

The newsmagazine of the American Historical Association

PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

Volume 61: 1
January 2023



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ON THE COVER

Money is a really big deal, to say the least. Most money today fits in our pockets, but communities around the world have used many different sizes and types of objects to facilitate exchange. Understanding how a certain material can hold economic value in a society provides valuable information to curious historians and inquisitive children alike. Monetary metaphors can even tell you the measure of a man, if you know what questions to ask; the most grounded individual might let having their head on a coin, commemorative or otherwise, go to their head.

Illustration: Resplendent quetzal bird, Guatemala, ca. 1923. National Museum of American History, Gift of The Honorable Charles E. Hughes; 20 quetzales coin, Guatemala, 1926. National Museum of American History, Gift of Robert Leon Hughes.

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LAURA ANSLEY

TOWNHOUSE NOTES

Long Overdue

One of the great honors of being managing editor of *Perspectives* has been editing the In Memoriam section. Over three years and nearly 100 tributes to historians, I have worked with dozens of authors to write reflections on their friends and colleagues who have passed away. In editing these short essays, it has always struck me what a wide impact each historian has had. Whether they have taught thousands of students; published books and articles widely read in their field; curated exhibitions; or served as department chairs, association officers, journal editors, or in other leadership roles, these historians' work has not been forgotten.

The AHA has acknowledged and honored historians over the last 128 years through these tributes and obituaries in our publications. But obituaries also say something about how communities are defined, who is included and who is left out. Starting with the first issue of the *American Historical Review* in 1895 and moving to *Perspectives on History* in 1980, AHA obituaries offer insight into who was considered a member of the community of professional historians—and omissions suggest who was not. Along with publication of scholarship and participation in the annual meeting, obituaries are yet another site where people of color, white women, and other marginalized people were unwelcome in the AHA membership and the discipline.

As part of the Racist Histories and the AHA initiative, this month we launch Long Overdue. Inspired by the *New York Times'* Overlooked series, Long Overdue is a series of In Memoriam essays for historians of color whose passing the AHA did not mark. We hope to highlight the many historians of color whose research, teaching, and service helped to shape the discipline, and to honor those excluded by AHA practices and culture in the past.

An immense data collection effort led to this project launch. In the summer of 2022, graduate intern Mohammed Ali (Duke Univ.) completed a database of AHR obituaries

published between 1900 and 1980. In the fall, our staff filled in the gaps from 1895–1900 and 1980–present. This searchable database of more than 3,000 obituaries enables us to identify which historians received an obituary and which did not—including some surprising (and glaring) omissions.

We're launching Long Overdue with a titan of the field: W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963). Du Bois's work shaped the field of US and African American history through books like *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), *The Negro* (1915), *The Gift of Black Folk: The Negroes in the Making of America* (1924), and *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935), yet his death was noted with just one sentence in the AHR. David Levering Lewis (New York Univ.), winner of two Pulitzer Prizes for his two-volume Du Bois biography, has written this Long Overdue obituary. Our colleagues at the AHR are also taking another look at Du Bois's work. *Black Reconstruction* was egregiously ignored by the AHR at the time of its publication; Elizabeth Hinton (Yale Univ.) reviews it in the journal's December 2022 issue.

As with all problems of exclusion and omission, we often don't know what we don't know. Therefore, we need your help. At historians.org/Long-Overdue, you'll find a form where you can suggest historians of color for a Long Overdue obituary. With a crowdsourced list of subjects, we can expand our net as widely as possible, compare suggestions against the database of existing obituaries, and commission authors to write tributes. With your help, we hope to publish Long Overdue obituaries in every issue of *Perspectives*, just one small step in mitigating the harm done by racism in our publications and ensuring that the work of historians of color is not forgotten. **P**

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



LETTER TO VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION URGING ADOPTION OF PROPOSED HISTORY STANDARDS

In October, the American Historical Association sent a letter to the Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) commending the draft social studies standards that the VBOE considered at its August meeting and offering assistance with the continuing process of revision. The AHA strongly urged the board to proceed with adoption of those standards, which aligned well with the AHA's Criteria for Standards in History/Social Studies/Social Sciences. The AHA has also encouraged Virginia residents to share comments at VBOE meetings and community engagement sessions about the state's social studies standards process.

October 19, 2022

Dear Members of the Virginia Board of Education:

I wrote to you by email on October 11 to offer the American Historical Association's assistance regarding the standards revisions process because of our concern about the direction that the process has taken. Since that time, concerned members of our Association have contacted us to request that the AHA publicly endorse the proposed standards and affirm that they align with the AHA's criteria. The AHA's offer to assist the board stands, and we hope that this second letter further underscores the AHA's support of the proposed standards.

The American Historical Association (AHA) supports the process of revising the standards of learning for history and social science that you have undertaken in Virginia starting in 2021 and commends the draft standards that the Board of Education considered at its August meeting. The AHA strongly urges the board to proceed with adoption of these standards, which would offer Virginia students a strong foundation in historical study and prepare students to be informed citizens and lifelong learners across disciplines.

The draft standards align with the AHA's Criteria for Standards in History/Social Studies/Social Sciences, which were

developed and updated with detailed input from historians and K–12 educators. The Virginia standards process in 2021–22 drew upon extensive contributions and rounds of revision from an impressive range of teachers and educators, parents, students, and subject matter experts. The proposed standards suitably incorporate the practices of historical interpretation, understanding historical context, and critical thinking. The results are robust and should be a point of pride for the board and the secretary, as well as for the hundreds of other Virginians who contributed to them.

The AHA strongly urges the board to proceed with adoption of these standards.

As the AHA has documented through our extensive work on career preparedness in history classrooms, the aspect of history education employers value most is students' ability to communicate with and understand people from different backgrounds. The history education elaborated in these standards would properly expose students to complex and contested voices from the past, making them competitive job candidates and enhancing their future career prospects.

We applaud the Virginia standards process for aligning with our criteria, which emphasize that good history education helps students learn to explore issues from various angles. We were dismayed to read the letter written by the National Association of Scholars (NAS) recommending substantial revisions to the proposed Virginia standards. Its recommendations are fundamentally at odds with the AHA's criteria and the best practices of history and social studies education. We were further dismayed that the NAS lauds the recent South Dakota proposed standards draft, which fails to meet even the minimal criteria for drawing on historical scholarship or incorporating substantive input from historians and history educators. After careful consideration and extensive review

by professional historians, the AHA determined that the South Dakota effort “has been tainted by serious procedural problems and cannot be redeemed to meet the standards of our discipline.”

It is appropriate that the primary audience for the Virginia standards is the state’s own educators. The document is long because it admirably contains and integrates materials that provide easy reference for trained educators and districts; teachers can rely on it as a central and shared resource. If the board, secretary, and superintendent wish to draft another document whose purpose is to communicate to parents and others with limited background in education a more succinct version of the state’s goals for history learning at the primary and secondary level, they should do so. The standards of learning document itself need not be relied upon to serve that communication purpose.

Teaching historical thinking is essential to excellent historical education. No mere list of facts, however grandiose or classical they appear, can make students remember anything meaningful about the past, let alone understand it. History is complex; to reach high educational standards in our discipline, students need nuanced teaching and practice performing cognitive moves of increasing difficulty. Like mathematics, biology, and other disciplines, history has core concepts, such as context, contingency, and causation, among others. The draft standards of learning document offers Virginia’s teachers explicit guidance on how to lead their students to higher achievement in our discipline.

The great experiment of American politics is a work in progress.

This bears emphasis: **If you throw out the draft standards, or substantially revise them, you risk doing significant harm to students in your state.** Emphasizing rote memorization in elementary education does not magically make it easier to teach students to think for themselves later on. On the contrary, adopting the recommendations of the NAS would create substantial gaps in the knowledge, critical thinking skills, and habits of mind taught to Virginia students and limit their preparedness for college as well as their access to early college credit. Adoption of the NAS recommendations would result in ignorance of fundamental understandings about American history, as well as undermine students’ ability to perform effectively on the US History Advanced Placement test or successfully complete college-level dual enrollment courses in US history.

Standards should indeed define factual content that teachers should cover—as the proposed standards do—but mastery and retention of historical content requires that students actually think about what they are learning. Students need extensive, structured practice in considering multiple perspectives on questions of great historical significance. Carefully teaching all students to think historically is the best way to ensure the endurance of the nation’s founding principles. The draft harnesses the power of demonstrated expertise from across the state to secure the future of self-government in the Commonwealth.

The great experiment of American politics is a work in progress. It was so in 1776 and was meant to remain so thereafter. The “eternal vigilance” that Jefferson identified as “the price of liberty” requires a citizenry educated and encouraged to inquire, to ask questions, and to think critically about our history and institutions.

Moving forward with the proposed standards will show historians, teachers, parents, and students that their careful input is valued; to reject the standards now would be a sign of bad and broken faith with these communities. **P**

Sincerely,
James Grossman
Executive Director

EDWARD MUIR

HOPE AND DESPAIR

Historians and the Future



In 2009, before Vladimir Putin had solidified his dictatorship, when hopes for a democratic alternative to the Soviet system were still alive, the driver of our rickety bus struggled in the dark to navigate around the potholes in the main road between Saint Petersburg and Novgorod. I, and the rest of the busload of scholars, had been attending a conference on the historical models of republicanism at the European University at Saint Petersburg (EUSP); we were on a field trip to Novgorod, which had been a thriving medieval republic until Ivan III snuffed out its independence in 1478. Novgorod represented a historical path to republicanism not taken for Russia, but Ivan had destroyed its library and archives; little of its local republican institutions and democratic practices is preserved. A small group of Western scholars came to the conference to offer models of republicanism, all as a way of helping the future leaders plan a better, more representative political system for Russia. As a historian of medieval and Renaissance Italy, I found my own participation decidedly odd, because whatever the successes and failures of the medieval Italian republics, ripping their political institutions (pace Machiavelli) out of their historical and cultural context did not make much sense to me, but I got a gratis trip to Russia out of it.

I sat at the back of the bus with the best and brightest of Russia's post-Soviet social science graduate students. The male graduate students had conventional projects, so conventional that I have forgotten what they were, but a female sociologist from Irkutsk had an inspired idea of studying how the apartment dwellers in Saint Petersburg were adapting to the post-Soviet management of their huge concrete "commie blocks," mostly built after the German siege of the city during World War II. The sociology student wanted to investigate alternatives to the old Soviet culture in which building superintendents had autocratic power over the inhabitants, the ability to skim off for themselves as much extra income possible, to use bribes and sexual coercion to fix broken pipes in apartments, and, in short, to emulate on a microscale the macrostructures of the Soviet/Russian system.

The sociologist asked me how collective properties were managed in the United States. At the time, I was on the board of my condominium association in liberal Evanston, Illinois, and I had a ready answer: we elected board members every year, had a clear legal charter of responsibilities, and delegated day-to-day maintenance to a management company. We had a board chair, who was a property owner in the condominium, represented us to outside authorities, and conducted meetings that followed Robert's Rules of Order. In the West, too, the macropolitics of the state and the micropolitics of small groups from elementary school classrooms to town hall meetings tend to mirror each other. The sociologist was stunned. Everyone accepted the rules of the game? You could depose through a simple vote a board chair who has abused his position by building a private storeroom in the collective space?

What we think does not matter
because only a few people will
decide.

In the safe quiet of the back of the bus, I enjoyed this and other lively conversations with the graduate students. Eventually, I asked what they thought Russia would be like in 10 years. It was a question I could certainly imagine asking students in the United States or Western Europe, especially in the context of the possibilities for political renewal. There was an embarrassed pause. Finally, one student said, "What we think does not matter because only a few people will decide." That, of course, is what happened, and their lack of hope has haunted me ever since.

As that conference showed, the end of the Cold War offered heady, invigorating times for historians to enter the public arena in discussions about possible futures. During that period, the Renaissance Italian republics became yet again food for thought as they had for the antimonarchists in England during the Commonwealth, the founding fathers in America,

and the German émigré scholars and their American students after World War II. During the 1990s and early 2000s, I found myself invited not just to Russia but to Poland, Slovenia, and South Africa to talk about Renaissance Italian models for vigorous independent communities.

Of all those trips, my discussions in South Africa in 1999 during the bright moments of Nelson Mandela's presidency revealed hope about the future that was missing in what would become Putin's Russia. Perhaps that hope was misplaced, but it was an inspiration to witness an imagined future shared by Blacks and whites that citizens freed from tyranny could make a fractured society whole. I even saw it at Rand Afrikaans University, once the fortress of apartheid, which had now abolished the Afrikaans language and literature department and welcomed Black students in large numbers. The young Black and white teachers at Vista University in Soweto showed an enthusiasm for building their country anew that seemed universal—but of course it was not. Counterrevolutionary forces still lurked behind the public institutions, crime was rampant, and racial equality was a fleeting goal. While I was in Soweto, my hosts asked me to talk about Renaissance community building, but once there, I threw away my prepared paper to learn from the audience. Mandela's home township, Soweto now has well over a million residents, but when I was there, no one really knew how many. Squatter shacks blanketed the hillsides, and even though the faculty members at Vista most interested in building community institutions were from the English department, they recognized that the first task was the basic work of history and sociology: determine who was living in Soweto, what languages they spoke, where they came from, what skills they possessed, and their histories. Despite overwhelming challenges, the belief that the community could be made whole was universal. But my hosts did not need a historian to do that work. Hope could do it.

Historians have a long-standing engagement in the public discourse, political engagement, and futurology, but we have never been very good at that last task. Machiavelli, who was deeply engaged in historical studies, advised the Florentine republic about reorganizing its militia along classical lines, but his efforts were a dismal failure. One of the early Johns Hopkins PhDs in history, Charles Homer Haskins taught at the University of Wisconsin and Harvard University and advised Woodrow Wilson on European matters for the Treaty of Versailles. I have often wondered whether he had been so enchanted with the medieval Serbian epics about the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 that he advocated that the borders of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes include Kosovo in Serbia, thereby blocking its majority Albanian population

from joining their ethnic and religious fellows in neighboring Albania. That great historian's venture into futurology may have cost tens of thousands of lives over the past century. Wilson, himself a PhD historian who taught at Bryn Mawr College and Princeton University, and became president of Princeton, the United States, and the AHA, had the opportunity at the Paris Peace Conference to fashion the future more directly than possibly any historian before or since. One wonders if all that learning and practical experience really helped. The past century would suggest not.

Despite overwhelming challenges,
the belief that the community
could be made whole was
universal.

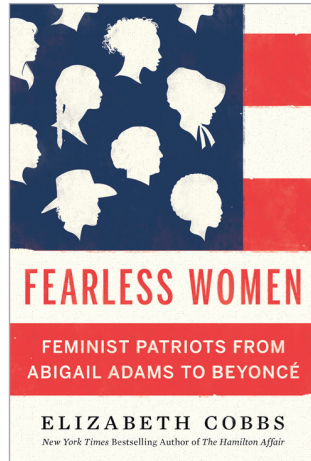
Putin's appalling invasion of Ukraine brought that conversation in the bus back to me and left me to wonder where those students are today. Had the EUSP managed to stem the brain drain from Russia? Not likely. For some years, Putin's henchmen harassed the EUSP with phony fire safety violations and even closed it down for six weeks in 2008. But that conference, and the question of how to rehabilitate Russia, now seems even more vital, more necessary to world peace, than it did in the decades after the fall of the Soviet Union, when we could naively imagine that rational discourse about democracy could erase the brutal history of autocratic violence. The annus horribilis in Ukraine and the fate of those EUSP students raise the question yet again about what role historians should and could have in constructing future democratic political institutions. It is impossible to think about the future without thinking about the past—but what past? What context? What questions?

The problem for most historians is that we tend to work in the ironic mode. Things never quite work out the way they were planned, a reality that often makes it hard to be hopeful. Unlike economists, whose job is to predict the future for governments and businesses, historians evaluate the past for our students and our readers. Without resorting to an unsustainable teleology of progress, however, we need to avoid easy cynicism and listen to our students, who always seem to have hope for a more just future. **P**

Edward Muir is president of the AHA.



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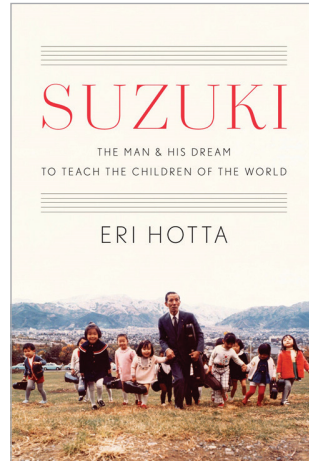


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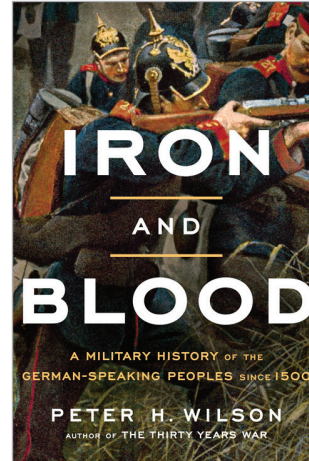


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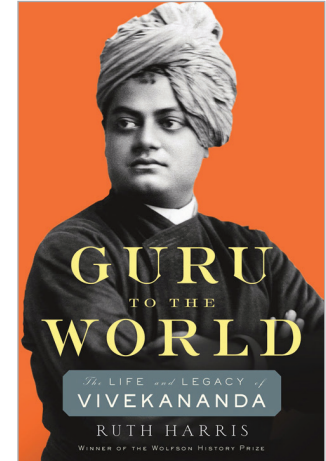


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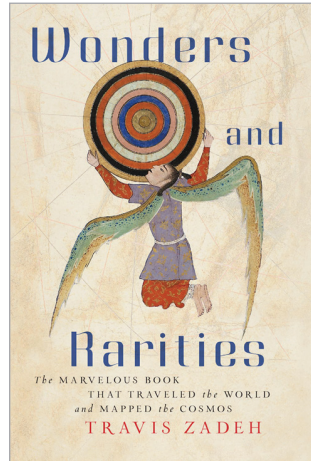
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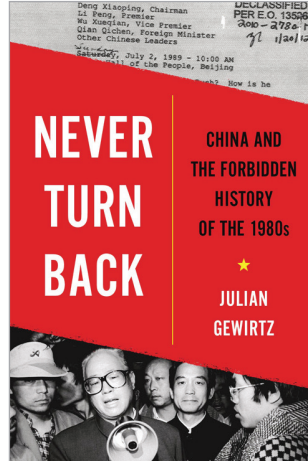
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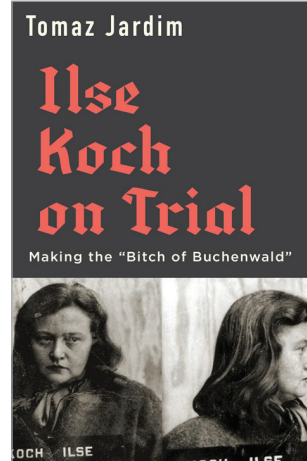
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REBECCA L. WEST

ADVOCACY BRIEFS

AHA Supports Archivist Nomination and Urges Adoption of Virginia Learning Standards

In the fall of 2022, the AHA sent two letters: one in favor of the nomination of Colleen Shogan as the new archivist of the United States and one to the Virginia Board of Education in support of adopting the draft standards of learning for history and social science. In November, the US Supreme Court heard *Haaland v. Brackeen*, for which the AHA and OAH co-sponsored an amicus curiae brief.

AHA Supports Nomination of Colleen Shogan as Archivist of the United States

On September 16, the AHA sent a letter to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs stating that it “enthusiastically supports” the nomination of Colleen Shogan as the 11th Archivist of the United States. Shogan “has worked effectively and productively with our members in such important settings as the Library of Congress, the White House Historical Society, and the America250 Commission,” the AHA wrote. “She has been especially effective as a collaborator across disciplines, drawing on her political science background to complement the work of archivists, librarians, and historians.”

AHA Sends Letter to Virginia Board of Education Urging Adoption of Proposed History Standards

On October 19, the AHA sent a letter to the Virginia Board of Education urging the board to proceed with adoption of the draft standards of learning for history and social science. “The history education elaborated in these standards would properly expose students to complex and contested voices from the past, making them competitive job candidates and enhancing their future career prospects,” wrote the AHA. “Moving forward with the proposed standards will show historians, teachers, parents, and students that their careful input is valued.” See pages 4 and 5 for the full letter.

AHA and OAH Co-sponsor Amicus Brief in *Haaland v. Brackeen*

In November, the US Supreme Court heard the case *Haaland v. Brackeen*. The AHA co-sponsored, along with the Organization of American Historians, an amicus curiae brief, based on decades of study and research by professional historians, that aimed to provide an accurate historical perspective as the court considers the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

After rejecting jurisdiction over Native children when the federal government

tried to transfer that responsibility to the states for the first time in the 1930s, state governments accepted jurisdiction over Native children only when those programs were entirely federally funded. To avoid having to delve into any state welfare funds and to protect their bottom lines, state and local governments placed Native children in non-Native homes, separating them from their families and their nations. By the late 1960s, state and local governments were forcibly removing 25 to 35 percent of Native American children from their parents. The ICWA, enacted in 1978 with strong support from Native Americans, sought to prevent this policy by strengthening the authority of tribal governments and prioritizing the placement of Native American children with their extended families and tribal communities.

Everything has a history, and the historical context of the ICWA and the impact of the legislation itself are straightforward. Considering this historical record, the AHA and OAH contend that the challenged provisions of the ICWA should be upheld in full. **P**

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

STEPHEN JACKSON

STANDARDS OF REVISION

Partisan Politics Comes to South Dakota's Schools

applied to serve in the 2021 South Dakota social studies revision process with some trepidation. It was clear by then that a movement opposed to anything its members deemed "critical race theory" (CRT) had gained ground. "Divisive concepts" bills proliferated in state legislatures across the country while South Dakota's governor, Kristi Noem, made opposition to CRT a central part of her brand as a politician with national aspirations, despite producing little evidence that CRT was even being taught in K-12 classrooms. In fact, recent polls show that parents of school-aged children are not driving the anti-CRT movement and generally support the education their children currently receive—including education on difficult topics. A 2022 South Dakota Department of Education study found that almost all standards or educational practices being used in classrooms were already consistent with Governor Noem's executive order banning divisive concepts.

But debates over standards are not just about facts and evidence. At heart, they are contests over rival visions of what the nation should be, and proponents of "divisive concepts" bills largely embrace the idea of American exceptionalism. In South Dakota, Governor Noem was one of the first significant

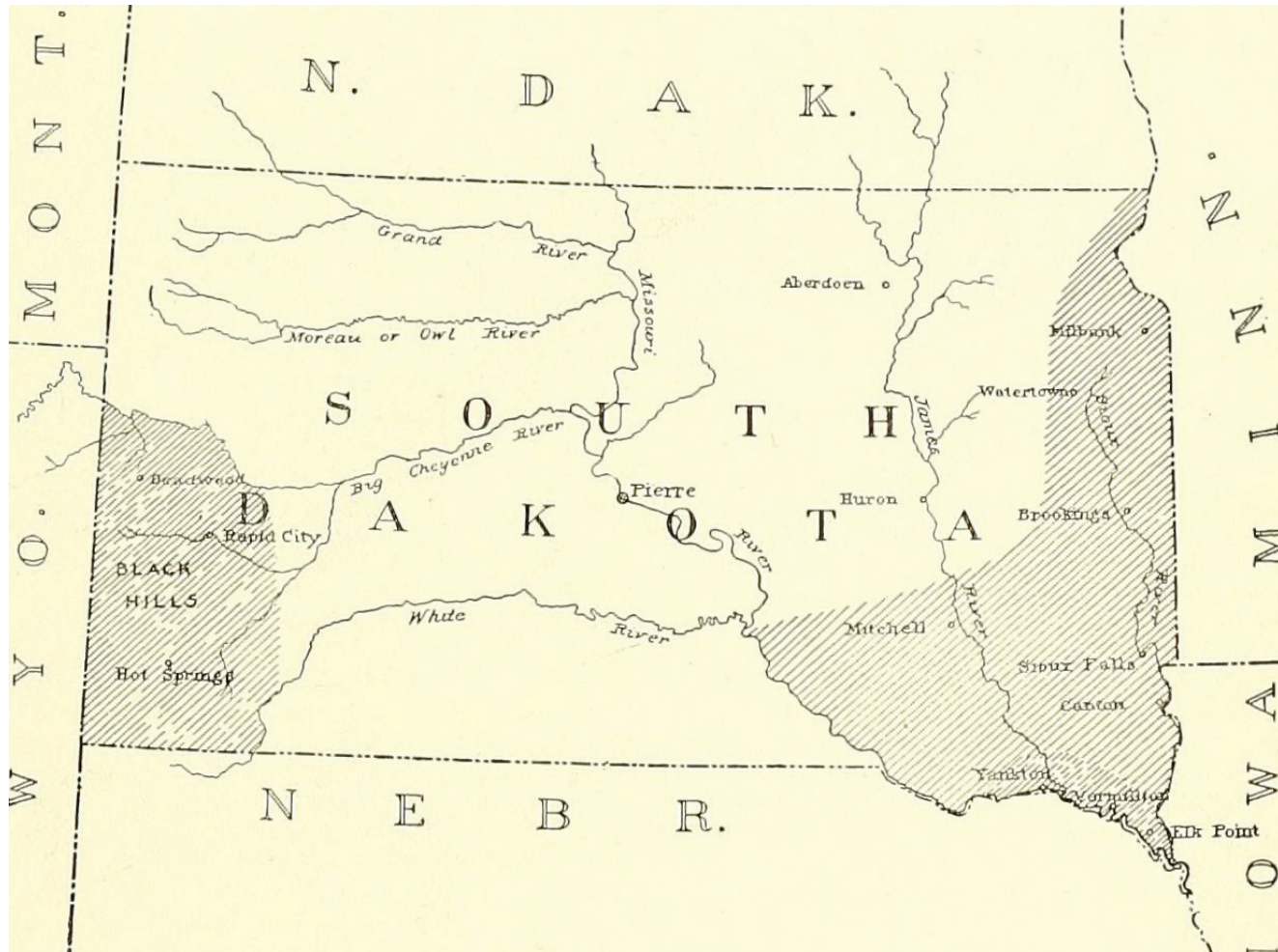
politicians to sign the "1776 Pledge," which begins by stating that "the United States is an exceptional nation whose people have always strived to form a more perfect union based upon our founding principles." Locally and nationally, history education is at the center of US culture wars.

As a historian, I could share my subject matter expertise and insist on a nuanced set of standards that incorporates multiple perspectives.

Despite the potential for controversy, I believed that I could positively contribute to the revision process as a historian and as a citizen. As a historian, I could share my subject matter expertise and insist on a nuanced set of standards that incorporates multiple perspectives. As a citizen, I wanted the process of standards revision to be transparent, thorough, and inclusive. So in the summer of 2021, I journeyed to the state capital of Pierre as a member of the Social Studies Work Group. Over eight workdays, I collaborated with educators, state representatives, businesspeople, and a representative from the South Dakota Department of

Education (SDDOE). Together, we forged a new set of social studies standards for K-12 students that significantly improved on the previous version.

Among the technical revisions and updated wording, the work group focused on two broad sets of changes. The first was to more fully include perspectives from South Dakota's Indigenous peoples, the Oceti Sakowin Oyate. Here we relied on the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings (OSEU) for guidance. This document was officially approved and recommended, but not required, by the State Board of Education Standards (BOES) in 2018 (a 2021 poll found that OSEUs were taught in less than half of classrooms). Second, the work group integrated concepts from the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards, which offers guidance on how best to include inquiry in the K-12 curriculum. Inquiry encourages the development of critical thinking, research, and writing skills that accompany content knowledge acquisition in a thorough social studies education. South Dakota's 2015 standards incorporated some of these principles, but public input prior to the 2021 work group sessions indicated a desire for a more robust engagement with the C3 Framework. Both sets of changes were made in consultation with the SDDOE, which required every work group member to participate in training sessions on the C3 Framework.



Political agitation against "divisive concepts" in the social studies curriculum has divided South Dakota along partisan lines.
 L. H. Bailey and Wilhelm Miller, *Cyclopedia of American Horticulture* (1900). Public domain.

In August 2021, the new standards were released to the public, but we found it was not the document on which we had all worked. The SDDOE had rewritten the standards behind closed doors, significantly undermining the efforts of the work group by removing numerous references to the Oceti Sakowin Oyate as well as an anchor standard—inquiry—based on the C3 Framework. My own contributions to the original document had focused specifically on the high school world history course. As I read through the new version of this section, I noticed that all references to Indigenous peoples—both Oceti Sakowin Oyate and global Indigenous peoples—had been

removed. The changes were so significant that I requested my name be taken off the document.

The SDDOE provided little justification for their actions, and it remains unclear why the state government amended the standards outside of their own stated procedures. A poll of South Dakotans in late 2021 revealed how out of step the result of this unprecedented action was with public opinion, as 88 percent of respondents supported teaching Indigenous history in K–12 settings. What is clear is that the SDDOE's intervention resulted in controversy. The South Dakota branch of the American Civil Liberties Union declared that the

SDDOE's actions were likely illegal. Indigenous education advocates organized the Oceti Sakowin March for Our Children on the state capital, and a majority of public comments submitted to the BOES opposed the state's actions.

The censorship of the work group's standards proved to be only the first step in a series of unprecedented actions by state officials designed to affect the outcome of the social studies revision process. Facing sharp criticism from Stanley Kurtz in *National Review* that even the SDDOE's revised standards were "hopelessly compromised" by "hard-left activists," Governor Noem

suspended the normal standards revision process and eventually threw out the SDDOE's 2021 draft standards entirely. She announced the formation of a second group, known as the 2022 Social Studies Standards Revision Commission (SSSRC), to create a new set of standards from scratch. The makeup of this group indicates the overt politicization of the process. The governor's chief of staff, who has no background in education, chaired the group. Only three of the 15 members were practicing K–12 teachers—and one of them did not teach in South Dakota—indicating the marginalization of professional educators in the state's new standards creation process. The only two practicing K–12 South Dakota educators on the commission have both since spoken out against the process and the results of the commission's work.

The makeup of this group indicates the overt politicization of the process.

The SDDOE contracted William Morrissey, professor emeritus from Hillsdale College, to facilitate the SSSRC. In another unorthodox move, Morrissey wrote the draft of the standards before the commission even met. It therefore remains unclear to what extent the commission, appointed to draft standards, was actually involved in the process.

The exchange of educators for political loyalists did not stop there, but reached the BOES, which serves as the final arbiter of K–12 standards in the state. In May 2022, Governor Noem replaced an educator who had decades of experience on the BOES with a retired orthodontist. Sidelining educators led to a set of standards that fail to meet

the basic criteria for social studies education.

The SSSRC released their draft standards in August 2022. Though the 128-page document more than doubles the number of requirements from the current version, the additions are not meant to increase student proficiency in history. The introduction states that inquiry has no place in a set of social studies standards. Instead, the action verbs in the proposed standards—describe, recite, explain—rely on rote memorization. Even the early grades are saddled with vast memorization of content, leading the South Dakota Educational Association to conclude that the new standards are age-inappropriate. To date, public reaction to the SSSRC standards has been overwhelmingly negative. Of the hundreds of public comments submitted in advance of the first BOES meeting in September 2022, 86 percent were opposed to the commission's version of social studies standards.

The process and results of South Dakota's social studies revision from 2021–22 reveal a pattern of troubling and politically motivated actions by the state's government. South Dakota has one of the largest Native American populations in the country: their robust inclusion in the state social studies standards is imperative, not decorative. And basic historical thinking skills are vital to a rigorous social studies education. If the 2022 SSSRC proposed standards are adopted as written, the focus on rote memorization and the intentional neglect of historical skills development will be a serious detriment to South Dakota's students. Further, throughout this process there has been a decided lack of transparency as the state government engaged in the unprecedented use of executive power to affect the outcome of the social studies standards revision process.

The SSSRC's proposed standards vividly demonstrate that intentionally marginalizing educators in their creation results in standards that lack basic features of a rigorous social studies curriculum. Though the bureaucratic processes can seem byzantine, the politics can get ugly, and the end product might feel far from the cutting edge of historical knowledge, it remains critical that educators and historians continue to advocate for high-quality social studies standards. **P**

Editor's Note: The AHA sent a letter to the South Dakota Board of Education Standards on September 15, 2022, registering "strong concern" about the revisions process.

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JAMES M. BANNER, JR., AND JAMIL S. ZAINALDIN

LIBRARY LEGACIES

Historians and the Disposal of Their Books

What follows should be read in the context of two recent, related discussions among AHA members about the fate of historians' libraries.

The first was the May 2022 retirement-themed issue of this publication; the second, a subsequent exchange in June that took place in the AHA Member Forum. Our aim here is to offer some additional observations, alternately

sobering and hopeful, about the challenge facing many historians as they enter retirement and plan the fates of their working libraries: How to reduce the number or dispose of their books?

These observations grow out of our recent cooperation as historians of long acquaintance. In the summer of 2021, Jim began seeking to arrange the disposition of his history and other books to the Atlanta University Center (AUC) Robert W. Woodruff Library, a shared

collection that serves the students and faculty members of four Atlanta historically Black colleges and universities—Clark Atlanta University, the Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse College, and Spelman College—the world's largest consortium of such institutions. That search led him to the good offices of Jamil, who sits on the library's board of trustees.

What set off the search for a fitting resting place for roughly 3,000 books



For those who have spent their lives with books, getting rid of them can be unexpectedly difficult.
Iñaki del Olmo/Unsplash

was Jim's wish to find an institution that might desire and have space for them. He could thus avoid having to consign a library of some coherence to a bookseller or to leave its disposition to his executors, both of which he preferred not to do. But what began as a simple desire turned quickly into a frustrating, sometimes dispiriting, endeavor, one whose realities that those writing about their preparations for retirement in *Perspectives* and the AHA Member Forum, as well as many others, will recognize.

He would avoid having to consign a library to a bookseller or to leave its disposition to his executors.

Before he approached Jamil, Jim's two attempts to find a new home for the books failed. Perhaps his high school would like to have his collection? "Thanks, but we're no longer accepting books" was the disheartening response; "not enough shelf space." How about a college or university library, especially that of a historically Black college or university, which might welcome a gift of books it didn't yet possess? The leading such institution in his home city never responded to repeated phone and email inquiries.

So what to do? Perhaps, Jim reasoned, it would help to go farther afield. Thus began conversations between the two of us, conversations that resulted in an introduction to Loretta Parham, director of the AUC Woodruff Library and a leading figure in the American library community. From further discussions with her and her senior staff members soon emerged a formal deed of gift. The

legal document, a simple one, obligates Jim or his estate to release his books to the AUC Woodruff Library at a future, unstipulated date. Arriving at that agreement proved reasonably uncomplicated. The library, possibly unusual in this respect, required no collection inventory but, desiring some indication of what the collection contains, instead asked for photographs of a sample of the contents of Jim's bookshelves. After determining that it could use a good proportion of his books, the library agreed to take all of them. To assure that unwanted books would end up, as the donor wished, with similar libraries, the AUC Woodruff consented to make a good-faith effort to place those books with other HBCUs.

No one should think that this happy result can easily be repeated. As the *Perspectives* issue and the AHA Member Forum discussion made clear, our experience was unusual. It came about by virtue of an old friendship—Jamil was able to open a door for Jim—plus the AUC Woodruff Library's discovery that the future gift would add appreciably to its holdings. Nor do we believe that our approach to a general problem should be considered the sole or best option for all historians desirous of disposing of their libraries or that historians should bear central responsibility for resolving the many challenges that face all authors, libraries, and book owners today.

That said, other historians and the leaders of other libraries might find the arrangement that resulted from our cooperation of interest. After all, such an approach holds out promise of reciprocally serving the desires of individual historians to find appropriate resting places for their collections of books and the needs of many small baccalaureate colleges (by no means exclusively HBCUs), historical societies, and K–12 schools whose libraries may welcome

gifts of books. In addition, this kind of arrangement strikes us as a more mutually beneficial means of disposing of books than others that are frequently resorted to: tag sales, the random distribution of books to students and colleagues, or—frequently as acts of desperation—recourse to local booksellers who offer no more than a pittance for what has taken a career to amass. Yes, the obstacles to such arrangements are many. But that doesn't mean that those obstacles can't be overcome.

Prospective gifts of books should ideally have easy going with their prospective recipient institutions. But that's not the case today. Libraries are in transition because of budgetary and space limitations, the digital revolution, and resulting changes in patrons' expectations and experiences. While book gifts may reduce an institution's budgetary outlays for book purchases, such gifts require shelves to contain them, and many libraries have become short of shelving as well as of the funds to add more. Furthermore, book cataloging, which requires experienced library staff members, is increasingly costly. Libraries, which must be mindful of the interests of their users—students, faculty members, and members of the general public—are likely to discriminate in what they choose to receive and hold. When offered books, many prefer to see full inventories of collections before they accept them, a burden on prospective donors they may not be willing to undertake. In short, giving books away can prove hard going.

So, you'll ask, is the search for suitable homes for historians' personal libraries worth the effort? We think it is—as long as you're willing to run the possible obstacle course to the finish line. Many professors have approached their institutional librarian only to be told that "we're now accepting only rare books;

in fact, we're not accepting the papers of even the most long-serving and distinguished of our retired faculty members." Or they've been turned away by librarians who tell them with a rueful look that they're only buying e-books. Thus, consequently, we welcome what's often the easiest solution to a complicated challenge—that smiling book dealer willing to haul away the books that your family members don't want.

All of this is to say that whether Jim's arrangement repeated elsewhere with the same ease is unclear. Yet we think it's worth identifying and directly approaching institutions you consider fitting for your books; if you can do so through an intermediary, all the better. The hoped-for mutual benefits of a gift of books go without saying. On the donor's side lies the benefit of federal and possibly state charitable gift deductions, while the institution, of course, receives the books.

Libraries ought to be more forthright in seeking collections of books for which they have need and space.

But it also seems to us that libraries ought to be more forthright in seeking, from alumni, faculty members, and others, the collections of books in the specific subjects, not just history, for which they have need and shelf space. Disciplinary societies like the AHA and the Organization of American Historians—indeed, many of the constituent societies of the American Council of Learned Societies and consortia of baccalaureate colleges like the Council of Independent Colleges—could serve as auspices for the exchange of information about what specific subjects their libraries have identified as needed to strengthen

themselves, if possible through donations. Furthermore, such arrangements ought to lead libraries to intensify their efforts to attract alumni or others' donations of books in subjects of which they're in particular need.

We offer these thoughts and suggestions in the spirit of furthering discussion of how to alleviate a general problem in ways mutually beneficial to historians and the institutions that support their work and that of their students. What's now important is that discussions continue and that additional workable ways to address the problem be found. **P**

*James M. Banner, Jr., is the author most recently of *The Ever-Changing Past: Why All History Is Revisionist History*. Jamil S. Zainaldin is president emeritus of Georgia Humanities, co-founder of the New Georgia Encyclopedia, and a trustee of the AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library.*

At the Table of Power

Food and Cuisine in the African American Struggle for Freedom, Justice, and Equality By Diane M. Spivey

At the Table of Power is both a cookbook and a culinary history that intertwines social issues, personal stories, and political commentary. Renowned culinary historian Diane M. Spivey offers a unique insight into the historical experience and cultural values of African America and America in general by way of the kitchen. From the rural country kitchen and steamboat floating palaces to marketplace street vendors and restaurants in urban hubs of business and finance, Africans in America cooked their way to positions of distinct superiority, and thereby indispensability. Despite their many culinary accomplishments, most Black culinary artists have been made invisible—until now. Within these pages, Spivey tells a powerful story beckoning and daring the reader to witness this culinary, cultural, and political journey taken hand in hand with the fight of Africans in America during the foundation years, from colonial slavery through the Reconstruction era. These narratives, together with the recipes from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, expose the politics of the day and offer insight on the politics of today. African American culinary artists, Spivey concludes, have more than earned a rightful place at the table of culinary contribution and power.

A Hard-hitting and Provocative Rethinking of American Culinary History
At the Table of Power - University of Pittsburgh Press (upittpress.org)

ELLEN R. FEINGOLD, ABBY PFISTERER, ORLANDO R. SERRANO JR., AND SARAH WEICKSEL

WORKING TOGETHER

New Approaches to a History Exhibition for Children



ANYONE WHO HAS tried to teach a young child knows that getting their attention and keeping it can be a struggle, especially in a museum, where learning is often quiet and fatigue can set in quickly. Sometimes, the best way is to surprise them. *Really BIG Money*, our new exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, is full of attention-grabbing, unexpected monetary objects. Carefully designed to prioritize the needs of young learners, the exhibit captures children's attention and seeks to engage them in fun and complex learning about world cultures and financial literacy. We believe our approach to this exhibition can serve as a model both for developing history exhibitions designed for children and for engaging in transdisciplinary collaboration.

Building something for young learners presents different types of challenges, ranging from the reading level of the text to the design of the room and the height of the exhibition cases. As curators and historians, Ellen R. Feingold and Sarah Weicksel envisioned a group of objects that might do this work. We quickly realized, however, that to attract our target audience, we needed to make the exhibit relevant to classroom learning. And to do that, we needed to collaborate with our colleagues in museum education, whose complementary skill sets would ensure that the exhibit engaged children and aligned with specific social studies learning standards.

To attract our target audience, we needed to make the exhibit relevant to classroom learning.

As a team, we took a different approach to collaboration than is typical in a history museum. History exhibitions have often been driven by a specific curatorial vision, with curators and historians choosing the objects and drafting the exhibition text. Curation, education, design and fabrication, and collections management are often treated as related but separate parts of the creative process, frequently occurring within siloed departments. Learning goals and strategies for audience engagement, for example, are often added to the exhibit development process after a curatorial foundation has been laid.

Many history museum professionals desire a more inclusive approach and would prefer to break away from institutional processes and culture. But doing so requires a willingness to let go of decades-old and deeply entrenched ideas about professional roles and responsibilities. Ellen and Sarah found museum educators Abby Pfisterer and Orlando R. Serrano Jr.

to be enthusiastic partners. Together, we piloted a transdisciplinary way for educators, curators, and historians to work together from the earliest stages of exhibition development to center learning goals and audience needs for young visitors in the curatorial process.

Building a new approach meant having equal seats at the table starting with our first meeting, as well as shedding discipline-based notions of ownership over the exhibit's pieces. This enabled us to benefit from one another's expertise in open and responsive conversations. Ellen and Sarah were able to explain the historical pathways objects could open up and to identify the lessons they might teach, while Abby and Orlando brought their knowledge of *how* young learners would approach these objects and the methods through which an educator could engage them to reach a learning goal. For example, Ellen and Sarah explained that the tail feathers of the resplendent quetzal bird offer powerful insights into historical Mayan and Aztec culture and contemporary Guatemalan national identity. But Abby and Orlando suggested that, upon learning tail feathers must be plucked to be used as currency, a child's first question would be not necessarily about the purchasing power of those feathers but rather about the well-being of the bird. As a result, we worked together to address natural child concerns and questions before digging into historical interpretation. Building these kinds of connections between our professional skill sets developed more comprehensive methods through which objects could communicate diverse histories for young visitors. And despite our initial concerns that this form of collaboration might slow the development process, we found precisely the opposite—the project both progressed quickly and yielded more creative ideas, greater enthusiasm, and a stronger collaborative ethos.

In building the exhibition's framework, our team agreed that we needed to start with the curriculum—but for which age group? Poring over both local and national curriculum standards, we saw that economics and money are first significantly incorporated into social studies lessons in the third through fifth grades. Not only relevant to building financial literacy, these topics are part of how teachers engage children with world cultures. We therefore decided to create an exhibition space specifically for students in these grades. With our teammate, interpretive specialist Julia Garcia, we discussed the importance of interactive experiences for this age group. "Everyone," she explained, "especially children, learn more by doing and making their own meaning." With this in mind, we decided to dedicate half the gallery to interactive experiences and half to more traditional, but still kid-friendly, display cases. All interactives would be designed to reinforce the concepts and ideas presented through objects in the cases.

Out of 1.6 million objects in the National Numismatic Collection, we chose a handful of objects that are big in size, quantity, and denomination that help young learners think about the world around them. We selected four really big monetary objects—a quetzal from Guatemala, a copper plate from Sweden, an ancient Roman coin hoard, and a large stone ring, or rai, from the Micronesian island of Yap. We aligned each of these objects with one of the four key concepts in the third-to-fifth-grade curricula: communities and cultures, natural resources, political leaders, and exchange. An additional section focuses on the relationship between value and context through an exploration of hyperinflation.

Based on broad feedback, we revised labels to ensure that they were accessible to our target audiences. The in-case labels are written to directly engage young learners through a repetitive question—how big is this money?—to encourage close looking through a piece of easily accessible information. Additional text outside the cases connects each object to a concept and is complemented by contextual images and three-dimensional tactile features. For example, when children enter the gallery, they are greeted by a quetzal collected in Guatemala and taxidermized in the 1920s. With iridescent tail feathers measuring 21 inches long that were once used as a form of currency in Aztec and Mayan communities, the quetzal continues to hold a place of importance in Guatemalan national culture. *Quetzal* is the word for Guatemala’s national currency, and images of the bird are featured on the country’s coins and banknotes. Visitors encounter a page from a 16th-century codex depicting quetzal feathers as a form of payment as well as ornamentation. They can also touch a three-dimensional reproduction of a 20 quetzales coin from 1926.

Having explored four key objects and themes, the exhibit then teaches the foundational concept that the value of money depends on its context. We teach this through objects and photographs that represent hyperinflation, including origami swans crafted from recent Venezuelan banknotes and a 20 trillion mark note from post–World War I Germany. Banknotes like these can be shocking to see and might initially seem valuable, but such astronomically high numbers on money are often clues that a country and its people are experiencing extreme hardship. Here, the exhibit also aims to help visitors build empathy toward people and places that seem unfamiliar at first glance.

The final section of the exhibition promotes learning through play and interaction. Young visitors can see their own faces on money through customized mirrors, measure themselves against a five-foot, seven-inch liganda (a Congolese iron blade), and play a touchless Match the Money clue-based

game featuring an animated quetzal bird on a magical journey through world banknotes. In these ways, the exhibition combines formal learning concepts with an informal learning environment and eye-catching artifacts with which young learners can think creatively and critically.

On the surface, we have finished developing the exhibit—it is installed, open to the public, and viewed by hundreds of visitors every day—but the experience of creating it continues to reshape how each of us approaches our daily work. We have delighted in watching young learners visit *Really BIG Money* and their joy in discovering that it is a kid-friendly space that looks and feels like it is meant for them. Observing the effectiveness of our approach has led each of us to advocate for learning goals to be considered at the earliest stages of new projects, ranging from the new exhibits on which Ellen, Orlando, and Abby are working, to Sarah’s conceptualization of the AHA’s Teaching Things: Material Culture in the History Classroom project. It is not enough to develop an exhibit, write a book, or design a lesson plan and assume that it will meet our audience’s needs. Considering who the audience is and asking what they already know and do not understand allows us to meet them where they are and lead them toward new historical knowledge.

Learning goals need to be considered at the earliest stages of new projects.

In sharing our experience of reimagining the process of creating a history exhibition, we hope that other historians, curators, and educators will feel emboldened to take a chance—to reorganize and redistribute duties, authorship, and exhibit development; to begin with an audience, rather than a narrative directed by a set of objects; and to create a team who can meet the needs of that audience. When we welcome new colleagues and skill sets, both within and outside our own institutions, really big things can happen. **P**

Ellen R. Feingold is curator of the National Numismatic Collection at the National Museum of American History. Abby Pfisterer is director of PK–12 education at the Wisconsin Historical Society. Orlando R. Serrano Jr. is manager of youth and teacher programs at the National Museum of American History. Sarah Weicksel is director of research and publications at the AHA and research associate at the National Museum of American History.

WILLIAM PARTLETT

PUTIN'S PAST

The Return of Ideological History and the Strongman



Vladimir Putin's ideology has put new force into an old conflict between Enlightenment and Romantic notions of history.
The Kremlin/CC BY 4.0

FROM RUSSIAN CONSTITUTIONAL Court chairman Valery Zorkin, to former Russian culture minister Vladimir Medinsky, to presidential adviser Yuri Kovlachuk, amateur history is everywhere in the Russian government today. This is not an accident but a deliberate way to build official state ideology in Russia. For instance, in a recent interview discussing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the deputy secretary of the Russian Security Council, Oleg Khramov, said that the West is trying "to stop the course of history" by "blinding" many Ukrainians to the historical truth of their shared civilizational identity with Russia.

Nowhere is this ideology more prominent than in the speeches of president Vladimir Putin. Russia's amateur historian-in-chief frequently says that history was his favorite subject, and his spokesman has boasted that Putin possesses an "absolutely phenomenal knowledge of history." Putin regularly describes the invasion of Ukraine as a technical decision required by history. In his telling, history proves that, from "time immemorial," Russia and Ukraine were one. A separate Ukrainian identity from Russia, therefore, must be a project of external manipulation and an existential threat to Russia. The decision to invade, annex, and reeducate Ukrainians is not a political decision driven by contestable political values or beliefs. It is instead an objective decision that was unavoidable. To Putin, anyone opposing the invasion of Ukraine either does not understand this fundamental historical truth or is a traitor. History is now so important to official Russian discourse because Putin and many of his supporters genuinely believe that history provides objective, historical truths that govern the present. Their understanding of these historical truths, therefore, determines policy. This form of "ideological history" has become Russia's official state ideology.

Putin and many of his supporters genuinely believe that history provides objective, historical truths that govern the present.

Ideological history has its own past, with roots in 19th-century German intellectuals. Reacting against an Enlightenment program that held that each generation should use reason to remake the world, these conservative thinkers argued that each generation must accept the world given to it. For instance, Friedrich Karl von Savigny, a leading Prussian historian, argued that the present naturally reflects the historically grounded and eternal *Volksgeist* (spirit of the people). This form of historical thinking developed into a critical reaction to revolutionary claims of a historical moment — often, the specific

Enlightenment claims of the French Revolution. This approach was not without merit; history does indeed help us to understand why the revolutionary reconstruction of society can have unintended and deeply problematic consequences.

But in post-World War I Germany, this conservative understanding of history developed into something else: ideological history. Adolf Hitler — another strongman who declared history to be his favorite subject — placed it at the center of Nazi Germany's ideological program. In particular, a central Nazi goal was the desire to "restore" a racially pure German nation to its rightful place in the world. This historical mission was then used to justify Germany's territorial expansionism and genocide.

As an approach to the past, this kind of ideological history has two key problems. First, its adherents do not seek to understand history by critically engaging with the existing source material. Instead, they create a selective historical narrative that fits a preexisting political ideology. For the Nazis, their political commitments helped to generate an invented narrative about the racial purity of the German people in the past and its "pollution" in recent centuries. This ideological use of history therefore cloaks a political agenda in the language of history.

Second, adherents of ideological history view history as a repository of immutable truths that must be preserved or restored today. History is therefore something that determines the present and *requires* certain types of action today. A critical approach to history, of course, shows that opposite: even if we adhere as closely as possible to the source material, the questions we ask of history invariably change over time. As E. H. Carr wrote, history is "a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past." Historians must seek to critically understand how the present drives our historical understanding and how that history shapes our actions today. Denying this critical process risks creating an authoritarian ideology cloaked in the language and narratives of history.

Both of these criticisms can be leveled against Putin's historical narrative about the invasion of Ukraine. First, his account of the historical unity of Russia and Ukraine selectively draws on historical facts to construct the story of an immutable, Russian civilization that naturally includes Ukraine. This story of unity is not new: it was developed by Russian officials and intelligentsia in the imperial era to justify Russian power over its lands. The second criticism, however, is equally important. Even if we accept Putin's historical narrative of civilizational unity, why must this unity continue into the present? Why deny the Ukrainian people today the ability to

build an independent identity that breaks with a form of historical unity that itself stems from Russian imperialism?

These critiques not only show why the invasion of Ukraine was not required by history. They also uncover the fundamental tenets of Russia's post-Soviet form of ideological history. This ideology is about defending a historical story about Russia's natural civilizational and imperial identity and position in the world. In contrast with the Soviet period, today's ideology does not make universal claims about remaking the world; it instead makes identity claims about Russia's natural and eternal place within it. Further, unlike in the Soviet era, this new ideology does not rely on conceptual categories such as the superstructure or class but instead reflects an emotional fantasy of restoring an imperial past in which the Russian world and its unique civilization (including Ukraine) balance against a decaying West. Russia's new state ideology is not a forward-looking commitment to a coming communist society but a backward-looking one to defend an imperial version of Russian civilizational identity found in history.

Putin is not alone in developing this kind of ideological history. Similar forms of history are being developed in Xi Jinping's China and Narendra Modi's India. For instance, Xi recently told US president Joe Biden that both countries should use history as a "mirror" and let it guide the future. This broad use makes it tempting to see this return of ideological history as simply self-interested justifications of personal power. But these arguments reflect more than that. They draw force from a legitimate critique of the post-Cold War order and its own claims about the "end of history." Led by the United States, post-Cold War triumphalism includes a confidence that certain best practices—often derived from the United States—should be transferred universally around the world. For instance, the Washington Consensus of the 1990s advocated a standardized set of rapid, free market reforms for the entire former communist world.


In many places—most notably, Russia—the implementation of these best practices had unintended consequences, including the creation of vast economic inequality. A historical critique is an important response, holding that national history and context should have been taken into account in shaping these reforms. Such a critique therefore echoes the 19th-century German criticism of the Enlightenment-era claims of the French Revolution. Taken critically, historical ideology is an important corrective to an idea that history no longer matters in the face of rational, universal best practices.

But, as in 1930s Germany, history in the minds of strongmen in Russia, India, and China today is not used critically. The

return of ideological history threatens to rob new generations of their agency. And authoritarian governments enforce this view of history through law, including it in government-mandated history curricula. In Russia, this official history is also officially enforced by laws forbidding the "falsification" of history, what has been called "rehabilitating Nazism." In part, these laws criminalize any challenge to the historical myth that Ukrainian independence from Russia is purely the cynical creation of Nazi Germany during World War II. Since 2014, dozens of professional Russian historians have been imprisoned or fined under these laws.

This ideological history is not only authoritarian. It can detach its adherents from reality. Once they find their truths in history, strongmen will then filter the outside world through these perceived truths. Russia's invasion of Ukraine was exactly that: a response to the perception that an increasingly independent Ukrainian identity must be the result of external manipulation. This failure to perceive the deep roots of Ukraine's independent identity led to the Russian fantasy of a three-day march to Kiev with Ukrainians greeting Russian tanks with flowers. More broadly, it leaves one worrying about the policy consequences of China's historical claims to Taiwan or Modi's restoration of India as a Hindu state.

This failure to perceive the deep roots of Ukraine's independent identity led to the Russian fantasy of a three-day march to Kiev.

The historical critique of post-Cold War universalism, though necessary, need not lead to a return of ideological history. Critical history can inform intelligent present-day policymaking without becoming a backward-looking discourse of historical nostalgia. In this understanding, history can be a place of critical departure and change. Constructive engagement with history can be a powerful way of reforming in a way that respects important traditions within a particular country. Although this kind of critical history is currently illegal in Russia, nongovernmental historical organizations like Memorial and a generation of professional historians (some of whom are in jail) await a new Russia where they can restart their projects. In this work, Russian history is not a place of nostalgic return but an important resource for change. 

William Partlett is an associate professor at the University of Melbourne. He tweets @WPartlett.

L. RENATO GRIGOLI

COMMUNAL RITUALS

Meet Edward Muir, the 2023 AHA President

On Saturday, January 7, 2023, Edward Muir, the Clarence L. Ver Steeg Professor in the Arts and Sciences, professor of history and Italian, and a Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence at Northwestern University, becomes the 139th president of the American Historical Association. He begins his yearlong term during a period of considerable challenges for the AHA and the historical discipline. From divisive concepts legislation targeting both K–12 and higher education to undergraduate enrollments, from academic job availability to ongoing COVID-19 recovery efforts, a variety of important issues confront the Association as he begins his term.

A scholar of Italian cultural and social history, Ed focuses on the history of ritual and violence during the later Middle Ages and into the 16th century. He has previously served as president of both the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference and the Renaissance Society of America. Among his many awards and fellowships, Ed has been a fellow at the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies at Villa I Tatti, the Institute for Advanced Study, the National Humanities Center, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, and the Newberry Library. The author of multiple books and articles, his first book, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1981), won the AHA's Herbert Baxter Adams Prize. His current project is tentatively titled *The Delicate Sinews of Trust: The Italian Renaissance, 1350–1650*. As a teacher, Ed offers undergraduate courses in Renaissance and Reformation history, with a freshman seminar on the great legal trials of Western history. He also teaches courses on microhistory, which he enjoys because it offers an opportunity to show students how to identify and explore marginal or minority figures, and modern Italian history, a subject that he loves simply because it is, in his words, “so weird.”

A fondness for weirdness may be what made Ed a historian in the first place. Born and raised in Utah, Ed had a fascination with history that shaped him from an early age. In third

grade, he began reading about Paleolithic Switzerland and then Venice, discovering for the first time different cultures and new places beyond those he already knew. By the time he was in junior high in 1959, he was sure what his career would be—that year, when the *Salt Lake City Tribune* asked where he saw himself in the year 2000, he told the paper he would be a university history professor.

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in his words, “so weird.”

In addition to informing his general trajectory, Ed's upbringing in the local religious community was formative for the particular course of his academic career. It was there, among the faithful recounting their visions as the Spirit moved them, that Ed first became suspicious of professions of belief. The Spirit would, he noticed, move the same people in the same way to say the same things time and time again. These professions of faith seemed to be more about behaving in a certain way in front of certain people than they were about the specific words said or their meaning. Ed observed that this ritual created the community he was part of, and that what was important was not what people said but what they did. Ed's scholarly work has focused on such ritual acts rather than professed statements.

Despite these early interests, Ed's path to becoming a professor and to the academic subject that has defined his career was not entirely straightforward. His father, he remembers, was not particularly fond of the idea of him becoming a history professor, preferring that his son follow his own long-abandoned ambitions and pursue a career in law. And although Ed did not have to struggle particularly hard to get his own way, his father never really understood his career choice. Even when Ed won the AHA's prestigious Adams Prize, his father responded that it was still not too late to



AHA president Ed Muir enjoying an outdoor market in Italy.
Courtesy Edward Muir

pursue law. Nevertheless, his father did get his way, after a fashion: the primary sources on which Ed's work most relies are legal documents and case records.

Ed did not start out as a cultural historian, nor did he arrive immediately at microhistory as his chosen methodology. He began his graduate study as an economic historian. Thanks in part to his childhood experiences with ritual and the questionable truth offered by statements of belief, Ed forsook histories of ideas and looked instead at histories of behaviors and actions. He was thus among the many historians of Italy trained in the 1960s and '70s who began as quantitative historians of economic history before turning to cultural, qualitative study. Ed sees behavioralist history as an especially revealing approach, one that cuts across the social and economic divisions that usually confine historical study. Further, he is fascinated by the question of how to translate historical behaviors into something intelligible to modern readers, a question whose answer has strong ties to the history of emotions. It is therefore unsurprising that, when asked the

standard *Perspectives* interview question of which three historians he would invite to dinner, he chose two cultural historians of early modern Europe, Natalie Zemon Davis and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, and French medievalist Marc Bloch.

As with many premodernists, Ed's teaching and research are temporally wide, but within his specialization, he finds the first two decades of the 16th century particularly fascinating. In his telling, they were a pivotal moment for change when "everything was up for grabs." The papacy was suffering a legitimacy crisis, the legacy of the previous two centuries of institutional excess (he is not, for the record, a fan of Showtime's *The Borgias*, despite the presence of the inestimable Jeremy Irons), and almost every kingdom, state, and principality was similarly in the midst of political turmoil. In this ferment, there was a "moment of soul-searching by articulate and well-educated people" struggling to find solutions. It was a moment that sparked the beginnings of modern political thought, and one that is all too relatable to the present day.

But what makes a good history for the AHA's new president? Magisterial breadth of knowledge and exacting precision. Remembering what he still considers the pinnacle of the historian's craft, Ed recounts a dinner party held at Princeton University sometime in the early 1980s, shortly after British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper incorrectly authenticated Konrad Kujau's forged *Hitler Diaries*. Felix Gilbert, a historian of Europe who was part of the Office of Strategic Services during World War II and who had seen Hitler's bunker with his own eyes, was in attendance. When the *Diaries* came up in conversation, Felix took over the room. In a straightforward, methodical manner and with no notes, he began a point-by-point demolition of the *Diaries'* legitimacy. Forty years later, Ed still considers it the most stunning display of the historian and their art that he has ever seen.

When not crafting his own meticulous scholarly works or teaching, Ed can be found in the wilderness. A self-described "mountain guy," he loves to travel and hike. His favorite activity, however, is downhill skiing (snowboarding is for teens, he says). Although Ed is, by his own admission, getting a bit old for the sport, he considers dying of a heart attack midrun as the ideal way to go out. And while he doesn't have

a favorite ski slope, here too Ed displays a fondness for strangeness: the weirdest ski spots he's ever been to are in the Swiss Alps. There, even at the swankiest resorts, the slopes are still old fashioned and lift service is spotty. Skiers often have to interrupt their run, take off their skis, and hike up the next ridge in order to get down the mountain. Though discordant to those used to the long, fast runs of the American West (or even the short, icy slopes of the Northeast), the older way of doing things has its own cadence and charm.

In the world of historical scholarship, however, Ed has an abiding enthusiasm for listening to new and exciting voices, which he credits as a means of keeping his own thoughts and interests fresh. *Perspectives* readers can look forward to reading the thoughts his conversations have inspired within these pages. He is particularly interested in highlighting historians engaged in fields that he believes have received inadequate attention in AHA events and publications. For, above all else, Ed sees the AHA presidency as an opportunity to amplify the voices of others. **P**

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



MARK PHILIP BRADLEY

LOOKING BACK

In the December Issue of the American Historical Review

The articles in the December issue of the *American Historical Review* draw out new approaches to the history of ideas, transnational history, and the histories of memory and emotion. The issue also includes a critical exploration of the 1619 Project and a long-form review of W. E. B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935); the latter has never been reviewed in the pages of the journal.

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Two articles in the December issue use the history of ideas to examine crucial dimensions of the early modern world. In “Compassion as an Agent of Historical Change,” **Katie Barclay** (Univ. of Adelaide) reexamines the place of pain and compassion in early modern European judicial punishment. She combines a close reading of religious and secular accounts of the body in pain and of public executions to argue that the decline of corporal punishment and the rise of human rights in 18th-century Europe are better explained by changing biological and social attitudes, rather than broad assumptions historians have previously put forward that center changing attitudes toward compassion. **Carl Wennerlind**'s (Barnard Coll.) “Atlantis Restored: Natural Knowledge and Political Economy in Early Modern Sweden” looks at how elites strove to establish a new economic base to support Sweden's growing geopolitical prominence after the Thirty Years' War. He traces the impact on Swedish thinkers such as Carl Linnaeus of an emergent pan-European discourse that sought to use scientific knowledge to transform nature into usable wealth. These self-styled improvers, Wennerlind argues, forged a vision through which they hoped

Sweden could embark on a new trajectory of economic growth and political power.

Three other articles discuss how new approaches in international history are bringing into focus histories both smaller and larger than the nation. **David Carey**'s (Loyola Univ. Maryland) “Medicine and Health ‘in the Least Civilized Regions’” examines how racial thought and public health influenced each other in Guatemala and Ecuador at a time when the Rockefeller Foundation sought to improve public health in both countries. Combining transnational and comparative historical analysis, Carey focuses on Indigenous voices to reveal interconnected and varied forms of racism that shaped Indigenous encounters with public health initiatives and scientific medicine. In “The Political Geography of International Advocacy: Indian and American Cold War Civil Society for Tibet,” **Lydia Walker** (Ohio State Univ.) maps the advocacy efforts of Indian and American civil society on behalf of Tibet in the immediate aftermath of the Dalai Lama's 1959 flight to India. While Tibetan nationalists worked across the geographic and political spectrum to generate international support, Walker reveals, anticommunism, empire, and discussions of religious freedom and civilizational solidarity shaped interactions that eventually constrained Tibetan autonomy. **Nico Slate**'s (Carnegie Mellon Univ.) “The Geography of Nonviolence: The United Nations, the Highlander Folk School, and the Borders of the Civil Rights Movement” also complicates understandings of the post–World War II era. Using rare audio recordings of workshops held in the summer of 1954 by the Highlander Folk School in rural Tennessee, which aimed to connect the United Nations to local action on behalf of racial integration, Slate suggests that the Highlander's “radical integrationism” challenged the borders of race and opened a space for other kinds of border crossings around nonviolent civil disobedience.

Two final articles explore questions of memory and affect through the lens of cultural history. In “The Well That Wept Blood: Ghostlore, Haunted Waterscapes, and the Politics of

One of more than 60 data visualizations prepared by W. E. B. Du Bois for the Exposition des Nègres d'Amerique at the 1900 Paris Exposition to illustrate the progress made by Black Americans since emancipation. This infographic shows the increasing "assessed value of household and kitchen furniture owned by Georgia Negros." For the first 100 years of its history, the *AHR* remained largely closed to the work of Black scholars. This issue includes a featured review of Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction in America*, which, like many works by Black historians before the 1980s, was not reviewed in the journal at the time of its publication. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Department, Washington, DC.



Quilombo Blackness in Amazonia (Brazil),” **Oscar de la Torre** (Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte) examines the oral myth of a blood-weeping well from a small city in the mouth of the Amazon River. He then uses the myth to discuss the origins and the significance of haunted waterscapes in Black Amazonia, tracking the history of the myth, including its arrival in the 19th century through Bantu-speaking enslaved Africans and its 21st-century iterations in the context of Black rural mobilization after the military dictatorship. **Ofer Ashkenazi**’s (Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem) “Reading Private Photography: Pathos, Irony, and Jewish Experience in the Face of Nazism” argues that private photography is among the most readily available visual sources for historians of the 20th century but too rarely used by scholars. Ashkenazi shows that Jewish photography’s recurrent use of pathos and irony reveals a set of understudied Jewish reactions to their own growing exclusion from German society and to major trends in the German Jewish identity discourse of the era.

The *AHR* History Lab for December includes a forum on the 1619 Project, which, as most readers know, has become a very public flash point in academic and public debates about the work history does in the world. We invited 19 historians of slavery and race in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas to critically engage with the project in an effort to build a transnational conversation about its reach and reception. The issue also continues the lab’s Engaged History project in a conversation led by **Timothy Snyder** (Yale Univ.) with curators and historians on the problems of contemporary Polish history museums. History Unclassified completes this edition of the lab. In “Sad Historian,” **Carolyn Steedman** (Univ. of Warwick) uses the works of 19th-century philosopher William Godwin and poet Oliver Goldsmith to explore the visual turn in history writing.

Reviews of more than 100 books round out the issue, among them a featured review by **Elizabeth Hinton** (Yale Univ.) of

W. E. B. DuBois’s *Black Reconstruction in America*. Throughout most of its first 100 years of publication, the *AHR* largely ignored scholarship by Black historians. Hinton’s review is the first of what will be a continuing series of commissioned reviews of books by Black and other underrepresented scholars that should have been, but never were, reviewed in the journal at the time of their publication.

History in Focus, the *AHR*’s podcast hosted by **Daniel Story** (Univ. of California, Santa Cruz), offers four new episodes to complement the December issue of the journal at <https://www.historians.org/history-in-focus>.

The December issue marks the end of Volume 127 and the first year of the *AHR* History Lab. In 2023, readers can look forward to lab features on deglobalization, rethinking historical agency, using artificial intelligence in historical practice, digital histories of imperial wars, and writing transnational history, as well as a bit more on historical smells. We will also launch the #AHRsSyllabusProject, which will mark the first sustained engagement in the journal with the teaching of history. I invite readers to be in touch at ahrassistant@historians.org about what they would like to see in future editions of the lab. **P**

Mark Philip Bradley is editor of the American Historical Review.



Julian Nava

1927–2022

Historian, Politician,
and Ambassador

Julian Nava's remarkable life showed how a historian can flourish professionally and make history at the same time. Nava, who taught on the faculty of California State University (CSU), Northridge, for 43 years, died at age 95 on July 29, 2022. "I could have . . . chosen the quiet life of a tenured professor," he told an audience in 1970, but "I wasn't satisfied with the world as it is. I want to change it."

Nava was born in 1927 to a family who had immigrated from Mexico only to be devastated by the Great Depression. He grew up in Boyle Heights, then a polyglot but heavily Mexican American section of Los Angeles. Following wartime and postwar service in the navy, Nava enrolled at East Los Angeles Junior College. He went on to earn a BA in history from Pomona College in 1951 and a PhD in Latin American history from Harvard University in 1955. Teaching and administrative assignments followed, including stints in Spain on a Fulbright and in Colombia working to establish a new college.

In 1957, Nava joined the founding faculty of San Fernando Valley State College (later renamed for its Northridge setting). The campus was a magnet for first-generation college students. An educator above all else, he showed a passion for mentoring. To students who wondered whether they belonged in a university, he offered a reassuring voice.

Nava's energies were drawn as much outside the college as within. The postwar era witnessed a new militance among Mexican Americans, much of it prompted by veterans like Nava. His community and organizational commitments accumulated wholesale. During the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson, he served on the Inter-Agency Cabinet Committee on Mexican American Affairs. He also advised the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and Bilingual Children's Television.

In 1967, backed by a broad coalition, Nava won election to the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education—the first Mexican American ever to serve. Two additional terms

followed, together with stints as board president. He struggled to pull the board toward the causes dearest to him—an equal education for every child regardless of ethnicity; desegregation; and multicultural, bilingual education. He also strove to integrate the history of Mexican Americans into the educational canon. His contemporaneous publications served that end, including the pathbreaking *Mexican Americans: Past, Present, and Future* (American Book Co., 1969).

Meanwhile, the Chicano movement erupted, taking Mexican American activism well beyond that of Nava's generation. Nava played a high-profile role in establishing a Chicano studies program at CSU Northridge. He also backed a Chicano moratorium against the Vietnam War. Contrary to the movement's streak of separatism, though, he remained an integrationist willing to compromise. While conservatives assailed him as a radical, radicals clamored for him to go further. In the end, he became a transitional figure who bridged the postwar and Chicano movements while helping many others bridge them too.

Nava's personal manner reflected his instinctive moderation, a term he embraced. He exuded pragmatic common sense. He tended toward a warm yet dignified reserve. Though passionate over principles, his was seldom if ever the loudest voice in the room. If anything, he inclined toward understatement. He often spoke with a smile and a twinkle.

In May 1980, President Jimmy Carter appointed Nava the US ambassador to Mexico. Nava served just under a year. Energy and immigration issues predominated at the time, but Nava's most important legacy lay in the symbolism of a Mexican American representing his country in Mexico, a first.

Nava's later years kept him fully engaged. In 1992, he ran unsuccessfully for mayor of Los Angeles. He then focused on creating two documentaries, *Song of the Basque* and *Voices of Cuba*. Following his retirement from CSU Northridge in 2000, he published an autobiography, *My Mexican-American Journey* (Arte Público Press, 2002). He continued to volunteer with community organizations. Two Los Angeles public schools today bear his name.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Patricia; their three children, Carmen Nava, Katie Stokes, and Julian Paul Nava; and six grandchildren. Carmen is professor of history at California State University, San Marcos.

John Broesamle
California State University, Northridge (emeritus)

Photo courtesy EA Photography



W. E. B. Du Bois

1868–1963

Historian, Sociologist,
Editor, Activist

On August 27, 1963, our discipline lost William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. The author of 16 books of history, politics, literature, and social criticism, and an activist for racial equality and peace, Du Bois had few professional peers. New England born, his mother's Black Burghardt ancestry and his father's Haitian birth encouraged a special sense of self in an only son raised in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

Few American historians of any race rivaled his credentials in the late 19th century: double baccalaureates from Fisk University and Harvard College; graduate study at Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität; and his 1896 PhD in history from Harvard University, an African American first. His dissertation, *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States* (1896), was published as Harvard Historical Series Number 1. In 1897, he became a professor of history and economics at Atlanta University. Few 20th-century American historians would surpass Du Bois in interpretive originality, as with *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899). Long read as social history, it has been appropriated by our sociological kith as a founding monograph in urban sociology.

His revisionist insights were not always appreciated by fellow academics. In the presence of William A. Dunning, whose racist scholarship shaped the study of the post-Civil War South, Du Bois presented "Reconstruction and Its Benefits" at the 1909 AHA annual meeting, prefiguring his now iconic *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935). This magnum opus inspired, enhanced, and instigated the contemporary consensus about the long socioracial, political, and economic aftermaths of the Civil War. Acknowledgments of his influence from contemporary historians might be seen as posthumous professional consolations to a historian whose political heterodoxy in his final years invited the wrath of the Cold War establishment.

Yet it might not have been inevitable that Du Bois found teaching a woefully inadequate antidote for his country's dismal race relations. The public display of a lynched Black man's butchered remains near the Atlanta University campus induced a

traumatic understanding in him, as he famously wrote, that "there was no such definite demand for the scientific work of the sort I was doing." In lieu of social science, Du Bois conceived a unique experiment of history as literature, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), which remains an indispensable interpretive template for understanding the American race problem in all its anomalous history of color, gender, caste, law, and otherness.

Du Bois temporarily departed from the academy's triad of teaching, research, and writing books to co-found the NAACP and serve as founding editor of its magazine, *The Crisis*, in 1910. Yet he clashed with some distinguished board members when he abjured the organization's very *raison d'être*, denouncing the ideal of racial integration as no longer economically realistic during the Great Depression. He returned to academia and Atlanta University in 1933.

In 1944, Du Bois was invited to return to the NAACP as the senior intellectual of his race. But he soon offended board members by petitioning the United Nations to accept *An Appeal to the World: A Statement on the Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of Citizens of Negro Descent in the United States*. In advance of termination, Du Bois resigned from the NAACP in 1948. He came to believe that the Progressive Party alone could advance genuine domestic racial equality, and negotiate nuclear disarmament and pacific co-existence with the Soviet Union.

In the last 15 years of his life, Du Bois focused on activism for peace and free speech. On the final night of the Waldorf-Astoria Peace Conference in 1949, Du Bois's remarks at Madison Square Garden eventually led to federal charges of working as an agent of a foreign state. To read his account of his 1951 Smith Act trial, *In Battle for Peace*, where principled ideals slip the traces of parochial culture and reductionist politics, should prompt concerns in those of us who study the long shadow of history.

Du Bois died at age 95 at home in Accra, Ghana, where he and second wife, Shirley Graham Du Bois, had resided since 1961 as guests of the Republic of Ghana and in self-imposed exile after the American embassy stopped the renewal of his US passport. On the morning following Du Bois's Ghanaian exit, the executive secretary of the NAACP told the thousands of Americans at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, "It is incontrovertible that at the dawn of the 20th century, his was the voice calling you to gather here today in this cause."

David Levering Lewis
New York University

Photo: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution/CC0

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HUNTER COLLEGE, CUNY New York, NY

US Women and Gender. The Department of History at Hunter College, City University of New York, invites applications for an open-rank (full-time, tenure-track/tenured) position in US women's and gender history, with an anticipated start date on or about September 1, 2023. Candidates must demonstrate excellence or strong promise of excellence in both research and publication and in the teaching of US women's and gender history. In addition to teaching courses in this specialty, the appointee should have a demonstrated commitment to teaching the first and second half of the US history survey. Candidates who examine the intersections of women's and gender history with race and ethnicity and/or who explore women's and gender history with respect to public health, reproductive issues, disease, privacy, legal/constitutional history, or the history of science and/or medicine are especially welcome to apply. The position includes the opportunity, subject to need, to teach in the History Department's master's program. Review of applications to begin January 16, 2023, and will continue until position is filled. Applications must be submitted online by accessing the CUNY

Portal on the City University of New York website at <http://www.cuny.edu/employment>. To search for this vacancy, click SEARCH ALL POSTINGS and in SEARCH JOBS field, enter the Job Opening ID number (25771). Click on the "APPLY NOW" button and follow the application instructions. Current users of the site should access their established accounts; new users should follow the instructions to set up an account. Please have your documents available to attach into the application before you begin. The application package must include a letter of application describing teaching and research interests, CV, writing sample, and the names and email addresses of three references. Please combine all materials into one PDF and upload it as a single file. The search committee will solicit confidential letters of recommendation from references for candidates under consideration for first-round interviews. First-round interviews will be conducted remotely over Zoom; finalists will visit the campus in person. CUNY encourages people with disabilities, minorities, veterans, and women to apply. At CUNY, Italian Americans are also included among our protected groups. Applicants and employees will not be discriminated against on the basis of any legally protected category, including sexual orientation and gender identity. AA/veteran/disability/EOE. A PhD in history is required at the time of appointment. We seek applicants who have the ability to cooperate with

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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.

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(Signed)
Leland Grigoli
Editor, *Perspectives on History*

DAVID BARNES

THE PHILADELPHIA LAZARETTO



Chris Templin

There are stories in the very fabric of Philadelphia's Lazaretto. They speak to us from the bricks and mortar of the main building. They murmur in the tidal flow of the Delaware River next to which it stands. They whistle in the southerly breezes that fan the site just as they did when it was built in 1799, after four yellow fever epidemics in seven years had devastated what was then the nation's capital. For a century, the Lazaretto guarded the maritime gateway to the city against the entry of infectious disease and treated sick immigrants on their way to new lives on a new continent.

Quarantine stations — often called “lazarettos” from the Italian diminutive form of Lazarus, the patron saint of lepers — protected port cities from the early 15th century well into the 20th century. Arriving ships anchored for inspection and could be detained if there were reports of a disease outbreak at the port of origin, if passengers were sick, or if certain kinds of cargo were rotting. Detention could last from just a few days to two months or more, and often included strict isolation and disinfection of vessel and cargo. Most quarantine stations fell into disuse in the 20th century and have left no physical traces. Just a few, like Philadelphia's, were adapted to other uses and have survived more or less intact.

Arriving sailors and passengers were greeted by two pillbox-like gatehouse structures at the river's edge, symmetrically flanking the Lazaretto pier. Set back from the river along the eastern and western edges of the property, identical and symmetrical relative to the pier, were modestly handsome brick houses for the quarantine master and Lazaretto physician. Grandly occupying center stage, stately but not ostentatious, was the Federal-style main building of elegant flemish-bond masonry, consisting of two hospital wings and a central pavilion with meeting rooms, kitchen, and staff quarters. A colonnaded portico shaded the 180-foot front of the building, and a weather vane-topped cupola completed the structure. Its designers boasted that the station combined “expedition, utility, economy, and beauty.”

Some Philadelphia quarantine stories are tragically ordinary, like those of the Irish famine migrants who escaped starvation only to die of “ship fever” (typhus) on the way to Philadelphia. Others are less familiar but no less poignant: 137 people enslaved at Bunce Island in West Africa and freed in Philadelphia in 1800 after a US naval vessel intercepted two slave ships off the coast of Cuba. A mischievous 11-year-old orphan who survived a bout of yellow fever only to find himself blamed for starting an epidemic in Philadelphia. A yellow fever outbreak at the Lazaretto itself, when a 50-year-old widow went there to nurse a sick friend, then stayed after her friend's death to restore order at the station when most of the staff had either died or fled in panic.

The immigrant ships that arrived at the Lazaretto having lost nearly half their human cargo to typhus beckon us to dig deeper, to uncover the transatlantic commercial system of human trafficking that victimized vulnerable migrants, created shipboard typhus factories, and dumped the survivors on American shores as heavily indebted redemptioners. Then as now, ostensibly “voluntary” immigrants could be victims of profit motives beyond their control. The ways that Lazaretto doctors and local health authorities responded to disease threats can also teach us valuable lessons about courage, transparency, political negotiation, and caregiving under intense pressure. And these are just a few of the stories contained in an unusual riverfront relic, the oldest intact quarantine station in the Western Hemisphere. **P**

David Barnes is an associate professor of history and sociology of science at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of Lazaretto: How Philadelphia Used an Unpopular Quarantine Based on Disputed Science to Accommodate Immigrants and Prevent Epidemics (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2023). He tweets @historyof.

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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 sessions 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.

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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, 2023

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 Amy B. Stanley, Northwestern University (a-stanley@northwestern.edu) and co-chair A. K. Sandoval-Strausz, Penn State University (sandoval@psu.edu).