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PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

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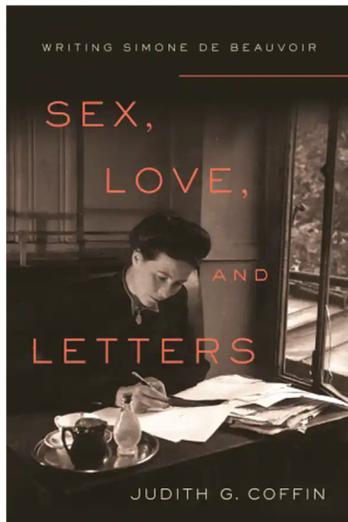
AHA22



Eugen Weber Book Prize

The UCLA Department of History is pleased to announce that

Judith G. Coffin,



Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin, has been awarded the **2022 Weber Book Award**. A prize for the best book in modern French history (post 1815) over the previous two years, this award is named for the eminent UCLA French historian Eugen Weber (1925-2007) and brings a cash award of \$15,000. Judith G. Coffin's beautifully written book, *Sex, Love, and Letters: Writing Simone de Beauvoir*, explores the neglected archive of letters written to Simone de Beauvoir by ordinary women and men. This innovative cultural history examines the twentieth century as an embodied experience, showing the intimate connections between the geopolitical and the personal.

Honorable Mention

Camille Fauroux, Associate Professor of History, Université Toulouse II Jean Jaurès
Produire la guerre, produire le genre: Des Françaises au travail dans l'Allemagne nationale-socialiste (1940-1945)

Annette K. Joseph-Gabriel, Assistant Professor of French, University of Michigan Romance Languages and Literature
Reimagining Liberation: How Black Women Transformed Citizenship in the French Empire

John Warne Monroe, Associate Professor of History, Iowa State University
Metropolitan Fetish: African Sculpture and the Imperial French Invention of Primitive Art

Andrew Israel Ross, Assistant Professor of History, Loyola University Maryland
Public City/Public Sex: Homosexuality, Prostitution, and Urban Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris

Claire Zalc, Professor of History, École des hautes études en sciences sociales
Denaturalized: How Thousands Lost Their Citizenship and Lives in Vichy France

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

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ON THE COVER

New Orleans has been a leader among localities working to identify and rename local streets named for figures who committed treason against the United States. At a plenary held at the 2022 annual meeting, members of and advisers to the New Orleans City Council Street Renaming Commission discussed the process by which roads including Slidell Street, named for a Confederate ambassador, will be renamed for significant New Orleanians. This was just one of many AHA22 discussions about the effects of history on the present. Read more in our annual meeting coverage.

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LELAND RENATO GRIGOLI

TOWNHOUSE NOTES

Ringin' the Changes

Some number of summers ago, I traveled to the tiny French town of Laon on my very first research trip, bright eyed and fresh faced. I found the city perched on a crescent plateau that rose steeply from a surrounding farmland still marked by shell and trench, and walking through its streets felt like exploring the bones of the earth.

Laon is old, coated in dust and memory. It was, in its time, a citadel of the Merovingian kings, a bulwark and fortification against every conqueror from Caesar to Napoleon, the center of learning in the Latinate West. The *gîte* where I stayed, run by a cardiologist at the local hospital and his wife, was at one end of the crescent, next to the church of St-Martin. Laon's ancient cathedral sat at the other, rising over my little garden. Each day, I went out from my rooms and through the stone gate that used to guard St-Martin's cloister. Into its stones were carved messages from interloping newcomers like myself: "F. H. 1914." "E. Cießmann, Berlin 1914/15." "F. A. M. 1914-15-16."

Each morning—every morning—I awoke to the sound of bells. St-Martin rang first, and the cathedral soon joined in. My landlady had lived there for so long, she said, that she could no



Leland Renato Grigoli



longer hear them. As I made coffee, turned an omelet into scrambled eggs, browsed the news, the bells rang out for Sunday mass. At some point, I realized: the bells do not tell time, do not mark its progression. They freeze and unify it. Echoing through past, present, and future, they are a constant, steady heartbeat uniting what was to what is to what will be.

The great French medievalist Marc Bloch, martyred by a Nazi firing squad on June 16, 1944, wrote in his *que sais-je?*, posthumously published as *The Historian's Craft*, that the master quality of the historian is the faculty of understanding the continuing entanglement of past and present. Bloch's perspective on history, relevant as it was to his own fight against fascism, is one that students and practitioners of history cannot ignore. The past is too much with us these days, activated in the utopic imaginations of neonationalists or assailed and rejected by those who wish to remember it otherwise.

Perspectives on History sits squarely in the center of that snarl of past and present, popular and academic. In my time as editor, I hope to untangle some of those threads and weave them into a conversation, one that is accessible and, above all else, useful. The presence of the past in contemporary discourse—whether on social media or cable news, in the classroom or at work—requires our presence and engagement. As we imagine and shape (or perhaps remember) our futures, we should keep in mind an old wisdom: that it is not our responsibility to finish the work of perfecting the world but neither are we free to desist from our labor.

Providing our perspective is the historians' task. For history is, at its core, a social discipline, a communion between and among individuals. And so Bloch was, in the end, only mostly right: the master quality of the historian is the faculty of *helping others understand* those entanglements of present and past. I look forward to joining hands with you in this work. **P**

Leland Renato Grigoli is editor of *Perspectives on History*. He tweets @mapper_mundi.

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JAMES H. SWEET

DIFFUSION AS DILUTION?

History and the Book



For nearly 150 years, the gold standard for research in the historical discipline has been the single-authored monograph, a long-form, book-length study based on extensive original research. Most history departments at research universities expect their tenure-track faculty to produce at least one such monograph that makes a novel contribution to knowledge. These studies can often take more than 10 years to complete, if measured from their conception as PhD projects to the final publication of the book. Researching and writing books takes time.

Eight years ago, when I became chair at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, our department was having difficulty conveying to university administration the importance of the published book as the primary measure for achieving tenure and promotion. For most professors in our college, journal articles were the coin of the realm; book production was viewed as tedious and unfamiliar. To underscore the uphill battle we faced, my colleague Bill Cronon shared an anecdotal conversation he had with a scientist colleague. When Cronon mentioned this requirement, the scientist was incredulous: “Historians write books!? I haven’t read a book in years!”

While our colleague surely was not representative of all scientists, his openness about his own meager reading habits demonstrated the diminishing value of the book even among some academics. In order to make clear to our administration why the book mattered, we crafted language similar to that outlined above, which now introduces nearly all our tenure cases. Historians now need to make the case for the standards of our discipline and the distinct intellectual advantages that our work brings to academia and the broader intellectual world.

In subsequent years, the terrain has shifted even further. The shrinking pool of tenure-track positions, alongside trends toward diversifying graduate student career paths, calls into question the efficacy of the traditional dissertation as the product of a history PhD and, by extension, the book as the measure for tenure. When the PhD was understood as an

exclusive pathway to the professoriate, and the professoriate alone, the dissertation made sense. Today, the history PhD is just as likely to lead to non-tenure-track teaching positions or jobs in museums, libraries, or NGOs, raising important questions about whether the traditional dissertation should continue as the primary and preferred standard for attaining the degree.

The scientist was incredulous:
“Historians write books!?”

Beyond market forces, trends in the diffusion of historical knowledge have quickened the de-emphasis on the book. As Lara Putnam noted in 2016, the proliferation of digital archives has deeply influenced historical research. With digital libraries and archives at our fingertips, historians no longer need to spend long periods of time in the places of our research. For many, “the archive” now resides in a digital space that almost anyone can explore and interpret, prompting historians to share their analyses on websites and social media. These analyses are more fragmented than they would appear in a book, but the individual fragments can be more easily accessible and digestible. Harnessing such digital fragments and making them legible online fosters a kind of expertise very different from that which comes from the tactile handling of documents and artifacts, the mastery of bureaucracies that govern archives, and living and breathing the air of the descendants of our historical subjects, whether in Banjul, Boston, Bahia, or Beijing. In this way, the rite of passage of traveling to archives for months or years, collecting sources, and then reporting one’s findings is slowly declining—and for good reasons. If one can write an acceptable dissertation using online archives, mastering the digital fragments, why bear the cost and inconvenience of traveling for extended periods to pursue other source materials? Perhaps more importantly, why should funders underwrite research that can be conducted online?

The concerns Putnam raised not only still stand; they have become more pressing: in the past few years, the online

ecosystem has continued to transform in ways that further erode long-form analysis. When Putnam published in 2016, Donald Trump was not yet president, Twitter was entering a new heyday, and COVID-19 was still three years away. Trump's commitment to historical disinformation inspired many historians to take a more active role in public life. They wrote op-eds, published blog posts, and offered disciplinary expertise, especially on social media and digital platforms. Meanwhile, AHA advocacy statements increased almost fivefold and were disseminated online and shared widely on social media. The diffusion of historians' expertise in combating historical deception was not only necessary politically; it was a boon for historians with the talent to synthesize and distill historical arguments in sharp, pithy fashion that resonated with a broader public.

I believe the book is the anchor of historians in academia.

As the number of worldwide daily users on Twitter nearly doubled between 2016 and 2021, the rewards for becoming Twitter famous were manifold: politically engaged historians could influence public debate by harnessing disciplinary expertise. If a riposte could be articulated in 280 characters or fewer, historians could gain new audiences for their ideas, as well as build new intellectual networks to support their professional advancement and help market their "brand." The results are clear: #twitterstorians have been some of the most important public advocates for the discipline over the past five years. Sharp, evidence-based historical engagement on social media seems indispensable for the discipline's future survival.

Nevertheless, these modes of fragmented communication and analysis run counter to deep historical research and long-form writing. The pace at which historians could potentially post online would foreclose the possibility of researching and writing high-quality books. There simply isn't enough time in the day. But why take years researching and writing for an academic audience when you can instantaneously project your knowledge to thousands of people and potentially influence public policy? The rewards are incredibly seductive.

History departments now consider "public visibility" in hiring and promotion decisions more than ever before. Yet we really have no criteria to measure these contributions, let alone a formula for balancing the critical imperative of diffusing knowledge with the continuing demands for new knowledge production. As we articulate disciplinary standards to administrators and others, should the single-authored monograph (or its digital equivalents) continue to

be the standard, or should we consider smaller chunks of original knowledge, distributed by tweet, blog, or online media outlet, to be cumulative equivalents to the book? Or are these worthy complements?

This question was already becoming salient before 2020; then came COVID. Archives and libraries closed their doors. Travel restrictions prevented scholars from conducting field research. And funding for faculty and graduate student research evaporated. For two years, most academic historians have been trapped in a state of suspended animation with regard to their research. Zooming through the various stages of quarantine, scholars isolated themselves in front of their computers. Mercifully, many libraries and archives responded by making material freely available online. But this trend again amplifies the problems Putnam identified five years ago. Never have there been fewer means and less incentive to travel for research. Additionally, the isolation and political rancor of the last two years have only reinforced the impetus toward social media as an intellectual gathering place. In between virtual meetings, historians continue online conversations with colleagues, critics, and trolls.

The last five years have taken a toll on our collective psyches and the ways we conduct our professional lives, especially in our teaching. But we also need to take stock of the ways the world has come to bear on our research and writing. The rapid digitization of collections in libraries and archives, followed by political and global health crises, have inexorably transformed how we conduct and share our research. Whether this is a permanent inflection point toward some new, expanded way of defining historical scholarship remains to be seen. At the very least, we should consider the consequences of these changes for a generation of assistant professors, contingent faculty, and graduate students for whom the deeply researched, long-form book increasingly seems unattainable and perhaps even superfluous.

To be clear, I believe the book is the anchor of historians in academia. The odyssey of researching and writing a monograph endows us with the expertise and gravitas that define us as historians. Absent this high standard, we lose intellectual authority and political credibility. Indeed, without it, I fear we run the risk of becoming the same as the trolls and amateur hacks who challenge our expertise. At the same time, the discipline demands robust public engagement, now more than ever. And we must find meaningful ways to reward the work of colleagues who carry this heavy burden. How we balance these two imperatives will define our future. **P**

James H. Sweet is president of the AHA.

JAMES GROSSMAN

A PARDON FOR HOMER PLESSY

The Long Arc of “Pernicious” Jurisprudence



The red brick buildings at 2800 Chartres Street in New Orleans were constructed in the early 19th century to store and press cotton—cotton planted, cultivated, and picked by enslaved Black children, men, and women. On January 5, 2022, more than a hundred people gathered in the courtyard of the Chartres St. complex, now home to the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA). They had come to witness a ceremony that Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards acknowledged “should never have had to happen”—the signing of a posthumous pardon for Homer Plessy, a shoemaker arrested in June 1892 for violating the Separate Car Act of 1890, the law requiring all Louisiana passenger railways to maintain separate train cars for Black and white Americans.

Train cars, visible that morning through an archway between NOCCA buildings, signaled the continuity of place and space and the rhetorical impact of material culture on historical commemoration. We were welcomed by NOCCA’s president, whose desk sits in what was once the ticket office where the light-skinned Plessy purchased first-class passage to Covington, 40 miles to the north. Plessy never got close. In a carefully orchestrated confrontation only blocks from the station, a conductor asked whether he was “colored.” When Plessy said yes, the conductor ordered him to change cars. Plessy refused, the train stopped, and he was arrested.

Plessy was not a naive traveler ensnared by the web of the Jim Crow legal regime. He was a member of the Comité des Citoyens, formed specifically to test the new segregation laws. The railroad company cooperated with the scheme; the Separate Car Act complicated business operations. Plessy’s claim had firm legal footing in the 14th Amendment (he also invoked the 13th), but Louisiana judge John Howard Ferguson invoked a states’ rights doctrine that entitled Louisiana to regulate business within its jurisdiction. When his case reached the Supreme Court, explained legal historian Angela Allen-Bell at the pardon event, Plessy “did not lose because his interpretation of the US Constitution was unsound. He lost because the nation’s commitment to white supremacy was

greater than its commitment to the aims of Reconstruction or to the promises of the United States Constitution.”

Institutional continuity was made even more poignant at the ceremony by the spate of legislation recently introduced in more than 30 states seeking to undermine teachers’ ability to explore the continuing legacy of slavery, segregation, and institutional racism. Orleans Parish District Attorney Jason Williams emphasized that the request to pardon Plessy was drawn up by the same agency that had unjustly prosecuted him in the first place—a moral and ethical obligation. Gov. Edwards amplified that tone, drawing on Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan’s stinging dissent, which emphasized the role played by the state of Louisiana in creating and enforcing a “pernicious” law. Dwelling on “pernicious,” Gov. Edwards placed deliberate emphasis on “our state,” pointing to himself as he spoke and leaving little doubt that “we” were responsible for what happened in the 1890s. “This happened in *our* state,” and “*we* are not where we should be” today. “The pernicious effects of *Plessy* linger still,” and there is work to do: “The stroke of my pen on this pardon, while momentous, it doesn’t erase generations of pain and discrimination. It doesn’t eradicate all the wrongs wrought by the *Plessy* court or fix all of our present challenges.”

“This pardon, while momentous,
it doesn’t erase all the wrongs
done by generations.”

I am not certain whether Edwards’s words would skirt the boundaries of permissibility in states that have passed “divisive concepts” legislation discouraging—even prohibiting—teachers from suggesting just this kind of continuity of historical responsibility. Williams’s reference to contemporary implications of the “stain of immorality on our state’s history” would undoubtedly cross the line, as would his observation that to “correct the sins of the past we must acknowledge my



Seated in front of a train, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards signs a posthumous pardon for Homer Plessy.
James Grossman

predecessors’ roles in committing those sins.” The law matters, Williams argued; by enshrining slavery and then segregation in law, Louisiana had created an edifice whose legacy remains readily discernible in contemporary legislation and social practice. The Supreme Court’s approval of this law and others like it, observed Allen-Bell, “etched the seal of legality on a system of social degradation.”

If this all sounds rather bleak for a sunny morning in New Orleans, it is worth noting how the ceremony opened. At 10:30 a.m., a cellist played the opening notes of “Lift Every Voice and Sing”—known to many Americans as the Black National Anthem—with the audience accompanying her:

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won

The cellist was Kate Dillingham, great-great-granddaughter of Justice Harlan. Joining Gov. Edwards on stage were Keith Plessy and Phoebe Ferguson—descendants, respectively, of the defendant and of the criminal court judge. From the moment the ceremony began, a distinct feeling emerged: a sense of how major historical events can be personified through descent, through family connections over time.

In their remarks at January’s pardon ceremony, complemented by additional conversation at an AHA annual meeting session three days later, Plessy and Ferguson—who clearly relish having revised the “versus” that bound their names to “and”—explained how history can provide a basis for change. After first meeting at an event tied to the publication of historian Keith Weldon Medley’s *We as Freemen: Plessy v. Ferguson* (2003), conversation led to friendship, to trust, and eventually to the establishment of the Plessy and Ferguson Foundation. At the AHA session, they expanded upon the work the foundation does in schools, and it became clear—especially during the Q&A—that Phoebe Ferguson has encountered resistance among white students, particularly male students, when she describes her apology to Keith for her family’s role in the legacy of slavery and segregation. But the apology is essential, she argued: it personalizes history and implements the foundation’s intent that “their mutual history can be a tool to create unity and understanding.”

Banning that apology from classrooms via “divisive concepts” legislation is not only a fool’s errand but a faithless one. “Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us.” We cannot sing what we will not learn. **P**

James Grossman is executive director of the AHA. He tweets @JimGrossmanAHA.

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SHINING LIGHTS

Putting the Dark Ages to Rest

In February 2019, Matthew Gabriele visited the British Library for the exhibition *Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms: Art, Word, War*. Like many exhibitions, this one ended at the gift shop, and as Gabriele perused the books on display, he realized that the general histories of the Middle Ages included there were quite old and “trafficked in ideas of the myth of the Dark Ages, which did not match what I had just seen.” Still standing in the gift shop, he pulled out his phone and texted fellow historian David M. Perry: “We should write a general history of the Middle Ages.” Perry replied immediately with “And we should call it *The Bright Ages*.”

For both Gabriele and Perry, one of the most pervasive myths surrounding the medieval world is that it was a time of decline and darkness. At the British Library, Gabriele, professor and chair of religion and culture at Virginia Tech, was “struck by how vibrant and brilliant and colorful the whole exhibition was.” Illuminated manuscripts, gold artifacts, and other objects popped with color. It had not been dark at all.

Perry, a history academic adviser at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and a freelance journalist, also had been thinking about this topic for a while. “Professional medievalists encounter a complex, nuanced world with beauty

and horror and everything that humans can do,” he told *Perspectives*. “And then there’s this narrative of the Dark Ages that has been with us for 600 years and is almost inescapable, and still permeates the public consciousness of what the European Middle Ages were.” Comparing the Middle Ages he and Gabriele know and the version the public encounters, especially in pop culture, Perry says, “They’re just not the same place.” So emerged the idea for their new book, *The Bright Ages: A New History of Medieval Europe* (Harper, 2021).

Student questions helped guide them in mapping out the book.

The book starts, as many on the topic do, with the fall of Rome in the fifth century. They then skip across nearly 1,000 years of history, illuminating moments, people, and places that have been poorly served by a Dark Ages framing. They spotlight key events, from scientific advancements to the founding of universities – all of which occurred in a society based on religious faith – before ending with Dante in the 14th century. It’s a complicated world, full of human actors who were as flawed and complex as we are today. As they write, “The Bright Ages contain the beauty and light of stained glass in the high ceilings of the cathedral, the blood and sweat of the

people who built them, the golden relics of the Church, the acts of charity and devotion by people of deep faith, but also the wars fought over ideas of the sacred, the scorched flesh of the heretics burned in the name of intolerance and fear.” Gabriele and Perry thus argue for an expansive vision of medieval Europe, one that is integrated with, not isolated from, a broader world and includes those who speak different languages or practice different religions.

This expansive world is one they have discussed together over the years. Like with many such academic friendships, they can’t pinpoint when they first met, though it was likely at a conference. They first wrote together in January 2019 for the *Washington Post*, and they had been looking for a way to collaborate again. Gabriele previously had gotten the attention of a book agent from other public writing in the *Post*. When he and Perry came up with *The Bright Ages*, the agent signed them immediately and helped sell the project to Harper.

In the book’s early development, they relied on experiences with the public they encounter most often: students. Over Gabriele’s and Perry’s years of teaching, their students have asked smart, important questions about the medieval period and its events, peoples, and cultures. These questions helped guide them in mapping out the book. And while many would be daunted by trying to cover nearly a millennium of

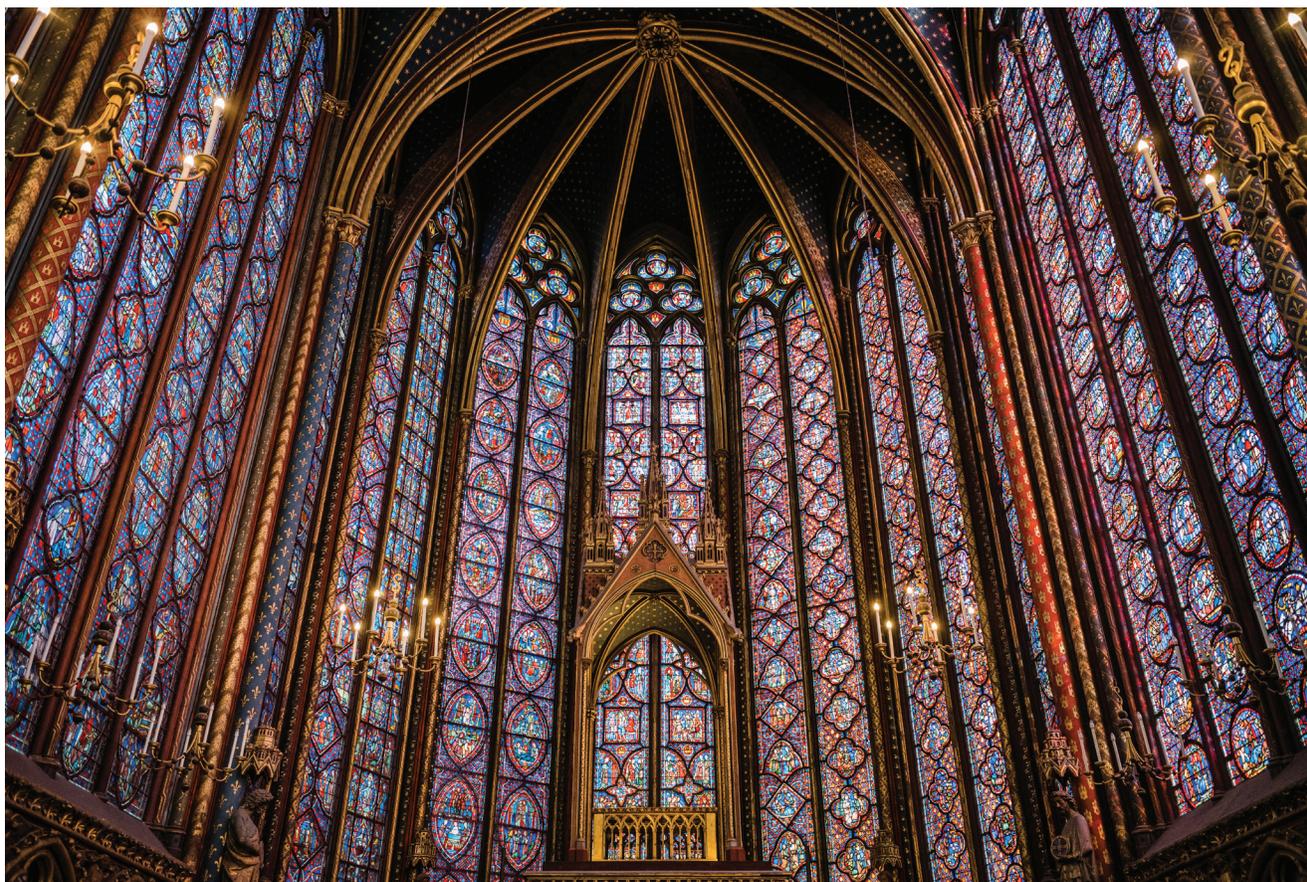
history in a single volume, this was no new task for these authors. Many medievalists, including Gabriele, are the only one in their department or their institution, and so they must become generalists who cover the entire period. The general framing of the Middle Ages has always included a specific beginning and ending – roughly between the fall of Rome and the Renaissance – and Gabriele and Perry wanted to rethink the meaning of those time constraints. As Gabriele said to *Perspectives*, they wanted to get readers “to think about, from the perspective of medieval Europeans themselves: What did the fall of Rome really mean? And we decided, well, what if Rome didn’t really fall? And at the end, what does it mean to say there’s a Renaissance? That’s saying something about the Middle Ages as a whole.”

Originally, they had planned to get together every few months to write and revise. In fall 2019, after Gabriele gave a talk at the University of Minnesota, he and Perry went to a cabin together. They fished and talked and wrote together. But like so many projects in the last two years, the pandemic had an inevitable effect. Those visits went out the window, and they transitioned to drafting the book together in Google Docs. Gabriele said, “We embraced it, but we were forced to embrace it. But in some ways, it benefitted us, because it forced us to trust each other.”

Important to both Gabriele and Perry was that the book be written in a single voice. They split up drafting chapters based on their own interests and expertise. The first chapter Gabriele wrote, for example, was

based on a lecture on the 11th century that he loves giving in his medieval world course. But these chapters did not remain their own solitary project. Gabriele told *Perspectives*, “We sent them to each other and said, ‘Make it better.’ I don’t really know which sentences are mine.” Perry said, “In that early stage, we weren’t tracking changes – we were writing words on top of words. That was deliberate, to try to accomplish a place where the words became *ours*.” This was by no means an easy time. The pair were juggling jobs, providing childcare while schools were closed, and supporting their partners and families through the crisis. Writing often took place late at night. But they persevered and kept trying to tell these stories.

The Bright Ages and its authors are not the first to reject the Dark Ages framing.

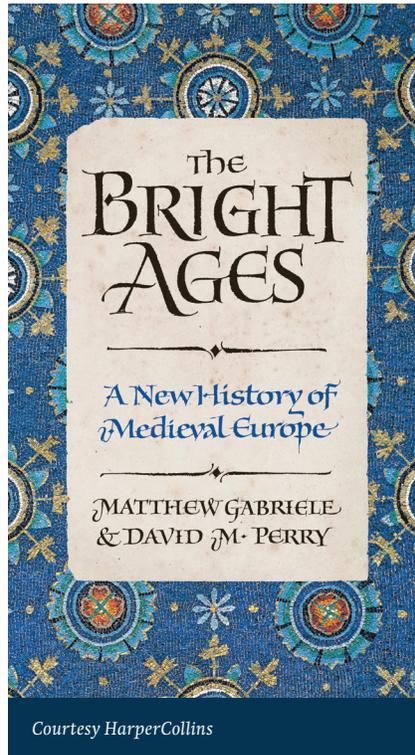


Suffused with light and color, *The Bright Ages* highlights the beauty found in the medieval period.
Oldmanisold/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 4.0

Both Gabriele and Perry emphasized in our interview that they are “building upon decades of scholarship by people much smarter than we.” As Perry said, “For every period, there is always a popular vs. scholarly disconnect. But for the Middle Ages it is particularly powerful. The myth of the Dark Ages has an impact—including professional scholars of other periods who teach in ways that take for granted this myth.” “What we’re trying to get across with this reframing,” Gabriele said, “is that the European Middle Ages are knowable. And they’re human. This is not a blank space in human history—a place without sources, where people plodded through life waiting for the Renaissance to occur and modernity to begin.” In contrast, the people of those centuries “lived full rich lives. Within those lives, they did terrible things, and they did amazing things, and they made choices. And those choices have impacted the way that European history has turned out since then.”

“The European Middle Ages are knowable. And they’re human.”

The Bright Ages not only rejects the Dark Ages as a metaphor; the physical book is suffused with light and color. The authors have woven this theme throughout the book, using sunlight shining through stained glass, gold crosses, and colorful mosaics (like the one depicted on the cover). This emphasis on objects and architecture allowed them to focus on people’s lived experiences. “A lot of the pieces we talk about are from elite culture, but they give you a sense of how you experienced the medieval world with all your senses—it looked like something, it smelled like something, it tasted like something,” Gabriele said. As Perry added, “People had stuff, and they



touched it, and they had ideas and thought about it and they wrote it down, and they traded it, and it meant something. People walked by a façade, they looked up, they saw it. Everyone could look up and see it and have some sort of interaction with the stories being told there. That’s part of the medieval experience.”

As medievalists know, their period of study comes up all the time in modern life—from *Game of Thrones* to the January 6 Capitol insurrection. Gabriele and Perry’s first collaboration was on such issues. “We’ve done a lot of journalism around the issue of modern invocations of the Middle Ages to serve contemporary political means,” Perry said. But “what we can’t do in our journalism is tell this bigger story.” One thing Gabriele wants is for their readers to think twice about using *medieval* as a careless descriptor about something that seems primitive or backward that is actually entirely modern. “When that happens, it’s a no-thought, get-out-of-jail-free card. It’s a way of distancing us today

from whatever we’re talking about, so we don’t have to take responsibility for it. ‘That’s a medieval practice.’ No, those things are happening now. Simply taking that adjective out of people’s repertoire will influence the way that we think about our position in the world and our responsibility to one another.” Perry added, “We always want to remember how history is being used and to engage that.”

By publishing with a trade press, Gabriele and Perry are hopeful that they will reach the public where they are. Perry said, “I want people walking through the airport who like history to see our book in paperback and pull it off the shelf.” Gabriele added that’s why they included such an extensive “further reading” list at the end of the volume—so it’s a starting place for readers to learn more. Perry said, “We want fellow historians to see this book as a way to open doors and invite people in.” “Will we succeed?” Gabriele asked. “I hope so.” **P**

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

REBECCA L. WEST

ADVOCACY BRIEFS

Supporting Historians' Rights and Students' Interests

The AHA's advocacy in December 2021 included the ongoing battle over "divisive concepts" legislation and the continued urging of elected officials to fund Title VI education programs. The AHA also issued letters concerning the rights of historians in Poland and the staffing of the history department at Youngstown State University.

AHA Calls On Polish State to Uphold the Rights of Historians

On December 8, the AHA sent a letter to Polish president Andrzej Duda expressing "dismay and continued concern about events taking place in Poland related to the study of history and especially regarding historical research on World War II and the Holocaust." The AHA originally wrote to President Duda in 2016 regarding the treatment of Polish historians, issued a statement in 2018, and wrote again in February 2021; this most recent letter comes as "scholars continue to be harassed, threatened with dismissal, or forced to resign." The AHA called on Polish leaders "to protect the rights of historians and other scholars to conduct impartial research into history and to advance the search for historical accuracy in a still controversial, and often painful, past."

AHA Signs On to Letter Urging US House Leadership to Reauthorize Title VI International Education Programs

On December 14, the AHA signed on to a letter by the Coalition for International Education "express[ing] our strong support" for the reauthorization of Title VI international education programs. "Whether it's global health, environment, food production, cyber security, law enforcement, immigration and more, meeting our challenges increasingly relies on foreign language abilities, regional knowledge, cultural understanding, and experience abroad," the letter stated. "As the most comprehensive and multifaceted federal program in international education, we believe HEA-Title VI is the federal government's foundational vehicle to address this 21st-century human resource issue."

AHA Sends Letter Opposing Oklahoma Bill That Would Limit Teaching of Race and Slavery in America

On December 23, the AHA sent a letter to members of the Oklahoma state legislature strongly opposing House Bill 2988, which would restrict the teaching of "certain concepts pertaining to America and slavery." This "irresponsible legislation," the AHA writes, would be "harmful to the youth of Oklahoma, leaving students ignorant of basic facts of American history and poorly prepared for the critical

thinking and interpretive skills required for career and civic accomplishment."

AHA Sends Letter Opposing Nonrenewal of History Department Faculty at Youngstown State University

On December 23, the AHA sent a letter to administrators at Youngstown State University strongly discouraging the university from "proceeding with the reported nonrenewal of two faculty members in the history program." These nonrenewals, in addition to planned retirements, "would severely diminish the department's ability to maintain appropriate pedagogical and research standards, and counteracts the university's own recent assessment of the department's health." **P**

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

LIZA BLACK

NATIVE TV IN 2021

Putting the I in BIPOC

In recent years, land acknowledgments have become the lightning rod of introductions at academic talks and keynote addresses, as well as email signatures. Everyone wants to know how to do them correctly, and no one is quite sure of the answer.

These debates have now hit the small screen. In the fifth episode of *Rutherford Falls*, a television show that began streaming on Peacock in 2021, Terry Thomas brings his own microphone to the titular town's history fair and gives

an uninvited land acknowledgment in the Mohawk language. Deirdre Chisenhall, the first African American female mayor of Rutherford Falls and Terry's nemesis, stands in stunned silence, directing awkward smiles toward the audience. Terry speaks at length as Native crowd members listen with great empathy and emotion to his passionate speech. The speech is meant to feel long, and him speaking in Mohawk makes it feel even longer for non-Mohawk speakers. He drops untranslatable words like *genocide* and *unemployment* in English, bringing expressions of

disgusted agreement from the crowd. Each time he uses English, Terry's words express loss and damage to Native communities. When Terry glances at Deirdre, she looks guilty, cast into the role of settler along with all non-Natives at the history fair. This scene captures what land acknowledgments might feel like for Native audiences, who are shown engaging with the content, while non-Natives clasp the arms of their chairs and wait for it to end.

Native experience is also central to *Reservation Dogs*, another 2021 comedy



In 2021, we finally got to see Native representation on American TV outside of the western genre.
the autowitch/Flickr/CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

series, which airs on FX. Both shows place Native people in the immediate present and tell stories steeped in humor and conflict. Filmed on the Muskogee reservation, *Reservation Dogs* is a hilarious and quirky immersion in Native Oklahoma, focusing on four teenagers, all of whom are Native, poor, and deeply loyal to one another, struggling to overcome grief and to find a way out of Oklahoma. *Rutherford Falls*, set in a fictional town located near a reservation in upstate New York, centers Reagan Wells, a Minishonka woman who returns to Rutherford Falls, her Native community, and her complicated friendship with Nathan Rutherford, a white man whose mission in life is to create pride in the Rutherford family. Together, these shows tell audiences that Native people are very much present, engaged, and funny in the 21st century.

The significance of these shows lies in their cast and creators. Both shows are written by Native people and have largely Native casts. Moreover, their narratives center Native characters, telling powerful and meaningful stories about their lives. Historically, it has been rare to find Native stories on TV. American television in many ways embraced the western genre, in popular shows such as *The Lone Ranger* (1949–57) and *Gunsmoke* (1952–61). Like western films, these shows centered white male protagonists, while Native characters, only sometimes portrayed by Native actors, held supporting roles. These shows garnered significant and long-lasting support, and their plots and characters satisfied consumers. They transcended age boundaries as well, appealing to younger audiences who played “cowboys and Indians” as much as to their parents, with a reliance on a ubiquity of stock, narrow, and often negative depictions of Native people. Native characters showed up in midcentury science fiction shows as

well, but the mainstay of their portrayal on mid-20th-century TV was the western.

Historically, it has been rare to find Native stories on TV.

Native people often made onetime appearances on shows that did not engage primarily with Native characters, themes, or content. *I Love Lucy* (1951–57), *The Andy Griffith Show* (1960–68), *The Beverly Hillbillies* (1962–71), and *F Troop* (1965–67) are examples of this trend. These shows, on the whole, engaged a narrative of nationalism in which America’s past and present are bucolic ones. In the 1970s, ’80s, and ’90s came shows like *The Brady Bunch* (1969–74), *Barney Miller* (1975–82), *Diff’rent Strokes* (1978–86), and *Saved by the Bell* (1989–93), which also brought in Native characters briefly and episodically to confirm a multicultural television landscape. *King of the Hill* (1997–2010) made a stronger statement, featuring John Redcorn, a recurring character who both perpetuated and challenged older stereotypes of Native people on TV. The PBS series based on Tony Hillerman’s novels, which included *Skinwalkers* (2002), *Coyote Waits* (2003), and *A Thief of Time* (2004), challenged previous stereotypes too.

Where 20th- and early 21st-century shows used Native characters in superficial ways, perhaps to create an appearance of diversity, *Reservation Dogs* and *Rutherford Falls* center Indigenous characters, themes, and content, decolonizing conventional television narratives about Native people. *Reservation Dogs* brings together an Indigenous group of male writers—including Taika Waititi, Sterlin Harjo, and Bobby Dues—to create a genre-blending half-hour show. Many of *Rutherford Falls*’ 12 writers are also Native, including Sierra

Teller Ornelas, Tazbah Chavez, Tai LeClaire, Jana Schmieding, and Bobby Dues Wilson. Native representation is not limited to the writers’ rooms. Director Sydney Freeland works on both shows, and *Reservation Dogs* employs Migizi Pensoneau as a producer. Not acting alone in an otherwise white cohort, both shows have achieved a distinctly Indigenous group collective clearly evident in the final product: shows with genuine Native content. With the influence of Native writers, producers, and directors, both shows employ Native actors in numbers that create a majority Native cast. Michael Greyeyes, Kawennáhere Devery Jacobs, Kiawentiio Tarbell, Geraldine Keams, Paulina Alexis, D’Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai, Zahn McClarnon, Lane Factor, Sarah Podemski, Gary Farmer, Kimberly Norris, and Casey Camp-Horinek are just some of the Native actors appearing in these shows.

Debuting within months of each other in 2021 on mainstream platforms, *Reservation Dogs* and *Rutherford Falls* generated a seismic media shift. Two shows with Native content, casts, and writers appearing together for television audiences felt like the ground had moved in meaningful ways. The last time Native people entered mainstream conversations was in 2016, with the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline. As some Americans began using BIPOC—Black, Indigenous, and people of color—to describe minoritized communities in 2020 and 2021, and in the wake of global protests against white supremacy and police violence, some began to search for ways to amplify the *I* in BIPOC. Considered together, these shows tell TV audiences that Native stories present incredible variety, entering virtually any genre to tell uniquely Indigenous stories. For many, they offer images long overdue, and their release in the same year made the addition that much more powerful.



The stars of *Reservation Dogs* in the pilot episode: (L to R) Paulina Alexis as Willie Jack, Devery Jacobs as Elora, D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai as Bear, and Lane Factor as Cheese. FX on Hulu

In spite of Native workers in Hollywood being told for years that American audiences had no interest in Native stories, *Reservation Dogs* and *Rutherford Falls* have received widespread praise. Media outlets large and small, Native and non-Native, have reviewed the shows highly and published articles on the cast, crew, and story lines. The shows' Native fan bases also produced a remarkable chorus of appreciation. Not since the film *Smoke Signals* (1998) have Native people embraced and promoted Native media so extensively, spreading their support through social media and word of mouth.

Perhaps because of the widespread embrace of streaming services, television seems to be outpacing films in popularity. Many speak of consuming multiple episodes in one sitting, and this can only be done with a TV series. Verbiage from TV shows makes its way quickly into the mainstream; for example, *Reservations Dogs*' fry bread song

immediately echoed across the internet. In that way, TV holds an immediate access to our collective consciousness.

Native people deserve to be part of that collective, to see themselves in media—and Native people who work in television deserve amplification, respect, and future opportunities. American TV and film took up the 19th-century impulse toward characterizing Native people in predictable ways, even as Native people wrestled with that imagery. In a sense, these new shows make reparations for the harm done to Native people by TV of the past, in which a Native person was often alone in an otherwise white cast. Tremendous talent, including scores of graduates of the Institute of American Indian Arts, lay underutilized throughout Indian Country over the course of the 20th century, and these shows highlight this rich resource in storytelling, humor, and acting. For decades, Native people have

been requesting Hollywood hire Native people for Native parts, and those calls are finally being met. Shows with Native writers, actors, producers, and directors are here to stay, and we are all better for it.

Much of the advertising for *Reservation Dogs* features its four teens, Willie Jack, Elora, Bear, and Cheese, walking directly toward the camera, wearing vintage black suits with white button-downs and ties. This shot comes from *Reservation Dogs*' first episode, which ends with a somber memorial held by the four friends to mark the one-year anniversary of the death of Daniel, the fifth member of their squad. Together in what functions as their lodge in an abandoned commercial real estate site, they gather around a small altar with his photo, cedar, a bandanna, and spray paint for graffiti. As the four friends smudge themselves with cedar smoke, they face the altar with tremendous emotion.

This scene demonstrates the deep bond these kids have with one another and their friend who has passed on, adding to the sense that we are seeing the inner worlds of these four struggling Native kids in Oklahoma. Native audiences took note of this powerful scene and visual aesthetic. On Halloween in 2021, Native parents dressed their kids up as the four-member squad from *Reservation Dogs*, proudly donning the same dramatic look as the stars. These families deserve this at Halloween: a moment when their kids can emulate Native television characters with pride. Indian Country has finally gotten the shows they have always wanted. **P**

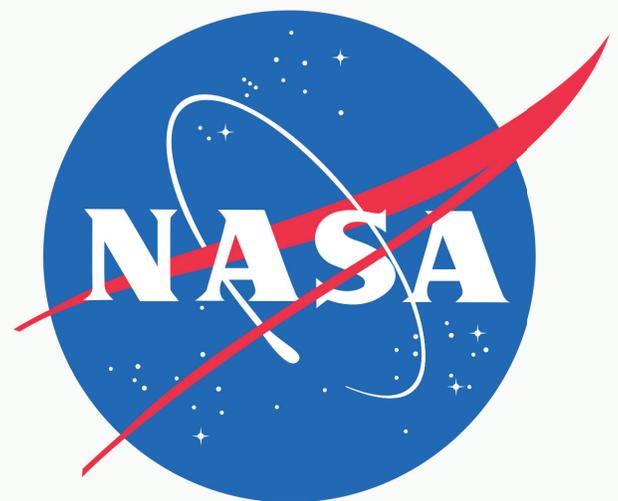
Liza Black is a citizen of Cherokee Nation and a visiting scholar at the University of California, Los Angeles. She tweets @Liza_Black.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARC MONAGHAN

AHA22

A Pandemic-Era Gathering



Slidell Street will soon be renamed for musician Henry James "Red" Allen following the work of the New Orleans City Council Street Renaming Commission.

AFTER THE 2021 annual meeting was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the AHA faced many challenges in planning for the 2022 meeting. As the Omicron variant began to spread in late 2021, many presenters opted to move their sessions to AHA22 Online in late February. But over 900 historians still gathered in New Orleans from January 6 to 9, with vaccines, masks, and rapid tests to mitigate risk.

A much more intimate meeting than a typical AHA annual meeting—which can attract more than 4,000 attendees—AHA22 addressed local history issues in New Orleans and how historians can become involved in advocacy, among many other topics related to teaching and learning, research, and professional issues. Read on for dispatches from across the meeting.

—*Laura Ansley, Leland Renato Grigoli, Sarah Jones Weicksel, and Rebecca L. West*

CHANGES AT THE CROSSROADS

New Orleanians will soon navigate streets named for local historic figures, including rhythm-and-blues great Allen Toussaint, jazz trumpeter Henry James “Red” Allen, and James Guillaume, who played a role in desegregating streetcars in 1867. On January 6, 2022, the New Orleans City Council approved these names as replacements for streets named for Confederate General Robert E. Lee; John Slidell, a Confederate ambassador to France; and New Orleans Mayor Andrew McShane, who signed a law prohibiting racial integration in neighborhoods.

That same evening, at a plenary session, Thomas Adams (Univ. of Sydney), Karl Connor (New Orleans City Council Street Renaming Commission), Rashauna Johnson (Univ. of Chicago), and Sue Mobley (Monument Lab) described the process by which the city council arrived at this vote. The session was chaired by AHA executive director James Grossman.

The New Orleans City Council Street Renaming Commission (CCSRC) was established in June 2020 and tasked with recommending a process to facilitate educating residents and gathering public feedback on possible changes. They were also asked to create a list, accompanied by detailed explanations, of streets, parks, and places that should be renamed, as well as suggestions for potential replacement names. The ordinance that established the CCSRC specified criteria for name removal that focused on the relationship between treason

and the defense of slavery, and the denial of rights under the 14th and 15th Amendments.

The commission, chaired by Connor, worked with a panel of experts, chaired by Mobley and Adams, who have a “demonstrable record of scholarship, formal or informal, regarding the history and geography of the City of New Orleans, especially in relation to traditionally underrepresented communities.” These scholars, including Johnson and other AHA members, worked to identify streets and places that fit the removal criteria.

In cities across the world, neighborhood matters.

In cities across the world, neighborhood matters—and the CCSRC understood that renaming needed to be meaningful within neighborhoods. The process of identifying potential names, then, involved researching where people lived, worked, and went to school. Allen Toussaint, for instance, lived on Robert E. Lee Boulevard, the street that will soon bear his name. Representatives of the commission visited each neighborhood to hold public conversations to ensure all voices were heard.

Those conversations could be very difficult. Connor described one conversation in which a constituent argued that enslaved people hadn’t contributed anything to New Orleans’s history. Another participant’s language was laced with racial epithets and stereotypes. Still, Connor emphasized, it was critical to have such conversations, “especially with people you don’t normally talk to.” From the beginning, the CCSRC



James Grossman, Rashauna Johnson, Karl Connor, Sue Mobley, and Thomas Adams at the plenary on New Orleans street renaming.

emphasized hard facts about individuals' actions when arguing either for removal or replacement. Through those conversations, they were able to teach people why convenience or nostalgia shouldn't rule. The CCSRC gathered more than 1,200 public comments during these sessions and through submission forms; all were included in the commission's report so the city council could read them when making decisions.

Renaming, the panelists emphasized, must not lead to merely cosmetic changes; the process itself must involve the community and deep research. It was in part that process of community consultation that led the AHA to send a letter in March 2021 expressing support for the CCSRC, describing its final report as "a remarkable document of collaborative historical research." The AHA's letter, Adams told *Perspectives*, "made clear to New Orleans City Council members, as well the Planning Commission, that the work of historians and other scholars on behalf of renaming was of the highest scholarly quality and firmly in the mainstream of American historical practice."

With its emphasis on clear criteria, collaborative historical research, and meaningful community involvement, the New Orleans street renaming process stands as a model for other cities undertaking this work. From the outset, the commission asked, "How can we use the process for people to understand each other better?" Get people to talk to one another, Connor emphasized. "That is how change is made."

—SJW

THE HISTORIANS' PLACE IN PUBLIC DEBATE

On Saturday morning, "Advocating for History Education: Insights for Historians," chaired by Kathleen M. Hilliard (Iowa State Univ.), provided context for the recent "divisive concepts" legislation and encouraged discussion about how to teach and advocate effectively in the current environment.

Hasan Kwame Jeffries (Ohio State Univ.) kicked off the panel, explaining that this is not the first time the United States has faced a conservative backlash about how history is taught: "You have to understand the origins in order to fight it effectively. None of this is new, but the moment is different." Jeffries dug into the legislation's short-term origins, describing how the reactionary white response to recent antiracism

movements led to the emergence of critical race theory (CRT) as a political tool, then how the ideas behind it trickled down to the local level, causing an outbreak of concern among white parents.

For example, parents in Tennessee objected to a picture book about Ruby Bridges, largely because of the depictions of angry white people yelling at the young Black girl as she arrived at school—an image nearly identical to photos of the event. AHA executive director James Grossman remarked that if he were teaching, he would confront the discomfort head-on by starting with those photos: "Are you uncomfortable?" he would ask students, then point to the six-year-old in the picture: "Are you more uncomfortable than she was?"

"None of this is new, but the moment is different."

This approach would likely be impossible under "divisive concepts" laws. Such legislation is already having a chilling effect on public school teachers, causing some to remove topics like racism and slavery from their lesson plans. This, Jeffries said, is a great loss: "It is our job as educators at every level to make sure our students understand the past. Why? So that they can make sense of the present, so that they are prepared to meet the challenges of the future." According to Grossman, the AHA is creating toolkits to help teachers to teach sensitive history without worrying about their jobs. As opposed to approaching this history as divisive, these kits will emphasize the idea that "there can be no healing until you understand the disease."

According to Leland J. White (National Coalition for History), whose presentation was read in absentia by Grossman, these bills "are designed to limit discussion in the classroom, even those that masquerade as defending free speech." He directed the audience to AHA letters to legislators explaining the harm these bills would do to students. (Here Grossman added that the AHA is happy to write to legislators in any state considering such legislation—just ask.)

White offered advice for tactfully countering the arguments of people concerned about CRT in schools. If you approach with "the intent of diffusing or disarming, rather than converting, the chances of success are way better. Create an open dialogue for future discussion and come across as reasonable to people who are concerned but not dogmatic." White added, "Every person to whom you can explain what revisionist history is, you have done a good deed. You do not want to go to a doctor who does not practice revisionist medicine."



2022 president James H. Sweet and 2021 president Jacqueline Jones present the Raymond J. Cunningham Prize for undergraduate journal article to Ann Tran (Univ. of Southern California).

White also reminded the audience: You are a constituent, a voter, and potential supporter. You are entitled to make your case to legislators. Set up a meeting with the staffer who handles education issues. Be prepared, concise, and polite. And “don’t trust the media coverage—read the legislation. Media coverage will simplify and leave out the complexities.”

Grossman then turned to the audience. “Our sense is that no one knows what’s actually being taught. Would it be useful to find out?” Audience members offered a range of anecdotes, including a historian from the Chicago suburbs, who shared that their daughter “took a world history class that was 90 percent western European history. The AP US History class started at 1492 and ignored Indigenous history.”

These anecdotes matched Jeffries’s own experiences. “But they’re learning something—they’re picking up on narratives. The myths are still there.” In K–12 education, Jeffries explained, “We start by teaching them to identify with the slave owners, and by the time we want to have a nuanced conversation about slavery it’s a huge contradiction.” As a result, when students arrive in college history courses, a lot of relearning has to happen.

The discussion shifted to the COVID-19 pandemic, which audience members agreed could not be ignored in addressing this issue. With students learning from home, parents have realized their kids are learning different history than they did, which can cause concern and confusion. Conservative commentators such as Joe Rogan and Ben Shapiro were also discussed as influences on viewing diverse, inclusive history as a performance of “wokeness.”

“What I’m hearing is that there’s a distinction between what kids are learning versus what teachers are teaching,” Grossman summarized. “The legislation is about what teachers are teaching. Then there’s the question of what parents *think* is being taught and what they want to be taught, which is what they were taught.”

Jeffries left the audience with a final piece of advice: “The language you have to use shifts with your audience. The message doesn’t. But the language does. Teaching history accurately and honestly is all we want to do.”

—RLW

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Based on the “drops” or posts of a person known only as “Q,” QAnon is a movement whose believers insist on the existence of a wide-ranging demonic, Democratic ring of child abusers who control the federal government of the United States. They expect an imminent apocalyptic battle, led by former president Donald Trump, and resulting in the capture and public hanging of this shadowy cabal and their supporters.

In “Historians Take(s) on QAnon, Part I: Religious History and the Roots of QAnon,” Rachel Hope Cleves (Univ. of Victoria), Thomas Lecaque (Grand View Univ.), Benjamin Park (Sam Houston State Univ.), and Stephanie Richmond (Norfolk State Univ.) discussed the deep historical underpinnings of this movement, with each focusing on a specific slice of time.

Lecaque explored this violent worldview’s medieval roots, focusing on the development of blood libel—that a secret Jewish cabal organized the murder and exsanguination of Christian children as part of an unholy ritual—as a precursor to both the “Satanic Panic” of the 1980s and to the current Q conspiracy. Richmond particularized this legacy to the American experience, noting that 19th-century US politics often revolved around conspiracy theories. When John Quincy Adams became president thanks to a vote in the House of Representatives in 1824, his opponent Andrew Jackson decried the “corrupt bargain” of backroom political operatives. In the middle of the century, anti-Catholic conspiracy theories aimed at Irish immigrants depicted nunneries as sites where both women and children suffered horrendous abuse. Even Abraham Lincoln’s Republican Party used conspiracies of a proslavery cabal as a popular rallying cry. Finally, Park examined the anticommunist conspiracy theories of the 1960s. Promoted through organizations such as the John Birch Society, such theories encouraged evangelicals to re-engage in politics to safeguard democracy from a fictive communist menace, setting the scene for the current political environment. A second panel focused on the “save the children” aspect of QAnon conspiracy theories was canceled.

Throughout their presentations, panelists emphasized both the diversity of QAnon sects derived from these historical influences and the shared expectations that nevertheless continue to unite them. Yet it seems that poultice of a professional corrective, the picking apart of a broader historical legacy



of which QAnon is only the most recent iteration, can provide little assistance in fighting against the movement. If it were otherwise, that legacy would not be nearly as deep as it is.

—LRG

BUSY TEACHERS, HOT TOPICS

As a high school teacher, AHA council member Katharina Matro (Walter Johnson High School) knows firsthand how difficult it can be for educators to stay up to date on the latest historical research and debates. “When I started teaching, I was so busy and overwhelmed,” she said.

This is where the idea originated for a new kind of annual meeting session, “A State of the Field for Busy Teachers.” Each year, this session will feature two parts: a keynote by a research expert, followed by a discussion led by a high school teacher and community college instructor.

Reconstruction's legacies
are difficult for most high
schoolers to grasp.

The inaugural “State of the Field” session tackled the US Reconstruction era. David W. Blight (Yale Univ.) gave a prerecorded keynote about how he teaches the subject in the college classroom. Blight presented four big questions that faced Americans at the end of the Civil War: Who would rule in the South? Who would rule in Washington, DC—essentially, who was going to

control Reconstruction? What were the dimensions and the meanings of Black freedom? And was the United States going to have a restoration of the old or a reinvention of the new?

“Reconstruction was soon to be a kind of agonizing referendum on the meaning of the war they just fought,” Blight said. “What cause had actually won and what cause had actually lost? The survivors on both sides would still inhabit the same land, and eventually the same government. How do you make the reconciliation work with the emancipation of the war?”

A key to teaching Reconstruction, he said, is to “help your students grasp the significance of the 14th Amendment in trying to keep us a nation of equals in a society where millions of us don’t want to be.” He concluded, “If we want to understand this United States, which isn’t very united right now, we have to go back to Reconstruction.”

The discussion was led by Matro, Chris Dier (Benjamin Franklin High School), and Shawna Williams (Houston Community

Coll.). Opening the conversation, Dier “found it interesting that [Blight] called Reconstruction a redefining moment in American history, but it’s one of the most undertaught parts of history.” In Dier’s experience, Reconstruction’s legacies are difficult for most high schoolers to grasp. He starts by asking students if they have ever heard of Reconstruction. “Some historians call Reconstruction the first Civil Rights Movement. If we don’t teach it to students, or reduce it to tidbits, I think it devalues students in many ways,” he said. Williams agreed that the topic is essential to US history survey courses, which typically end or start in 1877. “I always make sure to include it, no matter which half I teach,” she said.

Audience members eagerly discussed the nature of the failure of Reconstruction and shared ideas on how to engage students in a topic they often know little or nothing about. Ideas included exploring postwar Republican attempts at one-party rule, the rise in white supremacist organizations, the Panic of 1873, the concurrent revolution in Mexico, and the question of how democratic it is to enforce so-called democratic laws using military force.



At the latest K–12 Educators’ Workshop, “LOC 101: Finding—and Engaging Students with—Primary Sources from the Library of Congress,” attendees learned about digitized sources including sheet music.

Audience members also expressed concerns about how to teach the white violence of the period. Although there are many interesting primary sources, educators “didn’t want to rely too much on descriptions of violence and trauma.” Dier warns students they will hear about violence and trauma and gives them the choice to opt out. Williams described an assignment using slave songs that encourages students to place themselves in the time period. For Reconstruction, this means engaging with the period as a source of violence—not solely from racial tensions, but from the lingering trauma of war as thousands of surviving soldiers were dispersed across the country. An important thing, said Dier, is “to try to approach it from a human perspective.”

“History is not a thing told to make us feel good or bad,” Williams said, paraphrasing historian James Loewen. Helping students engage with the big, hard questions of Reconstruction is the best way to help them understand the facts of the period.

—RLW

ENGAGING ONLINE

The AHA Council’s Research Division organized a series of panels at the annual meeting on collaboration. “Beyond Zoom: Research and Audience in the Digital Age” featured four historians with very active social media presences: Matthew Gabriele (Virginia Tech), Lisa C. Moore (Amistad Research Center), Benjamin Park (Sam Houston State Univ.), and Varsha Venkatasubramanian (Univ. of California, Berkeley). In short initial statements, Gabriele, Park, and Venkatasubramanian discussed how social media can be leveraged to further a historian’s career. It might, for example, allow scholars who are the only members of their subfield at an institution to access a broader community or provide a means to promote an in-progress work. Additionally, Moore, a reference archivist, explored how the emphasis on digitization during COVID has affected archivists, archives, and researchers. It is now necessary for archivists to have much greater flexibility in how they curate and control access to collections as well as a better knowledge of their institutions’ digital holdings, and archivists now often expect to act as on-site proxies for remote researchers.

The subsequent discussion was wide ranging, covering how and when to enter an online debate, individual objectives for being online, and the differences between presenting one’s work in a physical versus digital environment. According to the panelists, a strong online presence could be immensely

beneficial for a scholar in the early stages of a project, allowing them to present and refine aspects of their broader argument for critique. Another central point of the discussion was audience size and engagement. High levels of audience engagement could be useful—the easy quantification of impact appeals to administrators, and engagement is a good way of assessing what an audience is interested in. But they also come with caveats; presenters cautioned attendees to use their own judgment in evaluating online feedback.

There is no shortcut for the investment of time and engagement.

The panel concluded with how to engage with a specifically digital space when it comes to promoting traditional scholarship such as academic books. Park and Gabriele noted that, in their experience, an online audience responded to the energy level and enthusiasm of a presenter much more than a traditional one. Further, they emphasized that scholars cannot rapidly build an audience; there is no shortcut for the investment of time and engagement, and public-facing scholarship is not an on/off switch. In short, they argued that, despite many popular protests to the contrary, “Twitter is real life,” and should be both understood and treated as such.

Interested in more about collaboration in research? At AHA22 Online, check out “Beyond Collaboration,” another session in this series.

—LRG

AHA22 ONLINE

In previous years, we have ended this article with a look forward to the next annual meeting—and we do indeed hope to see you at the 2023 meeting in Philadelphia! But the AHA22 programming isn’t over yet. With more than 200 sessions taking place as part of AHA22 Online, there’s so much more to learn, discuss, and take away from AHA22. Online sessions will take place from February 21 to 27 and will be recorded to be viewed on demand. Registration at the in-person meeting includes complimentary registration for the online sessions, and it’s not too late to register as an online-only attendee. Learn more at historians.org/AHA22Online. 

AHA CAREER CONTACTS

Are you a graduate student or early-career scholar who is interested in learning about the career paths open to historians?

Are you a history PhD employed beyond the professoriate with advice and experience to share?

Jonathan Sureau, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0, flic.kr/p/fdp8i6

Sign up to participate in AHA Career Contacts, a service that matches graduate students and recent PhDs with historians employed beyond the professoriate for one-time informational interviews.

For more information and to sign up, visit www.historians.org/aha-career-contacts.

PEGGY LISS

LIFE AT A CHERRYWOOD TABLE

Memoir and Material Culture



Peggy Liss writes at an antique cherrywood gateleg table, a less elaborate version of this 18th-century maple table held at the Met.
Metropolitan Museum of Art/Public domain

SIT AT A scarred but sturdy cherrywood table. Already antique in my childhood, it stood in the dining room of the farmhouse I grew up in. The computer I'm writing on is turning unreliable. The table? If anything, its reliability has increased with time, as I've come to understand.

I am 94 years old, and a few years ago, I decided to write a memoir. It took on a life of its own when material things—furnishings, clothing, and food—intruded as organizing topics. As I located my individual experience within social context, I learned a lot of history, both personal and communal. I realized not only the trajectory of my life more fully but also ways that material culture is intrinsically a purveyor of the past, both history retaining and history making.

I was born in Philadelphia in 1927, an event announced by a pink-ribboned card preserved in a silk-bound baby book. My mother kept this book, and I have it today. In it, there's a first photo of me in an intricately sewn white baby dress. Surviving, too, is the silver bowl from which I soon ate oatmeal or Cream of Wheat daily. My memoir is titled *Bygone*, and for good reason. These baby things of mine are artifacts that belong to the past, and while their presence jogs personal memories, in writing of my life, they also prompted me to search for historical context. That context I found persuasively set out in *The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy and Caste in America* (1964) by E. Digby Baltzell, a sociologist who focused on his native Philadelphia. In the 1920s, he explained, social class was multilayered and taken for granted as blue collar, white collar (lower to middle), upper middle, and upper; those distinctions were displayed in where and how you lived; how you spoke, dressed, worked, and played; and the material things you lived with.

As I look back, I realized this bygone hierarchy of classes was conveyed to me early on by my parents. My mother was proud of being a third-generation American. My father, having arrived in 1882 as a child in a wave of eastern European immigrants escaping persecution, took pride in having done the American thing of pulling himself up by his bootstraps. Both were Jewish but otherwise from different worlds—my mother a claimant to German Jewish aristocracy, imbued with a view of class paralleling the wider, essentially Protestant, social structure, my father the scion of a rough-hewn family from then Russian Ukraine.

In their marriage, my parents found unity in embarking on a particular American way of life—in their case, an upper-middle-class lifestyle made visible in how they lived and the things they lived with. I was three when they left Philadelphia to settle into a renovated revolutionary era Bucks

County farmhouse. Their move to the country, while indebted to the mobility that came with cars and trains, occurred within a trend initiated by Philadelphia's upper-class exodus to suburbs and exurbs. My parents, consciously overriding their different pasts, went about melting into America as they knew it.

In my childhood, the Stars and Stripes hung off the front porch every Fourth of July, and among the household furnishings were many newly acquired early American pieces, authenticating antiques. For in the 1930s and as long as clear class distinctions persisted, belonging to the upper crust had much to do with being born into it, the longer ago the better, and a visible sign was having inherited old things—nothing looking too new, things preferably handmade by a skilled craftsman long ago in the recognizable style of some past century. If you could not display actual old family pieces, second best were antiques reflecting “good taste.” I grew up, that is, amid trappings emblematic of high social class, “proper” clothes and foods and “good” old furnishings, all by hindsight grounding me within a family acculturated to America and within a class-proclaiming material culture.

These baby things of mine are artifacts that belong to the past that prompted me to search for historical context.

By 1951, after some college and a stint as a newspaper reporter, and now married and with a child, as a matter of course, I turned to housewifery, a role much publicized in radio sitcoms, in popular magazines such as *Woman's Home Companion* and *Ladies' Home Journal*, and through the cookbook by (the mythical) Betty Crocker, all envisioning America as thoroughly middle class. While I did not read the magazines, I swore by Betty Crocker and steadily baked her never-fail layer cakes. Having lived through the social leavening that occurred during and after World War II, I thought of myself as grown up and moving outward into a wider and more open society than that of my parents. Still, and overall, my material tastes were no sharp break with the past. As inculcated in childhood, I continued to wear well-made things of good fabric and to eat healthily. My new-style ranch house, while complete with the latest appliances, also contained antique furnishings I had grown up with—inherited things that, while evoking a distant time and place in their style, had acquired further meaning interwoven with personal history, attesting to past and present as overlapping and continuous.

I'd been drawn to history early on, as existing in my material surroundings and family stories and in the children's books I cherished. Stories of other times and places opened onto dimensions of a world far beyond my everyday life. Before and during the war had come events considered momentarily historical in newspapers, on the radio, and talked about at home. When my children went to school, I diluted my housewifery by taking a history course at the local Penn State University branch. Then, juggling home and the renewed allure of other times and places, I continued at the University of Pennsylvania to a doctorate in 1965 and to teaching and writing of the – to me – omnipresent past.

The farmhouse antiques I grew up with intermingle with newer furnishings.

Today, my taste and my surroundings continue to retain vestiges of the ambiance of my childhood. In clothing, a style adopted by my mother and long considered classic echoes in the well-aged things I still wear. But, on occasion, those things mingle with jeans, T-shirts, and hoodies. And where only doubtful Americanized Chinese and Italian foods were once to be had, today I find widely available, and indulge in, an international feast. The farmhouse antiques I grew up with intermingle with newer furnishings. Together, these objects provide a connection through time enriching the ongoing present. History lives in them. They tell me personal stories enlivening both past and present, broadening memory and life.

Once upper-class identifiers and valued as such, antiques have slowly lost ground to changing taste and, as the old class divisions have withered, to new material signifiers of top-doggism. Today, antiques as such are not much sought after; fringely fashionable, they are at once victims and communicators of historical change. That said, in my living room are the two antique chairs that once faced each other across the farmhouse fireplace. I again see my parents sitting in them each evening. They are reading – my mother usually fiction, my father usually history. Although sometimes my father is playing Michigan rummy (whatever that was) with me. Or he gets up to teach me to waltz, his “One and two and three” accompanying the music of Johann Strauss on the record playing on the Victrola.

The cherrywood table at which I now write once stood in the farmhouse dining room, and its daily presence embodies both American history and my own. Further, while it bridges time,

its shape and form have not changed over the years. Only its use and users have, and there it offers an analogy to history itself. The actuality of the past is unchanging, yet its study has proven far more malleable, subject to being shaped and reshaped (as historiography attests) and often in accord with current concerns that open new approaches to a bygone world but can also obscure the shape and form of a different time and place, antique in its own right.

The table attests to something more. In *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (1981), psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and sociologist Eugene Rochberg-Halton distinguish between “terminal materialism” as just that, a dead end, and “instrumental materialism” as a catalyst to unleashing creative energies. They see valued domestic objects as important to human existence and especially to its quality. “The possessions one selects to endow with special meaning out of the total environment of artifacts,” they conclude, “are both models of the self as well as templates for further development. They serve to give a tangible expression and thus a continued existence through signs to one’s relationships, experiences, and values.” This is precisely my own sentiment – something that has slowly dawned on me while writing my memoir.

Plumbing my own history has affirmed something further, however: that artifacts deposited by the past also attest to the tendency of the old to linger within the new. In the seemingly inevitable elision of past into present, present into future, I’ve found material culture can be the canary in the coal mine, alerting a historian to broader changes in the air, as it has throughout my lifetime. **P**

Peggy Liss is the author of, among other books, Isabel the Queen: Life and Times and has recently completed “An Almost Chosen People: Faith, History, and the Political Power of Words,” tracing religiously infused American political language back to earliest times. She served on the AHA Council and Executive Committee from 1985 to 1988.

NANCY LOCKLIN-SOFER

TRACKING THE NIGHT MARAUDER

When a Cold Case Becomes a Class Project



Nancy Locklin-Sofer and her student Lauren Gaines dig into the mystery of the Night Marauder.
Courtesy Nancy Locklin-Sofer

LEAD A TEAM of students on the tracks of a serial killer in East Tennessee. The 100-year-old cold case seemed to have come out of nowhere when I was simply trying to gather information for a single lecture in my History of Murder class. I fell down a rabbit hole, and like Alice in Wonderland, I found myself in a whole new environment inhabited by astonishing creatures.

Following a serial killer wasn't exactly the path I imagined when I arrived at Maryville College to teach Western and World Civilization classes 20 years ago. Though my own specialty is 18th-century France, I teach a wide variety of subjects. This is not unusual at a small institution where a handful of professors must cover the entire globe in every era, or at least try to. When we updated our curriculum and moved away from the survey format in 2016, I was empowered to develop classes on any topic, provided that my students learn the basics of the historical method and the importance of context. It can be challenging to teach in this way, but I have found that I relish the opportunity to develop new classes. I have taught everything from cookbooks to witch hunts. Inspired by research I had done for my second book, *Murder, Justice, and Harmony in an Eighteenth-Century French Village* (Routledge, 2019), I developed an undergraduate course called the History of Murder in time for the spring 2021 semester. I designed the class for history majors, but it also appealed to criminal justice, psychology, and writing/communications majors. Thus, the 18 students in the class brought a variety of skill sets to the table.

Early in the course, I had planned a lecture on how law enforcement officers rely on their experience when pursuing a case and how that experience can sometimes blind them to innovative lines of questioning. Murder, for example, had long been considered a crime arising from personal conflict, and early serial killers escaped notice because no one could imagine a killer without a personal motive. While preparing for the lecture last January, I set out to find local cases that would interest the students, most of whom had grown up in the area. One website referenced a headline from the *Maryville Times* in July 1926—“Night Marauder Kills Woman Aged Sixty: Maryville-Alcoa Folk Tremble While the Murderer Goes Unapprehended.” The full text was not included on the page, but a snippet revealed that the victim's daughter was recently divorced. The police believed the attacker must have been her former son-in-law and refused to listen to her daughter's protests that it was not. I needed to know more. Unfortunately, the *Maryville Times* from that period has not yet been fully digitized. The only way I could read the whole issue was to head to the Blount County Public Library (BCPL) and use the microfilm reader. Only with this research did I realize the scope of the violence.

This killer, dubbed the Night Marauder by the press, murdered eight people in Knoxville, Maryville, and Alcoa, Tennessee, between 1919 and 1926, the first of whom was Bertie Lindsey in August 1919. Lindsey and her cousin were sharing a bed when a man armed with a pistol threatened to kill them if they did not do as he said. As he climbed into bed with them, Lindsey became frightened and tried to run away. The man shot her and fled the scene. By the summer of 1926, there had been 45 home invasions, with multiple incidents occurring on a single night. The Night Marauder assaulted eight women, shot four who resisted, and killed eight people.

Although the case has never been solved, there were suspects. First, an African American politician named Maurice Mays would be unjustly accused, and eventually executed for the crimes, in 1919. Meanwhile, the attacks continued. The Beck Cultural Exchange Center in Knoxville still leads efforts to exonerate Mays today.

Early serial killers escaped notice because no one could imagine a killer without a personal motive.

White Maryville resident William D. Sheffey was tried three times for the Night Marauder murders in 1925–26. His case thrilled and horrified the area, and spectators packed the courthouse. The news of the case was reported as far away as Wisconsin and California. However, Sheffey's first two trials ended in mistrial and the third ended in an acquittal. He left to start a new life outside Tennessee. After that, the killing stopped, and so did the media attention and the investigations.

After learning about the Night Marauder case, I reframed the course to take advantage of the insights possible with this local example. We were tracing the evolution of the definition of murder, how formal criminal justice systems came into being, and how the political and social context of a crime shaped responses to it. Now, in addition to the trade books on historical crime and journal articles, we had a local example of all these themes. At regular intervals throughout the semester, the class returned to the Night Marauder case and considered how our reading had shifted our perspectives on the case.

Organizing the course and student projects around this example required the help of local experts. I am especially indebted to two librarians at the BCPL, Brennan LeQuire and

Tim Walker. They, along with a handful of local historians, helped me locate documents related to the case, including the notes of a private investigator hired to catch the Night Marauder. My students now had a treasure trove of source documents unseen for a generation. I distributed copies of these documents to the students as part of a primary source analysis assignment.

The class was a triumph—my students were so enthusiastic about the case that they threw themselves into the research. Students crafted research papers around everything that could be useful in studying this case, from the field of psychology to the extent of forensic analysis possible in the 1920s, the use of private investigators to assist law enforcement, the impact of class and race on the crimes themselves and the ways in which they were investigated, and the era’s sensationalist journalism. One student wrote an incredible essay on southern honor culture as expressed in the way male authorities and reporters wrote about the sexual violence perpetrated during the attacks. Another student, whose family includes members in law enforcement, created a detailed criminal profile of the murderer.

People began to contact me with their own memories or family lore concerning the killer and the suspects.

I wanted to write a book based on the case and asked my students whether they would like to be contributors. Historical true crime is a hot genre right now, and I have always been a fan. Though I wrote several chapters of the book over the summer, the project was still in progress as the fall semester approached. I realized that my teaching load would force me to put the book on hold for a while, and I was not scheduled to teach the History of Murder again until 2022. Not wanting to lose momentum, and knowing students were still excited about the project, I advertised on campus for a research assistant. I received 17 applications, many from students who were unable to take the class.

That may not sound like much, but it is a high turnout for our small campus. Most applicants expressed a desire to help but were unsure how much time each week they could commit to this work. In response, I proposed a research team in which anyone who wanted to help could contribute but no single person would be committed to regular hours. Nine students accepted this arrangement. I set up a Google Classroom with the relevant documents, current chapter

drafts, and a list of tasks. The students set up a group text to coordinate work so nobody would be replicating the work of another. I will also move the project forward by including assignments related to it in my Theory and Methods in the Study of History class.

My class and our book project attracted a great deal of local media attention. It was featured in the *Daily Times*, our local paper, in April 2021 and I was interviewed by all three of the Knoxville television news stations. After those stories came out, people began to contact me with their own memories or family lore concerning the killer and the suspects who had stood trial.

To sustain the buzz around our project, we began to blog at TheNightMarauderProject.com. I composed the first couple of posts to introduce the project. However, with the students’ permission, I have begun editing their essays from last spring for future posts so that they are already published contributors long before the book comes out.

This course design, combining an undergraduate course and a book project, provides an engaging and reproducible model for undergraduate education, regardless of the instructor’s area of expertise. As a historian of France, I sometimes lamented that there was no easy way to involve undergraduates in my research projects because of the language barrier. In addition, I had little knowledge of local history. However, sheer luck and curiosity led me to a mystery to solve, and I have been thrilled to have my students as company on this journey. **P**

Nancy Locklin-Sofer is professor of history at Maryville College.

LAURA ANSLEY

SPARKING CONVERSATIONS

An Interview with Leland Renato Grigoli, Editor of Perspectives on History

In December 2021, the AHA welcomed the new editor of *Perspectives on History*, Leland Renato Grigoli, who is the first medievalist to lead the magazine. A historian of the medieval Mediterranean, Leland holds a bachelor's degree from Harvard University Extension School, a master's in theological studies from Harvard Divinity School, and a PhD from Brown University, where he wrote his dissertation on monastic colonialism and state formation. Leland is also experienced in the digital humanities as the managing editor for the *Digital Atlas of Roman and Medieval Civilizations* from 2013 to 2019. Read on to learn about how he came to history, his plans for the magazine, and his passion for cycling.

Where did your interest in history begin?

Pretty much as soon as I could read! My mom often says that by the time I left middle school, I had read every book on World War II that the school *and* local library had on the shelf.

But my interest in being a historian comes from taking a course on medieval warfare and the crusades at Harvard Extension School (HES) in the spring of 2010. I don't know if I had any particular interest in the Middle Ages before, outside of a love of high fantasy, and my first few years as an undergraduate were as a mechanical engineer. I had signed up for it because I wanted to go back to school to finish my BA, and it sounded like a subject that would be enjoyable as I eased my way back into college. By the semester's end, I was not only looking up what other courses I could take on the subject but researching graduate programs and trying to figure out how to build out my language skills.

You took a nontraditional path through your postsecondary education, including a few attempts at a bachelor's degree before completion and a master's in theological studies before your PhD. How did that path influence your outlook on academia?



Perspectives editor Leland Renato Grigoli is the first medievalist to edit the magazine.
Alyson Grigoli

Oh, in so many ways. First, I have to say that I was able to take the path I did because I was both privileged and lucky. Privileged because I had parents who could pay for an excellent private high school, where I learned a lot more than my grades suggested (congrats on your retirement, Dr. Horn!), and lucky because I lived in Boston and thus could sign up for courses at HES if I wanted. Because of this, I've become fairly radical in my belief that intelligence, and particularly academic intelligence, is a performance, not an inborn fact; most people are capable of performing it with effort and the right training.

It's also a process that's left me very comfortable with who I am and what I am doing. I had good mentors who did not let me go into graduate school blind to the multitude of problems in higher education, and I had enough experience outside of school to know how to be deliberate and thoughtful in my career choices. It's not uncommon for new PhD students to feel disoriented and lost. I just did the disoriented and lost thing *first*.

Being a medievalist has shown me the importance of communicating across the history discipline and with other disciplines.

You're the first medievalist that's ever been editor of *Perspectives*. How does this training influence your editorial work?

I don't think I'm the only one to believe that the study of Latin is the best English grammar course you can take, and my training as a philologist has, I hope, made me particularly sensitive to the semantic nuances of language. More broadly, though, being a medievalist has shown me the importance of communicating across the history discipline and with other disciplines. Most medieval historians are the only ones—or even the only premodernists—in their departments, so for both hiring and collegiality, we need to keep abreast of what our colleagues are doing. Consequently, I've always tried to engage with theories and practices that are in use outside both my field and the historical discipline, and I think that gives me a broader *perspective* than I might have otherwise had.

What are your goals as editor of *Perspectives*?

I should first say that I think *Perspectives* has come a long way in the past year or so, and that I'm taking over a job with big shoes to fill, so my priority is to not mess that up. December's issue on history and fiction, for example, was just fantastic. It's exactly the sort of content I want to see.

I think my guiding idea is that I want to spark conversations. I want people to ask each other over whatever the pandemic equivalent of a watercooler or mail room is, "Hey, did you see that thing? What did you think?"

What's an example of the type of conversations you'd like to start?

During my field exams, I argued that the Middle Ages ended and early modernity began in 1215, and I got grumpy

comments about that from my examiners. I remember them mostly coming from my adviser, Amy Remensnyder, who would (understandably) not tolerate being termed a modern historian, even if only of the early variety. It's been a running joke between us ever since. Yet there's no reason why a division theoretically made out of mere convenience should have such power over the way we think, and we don't talk about periodization as much as we should.

I'm also very interested in the links between ironic or self-acknowledged historical anachronism in popular media—what some medievalists have recently taken to calling "neomedievalism" when it pertains to our subfield—and the discipline. In my own work, I've written about how the current emphasis on a professionalized discipline in higher education cedes substantial ground to some of the more pernicious iterations of neomedievalism, but this is a question for the entire field, from high school teachers to emeritus faculty, and not just medieval studies.

In short, I enjoy discussion on questions where the topic is considered so well settled that we begin to forget there was even a question to begin with. I find they make excellent conversation starters, even (or especially?) during your qualifying exams.

What are your passions outside of history?

Bikes! My wife and I haven't owned a car since 2011, so we bike everywhere. When I went to grad school, I went on some rides with local cyclists to make some friends, and that got me into racing bikes too. It's a habit I intend to continue, and I am looking forward to no longer suffering on a bike through what we New Englanders audaciously call "spring" when I move to Washington, DC, in February.

Last question: If you were to hold your dream dinner party, which three historians (living or dead) would you invite?

Oh, the ones who influenced me most as a writer: Ernst Kantorowicz, Kathleen Biddick, and Paul Fussell. Can we clear an extra space at the table for Marc Bloch too? The four of them together are also more or less responsible for how I think about the practice of history, broadly writ. I'm not entirely sure how friendly that conversation would be, but it would sure be interesting. **P**

This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

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

ACTIONS BY THE AHA COUNCIL

June 2021 to January 2022

Through email communications from June 17 to December 23, 2021; at teleconference meetings held on September 17 and November 3, 2021; and at teleconference meetings on January 6 and 9, 2022, the Council of the American Historical Association took the following actions:

- Signed on to a letter from the Coalition for International Education to Senators Patty Murray and Roy Blunt supporting increased funding for the US Department of Education’s international and foreign language education programs.
- Approved the *Statement on Threats to Historical Integrity in Texas*, opposing Texas House Bill 3979, which prevents state-owned agencies and facilities from presenting accurate views of Texas history and hobbles fundraising efforts crucial to the state-sponsored public history sector.
- Sent a letter to leaders in the Ohio legislature expressing strong opposition to HB 322 and HB 327, which would continue the trend of “divisive concepts” legislation, placing limits on what could be included in the social studies curriculum and how instructors could teach certain ideas, concepts, and historical facts.
- Appointed the following members to the 2023 Annual Meeting Program Committee: Andrew Johns (Brigham Young Univ.); John Kenney (Esperanza Cyber Charter School); Akram Khater (North Carolina State Univ); and Lydia Lindsey (North Carolina Central Univ).
- Appointed Christopher Dietrich (Fordham Univ.) and Rose Miron (D’Arcy McNickle Center) as associate review editors for the *American Historical Review* (AHR) for three-year terms. Dietrich’s term begins August 2021; Miron’s term begins April 2022.
- Signed on to a letter from Scholars at Risk, an “urgent appeal for Afghanistan’s scholars, students, practitioners, civil society leaders, and activists.”
- Approved revisions to the FY22 budget.
- Sent a letter to Texas legislators, the governor, and newspapers across the state opposing proposed legislation limiting the scope of history education in ways likely to exclude major aspects of the American past.
- Appointed Sandra Mendiola Garcia (Northern Texas Univ.) as associate review editor for the AHR for a three-year term to begin August 2021.
- Approved becoming a founding member of Learn from History, a coalition of parents, educators, and other concerned Americans who are working together to combat “divisive concepts” bills and to ensure that all children can learn accurate, thorough, and fact-based history in our schools.
- Sent a letter to Missouri governor Mike Parson recommending that he reconsider his decision to relocate the exhibition *Making History: Kansas City and the Rise of Gay Rights* from the Missouri State Museum to a considerably less visible site.
- Released the *Statement on Threats to Academic Conferences*, condemning the harassment and intimidation of participants, organizers, and university sponsors of the virtual conference “Dismantling Global Hindutva: Multidisciplinary Perspectives.”
- Signed on to an amicus brief in the Supreme Court case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*. This brief aims to provide an accurate historical perspective as the court considers the State of Mississippi’s challenge to a woman’s right to abortion.
- Began work with the National Security Archive and Public Citizen on a petition to unseal grand jury records related to the 1964 murders of civil rights workers in Neshoba County, Mississippi.

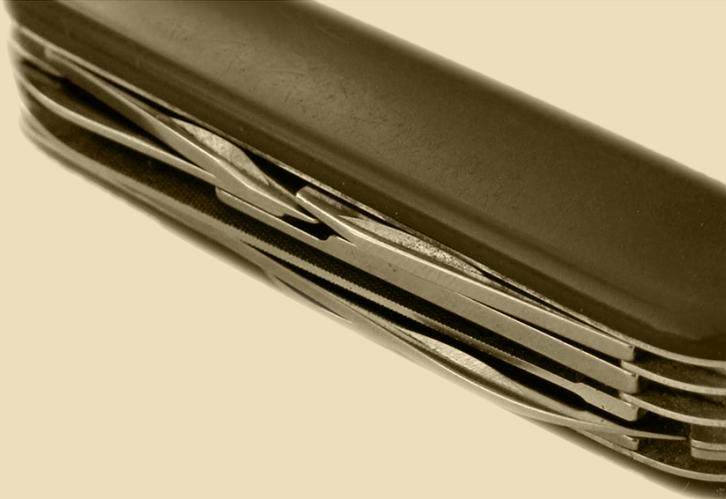
- Appointed Jennifer Derr (Univ. of California, Santa Cruz) as associate review editor for the *AHR* for a three-year term to begin August 2021.
- Appointed Carin Berkowitz (New Jersey Council for the Humanities) and Athan Biss (Baldwin School) as co-chairs of the Local Arrangements Committee for the 2023 annual meeting in Philadelphia.
- Approved the AHA's continued involvement in the Immigration and Customs Enforcement records disposition case with co-plaintiffs Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington and the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.
- Signed on to a letter from the Coalition for International Education urging 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).
- Sent a letter to President W. Kent Fuchs of the University of Florida objecting to the university's decision preventing University of Florida faculty members from testifying as expert witnesses in a voting-rights case.
- Approved several policies for the 2022 annual meeting: requiring attendees to wear masks, requiring attendees to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination to retrieve a conference badge, and not allowing for religious exemptions to the vaccination requirement.
- Approved the Society for US Intellectual History as an affiliate of the AHA.
- Approved the *Statement on Censorship and Prosecution by Chinese Authorities*, expressing alarm about escalated censorship and prosecution of Chinese citizens and national laws and policies that in effect criminalize the historical enterprise.
- Approved the reappointment of Fei-Hsien Wang as *AHR* associate editor for 2022–23.
- Sent a letter to Polish president Andrzej Duda expressing continued concern about the harassment and firing of Polish historians and calling on Polish leaders to protect the rights of historians to conduct impartial research into history and to advance the search for historical accuracy.
- Appointed Christolyn Williams (Westchester Community Coll.) to the 2023 Program Committee.
- Signed on to a letter from the Coalition for International Education urging US House leadership to reauthorize Title VI international education programs.
- Appointed Kim Gallon (Purdue Univ.) as AHA delegate to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission for a four-year term to begin in January 2022.
- Sent a letter to the Oklahoma legislature opposing House Bill 2988, which would limit how the history of slavery could be taught in public schools and colleges.
- Sent a letter to Drs. Brien Smith and Charles Howell discouraging Youngstown State University from proceeding with the reported nonrenewal of two faculty members in the history program.
- Approved the minutes of the June 2021 Council meetings.
- Approved the interim minutes of the Council from June through December 2021.
- Approved the 2022 Committee appointments.
- Authorized the AHA president to appoint a Committee to Explore Broadening the Terrain of Historical Scholarship.
- Approved changes to AHA Bylaw 12, Number 4a Pursuant to Article VII, Sections 1–5, to move the deadline for receiving resolutions for consideration at the business meeting from November 1 to October 1.
- Approved changes to the Nancy Lyman Roelker Mentorship Award application materials to include three nomination letters of no more than three pages each.
- Adopted Oxford University Press's "Read and Publish" policy for the *AHR*, on a trial basis, through the end of the current contract with the press.
- Suspended the John H. Dunning Prize, pending legal advice regarding the funding of the award.
- Approved recommending AHA book prize winners for the ACLS Humanities Ebook portfolio.
- Approved a template for use when sending letters of objection to "divisive concepts" bills.
- Approved a letter to the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District speaking out against proposed Resolution

No. 21-12, “Resolution Opposing the Teaching of Critical Race Theory.”

- Received the FY20–21 financial audit.
- Authorized the revision of membership categories as appropriate, including the addition of a \$200,000+ salary category for the FY23 budget year.
- Approved the 2022 Honorary Foreign Member (to be announced fall 2022).
- Appointed Amy Stanley (Northwestern Univ.) as chair and A. K. Sandoval-Strausz (Penn State Univ.) as co-chair of the 2024 Program Committee.
- Approved the addition of regularly scheduled Council online teleconferences of one to two hours in length, one each in the spring and the fall.
- Amended Bylaw 9 Pursuant to Article V, Section 1.2, to allow Council to convene online teleconference meetings with at least one week notice to address urgent business when the president or executive director deems it necessary.
- Approved the German Studies Association as an affiliate of the AHA.
- Commended the AHA staff for their work on the 2022 annual meeting. 



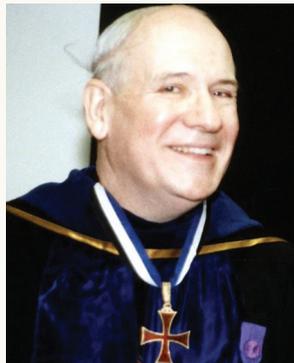
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Donald D. Horward

1933–2021

Historian of France

Donald D. Horward passed away at age 88 on October 31, 2021. A native of Pennsylvania, Don completed his undergraduate studies at Waynesburg University before earning an MA at Ohio University. He then attended the history doctoral program at the University of Minnesota, studying with Harold Deutsch and John Wolf. In 1961, Don joined the faculty at Florida State University (FSU), where he remained for over 44 years.

During his long and distinguished career, Don introduced some 16,000 students to the history of the French Revolution and Napoleon and developed a dynamic graduate studies program. He directed his first master's student in 1963, followed by his first PhD student in Napoleonic history in 1966. Don was one of the founders of the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe (currently called the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era, 1750–1850), established in 1972 to foster the study of Europe during the revolutionary period. He also founded the Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution in 1990. Eight years later, he became the recipient of the first endowed chair devoted to Napoleonic studies in the United States. By the end of his career, Don had directed 48 PhD and 52 MA students, making FSU one of the most prolific centers in the world for the study of Napoleon and the French Revolution.

Don also made important contributions to Peninsular War studies in his scholarship. Starting in 1965, Don published three major works that offered detailed analysis of the French invasion of Portugal in 1810–11: *The Battle of Bussaco: Masséna vs. Wellington* (Florida State Univ. Press, 1965); *The French Campaign in Portugal, 1810–1811* (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1973); and *Napoleon and Iberia: The Twin Sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, 1810* (Univ. Presses of Florida, 1984), which was also published in Spanish editions. He co-authored or contributed to an additional 20 books and wrote over 50 articles on the revolutionary and Napoleonic period. In all, he addressed various Napoleonic topics at more than 190 conferences in the United States and Europe.

Teaching was always Don's love, and as a result, he received seven university-wide awards from FSU, including the first Distinguished Teaching Award, established in 1990; three Excellence in Teaching awards (1988, 1994, and 1997); and the university's first Outstanding Graduate Faculty Mentor Award (2005). He held 15 academic chairs at various American and European universities and institutions, including West Point, Virginia Military Institute, the Marine Corps War College (renewed seven times), and the School of Advanced Warfighting at Marine Corps University. Don lectured at universities throughout the United States, as well as the Smithsonian on several occasions, and gave presentations in universities across Europe.

For his work in the Napoleonic period, Don was decorated by the French, American, and Portuguese governments and recognized by the Czech Republic and Spain. He was elected to the Portuguese Academy of History in 1991, and the following year, he was decorated by the president of Portugal and named a Grand Officer of the Order of Infante Dom Henrique. Don received his most distinguished awards from the French government, being named Chevalier (1984), Officer (1992), and Commandeur (2001) de l'Ordres des Palmes Académique, an order established by Napoleon in 1808 for contributions to historical studies and the sciences. In 2002, the French government recognized his contributions to the field of Napoleonic studies by naming him Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur, which was established by Napoleon in 1802.

All who have studied with Don or worked closely with him know that he was tough, demanding, and at times hard on his graduate students because he wanted us to be the very best we could be. He was a friend, a father figure, and a role model for us. He taught us how to teach and how to be scholars; he protected us yet pushed us out of the nest for our first unsteady flights through the daunting halls of Europe's archives; he opened his international network to us so that we could develop professionally; he laughed with us and cried with us; he was larger than life. He was a giant among pygmies.

Don is survived by his wife of 63 years, Annabel Lee Vanscyoc Horward, his beloved companion and traveling partner across Europe for 50 years, who entertained hundreds of his graduate students annually. Without her, he believed, none of his accomplishments would have been possible.

Michael V. Leggiere
University of North Texas

Photo courtesy Florida State University

AHA CAREER CENTER

Positions are listed alphabetically: first by country, then state/province, city, institution, and field.

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CALIFORNIA

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

La Jolla, CA

Associate Professor in Chicana and/or Latinx History. The Department of History in the Division of Arts & Humanities at UC San Diego invites applications for a full-time tenured associate professor specializing in Chicana and/or Latinx history to begin July 1, 2022. Period, region, and specialization are open. Scholars whose work addresses immigration, Afro-Latinidad, relational race and ethnicity, and/or the 19th century are particularly encouraged to apply. This position is one of 14 new ladder-rank faculty positions in the Latinx Cluster Hire Initiative (LCHI) at UC San Diego. The LCHI aims to increase faculty diversity, innovative research, and culturally relevant curriculum and mentorship through increased engagement and collaboration between various departments across campus with the Chicana and Latinx Studies (CLS) and Latin American Studies (LAS) programs. Faculty hired under LCHI will be expected to design and teach undergraduate and graduate courses in Chicana and/or Latinx history, as well as the successful candidate's thematic areas of expertise. They will also be expected to teach courses that align with the CLS and LAS academic programs, serve as faculty affiliates in CLS and/or LAS, and mentor undergraduate students in one or both programs. Faculty hired under LCHI

will have multiple opportunities to contribute to UC San Diego's transformation from an emergent Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) to a full-status HSI that meets the curricular and cultural needs of Latinx, URM, and first-generation students. This includes faculty engagement with scholars across disciplines to address issues of race and racism, access and equity, and social and political debates pertinent to Chicana, Latinx, and Latin American Studies, while also working within their home departments and professional communities. We seek candidates whose research, teaching, and service will advance UC San Diego's transition to HSI and/or anti-racism, anti-oppression, equity, and social justice with a focus on the Latinx/Chicana community. We especially welcome candidates whose professional experience, community engagement, and personal background have facilitated their understanding of and ability to better serve students from traditionally underrepresented communities in higher education. Faculty are expected to have an inclusive approach to mentoring and advising that incorporates working with women and underrepresented undergraduate and graduate students. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and based on the University of California pay scales. Please submit applications prior to the Initial Review Date of January 10, 2022. For more information about the Department of History, see <https://history.ucsd.edu/>. For more information about the Chicana Latinx Studies Program, see <https://cls.ucsd.edu/>. For more information about the Division of Arts & Humanities, see

<https://artsandhumanities.ucsd.edu/>. The University of California is committed to creating and maintaining a community dedicated to the advancement, application, and transmission of knowledge and creative endeavors through academic excellence, where all individuals who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in a safe and secure environment, free of violence, harassment, discrimination, exploitation, or intimidation. With this commitment, UC San Diego requires all candidates for academic appointments with tenure or security of employment to complete, sign, and upload the Institutional Reference Check release form entitled "Authorization to Release Form" into RECRUIT as part of their application. 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.policelice.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. Basic Qualifications: A PhD in history, Chicana or Latinx Studies, or related discipline, evidence of excellence in teaching and service commensurate with experience, and publications appropriate to the candidate's experience. Preferred Qualifications: Spanish language proficiency is regarded favorably. Candidates with demonstrated leadership in support of equity, diversity, and inclusion in an academic setting are preferred. Apply at <https://apol-recruit.ucsd.edu/JPF02990>.



NEW YORK

ST. LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY Canton, NY

Visiting Assistant Professor in Asian History. St. Lawrence University seeks a qualified candidate for a one-year (potentially renewable for additional years) visiting assistant professor position in Asian history. Chronological and thematic research expertise is open. Experience teaching introductory undergraduate courses is preferred; ability to offer

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 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; Guidelines for the Hiring Process, www.historians.org/hiring; and Policy on Advertisements, www.historians.org/adpolicy.

courses incorporating East Asian religious history is a plus. Teaching responsibilities include three courses per semester, including broad introductory Asian history surveys, as well as upper-level courses related to teaching/research interests. The history department values diverse interdisciplinary and transnational connections in our teaching and research, and strongly encourages applications from candidates who can develop courses supporting Religious Studies, Asian Studies, or other departments/programs. St. Lawrence University is an AA/EOE and is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community. Members of populations traditionally underrepresented in US institutions of higher education are especially encouraged to apply. More information about SLU's diversity, equity, and inclusion commitments can be found at <https://www.stlawu.edu/offices/presidents-office/statement-diversity>. Interested applicants must apply online at <http://employment.stlawu.edu>, uploading all required materials which are defined in the "special instructions to applicant" section. Review of applications will

begin on January 15, 2022, and continue until the position is filled. Questions about the position may be sent to Dr. Matt Carotenuto, Search Chair, at mcarotenuto@stlawu.edu. All offers of employment are contingent upon the finalist successfully passing a background (including criminal records) check. Minimum Qualifications: Historian of East Asia, with PhD in hand at the time of appointment preferred but ABDs may be considered. Preferred Qualifications: Preferred candidates would bring innovative and creative approaches to course design and teaching.



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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.

The deadline for all research grant applications is February 15.

TIYA MILES

THE OHIO RIVER

I am from Cincinnati, an Ohio River town named for an Iroquoian word translated as “beautiful river” or “great river.” In January 1977, the day after I turned seven years old, the Ohio River froze to a depth of 12 inches. The chill extended into a 28-day stretch of below-zero temperatures with a low of -25°F . My father took me and my little sister Erin down to the river and took this photograph of us on the ice, saying he wanted us to walk on the water in case the chance never came again. His prediction was borne out: 1977 and 1978 were two years among the 14 times, out of 126 winters on record (since scientific recording began in 1874), that the Ohio River froze. I still recall my trepidation and exhilaration at stepping onto the mighty Ohio, transformed into a crystal sheet beneath my boots.

In the 1970s, the freezing of the Ohio River was a rare event. In the mid-19th century, it was not so uncommon. The river’s interesting natural history raises questions about the role of nature in social and political history. Could the state of this river have affected the national debate about slavery prior to the Civil War?

Stories, both factual and fictional, of enslaved people escaping over the river’s ice in the 1850s heightened social, political, and economic pressure on the system of slavery, as well as exposed the weakness of the ideological justifications for it. Eliza Harris, a woman later fictionalized in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, traversed the frozen Ohio River in her bid for freedom in the 1850s. But it is Margaret Garner who is perhaps best known for crossing the river, in part because her experience served as inspiration for Toni Morrison’s novel *Beloved*.

Garner’s story is a particularly revealing way into the exploration of these ideas. At age 22, she was pregnant and the mother of four children, likely fathered by both her enslaved husband, Robert Garner, and her owner, Archibald Gaines. On January 28, 1856, a freezing cold day in Kentucky,



Margaret and Robert fled in the company of their children and Robert’s parents. The Ohio River was frozen over, permitting them to cross on foot over what abolitionist newspapers the *Anti-slavery Standard* and the *Liberator* described as an “ice bridge” or a “winter bridge.” Nine others also escaped that night in what the *Chicago Tribune* disparagingly called a “stampede of slaves.” Following a tragedy in which Garner killed one of her children rather than permitting the child’s return to captivity, Gaines seized the Garners under the authority of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and sold them into the Deep South. Abolitionists were incensed and activated by the outcome. After this heartbreaking episode, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper composed her poem “The Slave Mother: A Tale of the Ohio” (1857), which poignantly describes Margaret Garner approaching the river “bridged and spanned with ice.”

Rutherford B. Hayes told an interviewer in 1893 that, in the winters of 1850–53, 1855, and 1856, “the river was frozen over and crossing made everywhere practicable near Ripley and Cincinnati,” noting that this was “soon after the fugitive slave law” had passed. The repeated freezing of the waterway after that crucial turning point enabled enslaved people to escape. Their stories, reported in newspapers and fictionalized, made up an important component of the public discourse in advance of the US Civil War. It would seem that the frozen Ohio did act its part in this great national and human drama. **P**

Tiya Miles is professor of history at Harvard University and Radcliffe Alumnae Professor at the Harvard Radcliffe Institute. Her current book project, Trail Ready: The Little-Known History of Girls Outdoors, is underway for W. W. Norton. She tweets @TiyaMilesTAM.

Photo: Benny Miles



AHA Awards



Know a great historian who deserves to be recognized?

Every year the AHA honors distinguished historical work with dozens of awards and prizes for books, articles, teaching, mentoring, public history, digital history, and more.

Nominations are due May 15

Learn more about past winners, how to submit a nomination, and how you can support prize endowments at historians.org/prizes.



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.

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

Contact annualmeeting@historians.org.

Questions about the content of proposals?

Contact Program Committee chair Akin Ogundiran, Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte (Ogundiran@uncc.edu) and co-chair Molly Warsh, Univ. of Pittsburgh (warsh@pitt.edu).