned from his sources and engaged them in a respectful conversation. His role as a historian was to frame, organize, and contextualize those voices into broad narratives, arguments, and commentaries on the human condition.

Above all else, Leon talked in complex ways about Black Americans as agents of history, an agency that battled and ultimately transcended victimization. These histories always included oppressors and perpetrators, whether individual or systemic (usually both). Avoiding the passive voice was not about grammar; it was about agency, causation, and change.

This is what historians do. We listen. We listen to voices, and we listen to silences. Leon taught his students how to find them and gave us the confidence that we *could* find them. And he helped us learn from them. We choose those words carefully—“helped us learn.” We recall conversations with Leon about what we, as historians, do and what we can accomplish. In this, he guided by example, through conversation about values and purpose and, occasionally, gentle criticism, usually posed as skepticism articulated through a question. But he seldom told us *what* to do as historians, other than to listen actively—and hear.

### “Just call me Leon: that’s my name.”


This respect for sources and attention to the agency of all participants in historical processes extended into a democratic approach to how one became a historian. Waldo vividly recalls his first meeting in Leon’s office in the summer of 1973 as part of an incoming cohort of Berkeley graduate students of color working in tutorials with mentors, prepping for the fall semester. The readings were US history classics; the discussions were always probing and exhilarating. Most striking, however, was Leon’s response to the first question posed to him: “What would you like to be called? Dr. Litwack? Professor Litwack?” No. “Just call me Leon: that’s my name.”

This indifference to hierarchy had deep roots. Leon’s parents, Julius and Minnie (Nitkin) Litwack, were Russian immigrants who had met through a hiking club that Leon would later characterize as “anarchist-socialist-Jewish-vegetarian.” Minnie was a seamstress, Julius a gardener. They raised him with books, which one lifelong friend later recalled did not make him popular among his peers in Santa Barbara. Eventually his extensive and carefully maintained collection would find its way into exhibitions at prominent museums and libraries; its core will be housed at the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

Skepticism of authority and the necessity of dissent would remain constant themes winding through Leon’s life and work. In high school, he objected to the textbook’s conventional racist Dunning School interpretation of Reconstruction and subsequently presented to the class a dissident counternarrative drawn from W. E. B. DuBois’s *Black Reconstruction*. Although the teacher generously offered this opportunity, she also prudently cautioned the class that Leon was “bitterly pro-labor,” with obvious implications for his reliability. In 1953, he was prepared to risk his career

(and was suitably warned by a faculty member) by refusing to “name names” before the House Un-American Activities Committee. He showed up strategically dressed in his army uniform, but he was spared testimony; legend has it that the august panel was too busy harassing Harry Bridges to worry about a private taking a military detour from graduate school. In 1950–51, he organized Berkeley students to oppose the infamous loyalty oath. And he summed it all up in his final lecture in 2007, to an audience of approximately 900, including local media and former students who hadn’t been on campus for decades: “When I hear UC Berkeley denounced for lawlessness, debauchery, free thinking, subversion, harboring communists and radicals, exposing students to radical ideas—whenever I hear those charges made, that’s when you’ll hear me, wherever I am, shout, ‘Go Bears!’”

That invocation of school spirit was neither cynical nor insincere. It wasn’t just his three degrees from UC Berkeley (BA, 1951; MA, 1952; PhD, 1958) or his four decades on the faculty. Or even that he’d met his wife Rhoda (Goldberg) Litwack there and they would remain married for 69 years, raising not only two children but also what Rhoda still refers to as their “academic family.” It was a faith in the imperative of dissent to a healthy public culture.

Leon’s critics (and there were many) never fully understood his similar loyalty to our nation. “To preserve our past,” he wrote in 1995, “and to communicate it freely, clearly, and effectively, remains one of the best hopes of ensuring a more humane future. . . . The indispensable strength of this nation remains our freedom to question and probe various versions of reality, to experiment with new ideas, and to undermine old dogmas and values, even to insult proprieties and expose absurdities.” 

*James Grossman is executive director of the AHA; he tweets @JimGrossmanAHA. Waldo E. Martin is Morrison Professor of American History and Citizenship at the University of California, Berkeley.*



CLAIRE VANDERWOOD

# STUDENT FOCUSED AND HISTORICALLY ACCURATE

*The 2021 Texas Conference on Introductory History Courses Takes on Divisive Concepts*

**In 2021, growing right-wing fears of “divisive concepts” and critical race theory (CRT) took the country by storm. As AHA president Jacqueline Jones wrote in the September issue of *Perspectives*, the subject has become “the focal point of strident public debates over the teaching of history and civics in K–12 schools and at colleges and universities.” Texas and seven other states have passed a series of anti-CRT bills, many of which have generated responses from the AHA, designed to limit the ability of teachers to educate students about the history of racism and sexism in the United States.**

The AHA’s Texas Conference on Introductory History Courses placed this legislative attack on so-called divisive concepts front and center. From October 19 to November 4, 2021, the seventh annual event provided a space for history instructors at two-year, four-year, and dual-credit institutions to share lesson plans and find approaches to bolster student success in college-level introductory history classes.

Held online for the second year in a row, the conference drew a broad spectrum of attendees eager to understand how these legislative restrictions affect the content and quality of history education. A’Lelia Bundles, a prominent

biographer and journalist, participated in the conference because she has long been following the wars over public school textbooks. “I wanted to listen to find out what teachers were going through,” she said. “They are on the front lines and the people who are afraid to speak.”

“We have built each program around helping history instructors understand state policies that shape how and where students take college history courses in Texas.”

Following its signature format, the conference featured several plenaries and six small-group discussions. Experienced educators facilitated the smaller discussions in order to develop strategies for the six introductory history courses taught across the state: African American History, Mexican American History, Texas History, US History, Western Civilization, and World History. Attendees discussed the impact divisive concepts legislation was having on their classrooms. One professor in the African

American History session shared that after they had designed an African American history course, their institution ignored them when it came time to implement it. Facilitator Theresa Jach (Houston Community Coll.) had a student whose parents prevented her from reading an extra credit book simply because they thought it was about reparations. Still, while anti-CRT legislation alarmed many participants, others were more sanguine. Western Civilization discussion facilitator Kent McGaughy (Houston Community Coll.) noted that many institutions have no structures in place to punish educators for teaching the histories such laws aim to limit.

Although the intensity of interest provoked by recent legislation is unusual, statewide educational policy discussions are standard at the Texas Conference. “Since the first year, we have organized sessions on pedagogy and resources that are common at teaching conferences,” organizer and AHA special projects coordinator Julia Brookins told *Perspectives*. “But we have also built each program around helping history instructors understand the state policies that shape how and where students take college history courses in Texas.” Past speakers have, for example, addressed the structure of introductory courses amid the rising cost of higher education and the implications of COVID-19 for higher education policy. The conference has thus formed an important part of

History Gateways, the AHA's initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to lead a substantial revision of introductory college history courses.

Addressing rather than whitewashing contested history in the classroom was a theme of the conference's plenaries. Jacqueline Jones's (Univ. of Texas at Austin) opening lecture was on the ways state and federal governments have supported systems of racial prejudice in the United States since the 18th century. She concluded that the civil rights legislation of the mid-20th century was not sufficient to guarantee a level playing field for all. Attendees were eager to reflect on recent attempts to discourage the telling of expansive histories, including the Trump administration's 1776 Commission report that resulted in the creation of the "patriotic" Hillsdale 1776 Curriculum already implemented in public schools across the country. During the Q&A after Jones's talk, Brookins reiterated the importance of holding this conference in Texas (albeit virtually), where

educators in the states most under threat can come to collaborate.

Other talks focused on specific pedagogical practices. Leonard N. Moore's (Univ. of Texas at Austin) keynote targeted one issue at the core of anti-CRT legislation: "Teaching Black History to White People." In this talk, based on his recent book, Moore provided several strategies he has found useful in teaching controversial subjects to recalcitrant audiences, methods educators could apply to discussing CRT and Black history with white students, parents, and legislators.

One method used the *Monopoly* board game to explain the history of state-sponsored segregation. Moore asked listeners to imagine a game in which he started with less money than his white counterparts and was prevented from buying property until his 20th turn—yet still he had to pay rent and taxes and could go to jail. It was clearly impossible for Moore to win, regardless of his skill level. And when

the players' children took over the game, continuing with the property (or lack thereof) that their parents left behind, they experienced the economic disparity without experiencing its origins. As a consequence, they could not see how their success was predicated on historical inequalities.

In addition to encouraging diverse course content, part of the conference addressed designing the *structures* of courses with consideration of students' and teachers' unique backgrounds. The panel, "A Return to Humanity in Teaching," featuring Stephanie M. Foote (John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education), Daniel J. McInerney (Utah State Univ.), Tomiko M. Meeks (Texas Southern Univ.), and Amy Powers (Waubonsee Community Coll.), discussed classroom practices that create inclusive and responsive learning environments by taking into account the identities of teachers and their students. Foote provided a worksheet instructors can use to reflect on whether



The 2019 Texas Conference at the University of Texas at Dallas was the last to occur in person. But the online format in 2020 and 2021 has broadened the audience.

Megan Connor



aspects of their course design privilege some student identities—or their own identity—over others, and she suggested steps to ensure a greater number of students succeed. Panelists stressed the importance of practicing reflective teaching, assigning projects on family history, and building connections among all members of the class, all things divisive concepts legislation appears to discourage.

This approach resonated with attendees. Small-group participants shared that they found greater student engagement when students felt like the professor cared about them. Priscilla Martinez (Univ. of California, Santa Cruz) encouraged Mexican American History course discussion attendees “to place students at the center of their teaching.” She found that students benefited when she and her co-instructor had them put together lesson plans for students in their respective communities. “Students became so invested when they were put in the role of a teacher,” she said. Other instructors found similar success when assigning local history papers or having students record their own oral histories. Their experiences suggest that restricting the telling of diverse histories does a disservice to student engagement across the board.

The importance of taking a holistic, student-centered approach came up during the course discussion on Texas History. Gene B. Preuss (Univ. of Houston–Downtown) noted that considering students’ identities in the classroom can often be counterintuitive. “We as academics tend to put students into categories,” he commented, “but many students don’t see themselves siloed like that. They see themselves as multicultural.” Walter Buenger (Univ. of Texas at Austin and Texas State Historical Association) shared Adolph Hofner’s “Shiner Song (Farewell to Prague),” a piece with German, Czech, and Tejano

influences, illustrating that Texas history is about an abundance of cultures merging. In the history classroom, it is crucial to talk about all of them.

## Classroom practices can create inclusive and responsive learning environments by taking into account the identities of teachers and students.

Attendees appreciated that the conference brought together people at different institution types and instructional levels. Martinez was a little surprised that she was the only graduate student in the Mexican American History course discussion, but “despite the gap in career stages, I felt welcomed,” she told *Perspectives*. “I was also comforted to learn that [others] were grappling with the same pedagogical questions I was struggling with.” For Preuss, the mixing of high school and postsecondary educators is invaluable—“We can learn from each other.” Sessions boasted a mix of instructors from four-year, two-year, and K–12 institutions from the United States, and conference registrants came from as far as Canada. Clearly, there is an appetite for effective introductory history course design, especially amid efforts to restrict this history, beyond the borders of the United States.

Bundles, who attended high school in Indianapolis in the 1960s, urged conference goers to think about the legislators of her generation (and older) enacting anti-CRT measures. “My generation learned a version of American history that is inaccurate and inadequate,” she

said, pointing to the fact that what students learn in the classroom shapes policy down the line. Such legislators believe that the teaching of histories unfamiliar to them is historical revisionism by radicals, rather than what it is—a reorientation toward the best practices of the discipline.

Texas historians and teachers should look forward to another Texas Conference in the fall of 2022. According to Brookins, attendees find that “the experience has strengthened historians’ networks across the state, and may prove helpful in responding to the recent wave of legislation aimed at restricting history education in Texas and other states with a conservative electorate.”

For those who missed this year’s events, recordings of two of the plenaries are available on the AHA’s YouTube channel, and discussions about anti-CRT legislation will continue at the 2022 annual meeting. **P**

*Claire Vanderwood is program assistant, academic and professional affairs, at the AHA.*

## ADVOCACY BRIEFS

*Education Funding, Academic Freedom, and NARA's Future Plans*

**In November 2021, the AHA advocated for education and research funding and continued its communication with the National Archives and Records Administration regarding NARA's reopening plans. The AHA also addressed threats to academic freedom both abroad and at home.**

### **AHA Sends Letter Objecting to University of Florida Preventing Faculty Members' Expert Witness Testimony**

On November 3, the AHA sent a letter to President W. Kent Fuchs of the University of Florida stating that it "objects strenuously to [the] decision preventing University of Florida faculty members from testifying in a voting-rights case." The university's decision "is contrary to the principle that the state university is a resource upon which public institutions such as the courts can (and should) draw for expertise," the AHA wrote. "A public university is not a political agent of the state in which it is situated; it is a site of learning and scholarly inquiry in service to the residents of that state."

### **AHA Signs On to Letter Urging Department of Education to Prioritize International and Foreign Language Education and Research**

On November 5, the AHA signed on to a letter by the Coalition for International

Education "urging[ing] the Department of Education to prioritize and strengthen its international and foreign language education and research role under HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays 102(b)(6)." "Our challenges increasingly rely on foreign language abilities, regional knowledge, cultural understanding, and experience abroad," the letter stated. "Key foreign language, regional studies, international business, research and education abroad infrastructures and capacity must be replenished."

### **NARA Responds to Reopening Questions in AHA Letter of August 5, 2021**

In August, the AHA wrote to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) on behalf of historical researchers seeking clarity about reopening plans. The questions in the letter drew on email communications received by the AHA and other membership organizations.

On November 15, NARA provided responses to the questions posed in the AHA's letter, as well as a communication to researchers. The AHA is glad to publish these responses as a window into NARA's reopening process and future plans. We continue to work with our colleagues at NARA to increase communication between archivists and researchers.

### **AHA Releases Statement on Censorship and Prosecution by Chinese Authorities**

On November 17, the AHA released a statement expressing alarm at "news reports that Chinese authorities have escalated the censorship and prosecution of Chinese citizens who deviate from the Communist Party line of hero worship." "Such efforts strike at the very heart of historical scholarship, which depends on open-ended inquiry and a free exchange of ideas, wherever that inquiry leads, and whether or not those ideas cast aspersions on historical actors," the AHA stated. "The AHA stands firmly against national laws and policies that in effect criminalize the historical enterprise." As of December 21, 20 organizations have signed on to the statement. **P**

*Rebecca L. West is operations and communications assistant at the AHA. She tweets @rebeckawest.*

TROY J. SACQUETY AND JARED M. TRACY

## SINE PARI

*US Army Special Operations Command Historians Are “Without Equal”*

**H**aiti after the 7.0 earthquake in January 2010. Afghanistan with special operations task forces during Operations Enduring Freedom and Freedom's Sentinel. Qatar and the tri-border area of Jordan, Syria, and Iraq during Operation Inherent Resolve against ISIS. Escaping (quickly!) from a submerged, upside-down MH-47 Chinook mock-up during an underwater egress simulation. Defensive driving and firearms training. At these and various other places, historians document the capabilities and operations of US Army Special Operations Forces (AR-SOF); conduct oral history interviews; collect documents and digital media; and archive and preserve these assets for future research, education, advising, and publication.

The US Army relies on historians to help it honor its 246-year heritage, promote esprit de corps, and learn from past successes and failures. The preceding examples might not represent what most people think historians do, but they fall within our job description. We are civilian historians at the US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the headquarters for the Army's Special Forces (popularly known as the Green Berets) and Rangers, as well as Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations (PSYOP), and Special Operations Aviation and Support forces. We take the USASOC motto *Sine Pari* (“Without Equal”) seriously,

and we are among roughly 150 civilian historians working for the US Army around the world.

The US Army relies on historians to help it honor its 246-year heritage, promote esprit de corps, and learn from past successes and failures.

Army policy mandates that historians write or compile annual command histories – key primary source documents – that capture their organizations' activities over the previous year. But this requirement is only the baseline. Army historians might be called on to teach soldiers, lead battlefield tours, write informational papers or published materials, conduct oral history interviews of senior leaders or following operational deployments, create exhibits and displays, or execute any number of other tasks. Alongside a talented team of archivists, graphic designers, and digitization specialists, we and two other historians meet the assorted historical requirements of USASOC.

Our paths to becoming Army historians are emblematic of our unique

professional roles. After earning a master's degree in history from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Troy worked as a military analyst in the Central Intelligence Agency while pursuing his doctorate at Texas A&M University. Sought out for his subject matter expertise on the World War II Office of Strategic Services, he was recruited by the USASOC History Office in 2006. He completed his PhD two years later and served as the US Army Civil Affairs Historian for more than a decade. Now, he is the Command Historian at USASOC, responsible for developing and implementing the command's historical program, supporting the commanding general's vision, and supervising a multifunctional staff.

Jared earned a master's degree in history from Virginia Commonwealth University before joining the US Army in 2003. While on active duty, he began the history PhD program at Kansas State University, researching ties between World War I propaganda and 1920s corporate advertising. After leaving military service, he applied for civilian positions related to history on USAJOBS, and he spent nearly two years at the Airborne and Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He joined the USASOC History Office in 2010 and completed his PhD two years later. Recently, he became the Deputy Command Historian, assisting the Command Historian.



Academic training provides the foundational skills for an Army historian, but other skills are picked up on the job. Our work is fast paced, and every day is different. On average, USASOC has some 3,000 soldiers conducting more than 200 missions in over 60 countries. A command with such diverse units, specialties, missions, and regional orientations requires historians knowledgeable about a wide range of subjects. They must be motivated and able to juggle competing priorities and adapt to rapidly changing requirements. Historians usually want to maximize the time they have for research. At USASOC, however, which mans, trains, equips, and deploys soldiers worldwide for enduring and rapid-response missions, historical support often requires a turnaround of less than 24 hours. While important, collecting sources

from the veterans' community, archival repositories, and other agencies is secondary to addressing more pressing needs of the command.

The collection and preservation of ARSOF records allows us to assist commanders and decision makers throughout USASOC, the Army, and the Department of Defense with historical perspectives and recommendations. This has proved relevant, for example, when the Army reduced its presence in Iraq in 2010–11 and during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020–21. Our graduate programs prepared us immensely for this function, as they did for our instructional roles. We teach historical classes, such as the history of US Army Special Forces, to students attending qualification courses and soldiers assigned to various USASOC units. These classes

ensure that they have enough historical context to be successful in their training and operational missions.

Building rapport with Army officers, noncommissioned officers, soldiers, and civilians of all ranks is critical to our collecting mission. We do not merely *receive* historical materials; we *retrieve* them. This includes conducting oral history interviews and collecting documents, photos, audiovisual media, and digital assets, even when events are still unfolding. Accordingly, USASOC historians are prepared to travel on short notice, including short-stint deployments to combat zones. Special operations are inherently sensitive in nature; use of recent sources in publicly released historical products are often delayed until classification reviews are completed years or even decades later.



Troy J. Sacquety (foreground) accompanies a Civil Affairs Team member in Jérémie, Haiti, during Operation Unified Response, a humanitarian mission following an earthquake in January 2010.  
US Army Special Operations Command

The research, analytic, and writing skills honed in our academic training prepared us to produce high-quality primary and secondary sources on behalf of the command. These include scholarly books and articles, quick-reference handbooks, in-house informational papers, and annual command histories. We are in a unique position of both generating original historical content—which benefits numerous audiences, including soldiers, historians, students, and the general public—and interpreting historical information to make it useful for our command.

Building rapport with Army officers, noncommissioned officers, soldiers, and civilians of all ranks is critical to our collecting mission.

Our publications are complemented by a robust ARSOF history website. In addition to distributing online versions of printed materials, the site hosts a memorial to fallen special operations soldiers and includes important information about ARSOF history, including key figures, milestones, and its long-standing emphasis on diversity. These publications meet the highest academic and aesthetic standards. In the absence of a formal peer review process, each historian doubles as an editor. Before any materials are distributed beyond the Army, they undergo a staff-wide prepublication review to ensure that they meet security, classification, and releasability standards.

Veterans' and soldiers' voices figure prominently in our publications, thanks to our active oral history program. Participants' words provide



Unit insignia for US Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.  
US Army Special Operations Command

firsthand perspectives to augment other primary sources, which are often operationally focused, stilted, or heavily jargonistic. These interviews are a valuable resource to bring to bear on military history, but they also mean that many of our subjects can talk back. Our primary audience is also our subject, and these individuals are personally invested in our work. Gathering, triaging, analyzing, and corroborating sources—all skills attained in years of advanced academic study and work in history—are essential to success. This sets much of our work apart from more typical forms of historical scholarship. It also means our subjects are our harshest critics.

Finally, we also serve as liaisons with outside groups, including other government agencies, academia, the media, and the public. We answer ARSOF related congressional inquiries, assist scholars writing books or articles, advise graduate students researching theses or dissertations, help family members seeking to learn more about a relative's service, and respond to interview requests from media outlets. These tasks require a mastery of our subject matter, as well as the flexibility to answer questions and concerns from

civilians, reporters, and scholars. Although we speak on behalf of a much larger organization, these tasks are not dissimilar from what our colleagues in higher education do when approached by members of the media, genealogists, or legislators.

The work of a USASOC historian may not be what comes to mind for students interested in history. However, we rely on the core skills fostered by our academic training every day as we research, document, and study the US Army's special operations outside a university setting. Army historians ensure that history is collected, cataloged, and included in training, education, and decision-making. The continued presence of institutional historians in all branches of the military reflects the branches' appreciation for the value of history. Historians across the Department of Defense are creating history that is without equal. **P**

*Troy J. Sacquety is the Command Historian at the US Army Special Operations Command. Jared M. Tracy is the Deputy Command Historian at the US Army Special Operations Command.*

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BRIDGET RILEY

# MISSING WOMEN

*Tackling Gender Imbalance in Social Studies Textbooks*





MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS know that our students are often ready to take on the world's problems. Their hunger for social action is inspiring and offers opportunities for teachers to foster meaningful learning experiences in the classroom.

I had such an experience when planning a seventh-grade revolutionary-era unit. I am not one to teach to the textbook. However, having heard my students take note of the discouraging lack of women in our US history textbook, I made our textbook the entry point for student project work. In class, we counted: it was 47 pages into a 55-page chapter before the contributions of women during the revolutionary era were addressed in more than a sentence or two. The textbook, published in 2019, annexed women's history with two other paragraphs at the end of the chapter: "How African Americans Served in the War" and "American Indians Choose Sides." As an educator, I was ready to move beyond the "just add women [and racial and ethnic minorities] and stir" approach.

This experience drove home a reality that I had grappled with as both an educator and a historian. All too familiar to anyone who teaches K–12 history, it is also a problem that has long been the focus of many academic studies. Namely, when students in grades K–12 study history, they are often confronted with a nearly womanless past, one where white male military and political figures populate the pages of our textbooks while women, especially women of color, are cast only as supporting actors.

When I began working at an all-girls school, this reality took on a new meaning for me. A central part of the school's mission is to inspire girls to work for justice and to take on leadership roles. What are the implications for my female students who see the dearth of women in the textbook? What message does it send to students of color when American history is framed almost exclusively around the accomplishments of white men in politics? How did my students, many of them precisely at an age when experts suggest confidence can dramatically decline in adolescents, internalize this absence of women and relate it to their own place in the world?

Despite the push to remedy gender imbalance in social studies standards and textbooks at a national level, as well as an understanding of the negative impacts of a curriculum that is not representative of a diverse student body, change has been slow. Often, curricular change originates from within the classroom. I implement change by framing my American history course so that students encounter the past through diverse lived experiences, emphasizing stories that too often

go untold and challenging narratives that are little more than nostalgia. I want them to see that studying the past does not mean focusing only on the accomplishments of men in politics. Rather, the daily experiences of ordinary individuals, of all races and identities, compose the real treasure trove of historical information.

To accomplish this in my Revolutionary War unit, I turned to the project approach, a style of project-based learning that defines a project as an in-depth investigation of "a real-world topic worthy of a student's attention and effort." The teacher's role here is to provide context, support student exploration and curiosity, provide feedback and opportunities for collaboration and connection among students, and confer with students in small groups and whole-class settings. Rather than a traditional piece of written analysis, I asked students to create a podcast to showcase their research. A student-created podcast would amplify not only the voices of those who have gone unheard in our history textbooks but also the voices of the students themselves.

When students in grades K–12 study history, they are often confronted with a nearly womanless past.

We began by exploring the topic of representation broadly. Students considered differences in how women and men are represented in history and how that representation shapes gender roles today. As a class, we thought through a fundamental question: What were we missing when we did not hear the voices of white women, Black Americans, Asian Americans, Indigenous Americans, and many others? Next, we created a planning web to formulate guiding open-ended inquiries. What effect did a woman's race, ethnicity, and social class have on her experiences during the revolutionary era? Although women were banned from voting and holding office, how did they shape the outcome of the Revolutionary War? Did freedom and liberty mean the same thing for white male colonists as it did for white women and women of color? From our list, each student selected one guiding question to frame their research and focus their podcast episode.

I wanted students to avoid creating podcast episodes that resembled a book report or biography. Instead, their episodes had to demonstrate the historical thinking skills they had developed throughout the course of the year. Anchored

in an exploration of primary documents, the podcasts showcased their ability to contextualize and corroborate historical sources in order to demarginalize women from our study of the past. The project called on students to consider how to examine an open-ended inquiry and how to identify and address a gap in the field of history. The process of researching, writing, scripting, revising, and producing allowed this project to be a pathway for understanding how historians work.

### Podcasts showcased the students' ability to contextualize and corroborate historical sources

The final podcast episodes were as varied as one might imagine. While each student started with the same premise—to provide a solution to underrepresentation and gender imbalance in our textbook—their individual episodes created a kaleidoscope of voices and perspectives (and sometimes middle school candor). Emerging from this process was a general unpacking of identities and intersectionality. Many students were inspired to examine not only how gender shaped a woman's experience and voice but also the impact race might have had on her experiences. So students began to appreciate how gender and race are intersecting layers of identities—for the women of the past and for themselves and the people around them. By focusing on how both gender and race shaped an individual's experience, students could further understand how access to resources for one person could be linked to the denial of resources from another and how, just like individuals in the past, their own layers of identity help to shape who they will one day become. Teaching and learning at the intersections of race and gender offered students an opportunity to examine and affirm their own identities and the identities of others, past and present.

One student centered her exploration on the experiences and writings of Black preacher and abolitionist Mary Perth. In her episode, she framed Perth's fierce belief as a form of resistance as the Methodist Church splintered over the issue of slavery: "Since Mary was both a woman and an enslaved woman," my student commented, "she couldn't hold official [religious] services. So you know what she did? She gathered her fellow enslaved in the woods, late into the night, in order to preach to them. Religion was so important to this woman that she walked miles just to preach. Think about that." This student then critically examined a general dearth of written sources from Black women, the majority of whom were legally prevented from reading and writing. She shared how

the particular combination of identities for women like Perth multiplied their obstacles, making their determination and resilience stand out all the more. For my student, Perth was not an avatar for the accomplishments of Black women in the revolutionary era, as might have appeared in the pages of our textbook. In the process of researching, scripting, and recording her podcast, my student had listened to the human story of this woman in hopes that others might listen and hear her story as well.

As I prepare a new cohort of seventh graders for this project, I will do a few things differently. First, as a part of a new curriculum, students have already spent time exploring identity and building social comprehension in their advisory program. I hope to embed some of this important work into their project, thereby further extending the critical conversations surrounding identity to their historical thinking work. Second, I plan to carve out more time and space for student research and exploration. This phase of inquiry-driven research was the most fruitful time not only for students to gain a sense of autonomy over their learning but also for me to confer with them individually and in small groups as they refined their historical analyses. Finally, recognizing that learning is social and that children learn among and with their peers, I plan to implement a more intentional process for peer review, beginning with the initial phases of research and lasting through podcast production and editing. Partnership with a trusted peer, both for whom and from whom meaningful and generous feedback is generated, is precisely the kind of experience historians of all ages should have. **P**

*Bridget Riley teaches middle school history at Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Bethesda, Maryland.*

JULIA BROOKINS

# WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES A PANDEMIC MAKE?

*2021 Survey Suggests Dramatic Changes, but Not for History Undergraduate Enrollments*



While undergraduate student enrollments decline across US universities, history enrollments have not suffered particular damage from the pandemic.

Museums Victoria/Unsplash



**THE RESULTS FROM** the AHA's 2021 History Enrollment Survey show academic units and history students managing the upheavals of the COVID-19 pandemic as best they can. Both in the quantitative data and in comments from respondents, the sense in many history departments seemed to be that, as bad as the pandemic has been in countless ways, it has not been as bad as they feared for student enrollment in history courses. Over the past four academic years, the number of undergraduate history enrollments at responding institutions has fallen by 2 percent. This is more than the 1.3 percent decline over four years that we found last year, but not a catastrophic drop.

In response to the survey, 138 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada provided full data for the past four academic years: 2017–18, 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21. This is an increase of 24 institutions over participation in last year's survey, and their responses reflect immediate changes in student enrollment as a result of COVID-19. In total, the responses represent 412,613 student enrollments in 2017–18 and 404,351 in 2020–21.

Because of the types of institutions that responded, the results for higher education in general should be interpreted with caution. This year's responses skew toward larger research institutions—including 49 US universities in the “very high research” Carnegie classification. While a concerted effort for participation from two-year colleges yielded a better-than-usual 13 responses, the number of baccalaureate colleges fell from 23 last year to just 15 this year, making it

difficult to draw conclusions about trends at that type of institution. This might speak to pandemic-induced staffing changes, and certainly to the difficulty many smaller departments and units had in accessing the necessary quantitative information remotely and ensuring someone submitted the survey, particularly as transitions back to in-person learning were underway from June to September.

Over the four years of reported enrollments, the 10 Canadian universities saw a 5.3 percent increase in undergraduate enrollment, the 87 public US institutions saw a 2.1 percent decrease, and the 41 private US institutions saw a 4.9 percent decline. As usual, the overrepresentation of the highest-research doctoral universities and their large sizes tend to blunt larger percentage swings at smaller colleges and universities (Fig. 1).

History declines have been smaller than overall college enrollment declines.

In aggregate, history declines have been smaller than overall college enrollment declines. According to National Student Clearinghouse data reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, overall enrollment of undergraduate students in the United States declined 3.4 percent between fall 2019 and fall 2020 and then another 3.5 percent in fall 2021. The AHA's history survey data does not reflect a decline of that magnitude, a discrepancy due in part to the type of institutions that

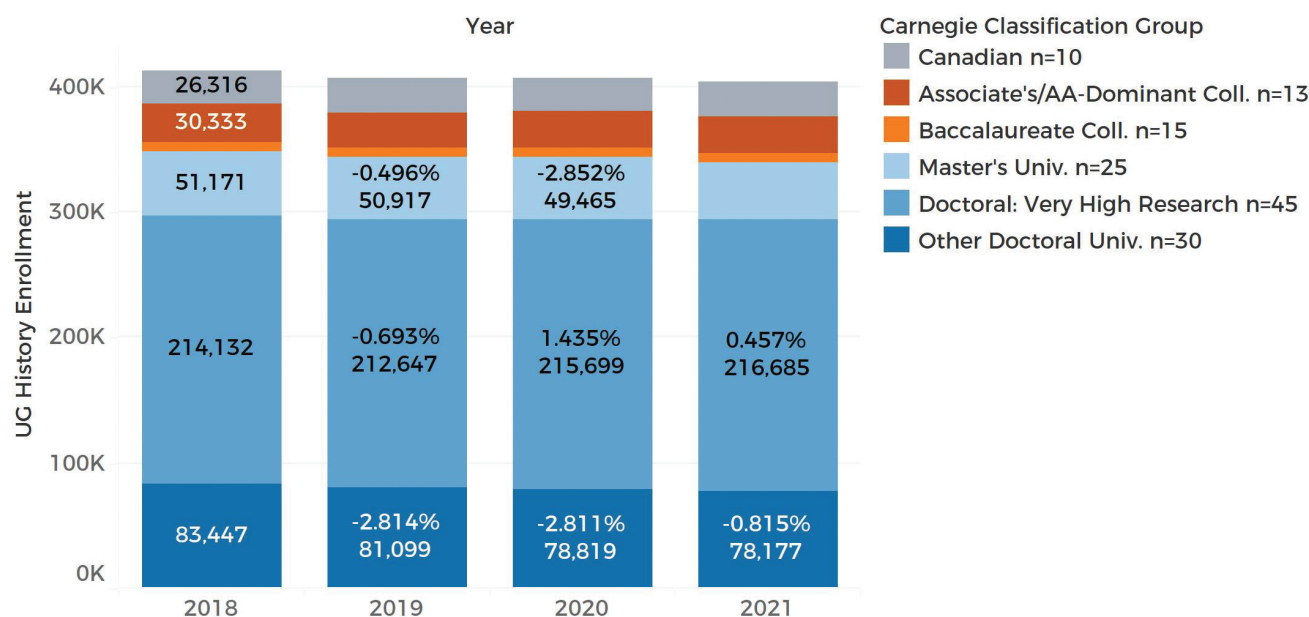


Fig. 1: Undergraduate history enrollment by institution type (n = 138).

responded to our survey. Nationwide, single-year declines were especially big at two-year colleges (down 9.4 percent and then another 6 percent) as opposed to the relatively small drops at four-year nonprofit institutions. The dominance of four-year respondents in our survey means we have fewer respondents from the institutions where overall enrollment fell most precipitously because of the pandemic (Fig. 2).

## The changes that many history instructors have made to their courses may prove to be valuable adaptations.

As usual, there is tremendous variation in the enrollment changes from one college to the next. However, it is interesting that in the most recent year, 67 respondents reported a positive annual change in their undergraduate history enrollments, whereas in the two previous years, only 55 or 56 saw any increase. This small sign of growth supports the idea that history enrollments have not suffered particular damage from the pandemic. Indeed, the changes that many history instructors have made to their courses, as well as

the hard-won ability to offer courses in several modalities (in person, hybrid, synchronous online, asynchronous online), may prove to be valuable adaptations. As one respondent put it, “Aspects of our program benefitted dramatically from the shift to online because of the pandemic. In particular, our summer enrollments more than doubled. For that reason, we are pursuing a path of largely online sync/asynch courses for our spring/summer semester from now on.” Another respondent agreed that “online courses enrolled quite well during the pandemic” but added that “almost everyone is happy to be back in person in fall 2021.”

Why are total changes relatively small? Some of the more positive news may indicate cautious decision-making by students. When choosing which courses to take under unstable, pandemic conditions, an emergency-remote or hybrid history course might have seemed a lower-stakes option – with less potential risk to students’ overall college plans – than a lab course in biology, or psychology and business courses with team projects.

As students tried to continue their education in 2020–21 by taking classes in whatever formats made sense, history departments and joint academic units scrambled to offer

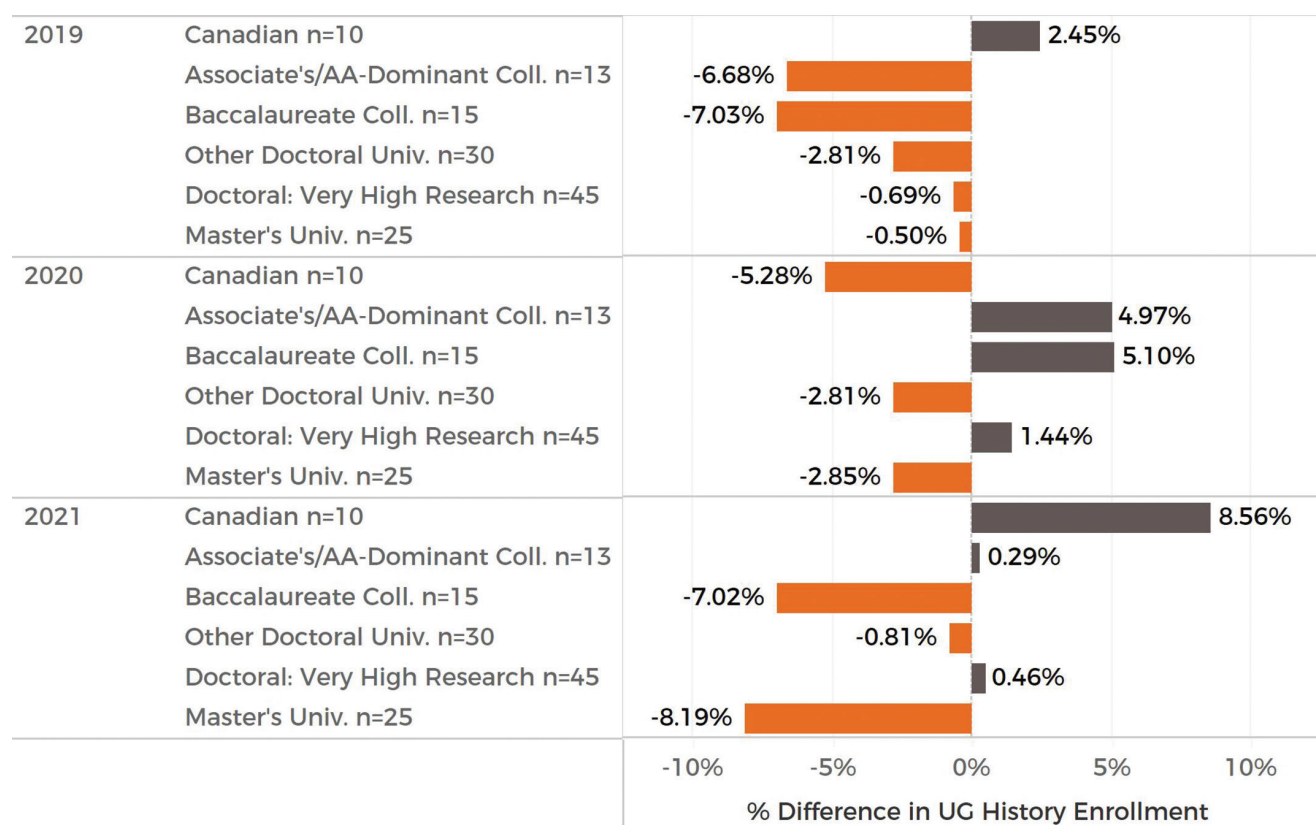


Fig. 2: Change from previous year by institution type (US) or country.

the courses they could with the faculty they had. As one respondent described it, “Due to a hiring freeze, retirements, and one year suspension of grad admissions, we have been limited in providing seats. Our major numbers have been on an incremental increase, however. We, like all, have been challenged by COVID and haven’t been able to focus on growth, nor do we have the staffing.”

### History departments and joint academic units scrambled to offer the courses they could with the faculty they had.

Staffing and space constraints varied among institutions; historians and their administrative colleagues made decisions about teaching modality and enrollment caps that made the most sense for their students, fellow faculty, and particular campuses. For many academic units, the pandemic enrollment story has been about managing greater uncertainty with fewer resources (human and financial) in an ongoing attempt to match the supply of spaces in online, hybrid, and in-person history courses with shrinking budgets and unpredictable demand from students. Some departments took steps to limit class size (whether in person or online) because of the pandemic. Others suspended admissions to their history graduate program, decreasing the supply of potential teaching assistants. Undergraduate enrollment caps were lowered for that reason.

“Our enrollments are strong and have been rising,” wrote one respondent. “We might, however, have to limit class size because of a reduction in the number of graduate students admitted to the program. We will not have the requisite number of TAs for large classes.” Another explained, “Our program size (majors, enrollments) has remained fairly stable during the pandemic, despite most courses having been moved to hybrid or fully online formats. While multiple visiting faculty were let go, continuing faculty saw their teaching load increase. The number of course offerings has been somewhat reduced, but the fill rates have increased significantly.”

With so many short- and long-term changes to higher education prompted by the pandemic, an additional source of optimism for some respondents was a renewal of conviction that history educators have something essential to contribute to society. “People have a thirst for understanding history and society, especially American history, in the light of all that’s happened and history departments around the

country should assert themselves within their institutions,” one respondent wrote. The AHA has made resources available for precisely this purpose, from the Department Advocacy Toolkit to *A Bibliography of Historians’ Responses to COVID-19* and Remote Teaching Resources.

While the process has been painful, history faculty members are dedicated to teaching students however they can. Some students and potential students may be out of reach for the time being, but hope endures that the difficulties of the past two years – and all that the community of historians has learned from them – will serve as the foundation for resilience and renewal in the future. **P**

*Julia Brookins is special projects coordinator at the AHA.*

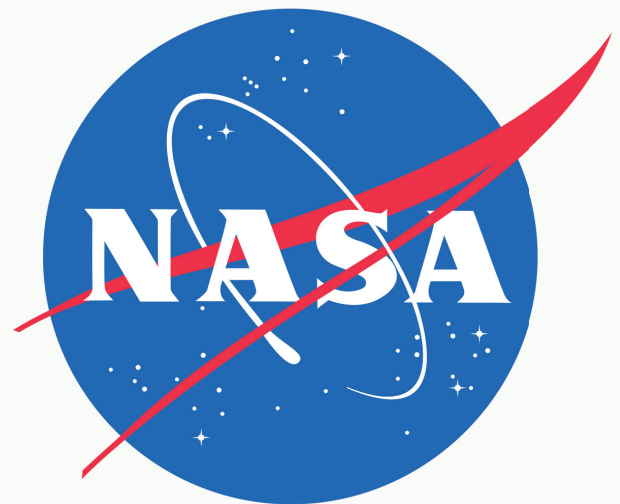


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LAURA ANSLEY

## TEACHER, MENTOR, COACH

*An Interview with New AHA President James H. Sweet*

History as a discipline remains at the forefront of contemporary culture wars, and many historical organizations are just beginning to recover from the impact of COVID-19. James H. Sweet (Univ. of Wisconsin–Madison) faces daunting challenges and exciting opportunities as he leads the Association and the history discipline as 2022 president of the AHA.

A scholar of Africa and the African diaspora, Sweet earned his BA and MA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his PhD from the City University of New York. He is the author of two prizewinning books. *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441–1770* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2003) won the AHA's Wesley-Logan Prize. His second book, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2011), won the Gilder Lehrman Center's Frederick Douglass Book Prize and the AHA's James A. Rawley Prize in Atlantic History. Additionally, he serves as series editor for *Africa and the Diaspora: History, Politics, Culture* for the University of Wisconsin Press, and he previously served on the AHA Council's Research Division (2016–19).

Sweet is an accomplished instructor. At UW–Madison, he has won teaching awards, and students elected him to be 2017 commencement speaker. His undergraduate and graduate courses focus on the Atlantic world, comparative slavery, comparative world history, and the histories of Brazil and South Africa. In his free time, he coaches high school football and volunteers with the YMCA.

Sweet assumes the role of the president at a ceremony during the AHA annual meeting in early January. *Perspectives* recently spoke to Sweet about his career, his goals as AHA president, and his Netflix recommendations.

### How did you first become interested in history?

I came into the discipline through the side door. As an undergraduate at UNC in the 1980s, I majored in political

science, but I was a work-study student in the Department of History. I built bookshelves for Bill Leuchtenburg and delivered mail to Nell Painter. When I graduated, my mentor Colin Palmer convinced me that I would die if I joined the army, so I opted for law school. One year of law school made me profoundly unhappy, so I quit and moved back into my mom's house. For a couple of years, I took history courses at UNC Charlotte; worked full-time at the airport; and used my earnings to travel to Europe, the Caribbean, and South America. It was during this time that I discovered a passion for history, and Colin encouraged me to apply for graduate school. He opened the door for me, and I haven't looked back.

### What first interested you in the African diaspora and the Atlantic world?

An accumulation of life events and broader intellectual interests drew me toward these topics. My stepmother was Venezuelan and a Spanish teacher, and she stoked my interest in the Spanish-speaking world from a young age. I took courses on Latin American history and politics as an undergraduate, in addition to courses in African and African American studies. Colin Palmer was Jamaican born but forged his career in the United States as a historian of the African diaspora. His influence on me was profound. Then, just before grad school, I married a South African.

When I applied to graduate school, the African diaspora and the Atlantic world were not discrete fields as they are today. I wanted to study slave societies in 19th-century Cuba, so I was considered a Latin Americanist. I cobbled together an individual plan of study, taking everything on African and African American history I could. Annual trips to Africa to visit my wife's family enriched my perspective on what I learned in the classroom. When I started reading in the archives for colonial Brazil, a lot of the African ritual and linguistic materials that others had overlooked made sense to me. I knew I could write a good dissertation.

**Colin Palmer clearly made an indelible mark on you. Tell us about his influence on you.**

When I worked in the history department, Colin at the time was department chair—the first African American chair of a major department at UNC. I sat at a table in the department office, and he would walk through and poke fun at me. One day, I was laboring over a research paper, and he just grabbed it and walked into his office with it. I waited a few minutes and then followed. He said, “You’re not as dumb as you look.” He took an interest in me—he would read my papers, and he asked me what I was interested in. He really saw me. And when I decided to attend graduate school, I returned to UNC to work with him, then followed him to CUNY.

Colin is still the primary role model for everything I do. I find playfulness really important in learning—something he reinforced. He also had an eye for the quiet student at the back of the class who has something to say. He would help pull them out of their shells. I gravitate toward those students too, especially undergraduates. I do it even more with younger kids in football coaching. He taught me that mentoring is as much emotional as it is intellectual and to make your mark where you can.

**How does your scholarship influence your teaching?**

I try to bring my scholarship into the classroom every opportunity I get. At the most basic level, I integrate my richest archival stories into lectures to raise questions or illustrate important conceptual points. In research courses, I assign methodological exercises that employ different kinds of sources—linguistic, artistic, material, and archival—drawn from my own research. I encourage students to think creatively about what constitutes a source and then to come up with innovative ways to interrogate those sources. Thinking about research through the prism of the classroom also facilitates my writing. If we can’t make our research comprehensible for our students, we miss out on the full potential of our work.

**How do you see historians, regardless of their professional role, having a positive influence on the newest “culture war” around history curriculum?**

The culture wars have been a proxy for political divisions for a long time. I came of age during Ronald Reagan’s presidency, and one of my senators was Jesse Helms. I rejected the dominant politics of my youth, but I sought to understand the anger and anxiety that generated them. The people who raised me held the same ethical values as me, yet we disagreed on some fundamental political issues. I still hold fast to the belief that people can agree to disagree on these

fundamental issues, while still talking, maintaining friendships, and even loving one another. I have never viewed politics as a zero-sum game.

That said, today’s culture wars transcend the mere political. What is at stake are the foundations on which we conduct historical research. In a world where our political leaders (and others) question the veracity of the most basic scientific data, historical evidence is often rejected out of hand. Over the last five years, historians have been fighting to protect our discipline from denialists and political provocateurs. The AHA has been especially proactive in opposing attempts to censor or control historical scholarship in public schools and universities. By explaining the importance of evidence and argument, we shine light on the *processes* of truth seeking at the heart of our discipline. I am optimistic that historians across the discipline—teachers, museum curators, archivists, editors, and others—are embracing this challenge, inviting our skeptics to understand how we do what we do.

**What goals do you have for your term as AHA president?**

First, I want to help the organization continue to grow its public presence. I’m particularly interested in bridging the



James H. Sweet speaks on behalf of the University of Wisconsin–Madison history department as department chair.  
*Courtesy James H. Sweet*

political divide by inviting prominent Americans — both Republican and Democrat — to engage with the AHA at its meetings, in its publications, and in its advocacy. As department chair, I presided over a board of visitors — all former undergraduate history majors, now bankers, lawyers, and CEOs, as well as educators, journalists, and human rights workers — who represented a broad spectrum of political views. What they shared was a passion for history, often kindled by their undergraduate professors, and they were some of our staunchest defenders against political attacks. They also opened their pocketbooks to support us financially. Colleagues at other public universities like UCLA and UT Austin have told me about similarly enthusiastic history boards of visitors. I believe these boards can be scaled up to help us address some of our most pressing national issues.

Historians across the discipline are inviting our skeptics to understand how we do what we do.

Second, I want to grow the AHA's endowment. A portion of the Association's annual budget is dependent on grant money. In fact, the salaries of several crucial staff positions rely on funds that could easily evaporate. I would like to see

us fill this gap and shore up the administrative capacity of the organization. Increasingly, historians rely on the AHA to protect our intellectual interests, as well as our professional ones, and there is no stronger advocate for the future of our discipline. We need to better fund these efforts through yearly giving, bequests, and so on. Beyond the immediate membership, I also hope to generate gifts from prominent Americans interested in the kinds of critical inquiry and debate generated by historians' work.

Finally, we ask everyone, "What can't you get enough of?" Any books, hobbies, or other pop culture obsessions that you're turning to right now?

I've always been a sucker for bad TV. During COVID, I discovered Netflix for the first time. After reading and writing all day, I looked forward to vegging out on my couch with a beer to watch shows. I binged everything from *Ozark* to *Bridgerton* to *Umbrella Academy*, including some truly horrible shows like *Tiger King*. The most recent series I watched was *Squid Game*. I should probably be embarrassed, but I'm not! **P**

*This interview has been edited for clarity and length.*

*Laura Ansley is managing editor at the AHA. She tweets @lmansley.*

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## James Z. Gao

1948–2021

Historian of the  
Chinese Revolution

James Z. Gao, professor of modern Chinese history at the University of Maryland, College Park, died on October 26, 2021, at the age of 73. The cause was cancer.

Gao was born and raised in Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang Province in southeast China. In 1983, he earned a master's degree in political science from Peking University and taught at that university as an assistant professor until 1986. He then attended Yale University, where he received his PhD in 1994. From 1992 to 1998, he was an associate professor of history at Christopher Newport University, before he joined the history department at the University of Maryland, College Park. Since 1999, he was also a regular summer visiting research fellow at the Institute for Contemporary Chinese Studies at Peking University.

A founding member of the Chinese Historians in the United States (CHUS), Gao served as the organization's first president in 1987–88. As he explained in his 2008 essay "From Margin to Cutting Edge: The Search for a Paradigm in Chinese Historical Studies" in the *Chinese Historical Review*, CHUS brings together historians who came of age and attended university in China before migrating to the United States for graduate training and employment. The essay was both a call for scholarly innovation and an account of his generation of Chinese historians' situation at the early phases of their academic careers.

Gao's scholarship was part of a creative and bold result of this challenging cross-fertilization of cultures, begun in an era of relative openness in China. His published works include *Meeting Technology's Advance: Social Change in China and Zimbabwe in the Railway Age* (Greenwood Press, 1997) and *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou: The Transformation of City and Cadre, 1949–1954* (Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2004), a remarkable history of his hometown. This book drew on research in the city archives, those of the Communist Party, press accounts, and oral interviews. The result was one of the first archivally based accounts of the Communist seizure of power in a

Chinese city in those years. Gao depicted a cultural clash between peasant-based Communist revolutionaries and an urban professional and intellectual middle class. Messages from Mao Zedong encouraged a "cautious realism of the early 1950s," as well as calls for radicalism and transformation. Gao saw in the latter some roots of the Communists' "utopian fanaticism in the later years." The cultural politics and psychological attacks on "class enemies" in those early years foreshadowed the much harsher confrontations of Mao's Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou*, alongside Gao's published articles, displayed a welcome integration of social with cultural, political, and intellectual history. It remains a work of enduring importance for historians not only of China but of revolutions in general.

Gao also wrote the 700 entries in the *Historical Dictionary of Modern China (1800–1949)* (Scarecrow Press, 2009). His manuscript *Shanghai Market: Rice Consumers, Merchants, and the State, 1955–1964* was completed and under publisher review at the time of his death. In addition, his 15 scholarly articles examined issues including food rationing, photography of Chinese disasters, famine in the 1950s, consumerism, the history of rice in Shanghai, war and nationalism during the Korean War years, and rural revolutionaries in the cities.

Though his work will endure, his death is a great loss for the Department of History at the University of Maryland, College Park, and for the historical discipline in general. Students recall a teacher who was both demanding and supportive. Colleagues recall his great warmth, intellectual engagement, integrity, and courage. His scholarship displayed a creativity, boldness, and importance that, as was the case with previous intellectual migrations to the United States, greatly enriched the American historical profession.

Gao is survived by his wife, Laura Liu, of Olney, Maryland, and his son, Weijing Gao, of New York City.

Jeffrey Herf  
University of Maryland, College Park



## Walter Nugent

1935–2021

Historian of the  
United States; AHA  
50-Year Member

Walter Nugent was a historian of wide-ranging interests and expertise, with habits of curiosity, wide reading, and hard work that resulted in a dozen influential books.

Born in 1935, Nugent often commented on the demographic good fortune that gave academic opportunities to his generation when baby boomers flooded into universities in the 1960s. He grew up in a Catholic family in upstate New York. He received a first-class liberal arts education at St. Benedict's College (now Benedictine College), and then he earned an MA at Georgetown University in 1956 and a PhD at the University of Chicago in 1961, all the while supporting a growing family by serving as a church organist. (His love of music endured and included an essay on Antonín Dvořák.)

Nugent's dissertation became *The Tolerant Populists: Kansas Populism and Nativism* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1963). Written at his kitchen table while he taught in Kansas, the book was soon widely taught in graduate seminars and undergraduate historiography classes. Nugent was often compared to Richard Hofstadter, who had asserted that Populists were nativist, paranoid, reactionary, and anti-Semitic. Nugent's long days in the archives brought him to a nearly opposite conclusion, and he emphasized Populism's tolerance of others and advocacy of state intervention to secure rational progressive reforms. In 2013, the press released a 50th-anniversary edition, a splendid tribute to the enduring influence of a first book.

*The Tolerant Populists* led to a position in the history department at Indiana University Bloomington, where Nugent flourished. The department and university were building an international focus that gave a young, ambitious historian immense opportunity. Nugent held several administrative positions, including department chair, and he played a leading role in bringing the *American Historical Review* to campus. His most rewarding position came as founding director of the university's Office of Overseas Study. The position led to travel abroad, as he came to embrace cultures, languages, history, and food from around the world. Nugent also served

the Fulbright Program in several capacities. He developed a special interest in Poland, Israel, and Ireland (where he held the Mary Ball Washington Chair at University College Dublin). He was immensely pleased when the main room of Indiana's Overseas Study office was named in his honor. After 21 years at Indiana, Nugent accepted the Andrew V. Tackes Chair at the University of Notre Dame, where he continued his research, teaching, and mentoring, dedicating time to helping new historians with their dissertations and career advancement.

Nugent's research spanned time periods and subjects. His early work was largely in the late 19th century, leading to his service as president of the Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era from 2000–02. He moved into economic history with *The Money Question during Reconstruction* (Norton, 1967) and *Money and American Society, 1865–1880* (Free Press, 1968), then to demography and immigration, notably in *Structures of American Social History* (Indiana Univ. Press, 1981) and *Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870–1914* (Indiana Univ. Press, 1992).

*Into the West: The Story of Its People* (Knopf, 1999) marked Nugent's deeper entry into western history, in which he published some of his most influential work, including *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansion* (Knopf, 2008) and his last book, *Color Coded: Party Politics in the American West, 1950–2016* (Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2018). Like many of his generation, Nugent often engaged the Turner thesis and American exceptionalism, the subject of one of the last of his dozens of published essays. He served as the Western History Association's president in 2005–06.

Nugent's books and essays are based on extensive research, creative thinking, and engaging prose. He was fortunate to have as partner the historian Suellen Hoy, who brought shared interests and joy to a sometimes-shy scholar. He enjoyed his children and their families and took special pleasure in conversations on American and western politics. His daughter, Rachel, remembers that Nugent delighted in recounting the food, wine, and conversations enjoyed with lively companions in restaurants near and far, more enjoyable even than his passion for golf.

James H. Madison  
Indiana University Bloomington (emeritus)

Photo: Walter Franklin Nugent Baird



## Charles Grier Sellers Jr.

1923–2021

Historian of the  
United States

Charles Grier Sellers Jr. was born on September 9, 1923, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Descended from Scotch-Irish immigrants, he was raised by parents Charles Grier Sellers and Cora Irene Templeton. Sellers attended Harvard University, where he studied American history. His senior year was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II, during which he served as a staff sergeant in the 10th Mountain Division in Colorado. After the war ended, Sellers returned to Harvard and completed his degree, *magna cum laude*, in 1947.

Sellers earned his PhD in 1950 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After teaching briefly at the University of Maryland and Princeton University, Sellers moved to the University of California, Berkeley, in 1958. He taught there until his retirement in 1990, in addition to holding the Harmsworth Professorship of American History at Oxford University in 1970–71.

Sellers completed two volumes of a projected three-volume study of President James K. Polk: *James K. Polk: Jacksonian, 1795–1843* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1957) and *James K. Polk: Continentalist, 1843–1846* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1966). The exceptional quality of Sellers's research and writing was widely recognized, and the second volume was awarded the Bancroft Prize. Sellers put Polk aside to work on what was to become his most widely debated book, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1991), but he later gave his many boxes of Polk research materials to Amy S. Greenberg (Penn State Univ.), author of a book on Sarah Polk.

*The Market Revolution* chronicled the transformation of the United States from an agrarian to a capitalist society. Sellers argued that almost every aspect of American life, from religion to politics, gender to economics, transportation to philosophy, was fundamentally affected and altered in this period. Not all historians were persuaded by Sellers's economically centered analysis, but it remains a standard reference in the study of 19th-century America.

At Berkeley, Sellers was a teacher of legendary skills and conscientious devotion to both graduate and undergraduate classes. He worked closely with teaching assistants in his survey course in US history before 1865. He edited a series of pamphlets with primary sources designed to be used in US history courses nationally; co-authored with his colleague Henry F. May *A Synopsis of American History* (Rand McNally, 1963); and designed a high school text, *As It Happened: A History of the United States* (McGraw-Hill, 1975).

During the 1960s, Sellers was a passionate political activist. He was among the leaders of the local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality, and in 1961, he volunteered as a Freedom Rider in Mississippi. He was arrested at the Jackson airport with a group of Black and white protesters for refusing to leave the “whites only” waiting room. Sellers was an early supporter of the free speech movement in 1964 and an eloquent critic of the Vietnam War. He spoke at many public forums, including, most notably, a debate with Charles Capper, then a history graduate student, on the relation of academia to the evils of the American government's actions at home and abroad. When arguing against the Trotskyist Capper, Sellers insisted that universities were quite distinct from the policies and practices of the US government. But during the 1970s and 1980s, Sellers became increasingly impatient with what he thought was the slowness of his professional colleagues to engage the panorama of injustices beyond academia.

When Sellers turned 90 in 2013, his wife, Carolyn Merchant, arranged a birthday event bringing together once again the academic historians Sellers had not seen for many years with the political activists who had become his more frequent companions. It was a moving event, integrating in the final years of his life as a great historian and activist the two long separated parts of his extraordinary career.

Sellers died at his home in Berkeley on September 24, 2021, at the age of 98.

Daniel N. Gullotta  
Stanford University

David A. Hollinger  
University of California, Berkeley

Photo courtesy Carolyn Merchant



## Martin J. Sherwin

1937–2021

Historian of American  
Diplomacy; AHA  
Member

Martin J. Sherwin – Marty to all who knew him – died on October 6, 2021, of complications from lung cancer. He was 84. Marty is probably best known for *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (Knopf, 2005), a magisterial and Pulitzer Prize–winning biography co-authored with Kai Bird. Marty conducted over 100 oral history interviews and collected more than 50,000 pages of archival documents in the two decades he spent working on the book. Shortly before his death, he learned that *American Prometheus* would be the basis for a feature film about Oppenheimer by Universal Pictures, due for release in 2023.

Marty was born in Brooklyn on July 2, 1937. His father was a clothier, and his mother worked part-time as a secretary. He attended Dartmouth College, where he captained the lightweight crew and graduated in 1959 with a bachelor's degree in history. He earned a doctorate in history from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1971.

His dissertation became the basis for his first book, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (Knopf, 1975), on the events leading up to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and its aftermath. He also wrote *Gambling with Armageddon: Nuclear Roulette from Hiroshima to the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1945–1962* (Knopf, 2020). His own service during the 1962 crisis as an intelligence officer attached to a navy antisubmarine warfare unit inspired this project. Only when researching the topic, he wrote, did he learn “how close to death we had come.” A summer job working at the Lucky Mac uranium mine in Wyoming at age 19 prompted Marty's interest in nuclear weapons. Researching and writing until the very end, Marty was editing the proposal for a new documentary film with Kai Bird – about a US bomber crew captured in Japan near the end of the war – on the day he died.

In more than 30 years as a history professor, Marty taught at Tufts University, Princeton University, and, since 2007, George Mason University. At Tufts, Marty created the Nuclear Age History and Humanities Center; in a collaboration with

Moscow State University, the center established a satellite “Space Bridge” connecting students and professors in the Soviet Union with scholars at the Medford, Massachusetts, campus. In 1989, Marty invited several historians specializing in the Cold War to join him in a memorable visit to Moscow. For many of us, the “Friends of Marty Sherwin Tour” was the first time we had set foot in the country that was much the subject of our study. Among colleagues, Marty was well known for his wry sense of humor about the world of academe, including Sherwin's second law of tenure: “Anything they can hold against you, they will.”

Marty was my dissertation adviser and assisted me in getting my first university teaching position. He was similarly instrumental in advancing the careers of many other aspiring historians – now senior faculty at major research universities – whom he helped find a job or a publisher or just get out of an emotional hole. For us – and to all in our discipline – Marty was an inspiration, a mentor, and a friend. He was also a good citizen of the history discipline. When the AHA sought to obtain the historians.org domain in 2003, Marty and Kai owned it for the Historians Committee for Open Debate, but they graciously ceded it to the AHA.

Marty is survived by his wife of 57 years, Susan Smukler Sherwin; his son Alex; his sister Marjorie; and four grandchildren. Marty and Susan's adult daughter, Andrea, died in 2010. *Gambling with Armageddon* is dedicated to her.

Gregg Herken

University of California, Santa Cruz and Merced (emeritus)

Photo courtesy Alex Sherwin





## Eric Weitz

1953–2021

Historian of Germany;  
AHA Life Member

Eric Weitz, a historian of Germany and global human rights, passed away on July 1, 2021. Weitz taught at St. Olaf College, was the Distinguished McKnight University Professor and chair of the history department at the University of Minnesota, and served as dean of humanities and arts at the City University of New York. Weitz was beloved by his students for his care and for challenging them to think big without sacrificing rigor. He earned several teaching and mentorship awards, as well as grants from many leading foundations. A lifelong baker (he paid his way through graduate school making bread for a Boston bakery) and builder, Weitz was a New Yorker who loved to travel.

Weitz will be remembered for his field-defining scholarship, which spanned the history of German radicalism in the early 20th century to global genocide in the 21st century. He had a unique ability to combine close-up detail with vast-canvas narratives, to apply big concepts without losing sight of the human—and humane—drama. He was an ethical historian: concern for justice informed his commitment to helping us understand atrocity.

Weitz began as a historian of the German Left, expanding his 1983 doctoral dissertation on radicalism in the Ruhr valley into a history of Communism in Germany from 1890 to 1990. He urged his readers to think of Germany, and especially Berlin, as a site of daring experimentation in politics, ideas, film, and architecture. But Weitz's Germany was never separated from transnational currents. He was always fascinated by the parallel human experiment—and horror—of Stalinism. He published a much-debated article on racial politics and ethnic purging in the USSR in *Slavic Review* (2002) and followed up in 2003 with a masterful overview, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton Univ. Press). In these works, Weitz drew attention to the importance of population policy at the core of so many modernizing regimes, policies that shared roots in racial ideologies.

Weitz worked his way to a wider history of international law and the long tail of empire, where racial ideologies and

population politics had their origins. Two landmark essays in the *American Historical Review* sketched the contours of an ambitious research agenda. “From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions” (2008) charted how 19th-century states created borders, organizations to manage the human toll. “Self-Determination: How a German Enlightenment Idea Became the Slogan of National Liberation and a Human Right” (2015) examined the longue durée of German ideas of sovereignty and peoplehood.

Those essays culminated in his last book, *A World Divided: The Global Struggle for Human Rights in the Age of Nation-States* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2019), written while he was being treated for the cancer that would eventually take his life. An achievement in world history, *A World Divided* keeps a reader's eye on humans making choices while the other eye is fixed on the systems they designed to include and exclude, protect and eliminate.

Optimistic by nature but realistic by inclination, Eric Weitz was never persuaded that the end of the Cold War and the rise of contemporary humanitarianism would dispel forces with such deep origins. He worried about the specters of xenophobia and ethnic cleansing even as a chorus celebrated postnational globalization. As long as nation-states monopolized who got rights, the urge to exclude, ban, or exterminate would be endemic. At the same time, Weitz insisted, those threats powered efforts to revive or to create defenses like human rights. The Berlin Wall may have fallen, but the questions of who has rights and what they mean were as contested as ever. This spirit motivated Weitz to launch a book series with Princeton University Press and his editor and wife, Brigitta van Rheinberg, on human rights and crimes against humanity.

We have Eric Weitz to thank for his brave yet subtle reminders that history has never been settled and that nations, perhaps especially those that endow themselves with exceptional destinies, have always been prone to commit horrible acts. He is survived by his wife, Brigitta; two sons; a stepson; two brothers; a niece; and a granddaughter, who was born in April.

Jeremy Adelman  
Princeton University

Photo courtesy Brigitta van Rheinberg

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La Jolla, CA

**Assistant Professor in History of Africa.** The Department of History in the Division of Arts & Humanities at UC San Diego invites applications for a tenure-track assistant professor specializing in African history to begin July 1, 2022. Region and period of specialization is open. Scholars whose work addresses women's and gender history, environmental history, the history of science and technology, colonial and postcolonial history, and transregional histories, including research in Atlantic, Indian Ocean, or related fields, are particularly encouraged to apply. A PhD (or advancement to candidacy) in history or related discipline by the time of appointment. Evidence of excellence in teaching commensurate with experience, and publications appropriate to the candidate's experience. Candidates with demonstrated strong leadership in supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion in an academic setting are preferred. Teaching responsibilities will include undergraduate and graduate courses in African history as well as in the successful candidate's thematic areas of expertise. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and based on University of California pay scales. Please submit applications before the December 17, 2021, review date to <https://apol-recruit.ucsd.edu/JPF02967>. The University of California, San Diego is an AA/

EOE advancing inclusive excellence. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, covered veteran status, or other protected categories covered by the UC nondiscrimination policy. As a condition of employment, you will be required to comply with the University of California SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Vaccination Program Policy. All covered individuals under the policy must provide proof of full vaccination or, if applicable, submit a request for exception (based on medical exemption, disability, and/or religious objection) or deferral (based on pregnancy) no later than the applicable deadline. For new University of California employees, the applicable deadline is eight weeks after their first date of employment. The University of California prohibits smoking and tobacco use at all University controlled properties. The UC San Diego Annual Security & Fire Safety Report is available online at <https://www.police.ucsd.edu/docs/annualclery.pdf>. This report provides crime and fire statistics, as well as institutional policy statement & procedures. Contact the UC San Diego Police Department at (858) 534-4361 if you want to obtain paper copies of this report.

## UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles, CA

**Eugen Weber Chair in Modern European History.** The UCLA History Department seeks to hire a

senior historian of modern Europe (with a preference for candidates whose profile complements existing field strengths). We are searching for a scholar with a distinguished research and publication record, who is also a leader in the field as well as a dedicated teacher and mentor. A PhD in history or related field is required. The department welcomes candidates whose experience in teaching, research or community service has prepared them to contribute to our commitment to diversity and excellence. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply online at <https://recruit.apo.ucla.edu/JPF07043> to upload their information for this position. This position is subject to final administrative approval. Documents should include a letter of application, a CV, and the name and contact information of three scholars who might be contacted for a letter of reference. A statement addressing the applicant's past and/or potential contributions to equity, diversity, and inclusion is also required. Please visit the UCLA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion website for Sample Guidance for Candidates on the Statement of Contributions to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: <https://equity.ucla.edu/programs-resources/faculty-search-process/faculty-search-committee-resources/sample-guidance/>. The University of California is an AA/EOE. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age or protected veteran status. For the complete University of California nondiscrimination

and affirmative action policy see UC Nondiscrimination & Affirmative Action Policy. As a condition of employment, you will be required to comply with the University of California SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Vaccination Program Policy. All covered individuals under the policy must provide proof of full vaccination or, if applicable, submit a request for exception (based on medical exemption, disability, and/or religious objection) or deferral (based on pregnancy) no later than the applicable deadline.



## COLBY COLLEGE

Waterville, ME

**Visiting Assistant Professor in Middle East/Islamic History.** The Department of History at Colby College invites applications for a one-year visiting assistant professorship in Middle East/Islamic history beginning September 1, 2022. The department is a community of engaged teacher-scholars who teach an array of courses from surveys to specialized seminars grounded in our research. We are searching for a teacher-scholar with a focus on Middle Eastern and Islamic history. The successful candidate will teach four courses. 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

### 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).

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. We will give particular weight to candidates who have successfully designed and taught their own courses. Please submit a cover letter, CV, a statement of teaching philosophy, a statement of research interests, and three confidential letters of recommendation. The statement of teaching philosophy and the statement of research interests should demonstrate commitment to the values of diversity and inclusivity. Please submit applications via Interfolio at <http://apply.interfolio.com/95988>. Review of applications will begin on December 1, 2021, and will continue until the position is filled. PhD preferred, but ABD will be considered. The Colby History Department is committed to professional development and the future advancement of all its members.

**Visiting Assistant Professor in Russian/Soviet History.** The Department of History at Colby College invites applications for a one-year visiting assistant professorship in Russian history beginning September 1, 2022. The department is a community of engaged teacher-scholars who teach an array of courses from surveys to specialized seminars grounded in our research. We are searching for a teacher-scholar with a focus on Russian and/or Soviet history. The candidate will teach four courses, including two survey courses. The two other courses can be in the candidate's specialty. 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, 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. We will give particular weight to candidates who have successfully designed and taught their own courses. Please submit a cover letter, CV, a statement of teaching philosophy, a statement of research interests, and three confidential letters of recommendation. The statement of teaching philosophy and the statement of research interests should demonstrate commitment to the values of diversity and inclusivity. Please submit applications via Interfolio at <http://apply.interfolio.com/95990>.

Review of applications will begin on December 1, 2021, and will continue until the position is filled. PhD preferred, but ABD will be considered. The Colby History Department is committed to professional development and the future advancement of all its members.



## MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Mississippi State, MS

### Associate or Full Professor and Endowed Chair of Abraham Lincoln and Civil War Studies.

Mississippi State University invites nominations and applications for qualified candidates as the Frank and Virginia Williams Endowed Chair of Abraham Lincoln and Civil War Studies. The university seeks an experienced, creative, and nationally recognized scholar who values Lincoln's legacy in shaping the nation in the 19th century and beyond. The Frank and Virginia Williams Chair will be a tenured position, with chair responsibilities assigned within the University Libraries. Tenure will reside within the Department of History in the College of Arts and Sciences, as the disciplinary background of the chair will be as a nationally recognized historian of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War era. The chair will develop a strong collaborative relationship with the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library. These important collections document the lives of two American presidents during the Civil War and Reconstruction eras. In addition to producing scholarship on these important subjects, the Williams Endowed Chair will work with the University and the Library to promote the use of the manuscripts, artifacts, and book collections of the Williams Collection of Lincolniana, as well as to create appropriately contextualized exhibitions in the Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana Gallery. The Mitchell Memorial Library on the main Starkville campus houses the official Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library and Museum and the Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana. The Library is an active institutional member of the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries. For more information about the university libraries please visit <http://library.msstate.edu/>. Mississippi State

University, founded in 1878, is a public research, land-grant university with a mission to provide access and opportunity to all sectors of Mississippi's diverse population, as well as other states and countries, and to offer excellent programs of teaching, research, and service. The university offers a comprehensive range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs across many disciplines, and enrolled 22,986 students in fall 2020 (including 18,803 full and part-time undergraduates and 4,183 graduate students and professionals). Additionally, Mississippi State University is designated as a Carnegie Foundation R1 "Very High Research Activity" institution. The university embraces its role as a major contributor to the economic development of the state and beyond through targeted research and the transfer of ideas and technology to the public, supported by faculty, staff, student, and alumni relationships with industry, community organizations, and government entities. Mississippi State University is committed to its tradition of instilling among its community ideals of diversity, citizenship, leadership, and service. Building on its land-grant tradition, Mississippi State University strategically extends its resources and expertise for the benefit of Mississippi's citizens, the nation, and the world by offering access for working and place-bound learners through its on- and off-campus education and research sites, Extension, and distance education programs. For more information about Mississippi State University please visit <https://www.msstate.edu/>. Anticipated appointment date: February 1, 2022. Tenure-track status: 12-month tenured position. Apply at <http://explore.msujobs.msstate.edu/>. As required by Executive Order 14042, If selected, you will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and submit documentation of proof of vaccination before beginning employment with the University. MSU is an EOE, and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, ethnicity, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, pregnancy, gender identity, status as a US veteran, and/or any other status protected by applicable law. We always welcome nominations and applications from women, members of any minority group, and others who share our passion for building a diverse community that reflects the diversity in our student population.

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17. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subjected to criminal sanctions.

(Signed)  
Ashley E. Bowen  
Editor, *Perspectives on History*



BRIAN PIPER

# PORTRAIT OF A MAN



In an age when most photographs we take never physically exist, it is easy to forget that photography originated as a visual *and* tactile medium. It is exactly this material nature that makes *Portrait of a Man* (ca. 1852) one of my favorite photographs in the New Orleans Museum of Art's collection. Touched by the hands of both the photographer, Felix Moissenet, and the unidentified Black man who sat for it, this daguerreotype invites us to explore the important history of how people of African descent participated in New Orleans's early photography scene.

Introduced to New Orleans in 1840, daguerreotypes made portraiture widely available for the first time. Louis Daguerre's process used light-sensitive chemistry to record an image on a polished sheet of silver-plated copper. Requiring no negative, every daguerreotype was one of a kind. By the 1850s, an exposure of several seconds produced an incredibly detailed portrait. (With magnification, you can see Moissenet's reflection in the sitter's eyes!) Daguerreotypists covered each finished plate with glass to protect its fragile surface and often placed it in a book-like case that made the daguerreotype safely portable, exchangeable, and easier to view. By closing the cover slightly and looking at the picture from an angle, a viewer can minimize reflections on the mirrored plate and focus on the image itself. Viewing a cased daguerreotype was, and remains, an intimate experience engaging both touch and sight.

This case's velvet lining bears the imprint of daguerreotypist Felix Moissenet, the sole proprietor between 1851 and 1855 at No. 1 Camp Street—just steps from the site of the 2022 AHA annual meeting. Born in France around 1814, Moissenet was a white photographer active in New Orleans between 1849 and 1861, when the intersection of Canal and Camp Streets was the city's photography epicenter. Competition was fierce; Moissenet advertised his "super excellent daguerreotype portraits," promising "results that have been sought in vain by other operators."

Black people likely made up a sizable portion of Moissenet's clientele. More broadly, in the 19th century, Black Americans, including famous figures like Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth and countless people whose names have been obscured, explored photography's potential for self-definition. Photographs were assuredly part of the daily lives of the 10,000 free people of color living in New Orleans, many of whom owned real estate, operated businesses, and formed collective institutions. Enslaved people, also, as scholarship by Matthew Fox-Amato has established, purchased their own photographs, openly or clandestinely, across the American South.

We do not yet know the identity of the man in this portrait and can only speculate about how he felt about his photograph. The quarter-length pose, his dress, and the assertive way this man meets the camera's gaze suggest he commissioned his own portrait. As bell hooks, Deborah Willis, and others have shown, photography offered Black people a tool to practically and psychologically navigate the white supremacist social order. For this man, sitting for a photograph was both a personal and a political act, an irrefutable assertion of personhood when so much of America's visual culture distorted or denied his existence. This photograph may be the best record we have of his life, and it exists because he chose to step in front of the camera and represent himself. The singular nature of a daguerreotype means that *this* is the very object he used to do so, and then he passed it into the future. That a photograph you can hold in the palm of your hand can carry that kind of historical gravity is a remarkable thing. **P**

Brian Piper is the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Assistant Curator of Photographs at the New Orleans Museum of Art and a member of the 2022 annual meeting local arrangements committee. He is on Instagram @nomaphotographs.

Image: Felix Moissenet, *Portrait of a Man*, ca. 1852. Daguerreotype, 3¼ × 2¾ inches. New Orleans Museum of Art, Museum Purchase, Maya and James Brace Fund, 2013.22.

# SAVE ON PACIFIC HISTORICAL REVIEW

# PHR

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SUMMER 2018  
VOLUME 87 NUMBER 3

AHA members receive a **20% discount** on subscriptions to the *Pacific Historical Review*, the official publication of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association.

For over eighty years, *Pacific Historical Review* has accurately and adeptly covered the rich history of the American West and the peoples and cultures of the Pacific world, including Asia, Latin America, and beyond. *PHR* is committed to the publication of work that explores cross-cultural and comparative studies, race and ethnicity, the history of empire and imperialism, environmental history, gender and sexuality, and other germane topics. *PHR* is published quarterly.

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# Call for Proposals for the 136th 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, 2022**

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 Akin Ogundiran, Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte ([Ogundiran@uncc.edu](mailto:Ogundiran@uncc.edu)) and co-chair Molly Warsh, Univ. of Pittsburgh ([warsh@pitt.edu](mailto:warsh@pitt.edu)).