

The newsmagazine of the American Historical Association

PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

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AHA23



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PREMIERE MARCH 2017



AN OUTRAGE

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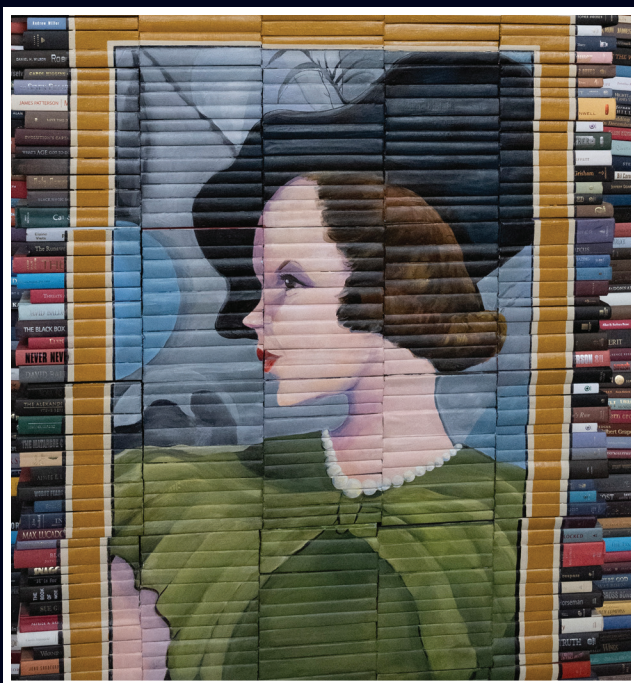


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A Philadelphia Story

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARC MONAGHAN



ON THE COVER

Books! As every seasoned conference-goer knows, talks and sessions can be engaging, stimulating, and even enlightening. But much of the fun at an annual meeting is in meeting friends new and old and (of course) browsing the publisher displays in the exhibit hall. Whether it's the feel of the page, the look of the text, or just the joy of reading a well-written sentence, for a bibliophile, there's nothing quite like being surrounded by towering stacks of books.

Photo: Marc Monaghan

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L. RENATO GRIGOLI

TOWNHOUSE NOTES

More of a Comment Than a Question

In *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), a novel set on a distant future planet where the concept of gender does not exist, Ursula K. Le Guin imagined a group of fortune tellers called “the Answerers.” Through long practice, the Answerers could perform a Foretelling, a ritual that, as its name suggests, could provide the correct answer to any question asked about the future.

A Foretelling, as you may suspect, is not the boon it seems. Stories have long cautioned those who might substitute prophecy for truth. Oedipus accepts that he will kill his father and marry his mother, missing the truth of the events that will unfold. Macbeth, perhaps learning from the classics, interprets his prophecy metaphorically. Alas for him, it was meant literally—the timbers of Birnam Wood do come to Dunsinane; Macduff was “from his mother’s womb untimely ripped”—and he, too, does not expect the true course of the future. The rules of tragedy ensure a rigged game; the play only ends when everyone marked for death dies.

The information age has answers everywhere. Miracle of miracles, you can find an answer to almost any question you wish to ask. Of course, the internet falls short of a Foretelling: it can’t speak to the future, and it does not guarantee a correct answer. No one really expects the former, and the latter has received a great deal of attention. Much ink has been spilled (and many bytes devoted) to how social media and search algorithms promote falsehoods and conspiracy theories. Sensible people agree that this is Not Good, and many find themselves shocked, simply shocked, that the slow defunding of the humanities (for a mere 60 years!) has left a majority of Americans without the ability to critically analyze information. Sifting truth from falsehoods is a key tenet of humanistic study; one trained in the art can find correct answers better than one who is not. Fewer have, however, questioned two positivistic assumptions at the core of this vision of the modern humanities: (1) that most people ever had such skills and (2) that the problem lies with the capacity to discriminate between pieces of information, and, as a

consequence, that one can find the correct answer if they are sufficiently learned.

Fifty-four years ago, Le Guin offered a critique of that assumption. When her protagonist, Genly Ai, arrives at the Answerers in dire need of their aid, he is stunned that such power—what could omniscience not accomplish?—is treated as a mere curio, a novelty intended for those with more money than wisdom. In fact, Genly finds that the Answerers don’t want answers at all. Instead, they see the value of Foretelling as simply pedagogical: it allows them to demonstrate “the perfect uselessness of knowing the answer to the wrong question.”

Many tragic figures could have benefited from the warning that embracing the first correct answer they find is useless, if they don’t first take care to ensure that they are asking the right question—or even that the answer actually answers their question. Oedipus, for example, does not have the question whose answer he truly needs to know—who are his parents?—or the intuition that he should ask it. He has therefore confused having the correct answer with knowing the truth, with a result that is not so much useless as it is blindingly catastrophic.

If the digital world has made finding correct answers more difficult, it has made asking the right question almost impossible. The constant translation of qualitative information into quantitative data sets every query in a nebulous mass of assumption. When combined with the digital sphere’s near-universal reliance on opaque algorithms, we cannot even be sure what question we are really asking—a problem that has become ever more pointed as the digital humanities have matured and evolved. The question for humanists, then, is how, within all these difficulties and constraints, we find the truth in a sea of correct answers. Or is it? **P**

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





TO THE EDITOR

It is certainly past time to erect memorials to the enslaved people who built so many institutions of higher learning, but I was appalled at how Jody Lynn Allen simply brushed aside the place where William & Mary now stands as “what the Native people called Tsenacommacah” in “Changing the Landscape” (November 2022). In other words, this memorial was erected on stolen land—in this case the land of the Powhatan Confederacy. Their homeland spanned 10,000 square miles, and the word Tsenacommacah means densely inhabited land. Only a remnant of the Powhatan remains. Don’t they deserve some recognition too?

 BURDEN S. LUNDGREN
Norfolk, Virginia



TO THE EDITOR

Carl Abbott’s “The Age of Planetary Revolution” (December 2022) reminded me “Scorched Supper on New Niger,” a short story by Suzy McKee Charnas. Though the story is a conventional one about trade wars and fancy rockets flitting about space between trade ports, much of the action takes place on New Niger, a planet founded by Nigerian market women, who were the only people with enough cash to get started in space travel following a major economic failure in Old Nigeria on Earth. They bought ships, named them with African proverbs, and continued their successful trading practices. The main character is Dee, a female pilot who was rescued by Helen, a Nigerian trader on New Niger. Helen claimed her role as a strong woman leader by invoking a well-known Nigerian event, the Aba Women’s War of 1929. There is also a reference to the punitive practice of “sitting on a man,” in the context of thwarting a non-African man who was trying to take over Dee’s ship and business; the title of the story refers to a deliberately burned meal offered to that man. I appreciated this story that imagined the continued role of African women in the future, fully aware of their past history.

 KATHLEEN SHELDON
Santa Monica, California

Grants for AHA members

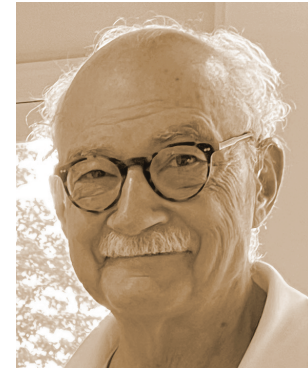
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Learn more at historians.org/grants.

The deadline for all research grant applications is February 15.

EDWARD MUIR

THE HISTORY OF THEM, THE HISTORY OF US



I have often been asked, “Why do you study Renaissance Italy?” My standard reply has been “Because it is not Utah, where I grew up,” but more recently I have just said, “Because it is beautiful.”

I am not Italian. I am not Italian American. I did not know any Italian Americans in my neighborhood or school. The only Italian I had ever heard growing up was on the Saturday-afternoon broadcasts of the New York Metropolitan Opera, which my father put on the radio as we drove up to the ski slopes in the winter. When confronted with my university’s requirement that I study a foreign language, I, in a mischievous mood while chatting with friends, declared that I wanted to study Italian. Perhaps this was because of my fondness for music and my indifference to German (the language I took in high school), but the decision that determined a life course was hardly well considered. After a semester, I wondered what good mastery of Italian would do if I never went to Italy. So I decided to go.

The decision that determined a life course was hardly well considered.

In 1967, my big state university left us to sink or swim, had no study-abroad programs, and did not even have a study-abroad adviser. My Italian-language teacher, who happened to be a prominent Italian novelist, had no clue. Utterly naive but undeterred, I wrote a letter addressed simply

Cultural Attaché
Italian Embassy
United Nations
New York, New York

In the letter, I asked how an American student might study in Italy. To my surprise, I received a prompt reply. The response included a list of the few programs then administered by

American universities, and I chose the Syracuse University one in Florence. It was the only option at the time in which students lived with an Italian family, and I was not so naive as to pass up that chance. I knew that learning a foreign language in a classroom was no match for struggling with it at the dinner table every night. So I went.

From Utah I flew to New York, where my fellow students and I boarded the *SS Michelangelo* for a nine-day voyage to Genoa, only a few years before the Italian Line gave up the Atlantic crossing. The university planned for us to take Italian lessons aboard the ship, but we soon discovered that we made more progress hanging out in the third-class bar with the migrant workers who were returning home with their hard-earned dollars. In vino veritas—in this case, the truth of how real people spoke the language, not just how the textbook taught us to speak it. The workers did not speak “correct” Italian, and only years later did I realize they were speaking in dialect, but the experience has left me with a lifelong love of puzzling out dialects. When visiting a new region in Italy, I still find a bar where the old men gather, sit in a corner, and try to understand what they are saying. As a foreign speaker of Italian, I have taken up the challenge to understand the “other” through the obscure dialects of daily life and, as a historian, to enter the always-strange world of half a millennium ago, fragments of which I can find in the documents written in dialect, obscure Latin, or antiquated Italian.

My history writing has been a history of them, and my distance from “them” can be measured in part by the language gap. But is that right? To say that my kind of history is a “history of them” may represent a delusion because I am the one asking questions largely derived from the concerns of my time and place. My own experience is always lurking in the anteroom of the other culture, no matter how hard I try to understand other peoples in their own terms. A soft anachronism seems inevitable. As my predecessor put it in his final presidential column, “Good historians are driven by curiosity

and imagination, both of which emanate from our inner dialogues in the present.”

The opposite of the history of them, of course, would be a history of us—whoever the “us” are. The study of the identities, of them and us, has become a necessity in our time, especially in the United States, where a long tradition of ignoring, misrepresenting, or lying about underrepresented groups has recently led many historians to broaden our perspective and our students to ask, Where do I and people like me fit into the past? Don’t we count in history? Why should I care about people who are unlike me? as one of my students once complained. These are profound ethical questions for historians, questions that delve into the very foundations of the historical project. The historical curriculum has often responded with changing answers to these questions. After an unprepared United States stumbled into World War I, historians invented the Western Civilization course to educate Americans about their obligations to the Old World; now the AHA’s Teaching History with Integrity initiative advocates for honest history education in the face of racist divisive concepts legislation.

These are profound ethical questions for historians, questions that delve into the very foundations of the historical project.

Integrity in history requires struggle. After the propaganda visit of the aeronaut and Fascist hierarch Italo Balbo to the Century of Progress World’s Fair in 1933, the city of Chicago honored him by changing the name of a downtown street to Balbo Drive, which passes in front of a monument Mussolini gave to the city. The inscription under the ancient limestone column, which bedecks the still-standing monument, reads in part “Fascist Italy, by command of Benito Mussolini, presents to Chicago, exaltation, symbol, memorial of the Atlantic squadron led by Balbo that with Roman daring flew across the ocean in the 11th year of the Fascist era.” In 2017, embarrassed by this shameful reminder of the city’s flirtation with Fascist self-promotion, 68 historians and other academics from the Chicago area, including the Italian American president of Loyola University, signed a petition to the city council. It read: “Be it resolved that whereas Balbo Drive in Chicago was named after the most violent of the Fascist warlords, Italo Balbo, who was a founding member of the Fascist Grand Council, who was responsible for the killing of numerous Italian citizens including the parish priest Giuseppe

Minzoni, and who was a key figure in a regime guilty of crimes against humanity in Libya and Ethiopia, where tens of thousands of civilians perished, the name of Balbo Drive should be changed.” The petition went on to suggest renaming it after the Italian physicist Enrico Fermi, a refugee from Fascism because his wife was Jewish, someone who had actually lived in Chicago, and a winner of the Nobel Prize.

After the circulation of the petition, a groundswell of opposition from elderly Italian Americans nostalgic for Fascism defeated us, and the street name remains. In one television appearance with a leader of the pro-Balbo group, I listened to him refer to me with poisonous sarcasm as “the professor.” As one of “them,” a historian with no ethnic affinity to Italy but a fluent command of the language and years of experience in the country, I had no hope of penetrating the defensive wall of the history of “us.” Pride in identity trumped the truth. Pride in the truth, in contrast, is the historian’s identity. **P**

Edward Muir is president of the AHA.

JAMES GROSSMAN

GUIDELINES FOR BROADENING THE DEFINITION OF HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP

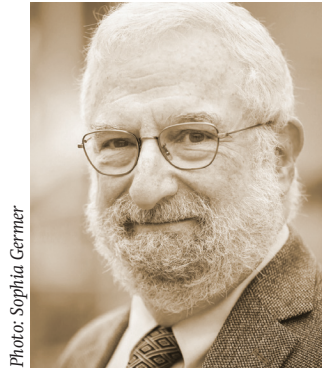


Photo: Sophia Gerner

On January 5, 2023, the AHA Council approved the *Guidelines for Broadening the Definition of Historical Scholarship*. In most history departments, “scholarship” has traditionally and primarily encompassed books, journal articles and book chapters, and papers presented at conferences. The weight and significance of each of these vary considerably by institution. The most valued coin of the realm remains not just the book—especially for early and midcareer scholars—but a particular kind of book known only in academia and scholarly publishing as a “monograph.” Yet many other categories of books don’t count: textbooks, official histories, anthologies, translations and critical editions, reference books, and more. These have not been deemed to be “creating new knowledge.”

Within this frame, and even at its edges, current practices vary. Different institutions not only have different expectations of quantity but vary according to intellectual priorities and definitional flexibilities. Although it is largely a myth that commercial versus university press matters (so long as there has been peer review), accessibility too often matters too little, and writing for a broader audience can even be viewed as a negative. Scholarship that doesn’t frame a narrative in the context of historiography or theoretical/methodological significance is often permissible only as a second book at best. It is risky, for example, for a tenure or promotion file to rest on synthesis or on experimental scholarship (whether print or digital), such as Theodore Rosengarten’s classic *All God’s Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw*. We are told, “Wait until later”: synthesis awaits seniority; demonstrated expertise before experimentation.

These narrow channels leave too little room for the great range of work that historians do as scholars. Limiting the diversity of scholarly genres limits the diversity of potential scholars. Historical work that lies outside the frame often includes activities most likely to influence public policy or enhance the presence of historians in public culture.

The AHA Council has decided that it is time to map a broader terrain of scholarship, with more flexible boundaries. There are many ways to be a historian, many ways to do historical work.

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

GUIDELINES FOR BROADENING THE DEFINITION OF HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Historical scholarship is a documented and disciplined conversation about matters of enduring consequence. Taking a cue from the sciences, history as a discipline has traditionally valued the creation of “new knowledge” as the primary (if not singular) aspect of that conversation worthy of consideration in personnel decisions. The American Historical Association (AHA) has concluded that it is time we also look to the Smithsonian Institution’s mission, articulated in 1846, which advances a broader aim: “the increase and diffusion of knowledge.”

Background and Charge

In January 2022, the AHA Council authorized the Ad-Hoc Committee on Broadening the Definition of Scholarship to

1. acknowledge both long-standing and increasingly diverse genres of historical scholarship that go beyond traditionally valued models of single-authored and peer-reviewed books, journal articles, and other essays, and
2. create guidelines for evaluating this work in tenure and promotion cases, as well as any other professional settings in which historians work and where historical scholarship is produced.

These guidelines lay the foundation for a broad expansion of what constitutes historical scholarship. It is by no means

limited to the examples it invokes, or to academia and its standard professional ladders. These guidelines can be adapted to any institution in which historians work and where historical scholarship is an expected aspect of that work.

The first decades of the 21st century have witnessed a broadening of the ways historical knowledge is advanced, applied, accessed, integrated, diffused, and taught. Despite this multiplicity of scholarly forms, most history departments remain wedded to narrow conventions defining how historical scholarship is packaged and circulated, as well as what “counts” toward elevations to tenure and full professor and in decisions about fellowships, awards, hiring, and other venues of evaluation. At the same time, essential forms of scholarship—from textbooks and reference works to documentary and journal editing, op-eds, expert witness testimony, and more—have traditionally been relegated to the category of “service” within the triad of research, teaching, and service on which academic promotion rests. The disconnect between the wide variety of valuable work being done by historians and the much narrower boundaries of scholarship considered for professional evaluation limits historians’ public influence while perpetuating inequities harmful to individuals and to the discipline as a whole.

Previous Steps

In recent years, the AHA and other professional organizations have taken significant steps to identify and value the variety of work that historians do. The Ad-Hoc Committee has drawn on and reaffirms statements previously issued by the Association. In 2010 (revised 2017), the AHA issued a joint statement with the Organization of American Historians and the National Council on Public History that recommended full academic recognition of “publicly engaged and collaborative scholarship.” The *Guidelines for the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship in History* (2015) asserts that “digital history in various forms often represents a commitment to expanding what history is, and can do, as a field, as well as the audiences that it addresses. . . . Work done by historians using digital methodologies or media for research, pedagogy, or communication should be evaluated for hiring, promotion, and tenure on its scholarly merit and the contribution that work makes to the discipline through research, teaching, or service.” Similarly, in 2019, the AHA Council approved *Guidelines for the Incorporation of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the Work of the History Profession*, affirming its legitimacy and significance as historical scholarship. While these guidelines have aided both candidates and departments in personnel evaluations, the recommendations have been unevenly adopted across the discipline.

Though the AHA’s journal, the *American Historical Review*, includes reviews of digital scholarship alongside book reviews, it has only recently begun including scholarship on teaching and learning, exhibitions, podcasts, and historical work in other formats. It is less clear whether history departments, in their promotion protocols and decision-making processes, have begun to value scholarship on teaching and learning, and historical scholarship published in a variety of formats.

Challenges

The stability and effectiveness of using the conventions and traditions of academic historians to define historical scholarship constitutes a major hurdle in the pathway to change. Removing that hurdle requires expanding the scope of how we define both genre and format.

A second set of challenges derives from our methods of evaluation. History departments have well-established criteria for assessing the originality and significance of books and articles that appear in competitive peer-reviewed journals. Many alternative forms of scholarship do not yet have an established infrastructure of evaluation. For traditional modes of publication, the content of standard peer review, the prestige of a press or journal, and the stature of a peer reviewer can readily serve to validate quality. Other genres require venturing beyond these protocols to make the case on intellectual merits alone. In addition, some modes of explaining and disseminating historical understanding are collaborative efforts that will require learning how to discern the nature of individual contributions.

Imperatives and Opportunities

In the face of these challenges, we understand why some departments remain wedded to conventional boundaries of scholarship and methods of evaluation. But standing pat risks losing ground as a discipline in an environment with so many venues for intellectual and civic contribution. It also risks undervaluing important work being done *within* our discipline. Historians depend on public support—whether as employees of public institutions, recipients of federal research funds, or faculty at universities and colleges that allocate resources according to enrollments. If legislatures, public officials, governing boards, and students don’t learn from us why history and historical thinking are essential elements of education and public culture, those resources will be allocated elsewhere.

We should remain mindful of the many other arenas of potential influence. If we believe that historical thinking and

knowledge should inform public policy, then we need to make our work accessible to policymakers and influencers. This will be accomplished not by increasing their access to scholarly journals but by applying and explaining our research to those who operate beyond our established sphere of influence, in policy and other decision-making environments.

This recommendation and the guidelines that follow rest on four pillars:

- A wide range of scholarly historical work can be undertaken in ways consistent with our disciplinary standards and values, from writing briefing papers and op-eds, to testifying in legislatures and courts, participating in the work of regulatory agencies, publishing textbooks and reference books, expanding our media presence across a wide range of platforms, and more.
- To support such publicly engaged and/or policy-oriented work, history departments should give it appropriate scholarly credit in personnel decisions. Not doing so diminishes the public impact of historians and cedes to others—observers less steeped in our discipline-specific methods, epistemologies, and standards—the podium from which to shape the historical framing of vital public conversations.
- Historians cannot expect decision makers or other potential audiences to appreciate the value of our work if we don't affirm its value ourselves.
- All historical work can be peer-reviewed, whether before or after publication.

In accentuating opportunities presented by publicly engaged and policy-oriented work, the AHA does not intend to diminish the value of traditional forms of scholarship and traditional standards of evaluation; we are not inverting old hierarchies in which monographs reigned in favor of a new order in which public history or other scholarly forms have primacy. Nor are we recommending creating a universe of *additional* expectations or requirements. Institutions will continue to determine criteria for the quantity and quality of scholarly deliverables in the evaluation of candidates for promotion. Many historians will continue to focus on researching and writing traditional peer-reviewed books and articles. This includes works of synthesis that speak to some combination of fellow scholars, students, or public audiences. Synthesis is intellectual work that increases the value of narrower scholarship as well as the discipline itself. Consider also, at the other end of the process,

where historians collect, categorize, and describe primary materials. Such work is scholarly activity in much the same way as the selection and ordering of facts in the creation of a historical narrative. There are many ways to be a historian.

Instead, these guidelines argue that history departments benefit from bigger tents in which many different forms of scholarship coexist and are mutually invigorating. Diversity strengthens our discipline; a department that includes historians working in a variety of modes and genres (as with methods and subfields) enhances the quality of collegiality, teaching, and research.

Nor does the shift imply an abandonment or even relaxation of standards. The challenge is to apply and adapt existing methods and theories of evaluation to a wider range of formats. Candidates can be required to write short memos putting such work into historiographical context as part of their portfolio, adapting customary expectations of clarity, originality, and significance to the relevant genre. A case must be made, at least during a period of transition to these broader definitions, that a particular publication or other product is appropriate to communicate the knowledge and precepts of a professional historian, as articulated in the AHA's *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct* (for example, not all op-eds are works of scholarship).

Historians cannot expect decision makers or other potential audiences to appreciate the value of our work if we don't affirm its value ourselves.

The evaluation of a historian's adherence to these standards has traditionally relied on peer review as a requisite to publication. There is no reason, however, why peer review and other conventional paths of evaluation prior to publication cannot take place *after* work is produced and circulated.

The AHA recognizes the logistical challenges posed by post-hoc peer review. The calendar for peer review is already complicated by factors that depend on an institution's particular criteria. Institutions that consider scholarly "impact" often depend on *predictions* of influence, or they must wait until that influence can be assessed (if only through measures of visibility that can even include word of mouth). With some exceptions and the occasional time lag, the impact of work

directed toward scholarly audiences usually aligns with quality. This is not necessarily true for publicly engaged scholarship, whose influence sometimes derives more from marketing, sensational modes of presentation, catering to prejudices, financial resources, and other factors unrelated to quality. Evaluation that considers public impact should, in all cases, include scrutiny of how such impact was attained, and maintain the standards of scholarship equal to those expected of other eligible formats.

History departments benefit from bigger tents in which many different forms of scholarship coexist and are mutually invigorating.

Once we have liberated notions of what constitutes legitimate scholarship from the constraints of traditional calendars and modes of peer review and accepted the principle that all historical scholarship can be subject to comparable evaluative criteria, the obstacles to broadening genre and format fall away. This broader landscape of historical scholarship might now include (but is not limited to) textbooks, official histories, reference books, op-eds, blog posts, magazine articles, museum exhibitions, public lectures, congressional testimony, oral history projects, expert witness testimony, media appearances, podcasts, and historical gaming. Rather than attempt a comprehensive list of genres, the guidelines proposed here are intended to be expansive and flexible enough to accommodate forms we have yet to anticipate. What the forms thus far envisioned have in common is that they can be peer-reviewed after the work has been disseminated. What remains is the second challenge: how to carry out that evaluation.

Recommendations

Existing standards can be adapted to this broadened notion of scholarly contribution. Procedures, however, will need to change. The AHA proposes an evaluation process in which the candidate and the evaluators engage in a conversation around a series of questions about the work under review. We start from the assumption that there is general agreement within the discipline that appropriate and transparent metrics are essential to evaluating the originality, quality, and significance of historical scholarship, regardless of the form or format it takes. That said, the process of valuing different genres of scholarship offers new challenges as well as opportunities.

Post-Hoc Review Process

All scholarship should be subject to careful professional review, regardless of which stage in the creative process the evaluation takes place. There is no reason such work cannot be peer-reviewed after publication as part of a promotion process. This principle would extend to any format that creates a product, whether written or preserved in other media. A history department can adapt its standards of quality and quantity to any mode of diffusing knowledge, just as we have different criteria for evaluating books, articles, and digital scholarship.

Departments and candidates should acknowledge and account for the different timelines that might be required for post-hoc review. Departments should offer guidance and appropriate mentorship to candidates to help them prepare and arrange for post-hoc review of work, including iterative or staggered assessment.

Criteria

Guidelines or criteria for the evaluation of nontraditional scholarly deliverables will serve not only as a tool for tenure committees; they will also allow candidates planning their portfolios to gather the necessary documentation to support their promotion. Scholarly projects intended for public audiences – exhibitions and public history ventures, digital projects, collecting initiatives, op-eds, reference works, historical gaming, and so on – do not always include citations in their final product. Guidelines for demonstrating the research and historical thinking that went into creating these kinds of scholarship will allow historians to prepare for post-hoc peer review or personnel evaluation while the work is underway.

As a wider variety of modes and formats of diffusion gain acceptance as scholarly work, some of the challenges with assessing them will diminish. Until then, there are interpretive questions that the candidate can help to answer – articulating, for instance, why a particular medium is appropriate, or even better suited, to a particular historical pursuit. Some genres of scholarship involve collaboration with other scholars and work with communities, academic and otherwise. In this context, it might be helpful for a candidate to describe the structure and extent of their collaboration, along with a description of their own specific role(s).

Allowing that these reviews should involve both candidate and assessors, the AHA proposes the following categories of evaluation, to be used in various combinations and with

varying emphases, depending on the form of scholarship under consideration:

1. **Genre and Dissemination:** The candidate should articulate what form the project takes and how it is being circulated, as well as explaining *why* this genre and mode of presentation are optimal for this project (a practice that follows the recommendation made in the *AHA Guidelines on the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship by Historians*). Some genres involve continuous revision, and therefore projects might be iterative, rather than terminal, in form. In such cases, the peer review might involve a different process – and the reviewer might require expertise different – from what might ordinarily be required for an article or book.
2. **Argument and Documentation:** Regardless of genre, the *AHA Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct* (updated 2019) should guide candidates and evaluators. As that document states, “Professional integrity in the practice of history requires awareness of one’s own biases and a readiness to follow sound method and analysis wherever they may lead.” Historians should not misrepresent their sources or omit evidence that runs counter to their interpretations. The *Standards of Professional Conduct* also emphasize the importance of historians documenting the primary and secondary sources on which a work depends. As much as possible, with allowances for genre, candidates should cite or make transparent the sources of their scholarly output. If the genre does not readily accommodate citation, the candidate must be willing to share their sources with evaluators.
3. **Impact and Influence:** Typically, scholarly impact in history is measured by the quality of reviews and the quantity of scholarly citations – the latter a metric that might sometimes be misleading. In addition to these traditional measures, the impact of scholarship might be weighed on other scales. For example, scholarship that is transmitted digitally might have a quantitative metric for impact based on the number of clicks, site users, or amount of site traffic. Candidates should make clear to evaluators the bases of their claims for impact or influence and explain how and why those metrics reflect scholarly influence.
4. **Current and Future Trajectory of the Project:** Some projects represent ongoing scholarly research. These might include new editions of textbooks, website design and curation, construction of scholarly databases, and so forth. Because these projects frequently have no finite deadline, candidates must be able to articulate the state of a project at the start – and the end – of an evaluation period,

accounting for all new work conducted in between. Some institutions emphasize the quality and originality of the new work introduced during the period under evaluation; others will focus on the product itself.

5. **Collaboration:** Some genres of scholarship involve collaboration with other scholars and work with larger communities. When appropriate, the candidate should describe the structure and extent of the collaboration, along with a description of the candidate’s specific role(s) in producing the work under review.

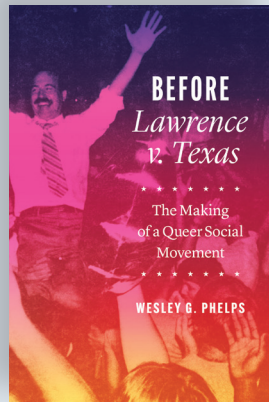
For all these criteria, the AHA will host conversations – at its annual meeting and through online programming – that we hope will generate continuing evolution of standards and procedures.

The AHA has a responsibility to
play a leadership role in
broadening the landscape and
influence of historical scholarship.

Conclusion

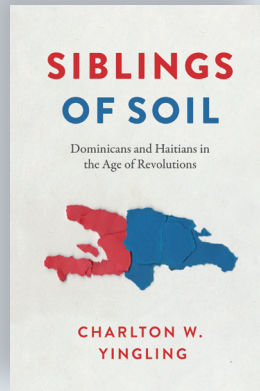
As the AHA declared in the *Guidelines for the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship in History*, “At its heart, scholarship is a documented and disciplined conversation about matters of enduring consequence.” This conversation, and hence the work of the discipline, is enriched and enhanced by the inclusion of diverse forms of scholarship. The AHA has a responsibility to play a leadership role in broadening the landscape and influence of historical scholarship. **P**

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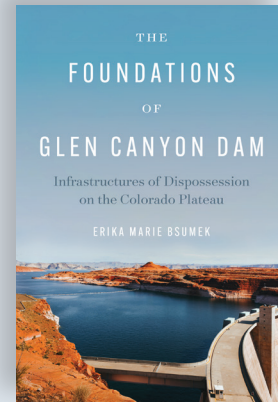
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At the Table of Power

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)

LAURA ANSLEY

NEW BEGINNINGS

The American Historical Review in the 21st Century

Big changes have come to the *American Historical Review*. In August 2021, Mark Philip Bradley (Univ. of Chicago) began a five-year term as editor. Over the last 18 months, Bradley has led a massive effort to redesign the journal, from the kinds of articles that are published to its visual appearance to a relaunch of the *AHR* podcast, so that the journal itself now looks radically different. And there have been changes behind the scenes too: the *AHR* has recently relocated back to the AHA's home in Washington, DC.

The *AHR* was founded in 1895 as an independent publication. After three years, the AHA began to support the *AHR* financially and offered it as a member benefit. Yet the journal maintained its institutional independence until 1915, when it became an official AHA publication. Elements of that initial independence remain. The editor is responsible for broad strategy and making individual article decisions, nominating historians to serve on the board of editors and as associate review editors, and serving as the public face of the journal, both externally and on the AHA Council as an ex officio member. The AHA's Research Division oversees the work of the journal in consultation with the editor.

For five decades, a partnership between the AHA and Indiana University

Bloomington (IU) maintained a geographic separation to match the administrative division. While the AHA is headquartered on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, the *AHR* moved from DC to IU in 1975. As was written in the *AHA Newsletter* at the time, the "AHA Council had become increasingly concerned with costs, especially those generated by an editorial staff in Washington which has consisted primarily of professional editors." This move allowed for lower operation costs, as well as the advantage of working with a research university. The *AHR* editor held a faculty position shared between the AHA and the history department at IU. Other IU faculty members served as associate editors of the journal or consulted for the reviews section. Over the years, dozens of IU graduate students served as editorial assistants (EAs), learning about the processes of scholarly publishing.

Perspectives spoke with several members of the IU community about this relationship. Robert Schneider, editor (2005–15) and interim editor (2016–17), said, "It's hard to overestimate what the *AHR* has meant to Indiana University, and especially the Department of History. Let me just say that the presence of the journal endowed the department with something unique." Alex Lichtenstein, associate editor (2014–15), interim editor (2015–16), and editor (2017–21), agreed, especially for the graduate students who worked as EAs. For those

who worked at 914 Atwater Avenue each year, "it created a really special intellectual community. Not only did these students get excellent training in editorial practice—a valuable skill—they also learned a great deal about the historical profession, good and bad."

During Schneider's and Lichtenstein's terms as editor, the journal made several changes. Structurally, one big shift came during Schneider's editorship. The AHA, under executive director Arnita Jones's leadership, began working with university presses to publish the journal—first the University of Chicago Press, and then Oxford University Press (OUP), which remains the *AHR*'s publisher in 2023. The journal also began broadening its content. Although articles and reviews continued to be the bread and butter of the publication, Schneider and Lichtenstein added new formats, including the featured review, *AHR* Conversations, and retrospective essays on classic historical works. The popular History Unclassified section, started in collaboration with Kate Brown (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), has allowed historians to take an often more personal approach to research. Lichtenstein also expanded the reviews section far beyond the historical monograph to include films, graphic histories, museums, websites, source collections, podcasts, memoirs, and even video games, which, he said, "gave us the opportunity to make some really creative

combinations of works and reviewers.” Near the end of Lichtenstein’s tenure, a massive staff effort and collaboration with OUP integrated the *AHR* into its first online submission system, ScholarOne, and in 2021, the journal transitioned from five issues per year to four while maintaining the same annual page count.

Lichtenstein also took the *AHR* into the digital and audio realm, including the AHA’s first podcast. Daniel Story, an EA from 2016 to 2018, produced *AHR Interview* from its launch in October 2017 until it wrapped up in June 2021. As Story described, “*AHR Interview* was true to its name—it offered more or less

straight-up interviews with minimal editing.” These were conversations with authors focused on individual articles “at a level probably most appealing to other historians and history grad students.”

The History in Focus podcast is moving in the direction of immersive storytelling.

Since February 2022, the podcast has continued as *History in Focus*, which

Story said is “moving more in the direction of immersive storytelling.” As he told *Perspectives*, “In the beginning, I was simply happy to help the journal out, but I quickly caught the audio bug. I really enjoyed editing and, more than that, was growing more and more intrigued by the ways you could tell a compelling story through audio and how that approach was really well suited to history.” After he completed his PhD, he took a position at the University of California, Santa Cruz, as digital scholarship librarian. And now with *History in Focus*, Story gets to think creatively. “Sometimes [an episode] is delving into the historical content explored in an article;

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The December 2021 and September 2022 covers of the *AHR* illustrate the journal’s first redesign since the 1970s.
Courtesy American Historical Review

sometimes it's peeling back the curtain on process; or maybe it's asking bigger questions around the meaning and importance of historical work in different contexts. My favorite pieces include some element of all of these."

Just as the digital environment opens new arenas for content, it also enables new structural possibilities amid a shifting financial landscape. In the mid-2010s, the Council charged the Research Division with preparing a report on the future of the *AHR*. Led by vice president Edmund Russell (Carnegie Mellon Univ.), their research found that continuing to headquarter the *AHR* in Bloomington with a local editor in chief was inadvisable. The division's report, issued in June 2017, recommended a distributed model, in which the editor of the journal could be located anywhere, while the production office could be moved to the AHA headquarters. Alternatively, IU could maintain the production office, but the committee recommended that an editor in chief not be required to relocate.

In January 2018, the Council voted to allow the next editor to remain at their home institution. As Russell said at the time, "The most important considerations during these discussions were the necessity of achieving the AHA's goals for the journal, and ensuring that the journal would best serve the needs of the discipline for the long term." In 2019, the AHA opened a national search to hire an *AHR* editor who was no longer required to relocate. The Council selected Mark Philip Bradley to start as *AHR* editor in August 2021.

The appointment of an off-site editor left the Research Division's second recommendation from 2017 as an issue to remain on the table and be reconsidered as conditions evolved. That evolution accelerated with the impact of

COVID-19 on work environments across the world. If the editorial staff would be in an office for only two or three days per week, it was logical to question whether it made sense to maintain two separate work sites.

The Council's executive committee decided in March 2022 to make the change to a single AHA work site, bringing the production office to the AHA's DC headquarters. A new *AHR* managing editor, Sarah Muncy, joined the AHA staff in July, and Alana Venable was promoted within the AHA staff to deputy managing editor. Associate editor Fei-Hsien Wang (Indiana Univ. Bloomington) continues to do her work on the IU campus, supervising the EAs assigned to the *AHR* in 2022–23. The final team of EAs will work directly with the DC staff in 2023–24, as the journal continues to make the transition to a review process anchored in the work of the associate review editors.

The 21st-century journal needs to operate very differently—not only to survive but to flourish.

This transition fits well with Bradley's vision for the journal. One of the big pitches Bradley brought was the *AHR* History Lab, which would transform the "middle of the journal"—the space between the articles and the reviews—into an innovative, interdisciplinary intellectual space. "I see history being made in and out of the academy in all kinds of diverse ways," Bradley told *Perspectives*, "whether by community activists and visual artists, public historians and archivists, or curators and chefs.

These individuals have found new ways into our practice that historians like me, who are still primarily writing traditional monographs, can learn from." The lab launched in the March 2022 issue and has led to many firsts in *AHR* history, including its first graphic novella and a peer-reviewed scratch-n-sniff card. This space is one way Bradley is attempting to address the uncertain future of scholarly publishing. "Serious financial pressures on print journals, the challenges of open-access protocols, and the changing nature of scholarship in the digital sphere all suggest the 21st-century journal needs to operate very differently—not only to survive but to flourish."

What should readers expect from the *AHR* in 2023? The lab will include projects on deglobalization, agency, artificial intelligence, and digital history. The new #AHRsSyllabus project will offer a series of teaching modules using case-based approaches to exploring the historical method. The journal is also collaborating with the podcast *Sexing History* on the history of a Texas abortion clinic run by a former evangelical minister. The team will produce the first digital-only special issue of the *AHR* in 2024, which will focus on histories of resilience. Overall, the journal strives to serve the interests of historians in the present and is working to showcase the many ways of being a historian and doing history. **P**

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

SEPARATELY TOGETHER

Rethinking Our Image of the Solitary Historian

The discipline of history tends to be solitary—even “isolating” and “lonely,” according to recent *Perspectives* articles. We often lack scientific laboratories, the fieldwork of anthropologists, or the interviews conducted by other social scientists. Co-authorships remain rare. All this can leave historians particularly vulnerable to isolation, burnout, and low morale—which I experienced myself before I learned about co-writing.

Co-writing is the act of writing with others at a fixed time and in the same space, in person or virtually. It is distinct from co-authorship: co-writers are not collaborating on a shared project. Rather, each works on their own research or creative work. My conviction about its usefulness emerges from my own professional struggles. I was fortunate to begin a tenure-track job soon after graduate school, but I arrived unprepared for the challenges of a small teaching-intensive college. My time and focus were directed toward teaching, advising, and service, and I failed to make sufficient time for research and writing.

Unsurprisingly, my research and productivity suffered. I wrote and published, but not as much as I had hoped—and certainly not with joy. I struggled silently. I never reached out to anyone for advice on the

practicalities of scholarship or successful habits of scholar-teachers, since I assumed that I should already know how to do the work. After all, hadn't I finished a dissertation and landed that elusive job? Increasingly, I wondered if perhaps research and academia were not right for me.

I never reached out to anyone, since I assumed that I should already know how to do the work.

In this state of existential crisis, I secured a yearlong unpaid leave and moved away. With time and distance, I focused on research and went into problem-solving mode, consuming as much academic writing advice as possible. I read about maintaining productivity, forming good habits, combating writer's block, and more. I experimented with an expensive online writing group where teams of participants were led by a writing coach, all logging their daily writing sessions. I tried a habit contract—a formal, written commitment to a daily writing habit, with a financial penalty for not following through—with a fellow medievalist. I participated in a standard academic writing group, meeting monthly with three other faculty members to discuss

one another's research. Nothing *really* worked for me.

Finally, I reached out to friends and colleagues, seeking their advice and asking about their struggles. Two suggested co-writing: a friend told me about the website *Shut Up & Write*, while a new colleague revealed that she had organized co-writing sessions at her former institution. I thought co-writing had the potential to create strong habits with built-in accountability for my writing practice. I returned to campus with an idea and the support of a few colleagues who were also silently struggling to make research progress.

And so Write Now, Right Now (WNRN) was born in the fall of 2016. The notion was simple: scheduled times and spaces in which faculty could sit and write. No introductions, no workshopping, no instructions—just come and write. It was difficult at first, dealing with an erratic schedule and shifting rooms and dragging along a makeshift coffee bar, but faculty showed up from different departments and for myriad reasons. One humanist had been talking about his book project for years but had not yet managed to sit down and write it. Another showed up discouraged by a multiyear fallow period in their work after achieving tenure. A tremendously prolific and well-funded scientist with collaborators elsewhere liked the idea of writing alongside faculty at our

institution. A newly arrived social scientist was drawn by the prospect of meeting people and finding community. To these and so many other faculty, the benefits quickly became apparent. By the spring of 2017, we found routine and stability: we equipped a room in a science building with a Keurig, a mini-refrigerator, and cozy lighting and decor and held regular hours hosted by multiple faculty.

More than six years later, WNRN hosts at least 12 co-writing hours per week during the semester (nine per week in summers), alongside three-day writing sprints during breaks. Dozens of faculty, representing all divisions and ranks and both contingent and tenure track, have participated, and all have boasted increased productivity. Our co-writing community has demonstrable outcomes that we do our best to quantify, logging numbers of participants; hours spent writing; and submitted and accepted articles, books, grants, and other projects. Our success has earned us a dedicated space in a newly renovated building, a substantial budget, and a course release for the organizer.

I have been astounded by WNRN's impact: my one humanist colleague not only wrote but published his book, and the other ended his slump and earned promotion. I have created strong habits that keep me writing whether it is summer break, a teaching-heavy semester, or sabbatical, and by my best estimate, my productivity has tripled. Equally importantly, I have found joy again in my writing. Writing can often be agonizing, but my anxiety and stress have largely lifted because my relationship to my work has changed. Writing is not something I *must* do or must isolate myself to do; it is something I *get* to do and do alongside great people. As an extrovert, I had found it difficult to choose



After exhausting all other options, Dana M. Polanichka gained strong writing habits through the practice of co-writing.

Kelly Sikkema/Unsplash

solitary research over the engaged work of the teacher, committee member, or adviser. I was drawn to working with students or even attending faculty meetings because I longed to be with others. Co-writing means that writing no longer requires isolation. That vital role of community in my work has been an unexpected realization.

When contrasted with writing groups, co-writing communities are profoundly inclusive. Traditional writing groups must be limited in size to allow

everyone the opportunity to regularly share their own work for critique. Such groups also tend to form around faculty members in adjacent disciplines to ensure helpful feedback—what could I say about a mathematician's research? In contrast, a co-writing community asks only that participants show up and write. One's project or discipline is unimportant, and space alone limits the number of participants. This inclusivity has created a truly interdisciplinary community. On most days, this means at least one political scientist, a

planetary scientist, an ancient philosopher, a religious studies professor, a Russian literature specialist, usually an education specialist or biologist, and, of course, a historian are all in the same room, each of us staring with great concentration at our laptop screens.

Feelings of solidarity arise simply from the presence of other faculty. Before co-writing, I knew that my colleagues were engaged in research because I heard announcements of publications, but I had never seen them perform the work leading to those publications. Now we observe one another's research and writing daily. Sometimes we share writing or ask for advice on research, other times we celebrate successes or seek consolation after rejections, and often we discuss our habits and tips for productivity. Through co-writing, we have fostered a strong collegial community, and our participants' overall morale has increased at a time when many of our colleagues in higher education are experiencing the opposite.

This community was particularly critical during the pandemic. When campus cleared out in March 2020 for remote learning, we shifted to a virtual format. Rather than inviting colleagues to write in a physical room, we shared a Zoom link. Two hours a day, we logged in, shared quick hellos, and then turned off our microphones (and some their cameras) and co-wrote just as we had in person. It was neither as fun nor as well attended as our in-person sessions, but it maintained both our habits and our community during a difficult and isolating time. The virtual format also ushered in positive transformation and growth by highlighting previously invisible accessibility issues. Once our co-writing community returned to a physical room, we made every in-person writing session simultaneously virtual. Now faculty on sabbatical, at home sick,

abroad for the semester, or not wishing to travel on a nonteaching day can virtually join the on-campus, in-person writers.

These habits and communities should continue throughout our careers, even during teaching semesters.

Co-writing should not feel unnatural to historians. When we go on research trips to archives and libraries, we read and write alongside fellow researchers, working away quietly until breaking for coffee or lunch and informally discussing our work. These habits and communities should continue throughout our careers, even during teaching semesters. Nor does co-writing mean changing the nature of the work itself. My research questions, methodologies, and writing style are the same, but my habits, productivity, and mindset have improved tremendously. And building a co-writing community is low cost and low risk. You can, as I did, begin by finding a few faculty friends willing to try it out, booking an on-campus meeting room, and advertising the schedule to the entire faculty. Then you need only show up at those times and places and write. In the worst-case scenario, no one else attends, but you still spent that time writing and developing a habit. In the best case, you build a vibrant co-writing community that increases productivity and improves faculty morale.

One critical lesson from my co-writing community can benefit even solitary writers: we must talk more about *how* we work—especially with graduate students, historians from

underrepresented and minoritized groups, pretenure junior colleagues, and contingent faculty. More than discussing schools of historiography, theory, and methodology, more than debating how to interpret sources, historians must discuss how we manage to sit down in our chairs, put our fingertips to the keyboard or pens to paper, and produce scholarship. What habits and routines improve our work? What motivates us? What deflates us? All scholars struggle; we must stop pretending that earning a doctorate means one knows how to be productive. The events of the last few years have encouraged us to rethink our lives, our careers, our teaching, and more. We must also reimagine our image of the solitary historian and work to build a community that will ensure a robust future for our discipline. **P**

Dana M. Polanichka is an associate professor of history at Wheaton College (Massachusetts).

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARC MONAGHAN

AHA23

A Philadelphia Story



Book art in the Notary Hotel greeted the more than 2,600 historians who gathered in Philadelphia in January.

IN A 2013 *Perspectives* column, executive director James Grossman argued forcefully that disagreement and debate stand at the cornerstone of the study and practice of history, going so far as to announce it as the theme of the 2014 annual meeting. The spirit of constructive debate continues to animate the field 10 years later.

The 2,610 attendees of the 2023 meeting in Philadelphia once again came together to discuss and disagree. From racial integration in sports to the place of history in social justice work, from divisive concepts to the integration of new historical theories and methods into the classroom, historians from across the discipline presented their best arguments and thoughtfully engaged with the criticism of their peers. For those who did not attend and those who wish to remember, *Perspectives* offers a snapshot of some of the discussions from this year's meeting.

—Laura Ansley, Whitney E. Barringer, Lauren Brand, L. Renato Grigoli, and Sarah Weicksel

PLAY BALL!

Fans of America's pastime found a particular treat in Philadelphia. At the presidential session "Baseball and Social Change in America," four sports historians gathered alongside Allan "Bud" Selig, commissioner emeritus of Major League Baseball, to discuss the progress made over the 75 years since Jackie Robinson became the first Black player on a major-league team.

Selig co-teaches a course on baseball at his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin–Madison, with historian David MacLaren McDonald. The former commissioner admitted that he had aspired to be a history professor when earning his BA and that baseball history has now been his focus for many years. According to Selig, "What Branch Rickey did in 1945—bringing Jackie Robinson first to the Montreal club and then to the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947—is the most important moment in baseball history." Robinson and other Black players were followed by Latino players by the 1960s. Though Rachel Robinson, Jackie's wife, has said that he would give the league a C grade, Selig says, "We still have come a long way."

The historians on the panel pushed the audience to think beyond the big names and the MLB. Adrian Burgos Jr. (Univ. of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign) pointed out that racial integration was not a moment but a process, which was "intensely local, but with far-reaching implications." Integration has also been flattened in our memory. The Pittsburgh Pirates started an all-Black lineup on September 1, 1971, the first

such game in MLB history, which has been recognized in retrospectives as a major milestone. Yet four of these players were Afro-Latino, a detail often elided. Players from the Spanish-speaking Americas played in the MLB before and after Robinson broke the color line.

The ballparks themselves
have had a major impact on
surrounding communities.

At the Smithsonian Institution, curator Margaret Salazar-Porzio (National Museum of American History) has been working to recover these stories. In developing *¡Pleibol! In the Barrios and the Big Leagues*, Salazar-Porzio and her colleagues visited 17 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico to talk about Latinos and baseball in local communities and families. They collected over 150 oral histories and created a bilingual exhibit that emphasizes how the story of baseball is about more than the MLB—as she said, "This history is defined by communities." *¡Pleibol!* also incorporates women into the story, as baseball players themselves or in support roles as wives and mothers, selling concessions, making uniforms, and even in the front office, with Linda Alvarado, co-owner of the Colorado Rockies.

Black and Latinx experiences off the field matter too. As Frank Guridy (Columbia Univ.) elucidated, the ballparks themselves—since the 1980s, often built in public–private partnerships that have been mostly funded by the public—have had a major impact on surrounding communities. In the Bronx, for example, Yankee Stadium's location has shaped traffic and subway stops that bring in "an army of fans" from the suburbs, who spend their money in the stadium rather than in the local businesses that surround it. Black and Brown service workers interact with these fans as security and concessions workers, in stadiums that have more pricey amenities than ever and with ticket prices that are increasingly inaccessible to working- or middle-class families.

Baseball isn't solely a US story. Sayuri Guthrie Shimizu (Rice Univ.) underscored how the sport has been exported and become a vehicle for social change globally. In Japan, now 150 years into its own baseball history, the sport was a modernizing influence with a large impact on school athletics and issues of gender and social class. Japan brought baseball to its colonial projects in Korea and Taiwan, and it became a site of resistance in those colonies. Baseball became diplomacy, a "reflective lens" of America's "soft power," as Shimizu argued. In the 1930s, as tensions rose between the two nations,

baseball became a symbol of US–Japan cooperation and a propaganda tool portraying the two nations as “brothers bonded by a shared love” of the game. And as Shimizu pointed out, the game was important for Japanese American communities too. The sport was popular in Japanese internment camps during World War II, and a number of those players went to Japan after the war to play professionally. The massive casualties the Japanese experienced included many ballplayers, and Japanese Americans became a core part of Japanese baseball.

Social change isn’t over when it comes to the sport. As audience members raised in the Q&A period, the integration of women, LGBTQ+ people, and others into baseball spaces has not yet been achieved, and African American participation is on the decline from kids’ athletics up to the majors. Yet the stories discussed at this session show that America’s pastime never stops evolving, and we can expect that to continue for players, coaches, umpires, and fans alike.

—LA

HARD CONVERSATIONS

Attendees gathered on Thursday evening for a plenary on “The Past, the Present, and the Work of Historians.” Session chair Earl Lewis (Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor) was joined by panelists Herman Bennett (Graduate Center, CUNY), Rashauna Johnson (Univ. of Chicago), Jane Kamensky



At the Thursday plenary, (left to right) Rashauna Johnson, Jane Kamensky, Carol Symes, Earl Lewis, and Herman Bennett had the opportunity “to ponder what it means to connect the past and present as historians.”

(Harvard Univ.), and Carol Symes (Univ. of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign).

Lewis opened the conversation by explaining that the session’s intent was to generate discussion about questions raised by James H. Sweet’s September presidential column in *Perspectives* and an opportunity, as Lewis put it, “to ponder what it means to connect the past and present as historians.” Lewis began by asking, “In your view, what is the historian’s responsibility to the work of social justice, if any?” He encouraged panelists to “feel free to challenge the definition of social justice,” asking, “Is this a concept with a universal definition?” In the wide-ranging conversation that followed, the panelists explored the challenges and opportunities posed by historians’ methodologies, reflected on 19th-century legacies of the professionalization of history, and historicized the concept of social justice.

“Black history has a history,
and it emerged in response
to a certain history.”

The term “social,” Bennett observed, “does an enormous amount of work for people to dog whistle about certain kinds of changes they aren’t comfortable with.” He wanted to “trouble the question about social justice.” All historians’ work, he continued, engages the past and present in certain kinds of ways. “The real issue is: Why social justice now? Why can we say that this country is moving into different terrains it hasn’t experienced?”

Symes asserted that “doing the work as citizens of our society and as historians doesn’t have to be mutually exclusive.” Pointing to current abuses of the medieval and premodern past, she argued that the work of historians, “since the professionalization of our discipline in the 19th century,” has often engaged in “the work of injustice,” including empire, colonization, subjugation, and “the apologetics for those movements.” We all share a common territory, she noted: “We are working on territory that is colonized by modernity.”

The injustices Symes referenced contributed to the formulation of dominant narratives grounded in racism to which the field of Black history was founded in response. As Johnson explained, “Black history has a history, and it emerged in response to a certain history.” In order “to tell different stories that aren’t rooted in histories of anti-Blackness,” she argued, scholars of Black history “have had to by default take up the cause of justice. And think of the cause of justice as deeply



At the "Teaching Things Workshop," AHA teaching resource developer Krista Grensavitch (*right*) instructs a participant on how to use a 19th-century stereoscope.

tied to the work of history." How, Johnson asked, "do we think about the generative possibilities of this moment?"

Kamensky suggested flipping the question about social justice and challenged the audience to consider, "What does it mean to deal ethically with people in different times and places that are different from our own?" People in the past, she pointed out, "made different choices and will think differently than we do." Historians, then, Kamensky said, must spend time "thinking about what we ethically and morally owe to the past" while recognizing "that we do this work in a vexed present." "One of the things historians can do in the world," Kamensky argued, "is to have hard conversations, seeking truth with evidence."

Continuing with Bennett's question of "Why now?" Lewis asked the panelists, "What in this moment has led us from social integration to equality to social justice?"

Activists, Johnson noted, have captured national and global attention. As historians, we "are now grappling with the ways questions from activists can help the questions we pose." But, she emphasized, "not necessarily the answers we generate." Historians "are members of the society as well," she noted, and as a result, "the questions we ask of the past are themselves historically contingent."

Bennett observed that many historians might be "seen as social justice warriors because we are trying to make those people's audibility legible to us" in the present. Activists in the 19th century constructed the disciplines we continue to engage, he argued. But "we don't see them as activists. We don't see the urgency they had. And part of that urgency was white supremacy." Sometimes, Bennett observed, we are

"just trying to make people's histories audible." And if we "don't have those histories, we don't have the knowledge of how to move out of the malaise we are in at the contemporary moment."

This moment requires many of the historians' skills, which, Kamensky argued, "are absolutely crucial to rebuilding our democracy." She drew contrasts between the urgency of the present and the long methodological processes by which historians research and interpret the past. "We are people that do slow and deliberate work, living in times that demand a greater sense of urgency," she argued. How do historians, Kamensky asked, "leverage the fierce urgency of now, without being captured by it?"

"Is there a danger," Lewis asked, "if historians turn their back on the present?" Bennett responded with an emphatic yes. Other people, he argued, "will and *are* filling that space at a rapid rate. We're spending decades, and they're producing 140 characters." Many histories have been lost, and there is more source material to uncover, Bennett added, but we do not have the number of people needed to do the research "and produce other kinds of histories." Nor do we have the money, Kamensky added. Symes agreed, emphasizing that historians need to ensure that collaborative work is properly funded as well as rewarded.

Johnson noted that one of the things she likes about history "is how it helps us figure out how we got where we are" and "how human actions could lead us to a different place." As historians look for new ways and avenues to advance this conversation, Bennett emphasized the need for "public education. Period. Support for teachers. Historical training from beginning to the end. It helps young people transform and have a stake in the society in which they live."

—SW

PEDAGOGICAL PRIORITIES

This year's meeting featured an abundance of resources for teachers at both the secondary and collegiate levels. Whether you were looking to incorporate digital resources and methodologies into an existing lesson plan or craft a syllabus from current historiographic trends, there was a session for you.

Digital methods for the classroom were at the heart of "What's Special about Maps?," in which discussants explained their use of digital mapping technology to facilitate

student learning. Sharika D. Crawford (US Naval Academy), for example, has students each pick a single slave trader and map their voyages in the Atlantic. This exercise leverages the skill sets and interests of her students—most of whom are STEM majors and all of whom are required to know how to use a map—to help them think about the broader historical assumptions on which such maps rested. Specifically, she asks them to probe whether there really was an Atlantic world and what borders and boundaries mean in an oceanic world. Alex Hidalgo (Texas Christian Univ.) uses maps as a means to move away from assigning a traditional research paper. Instead, he tasks students in his course on the conquest of Mexico with annotating the Uppsala Map of Tenochtitlan, a project that not only encourages them to think thematically about a visual medium but also teaches them how to work together in a group with primary sources. Yet despite the engaging projects presented by all the panelists, the fundamental question of the session still lingered: Are maps truly a unique pedagogical source and approach, or are they simply an underutilized choice among a variety of options?

What do borders and boundaries mean in an oceanic world?

Those interested in developing similar projects from digital resources found an abundance of riches at the “Digital Project Showcase,” which has become a staple of the annual meeting. In lightning-round presentations, participants shared projects ranging from databases of enslaved individuals in the United States to keyword analysis of newspaper articles, georeferenced historical tours, and archival tools for images.

The “Teaching Things Workshop” introduced participants to strategies and resources for incorporating artifacts into high school and college classrooms.

“State of the Field for Busy Teachers” is also becoming a regular feature of the annual meeting. This year’s iteration focused on world history and featured high school teachers and community college professors, with talks designed to help all teachers keep up to date with the latest historiographic and methodological approaches. Those looking for new resources for their classrooms or new ways of thinking about lesson design should make sure to attend the 2024 annual meeting in San Francisco, where pedagogy will again be front and center.

—LRG

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

From our streets to public schools, communities across the United States have been grappling in recent years over the significance of names in our public spaces. What, after all, does it mean to have everything from elementary schools to public thoroughfares named for Confederate generals?

From the perspective of Ty Seidule (US Military Academy, ret., and Hamilton Coll.), we are honoring those who committed treason against the United States. And perhaps more egregiously, we’ve been honoring these traitors on US military installations. A self-described “soldier, scholar, and white southerner,” Seidule attended Robert E. Lee Elementary School and Washington and Lee College, where at graduation he took his oath to join the US Army in the Lee Chapel. As a professor at West Point, he lived on Lee Road, near Lee Gate, in the Lee housing complex. After retiring as a brigadier general, Seidule made it his mission to convince the military and the American public that change was needed. In his book *Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner’s Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause*, many op-eds, and hundreds of talks, Seidule has led the charge to remove Confederate commemoration from the US military. In the summer of 2020, these efforts bore fruit with the naming commission, a bipartisan panel charged with identifying all such military assets and creating a plan to remove or modify them.

Attendees at “Making Treason Odious Again: Perspectives from the Naming Commission and the Army’s War on the Lost Cause” heard from three naming commission participants about how this process unfolded. Seidule appeared alongside Charles Bowery Jr. (US Army Center of Military History), who serves as chief historian of the US Army, and Connor Williams (Yale Univ.), the commission’s lead historian. The session was chaired by Jacqueline Whitt (Army War Coll.), with comment by James Grossman (AHA).



Shelly Lowe (right), chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, visited for a plenary conversation with AHA executive director James Grossman.

For Bowery, his role as executive director of the Center of Military History is “telling the army’s story to the nation, the public, and its own soldiers,” so this reevaluation has allowed him and his staff to “help to create a sense of corporate belonging to an organization older than the nation itself, and reflect the nation” in its diversity, as well as the diversity of soldiers who serve. This is “public history on an industrial scale,” and both the nation and its soldiers “deserve an honest, inclusive version of the past.”

This is “public history on an industrial scale.”

But that has meant grappling with the public’s understanding of the war, the Confederacy, and the Lost Cause mythology. The commissioners made a concerted effort, as public servants, to listen to anyone who wanted to speak to them during this process. Though they didn’t always agree with what they were told, Williams said, they heard from Americans around the South and around the country. The Confederate mythology clearly still has a strong hold on the public imagination, especially for those white Americans who have family stories passed down from their great-great-grandfathers who fought for the CSA. But as Grossman pointed out, quoting Steven Conn, “Heritage makes you feel comfortable, makes you feel good about yourself. History in fact makes you uncomfortable. The historical method—historical thinking—suggests that you ask questions. That by nature is going to make you uncomfortable.”

So what was the biggest challenge for the commission? Bowery pointed out that the scope of the task is monumental. In the end, 1,111 pieces of Confederate commemoration are being removed or changed. By the end of 2023, the process should be complete, yet it requires buy-in from across the army ranks. When an installation name changes, it isn’t just the sign at the entrance: it’s dozens of facilities on base, including their signage, letterhead, and other administrative trails that will require a major investment of both money and time.

One might assume that pushback would have been immense in these politically divided times. Yet Seidule said that among the members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, they had unanimous support. Privately, he was told that Republicans didn’t want to make it an issue to give a political “truncheon” to their Democratic opponents, and even right-wing pundits have so far been quiet on the commission.

Though this is unexpected—and may not hold, as word gets out and the renaming starts—what’s truly remarkable about

the commission’s work, Grossman commented, is the way that their report and recommendations “rethink how we define what a hero is.” In the work they did, “it’s not just taking off Confederate names and adding names of Black people. It’s taking off names of generals, commanders, powerful people, and putting on names of ordinary people.” One of the new honorees helped soldiers receive their mail; another was a helicopter pilot who evacuated 5,000 individuals to safety. For Grossman, “I wonder if the teachable moment is not just about the Civil War and treason, but what constitutes heroism.”

From the audience, David Blight (Yale Univ.) asked if, considering how little negative public response there has been, they panelists thought “the Lost Cause ideology is on the run forever, or is it finding different channels, paths, and forums?” Seidule sees a major difference between when the army investigated whether his work was political speech when he stated publicly less than a decade ago that the Civil War was fought over slavery, and now, when the army has supported the commission. Yet Bowery has been surprised at how the trope of reconciliation is often foremost in army leaders’ minds—they haven’t made connections among slavery, the war, reconciliation, and the Lost Cause. To him, the mythology is insidious, simply morphing rather than going away. The challenge is to continue beating the drum for honest history—a mission that draws together the ranks of historians.

—LA

CONTEXTUALIZING DIVISIVE CONCEPTS

Throughout the weekend, historians and teachers discussed the increasing pressures on historical scholarship and teaching, particularly since the rise of “divisive concepts” bills began in January 2021. How can historians navigate these challenges while under such governmental and institutional pressures? The overwhelming recommendation from these sessions’ participants was to do what historians do best: seek context.

A Friday-morning session titled “A Conversation on Navigating the Landscape of Teaching ‘Divisive Concepts’” featured representatives from the AHA and the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), who provided a broad contextual overview of the current situation. Julia Brookins, AHA special projects coordinator, explained what state social studies standards are, how the cycles of revision for these standards

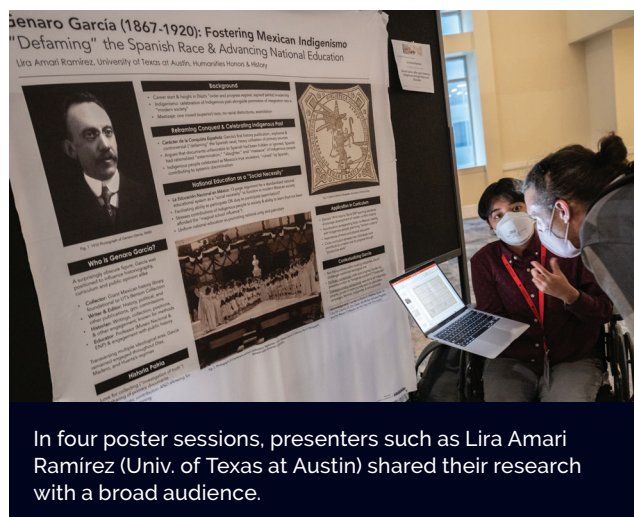
typically occur, and why these processes have become controversial. Larry Paska, NCSS executive director, described recent months as a “whiplash moment,” noting that in the past, most NCSS advocacy highlighted the lack of resources provided to social studies compared to other subjects. Today, the NCSS must also fight against the notion that history teachers are indoctrinating children.

A roundtable session organized by the *Radical History Review*, “Fighting the Culture War Attack on History: Strategies and Experiences,” provided additional context about the crises created by anti-CRT activists, which panelist Sarah Louise Sklaw (New York Univ.) described as “undermining the civic mission of schools.” Adam Sanchez (Central High School, Philadelphia) noted that while the response to anti-CRT accusations is usually “We don’t teach CRT,” we should also respond with a question: “What accounts for the persistence of racial inequality?” Mary Nolan (New York Univ.) described the organizations and individuals financing anti-CRT legislation and activism and argued that historians must get as many people as possible together to “strategize and coordinate” a response.

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Another *Radical History Review* session, “The ‘Ed Scare’—The Current Conservative Panic over the Academy and Its Antecedents,” explored reactionary movements during the Red Scare of the 1940s and 1950s and how their effects on the academy can be instructive today. Ellen Schrecker (Yeshiva Univ.) said that while McCarthy-era attempts to muzzle professors and scholarship were successful, they occurred at a point in time when the American public had a great deal of respect for higher education. Today, in contrast, the academy and the history profession are undergoing several concurrent crises that undermine their ability to fend off attacks, not least of which is the shift from tenured to contingent faculty. Eddie R. Cole (Univ. of California, Los Angeles) argued that the activities of HBCUs during the civil rights era model alternative paths for campus leaders to strategically advocate and act within a larger reactionary society.

In “‘Divisive Concepts’ in High School Classrooms around the World,” white supremacy emerged as the core source of conflict in history debates around the English-speaking world.



In four poster sessions, presenters such as Lira Amari Ramírez (Univ. of Texas at Austin) shared their research with a broad audience.

Abigail Branford (Oxford Univ.) explained that in the UK and South Africa, teaching the history of the British Empire often causes controversy. Official guidance in the UK dictates that the history of empire must be taught in a “pros and cons” style that may acknowledge the racist and genocidal parts of British imperial history while simultaneously describing the “benefits” colonized peoples received by being part of the empire. Branford also noted that in South Africa, the history of apartheid has recently been challenged as placing apartheid completely in the past, without connecting South Africa’s current social or economic problems to their roots in the old apartheid system. The UK is only beginning to confront these challenges, as demographic changes have prompted reckoning with their imperial past. Miranda Johnson (Univ. of Otago) explained the lack of any formal history education in New Zealand prior to 10th grade and that the recent effort to design and implement the first nationwide history curriculum had mostly focused on New Zealand’s Indigenous peoples. Johnson noted that New Zealand is also undergoing demographic changes and pondered how the focus on Indigenous history in the new curriculum would affect other growing demographic groups, such as Asian immigrants, who “are not well represented in this new curriculum.” Hasan Kwame Jeffries (Ohio State Univ.) noted that regional demographics in the United States often determine where battles over so-called divisive concepts have flared up.

Erasure and omissions persist in standards and curriculum in US classrooms. At “Erasing the Black Freedom Struggle: How State Standards Fail to Teach the Truth about Reconstruction,” chair Mimi Eisen (Zinn Education Project) and panelists Nancy Raquel Mirabal (Univ. of Maryland, College Park), Tiffany Mitchell Patterson (District of Columbia Public Schools), and Adam Sanchez (Central High School, Philadelphia) presented the Zinn Education Project’s 2022



Edward Muir (Northwestern Univ.) took the gavel as AHA president on Saturday evening.

report, *Erasing the Black Freedom Struggle: How State Standards Fail to Teach the Truth about Reconstruction*. Among their key findings is that instruction focuses on “a top-down history of Reconstruction, focused on government . . . with little emphasis on ordinary Black people and their organizing strategies”; does not name or contend with “white supremacy or white terror”; and does not connect the legacies of Reconstruction to the present day. Additionally, the report argues that instructors do not receive adequate support to be able to teach Reconstruction. There are also concerns that teachers are particularly afraid to teach the subject, lest they face punishment mandated in divisive concepts legislation. Patterson walked through the Reconstruction sections of the proposed District of Columbia K–12 social studies standards and how they directly confront the deficiencies that the report identified.

A final *Radical History Review* roundtable, titled “Teaching the Truth in Secondary Schools during Contentious Times,” featured public school teachers from the New York City area. The discussion illuminated how, even in states like New York, where no divisive concepts legislation has passed, teachers still feel pressure from administrators, parents, and students. Imani Hinson (Uncommon Charter High School, Brooklyn) noted that “we are doing kids a disservice by not teaching [them] how to disagree with each other.” She also identified a conflation between difficult and controversial topics. Teaching and learning about the Holocaust and the transatlantic slave trade, for example, can cause discomfort because they are difficult topics, not because they are controversial. As

panelist Chris Dier (Benjamin Franklin High School, New Orleans) said, ultimately, “teaching truthful history to kids brings joy and hope.”

On Sunday, the AHA’s Mapping the Landscape of Secondary US History Education research team presented the preliminary findings of their research. The AHA research team—Whitney E. Barringer, Lauren Brand, and Nicholas Kryczka—explained how their work attempts to capture “an accurate picture of what we teach about our history” by investigating how history curriculum is shaped from the state level to the classroom in nine different states. The team provided a history of how social studies and standards-based reform movements in the 20th and 21st centuries set the stage for current debates. Using nationwide legislative data, they demonstrated how legislation affecting social studies instruction and subject matter inclusion or prohibition comes in waves. Using Texas and Iowa as examples of how “vastly different and complex ecosystems” affect the production of curriculum, the team closed with an overview of its approach to curriculum appraisal. The AHA hopes that by the completion of the project in 2024, we will be able to share a more complete picture of what is being taught across the country—and that this research will equip historians and teachers alike to promote an accurate depiction of the past in our US history classrooms.

—WEB and LB

ON TO SAN FRANCISCO

On Sunday, attendees found a new way to close out their conference experience. At “Continuing Conversations,” AHA staff provided space for one last discussion. Attendees from a variety of backgrounds swapped stories and insights based on their experiences in Philadelphia, with topics ranging from the AHA’s Lizzo stickers and the panel on monsters to the importance of creating opportunities for attendees to make new connections that can carry on beyond the end of the meeting.

The 137th annual meeting will be held January 4–7, 2024, in San Francisco, California. Proposals for sessions that advance the study, teaching, and public presentation of history are due February 15, 2023. We hope that you will submit a proposal and that you will join us next year. **P**

LIZZY MEGGYESY

A NEW FACE AT THE AHA

Meet Brendan Gillis

The AHA is pleased to welcome Brendan Gillis as manager of teaching and learning. In this role, Brendan oversees the Association's many teaching and learning initiatives, which celebrate innovative pedagogy and promote the interests of both educators and students of history.

Brendan began his historical education with an AB in history from Harvard University, followed by an MPhil in historical studies from the University of Cambridge. In 2015, he earned his PhD in history from Indiana University Bloomington (IU). Brendan taught for a year as a visiting assistant professor at Miami University of Ohio, after which he spent a year researching and writing at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, as a Hench Post-Dissertation Fellow.

This new job is not Brendan's first stint at the AHA. From 2010 to 2012, Brendan worked as an editorial assistant for the *American Historical Review* when it was housed at IU. There, he was involved in coordinating every stage of the book review process for new

monographs. "I learned an incredible amount about history and the historical discipline, and I developed some really great friendships with other EAs," Brendan told *Perspectives*. "I'm proud of the work that I did for the *AHR* and that my name is listed on the masthead for the issues I had a hand in creating."

In the fall of 2017, he became an assistant professor of history at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. At Lamar, he also served as the assistant director of the Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast. Brendan credits this position as helping him "develop a rich appreciation for the pedagogy of place."

As manager of teaching and learning, Brendan looks forward to the opportunity of addressing some larger, systemic issues facing the historical discipline. He cites the last five years teaching at a public regional university that serves a majority-minority student population as an inspiration. "I love the work that I did in the classroom, but I also came to care a great deal about advocating for my students and for my colleagues," he says. In moving from teaching to a position that supports teachers and students, he is looking forward to learning about the pedagogy and learning taking place in classrooms across the country.

When not working or parenting his three-year-old child, Brendan enjoys playing the viola, cooking, and reading crime novels. He is an accomplished amateur musician; for a few years, he was the principal violist of the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra and served briefly as a board member. "I'll even occasionally bring my viola to class when I need musical examples for a lecture," said Brendan. Orchestra is not his only hobby that has crossed into the classroom—his affection for crime novels inspired him to develop and teach a course at Lamar called a History of Britain in 12 Murders. "I loved it, and I think many of the students did too."

Please extend Brendan a warm welcome to the AHA! **P**

Lizzy Meggyesy is the research and publications assistant at the AHA.



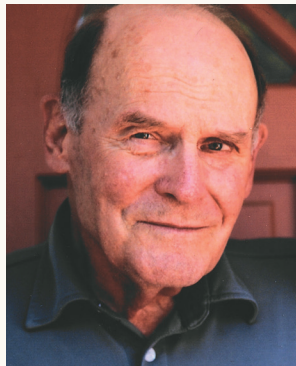
Brendan Gillis

ACTIONS BY THE AHA COUNCIL

June 2022 to January 2023

Through email communications from June 21 to December 19, 2022; at a teleconference meeting held on October 3, 2022; and at meetings on January 5 and 8, 2023, the Council of the American Historical Association took the following actions:

- Endorsed the LGBTQI+ Data Inclusion Act.
- Issued *History, the Supreme Court, and Dobbs v. Jackson: Joint Statement from the AHA and the OAH* expressing dismay that the US Supreme Court “declined to take seriously the historical claims of our [amicus curiae] brief” in its *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* decision.
- Sent a letter to Virginia governor Glenn Youngkin affirming “the importance of input from qualified historians” in deliberations about monuments in public spaces.
- Signed on to an amicus curiae brief in *Haaland v. Brackeen*.
- Appointed the following members of the 2024 Annual Meeting Program Committee: Brittany Adams (Irvine Valley Coll.), Maurice Crandall (Arizona State Univ.), Krista Goff (Univ. of Miami), Daniel Gutierrez (Harvard-Westlake School), and James Palmitessa (Western Michigan Univ.).
- Approved the appointment of the following AHR Associate Review Editors for terms ending in June 2025: Ellen Boucher (Amherst Coll.), Shennette Garrett-Scott (Texas A&M Univ.), and Ndubueze Mbah (Univ. at Buffalo, SUNY).
- Sent a letter to the South Dakota Board of Education Standards opposing its revision process for social studies standards.
- Approved the selection of Bryan Stevenson, founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative and law professor at New York University School of Law, to receive the John Lewis Award for Public Service to the Discipline of History.
- Endorsed the Campaign to Establish the Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park.
- Established the Tikkun Olam Award for the Promotion of Historical Literacy.
- Approved removing the phrase “and who have markedly assisted the work of American historians in the scholar’s country” from the Honorary Foreign Member selection criteria.
- Approved a request by the Royal Historical Society of the Netherlands to translate the *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct* into Dutch.
- Approved the minutes of the June 2022 Council meeting and the October 2022 teleconference meeting.
- Approved the interim minutes of the Council from June through December 2022.
- Approved the appointments recommended by the 2023 Committee on Committees.
- Approved the *Guidelines for Broadening the Definition of Historical Scholarship*.
- Approved the nomination of the 2023 Honorary Foreign Member (to be announced in fall 2023).
- Appointed Mary Ann Irwin (California State Univ.) to co-chair the Local Arrangements Committee for the 2024 annual meeting in San Francisco. A second co-chair will be appointed via email.
- Appointed Tamika Y. Nunley (Cornell Univ.) as chair and Gabriel Paquette (Univ. of Maine) as co-chair of the 2025 Annual Meeting Program Committee.
- Appointed William Wechsler to a second five-year term as AHA treasurer, beginning July 2023.
- Approved Reacting Consortium, Inc., as an AHA affiliate.
- Approved changes to the *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct*, including updates to hiring guidelines and recommendations for social media.
- Approved renaming the John H. Dunning Prize to the AHA Prize in American History, to be awarded for an author’s first book or its scholarly equivalent.
- Approved a proposal to establish a Middle East history prize, on the condition of raising the minimum funds required for AHA prizes (currently \$50,000).
- Received the audit for fiscal year 2022.
- Approved changes to the AHA’s Investment Guidelines.



John W. Shy

1931–2022

Military Historian

John W. Shy, professor emeritus of history at the University of Michigan and a leading authority on Anglo-American military history, died on April 8, 2022, in his 91st year.

Shy graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1952 and served as a US Army officer in Japan until 1955. He returned to the United States and attended graduate school in history, earning an MA at the University of Vermont in 1957 and a PhD from Princeton University in 1961. After teaching at Princeton, he joined the Michigan history department, where he remained from 1967 until his retirement in 1995.

He was admired and honored for his sound scholarship, clear prose, and, above all, broad historical vision. His books contributed significantly to our understanding of early America. Before he published *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1965) and *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1976), scholars had seen the British army primarily as an agent of the king and Parliament and as a threat to American lives and liberties. Shy acknowledged that commanders in chief believed the king and Parliament held ultimate power in the empire, but he emphasized that British commanders sought to work with colonial legislatures and to live in harmony with the colonists. The colonists responded favorably to such treatment, if not to taxes to support the army in America or demands for quarters, transportation, and food for the soldiers. The colonists did serve alongside the regulars in defeating the French during the Seven Years' War, in putting down an Indian uprising that threatened the mid-Atlantic colonies in 1763, and in protecting the colonies' frontiers until regulars marched to Lexington in 1775. Until then, many colonists admired the regulars, considered them comrades in arms, and celebrated their victories over the French and Indians. Shy's principal writings have added breadth and complexity to Anglo-American military history of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Shy was also an important member of his department. His courses were popular with undergraduates, he supervised a number of graduate students, and he served as an associate chair of his department and a member of the management committee at the university's Clements Library—famous for its collections of rare books and manuscripts dealing with the colonial and revolutionary history of the United States. For his teaching, scholarship, and service he was twice honored by the University of Michigan with a Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award (1994) and a Distinguished Senior Lecturer Award (1996). And after his death, the university's Military Studies Group, which he had helped found, established a fellowship and a memorial lecture in his name at the Clements.

His scholarship brought further awards and recognition from both sides of the Atlantic. *Toward Lexington* received the AHA's John H. Dunning Prize in 1965, and *A People Numerous and Armed* merited a second, expanded edition in 1990. In 2002, he won the Society for Military History's Samuel Eliot Morison Prize for lifetime achievements, and he delivered the society's George C. Marshall Lecture in Military History in 2008. Beyond that, he served on the Council of the Institute of Early American History and Culture in Williamsburg, Virginia, and on the US Department of the Army Historical Advisory Committee. He was three times appointed to distinguished visiting professorships at the United States Army War College; Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris; and the University of Oxford, where he was Harmsworth Visiting Professor of American History.

By temperament and intellect, Shy was remarkably well suited to the academic career that he chose. He also had the benefit of a supportive family and of a wholesome enthusiasm for sports. Although his first marriage had ended in divorce, he remained close to the children and grandchildren of that marriage—in large part because his second wife, Arlene, was a most considerate person who appreciated his love of family. She also, with time, came to understand his passion for golf and major league baseball. Shy is survived by Arlene, his daughters Elizabeth Manderen and Jennifer Shy, and four grandchildren. His was a life very well lived.

Ira Gruber
Rice University

Photo courtesy Matthew Bien



Liu Kwang-Ching

1921–2006

Historian of China

Liu Kwang-Ching, professor emeritus at the University of California, Davis, died in his Davis home on the morning of September 28, 2006.

Born in Beijing, Liu came from a distinguished family; his maternal grandfather, Chen Baozhen, served as an imperial tutor. He was raised in Fuzhou, where he attended a Methodist missionary school and learned English from an American tutor. For his secondary education, he was sent to the Diocesan Boys' School in Hong Kong, and after the Japanese invasion, he went to the National Southwest Associated University in Kunming. After completing his junior year there, he received a scholarship to finish his undergraduate work in the United States. He entered Harvard University in 1943, graduated *magna cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa in 1945, and continued in the history doctoral program. Liu published his first article in the 1946 *Journal of Modern History* on "German Fear of a Quadruple Alliance, 1904–1905." Then, heeding his adviser, he switched his focus to Chinese history, under the direction of his mentor and later colleague, John K. Fairbank, and earned his doctorate in 1956. After a six-year stint as a Chinese translator for the United Nations Secretariat, he returned to Harvard as research fellow and instructor, and then went to Yale University in 1962 as a visiting associate professor. In 1963, he took a position in the history department at the University of California, Davis, where he taught until his retirement in 1993.

Best known for his work on 19th-century Chinese social and political history, he pioneered the study of foreign business interests in China under the regime of asymmetrical treaty rights. His first monograph, *Anglo-American Steamship Rivalry in China, 1862–1874* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), was followed by a voluminous output of scholarship on a widening range of topics. His interests branched out to include Sino-American relations, the history of Christian missions, power relations within the late dynastic governmental order, the intellectual and political dimensions of statecraft and modernization, and the historiography of peasant rebellions. The importance of ideology in government, rebellion, and modernization figured prominently in his research and inspired him to

organize a large international conference on the subject in 1981, funded by the American Council of Learned Societies. Liu edited the two volumes that emerged from that conference, *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China* (Univ. of California Press, 1990) and *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China* (Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2004), the second with Richard Shek. He contributed three chapters to the authoritative *Cambridge History of China* and with Fairbank co-edited volume 11. Fairbank once wrote that he considered Liu to be "the foremost historian of 19th-century China." In addition to his own research, Liu contributed prolifically to the bibliographical literature, editing and co-editing volumes and studies on US-China relations, imperial archives, and both Chinese and American scholarship on modern China. His efforts in 1972–73 as negotiator and intermediary resulted in financial support from the American Council of Learned Societies for the photographing and publication of voluminous historical archives in the National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

In 1976, he was elected to membership in the Academia Sinica, Taiwan, and was chairman of the advisory committee of its Institute of Modern History. Liu served on the AHA's Research Division from 1983–86 and was a member of the Joint Committee on Sino-American Cooperation in the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council. He was associate editor of the *Journal of Asian Studies* and member of the editorial board of the *Tsinghua Journal of Chinese Studies* and of the editorial committee of the University of California Press.

K. C., as he was known to faculty colleagues and students alike, was a dedicated teacher, often prolonging evening graduate seminars with a collective visit to a local pub. He took a fatherly interest in his graduates, and with his eminent reputation, he helped them find academic jobs around the country and connect with academic presses to publish their dissertations as books. Extremely hospitable, he often hosted dinners for his graduate students at his home. In his undergraduate teaching, he gave some really noteworthy lectures, and his courses inspired some students to pursue graduate study with him. If he had any hobby, it was calligraphy, in which he rarely indulged, then only when prompted by Chinese visitors.

He was survived by his wife, Edith, his wife of five decades, since deceased, and by his son, Jonathan, and daughter, Faith.

Don C. Price
University of California, Davis (emeritus)

Photo courtesy University of California, Davis, History Department

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ELIZABETH STICE

TREES AND THE COLLEGE CAMPUS



College campuses can be kind of funny about their trees. Somewhere along the line, a sylvan setting became part of the image of American higher education. College brochures often feature “three and a tree”—meaning students from three different ethnic backgrounds with a tree—to represent the ideal college campus. Even outside marketing, you’ll often find trees at the heart of campus, both physically and metaphorically. Vanderbilt has a web page for their noteworthy trees, as does Swarthmore, and Texas A&M has a page for a single tree, the Century Tree (pictured here).

Students, faculty, and staff become very emotionally attached to campus trees, and the loss of one can provoke a response like Werther’s in Goethe’s *Sorrows of Young Werther*: “Oh it drives me mad, Wilhelm, that people can exist and have no sense or feeling for what few things on earth still matter. You remember the walnut trees. . . . How sweet and cool they made the forecourt of the manse, how splendid the branches were, and the memory reaching back to the honest clergymen who planted them years ago. . . . Chopped down! I shall go mad with rage.” Indeed, in 2010, an Alabama fan intuited that he could best attack rival Auburn University by poisoning its favorite trees. Campus trees are part of a university’s identity; they represent a union between past and present, a symbol shared across generations of students.

The attachment to campus trees goes beyond familiarity and tradition. In a fourth-season episode of the TV show *Northern Exposure*, radio DJ Chris Stevens reflects, “What is it about genus arboretum that socks us in the figurative solar plexus? We see a logging truck go cruising down the road stacked with a bunch of those fresh-cut giants, we feel like we lost a brother.” We live our lives surrounded by wood—floors, tables, bars. As Chris suggests, trees “carry a set of luggage from the mythical baggage carousel. Tree of life, tree of knowledge, family tree, Buddha’s bodhi tree. . . . Adam and Eve, they’re kicking back in the Garden of Eden, and boom, they get an eviction notice.

Why is that? ‘Lest they should take also from the tree of life, eat and live forever.’” The trees on campus may recall these many traditions.

We might interpret the shade of campus trees in many ways. Campus trees may reflect student desires for knowledge and enlightenment. Perhaps our students will alter the future of science, as Isaac Newton did after sitting under an apple tree. The shelter of a tree may represent college as a time protected for inquiry and discovery, a respite on the path to the wider world. Or perhaps campus trees simply contribute the benefits of being around plants. For various reasons, universities have positive associations with trees, and especially with *their* trees.

For historians, the many trees of knowledge on campus are not simply cultural and institutional practices—they reinforce the significance of our discipline. The best loved trees are old, with deep roots. What students love about them is not their biology but their history. The affection for them represents a veneration of the past and a desire for a relationship of some kind with the past. A better understanding and a way to make sense of our relationship to the past is precisely what the discipline of history offers. Historians who appreciate the appeal of campus trees may think about how to better demonstrate the appeal of the discipline. The love of ancient trees testifies to untapped potential for a love of history among students, one that we can cultivate. **P**

Elizabeth Stice is an associate professor of history and assistant director of the honors program at Palm Beach Atlantic University.

Photo: Ed Schipul/Flickr/CC BY-SA 2.0

Eugen Weber Book Prize

The Department of History at UCLA encourages submissions for the 2024 Eugen Weber Book Prize in French History. A prize for the best book in modern French history (post 1815) over the previous two years, this award is named for eminent French historian Eugen Weber (1925-2007). Professor Weber served on the History faculty at UCLA from 1956 until 1993 and was renowned as a teacher and scholar for being able to bring the French and European past to life.

The Eugen Weber Book Prize in French History brings a cash award of \$15,000 and the winner will be announced at the American Historical Association annual meeting in January 2024. The author will be invited to visit UCLA to speak about his or her work and receive the prize during the spring of 2024.

Books eligible for the 2024 prize are those written in English or French and published in 2021 or 2022.

The deadline for submissions is June 1, 2023. Submission information is available at <https://history.ucla.edu/content/eugen-weber-book-prize>.



The prize has been awarded twice, in 2022 to Judith G. Coffin for *Sex, Love, and Letters: Writing Simone de Beauvoir* (Cornell University Press, 2020) and in 2020 to Christine Haynes, for *Our Friends the Enemies: The Occupation of France After Napoleon* (Harvard University Press, 2018).

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

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Call for Proposals for the 137th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association

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

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

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

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

Session Proposals

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