The newsmagazine of the American Historical Association

PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

Volume 62: 7
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AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

139th ANNUAL MEETING

CHICAGO

JANUARY 8–11, 2026

Call for Proposals for the 139th 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.

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, 2025

Before applying, please review the annual meeting guidelines and more information at historians.org/proposals.

Questions about policies, modes of presentation, the electronic submission process, or the content of proposals?

Contact **annualmeeting@historians.org.**

FEATURES

ON THE COVER

November is election season in the United States. The "Latino vote" gets a lot of attention in presidential election years, but as Mike Amezcua writes, such a diverse community can be hard to define. It's easy to focus on the top of the ticket, but John Lawrence reminds us why Congress shouldn't be overlooked in political history. November ballots likely include local offices that often have the greatest effect on our everyday lives. Natasha Zaretsky, historian and former school board member, shares her experience running for local office. Want to run for something yourself or know someone who should? Nominations are now open for the AHA's elected officers and committee members.

Photo: Element5 Digital/Unsplash

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ALEXANDRA F. LEVY

HISTORY AS A SOURCE OF WONDER AND HOPE

A Redesigned AHA Website

The AHA website, including *Perspectives on History*, has a completely new look. In today's digital world, an organization's website offers crucial opportunities for connections and education. The AHA website receives millions of views—many from students—each year and is a key touchpoint for both historians and members of the public interested in history and historians' work. We designed the new site to reinforce the AHA's mission of promoting the critical role of historical thinking in public life. Visitors to historians.org will learn one thing above all else: history matters.

Since 2022, when we started this redesign process, we asked repeatedly, How do we show the public why history and the work of historians matter? How do we ensure that our publications and educational resources are easy to access—not just by members but also by educators and students from other disciplines, journalists, legislators, and other professionals? With focus groups, we considered how different audiences use the site and what they seek there. Accessibility also was central to this redesign. Our old site lacked key accessibility features, such as the ability to include alt text for all images. But the new site, hosted on WordPress, meets standard accessibility guidelines and will allow us to adhere to standards as they're updated. Its new design and structure emphasize the deep connections among the historical community, the value of history education from K–12 through graduate school, and the Association's leadership in the discipline. Improving the user experience, providing easier access to our vast educational resources and publications, and highlighting the Association's wide-ranging work were our core objectives.

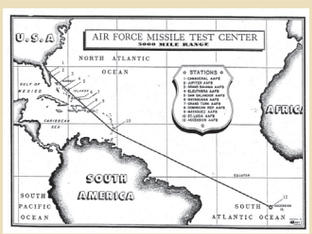
This new site emphasizes that everything has a history. And, in fact, so does historians.org. When I joined the AHA staff in 2020, I was pleased and surprised to learn that historians Martin Sherwin and Kai Bird generously had donated the domain name historians.org to the AHA. I worked with Marty and Kai during my previous job at the Atomic Heritage Foundation, and learning about this unexpected relationship between my work at the AHA and at AHF made me appreciate the many connections that bring us together as a community. We have worked to replicate that sense of community on our site by sharing photographs of attendees at AHA events, spotlighting our talented membership, sharing information about events and opportunities from the AHA and our partners, and the many other ways the Association convenes and fosters connections among historians everywhere, both in person and online.

Learning the origins of the site domain reinforced for me the importance of the website as an archive of the Association's work. Since 1884, the AHA has confronted a range of controversies about history education, academic freedom, archival access, departmental and institutional funding, and other issues that affect historians' work. Some of these issues echo loudly in the present, with resonances that the website documents. For example, a 1923 AHA resolution on "History Teaching in the Schools" warned that "attempts, however well meant, to foster national arrogance and boastfulness and indiscriminate worship of national 'heroes' can only tend to promote a harmful pseudo patriotism." Historians from a century ago would be surprised—or perhaps not—to learn that the Association is still combating efforts to restrict history education and still supporting history educators facing controversies about the teaching of the American past.

The AHA site offers thousands of educational resources and thousands more articles from *Perspectives*. As we built the new site, I often found myself distracted by older but still insightful articles. I was especially moved by Natalie Zemon Davis's reflection in her 1996 essay, "Why Become a Historian?" She wrote, "I still find history full of wonders; I still find in the differences in past societies a way to take stock of the present—a source of sober realism, but also a source of hope." We hope you, too, will find things on our website that fill you with wonder or serve as a source of hope. P

Alexandra F. Levy is communications director at the AHA.

Recently Published Online in *Perspectives Daily*



US Air Force/public domain

Making the American Orbit

Andrew J. Ross

When John Glenn returned from orbit, Turks and Caicos welcomed him back to Earth. NASA fellow Andrew J. Ross shares the history of US involvement in the archipelago.

Sites of Self

Isabel Naquin

Graduate columnist Isabel Naquin contends with her family history after visiting the Houmas House's Great River Road Museum.

Office of Government Reports, World War II Posters/National Archives and Records Administration/public domain

TEACHING THE CONSTITUTION

Not Just the First Amendment

Sophia Rosenfeld

Understanding the First Amendment's protection of speech and press requires students to think historically about more than just the US Constitution.

Thenceforward and Forever Free

Justene Hill Edwards

In her courses on 19th-century American slavery, Justene Hill Edwards's students delve into the lasting impact of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments.

Empowering Citizens

Julia M. Gossard

Putting students in the shoes of revolutionaries and drafters of constitutions produces a different kind of engagement.

Lee Graff, Shenandoah University

The Great Experiment

Warren R. Hofstra with J. J. Ruscella, Mohammad Obeid, and Kevin R. Hardwick

At Shenandoah University, faculty and students recreated the Constitutional Convention debates using virtual reality.

Find these articles and more at historians.org/Perspectives

THAVOLIA GLYMPH

ARTIFICERS IN A MOST HONORABLE TRADE

The Historian's Craft

Look where your hands are now.

—Toni Morrison, *Jazz*

The trade which of all manual trades has been most honoured: be for once a carpenter.

—John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*

My father was a carpenter. On washday, a week's worth of his work uniform, carpenter's overalls, hung side by side on my family's clotheslines. As was typical of the time, laundry was sorted and hung according to its use or purpose—bed linen, towels, blouses, shirts, pants, skirts, dishcloths, and so forth, all in their place. There was a beauty to this arrangement, intentionally so. In those days, clotheslines also telegraphed a sense of order and a household's wealth or poverty to the community at large—in my family's case, the proud occupation of a working man and a veteran who had served three years in Europe during World War II and used the GI Bill to further his education.

In the pockets of my father's overalls were some of his most valued tools—a hammer; a carpenter's folding ruler, with a sliding carpenter's scale on one side; pencils; and a nail puller—each in its place like the laundry on the clothesline. I carry an image of my father jotting down numbers and measurements calculated in his head on pieces of lumber that had to be cut, joists that had to be just right, walls that had to be timbered or sheet rocked. There were no calculators or computers, but pencils and rulers brought houses, office buildings, and bookcases into being.

I inherited little of my dad's mathematical brilliance, but from his example I gained an idea of what genius looked like, and what mind linked to hand could produce. The pencils and ruler that protruded from the pockets of his overalls left a deep impression, and I came to see them as among the most valuable of the legacies he left me. I give pencils to friends and colleagues. I find joy in writing with a pencil (and similarly with a fountain pen when sending a card or letter to a dear friend). My children gift me pencils and writing pads on special occasions, and pencils remain important items in my writing toolbox.

The pencils and ruler that protruded from the pockets of my father's overalls left a deep impression.

I still begin most new articles, essays, or book projects writing my thoughts out in pencil. It could be a few pages or as little as a paragraph. Yet in the face of the prominent place my laptop has in every aspect of my work, penciling is now more a ritual than anything else. At the same time, it is a valuable one and something more than ceremonial. It is also terribly demanding, and properly so. There is something about writing out a word, sentence, or paragraph on paper, erasing it, and starting over again that the delete, copy, and paste functions of the computer cannot replicate. Something that seems to force the brain to work a bit harder but in a way that is pleasurable. Typewriting captures some of this—the inserting of paper and physical movement required to move the page forward or make a correction, for example. When I'm writing with pencil on paper, my thoughts are not interrupted by the intrusions of spelling suggestions or predictions of what word I will or should use next. There is also the tactile pleasure that comes from writing by hand but is about more than touch. Most importantly, I can better see my mind working. I can better capture a word and sense when it's not the right one, even when I don't readily know what is the right one. To paraphrase Toni Morrison, I can see where my hands are.

My father's carpenter's ruler helps me see where my hands are. I keep it close by on my desk at home. It is a constant reminder of the importance of precision. It reminds me, too, that like my father, I measure things, just different things,

where the stakes are different but arguably no less important. His measurements had to be precise lest a building lean where it should stand straight, a roof fail to connect with the wallboards that rise up to meet it, or a wall collapse due to poor measurement of the timbers that frame it and lives be hurt or lost.

Historians measure not wood but words. Because of the demands of the trade and our reading audiences, we literally count them. But it's another form of measurement that we deem more important. It matters to us that a word means what we say it means, that it measures up to the job we give it, even acknowledging that all of us sometimes slip, sometimes dangerously. I am certainly never fully successful at avoiding the slippage. I use words that do not convey the meaning I attribute to them, but my father's carpenter's folding ruler is a constant reminder that precision matters in writing history.

> There is something about writing out a word, sentence, or paragraph on paper, erasing it, and starting over again that the delete, copy, and paste functions of the computer cannot replicate.

The joy I find in writing with a pencil is of a piece with the satisfaction I find in archival research. There is something about touching a document written by hand a hundred or more years ago—which I know for colleagues who study ancient, or even medieval, times is very recent history—in all its legibility and illegibility that never ceases to excite my imagination. I have other antiquated writing crutches, or writing companions as I prefer to call them, like my decades-old two-volume copy of the abbreviated *Oxford English Dictionary* and hard copies of dictionaries and thesauruses. It is undeniably easier to use the computer to search the meaning of a word or its etymology, and I take this route on most occasions now, I dare say. But I still find it a great deal more pleasurable to turn to hard copies. It's a bit like using old cabinet card catalogs versus online ones or going to the stacks to get a particular book only to be reminded of the riches to be found in the adjacent and nearby volumes, as historian Charles McKinney reminded us in a recent Facebook post.

As historians, we each have our own way of researching and writing. I have the deepest admiration for my colleagues who write the most splendid, brilliant prose from the start on their computers and even mobile phones. But we are also each in our own way, like my father the carpenter, skilled craftsmen, artificers in words rather than wood. Whether with computers or pencils, the frameworks of words that we craft into narratives are essential to understanding the past and present. We are members of a guild that has evolved over time and become more specialized; in many respects, historians are better than ever at what we do. The results are truly astounding. My figurative carpenter's bib overflows with new knowledge from the many books, articles, essays, podcasts, documentaries, history labs, databases, and other forms in which historical scholarship appears. This work has never been more important. Nostalgia has its place, but in the end, what excites me more is my membership in a craft that for all its imperfections continues to produce valuable and exciting new knowledge.

This is my last column as president of the American Historical Association and a bittersweet moment. I write amid the ongoing, centuries-old, terribly difficult work of making and keeping democracies at home and abroad and amid the ongoing efforts of the AHA to be responsible to the needs of its members. My year as president has involved a steep but necessary learning curve. It has not been without its challenges but has also been a good year and a productive one. I have learned so much more about the work of historians across the country, and indeed the globe, and about the immense challenges that make our work harder. I have been honored to work with wonderful AHA staff, whose contributions are often invisible to the membership but whose talents, brilliance, kindness, and warmth keep the AHA going. Thank you, AHA team. I could not have done it without you. You have been my joists. I also thank the readers of my *Perspectives* columns over the past year who have sent me the most gracious notes and their own wonderful stories. The ones about mail-order catalogs were especially dear. You helped make it an honor to serve as president of the AHA. P

Thavolia Glymph is president of the AHA.

JAMES GROSSMAN

"PROMOTION OF HISTORICAL STUDIES"

Politics and the AHA's Public Mission

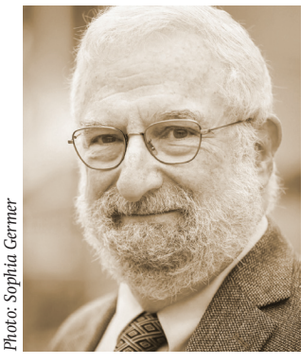


Photo: Sophia Germer

In late August, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) challenged scholarly associations like the AHA as part of a conversation now widespread across higher education and beyond. At stake are issues that we take seriously: institutional neutrality, statements of support or censure, and the role of political activity in our work. According to the AEI, the AHA, Organization of American Historians, Modern Language Association, and our counterparts in other disciplines including STEM have "traded their scholarly mission for a political one." Therefore, public universities should not use taxpayer money to fund conference travel or even basic participation in these organizations.

As I've indicated elsewhere, the AHA does not comment on the work of its counterparts in other disciplines, other than to occasionally sign on to statements, to praise significant work, or to announce collaborations. So I will stick with the AHA in my reflections on the AEI's accusation and its funding implications.

The AHA is specifically mentioned twice in the nine-page report: at the very beginning (alongside the American Chemical Society and American Statistical Association), to indicate the type of association in question, and later, in a brief description of the study's methodology. Notably, although the AEI clearly finds the AHA useful as a marker of the genre, we are not a source for actual examples: not one of the specific references to what scholarly associations say or do cites the AHA.

Perhaps that is because we provide little, if any, evidence for the AEI's argument. If that is the case—and were the AEI following the AHA's professional guidelines to "not omit evidence that runs counter to their own interpretation"—then the report would focus *greater* attention on the AHA. A close look at our activities in recent years—a period of increasing advocacy—indicates that the AEI report is deeply flawed. Its accusations lack an empirical basis.

"Scholarly Associations Gone Wild: Stop Publicly Funding Scholarly Groups That Trade Academics for Advocacy" draws on a sample of 99 associations that are alleged to "operate more like political entities than scholarly ones." Note the implicit quantitative or transactional basis for the claim. Such associations have "trade[d] academics for advocacy" and "traded their scholarly mission for a political one." Not supplemented or infused, but "traded." We now "operate more like political entities than scholarly ones." The accusation, then, is that political activity at worst has *replaced* (traded) scholarship, or at best occupies a greater proportion (more) of our time and attention.

> At stake are issues that we take seriously: institutional neutrality, statements of support or censure, and the role of political activity in our work.

The AHA does indeed advocate on behalf of historians and historical work in various political arenas. We defend the professional integrity of secondary history educators in state legislatures. We advocate on Capitol Hill in favor of adequate funding for agencies such as the National Archives and Records Administration, Library of Congress, Smithsonian Institution, National Endowment for the Humanities, and National Park Service. This kind of "political activity" does not subvert our mission but fulfills it. Our congressional charter, granted in 1889, includes in the AHA's mandate "the promotion of historical studies."

The examples the report *does* provide are not this kind of advocacy on behalf of our discipline—the same kind of "political activity" that all sorts of private sector vendors for government agencies engage in on behalf of their work. If defense industries can advocate on behalf of public expenditures

for military equipment, airlines testify on behalf of the FAA budget, or NASA contractors ply their trade in the corridors of the Capitol, then surely the American Historical Association can undertake "political activity" on behalf of funding historical work and assuring its professional integrity.

But that kind of "political activity" is not on the table here. The American Enterprise Institute surely doesn't mind us *promoting* the enterprise of history. Their report is concerned, rather, with letters and statements: the kind of "political activity" that has recently been in the news but is only a part of our wide range of activities. I suggest the AEI's researchers spend time on our website, or even take a shortcut and consult the AHA's annual Year in Review. Either will reassure them that we agree with their premise that "value depends on [our] ability to advance research, generate knowledge, and uphold academic norms." This is what the AHA does. It is work that requires resources and academic freedom, which in turn depend on the same "political activity" that so many other professions and economic sectors find imperative (and for which they hire expensive lobbyists).

> We take letters and statements seriously and craft them carefully.

That leaves only the statements and letters. This, too, is important work. Though the bulk of our time, resources, and energy lies in other enterprises—publications including the *AHR* and *Perspectives*, events including the annual meeting and webinars, professional development activities for teachers, attentiveness to professional standards, keeping public agencies informed about the historical context of their work, and much more—letters and statements are indeed a high priority. We take them seriously and craft them carefully. Therefore, I ask the AEI to take the *content* of these documents seriously before generalizing about their supposed "progressive orthodoxy." Despite their claims, the AHA's advocacy aligns entirely with our mission to promote historical work and historical thinking.

The AEI claims that "associations routinely take positions on issues that seem far from their fields of study." Clearly they have not read the AHA's statements and letters, every one of which starts from the premise that we are weighing in because of a historical issue and proceeds by situating history at the center of the argument. The AEI specifically calls out letters relating to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, including them prominently in published graphics. Did they read our statement, issued in February 2022 and signed by 42 other associations? It begins with history—"Russian President Vladimir Putin's rhetorical premise for this brutal violation of Ukraine's sovereignty is anchored by a set of outlandish historical claims"—and ends by denouncing "the twisted mythology that President Putin has invented to justify his violation of international norms." The AHA has also compiled resources related to the histories of Ukraine, Russia, and the Cold War.

The AEI is even more critical of statements relating to racism and issues that arose following the killing of George Floyd in 2020. The *AHA Statement on the History of Racist Violence in the United States*, which was endorsed by 98 other organizations, begins, "Everything has a history, including our nation's deplorable record of violence against African Americans." The statement was accompanied by a webinar co-sponsored with the National Council for the Social Studies, *Teaching the History of Racist Violence in the High School Classroom*, and our staff compiled and continues to update resources, especially for classroom use, on this complex history. Nothing in either the statement or webinar "delimit[s] the bounds of permissible thought" or allows "advocacy to erode their commitment to academic inquiry."

However eager the AEI researchers were to invoke the AHA's status among scholarly associations, they neither took the time to read our record of advocacy nor consulted us before making assumptions. I also lament that journalists covering this story did not consult directors of scholarly associations in their reporting. Had they done their homework, they would have found *Schools, History, and the Challenges of Commemoration*, a 2021 AHA statement that not only situates history at the center of "political activity" in its challenge to the San Francisco Board of Education but takes a position contrary to what the AEI calls "progressive orthodoxy."

But the AEI "assumed." At the AHA we don't merely assume; we do our research before we speak. We work, and speak, as historians fulfilling the mandate from our congressional charter: "the promotion of historical studies." P

James Grossman is executive director of the AHA.

REBECCA L. WEST

ADVOCACY BRIEFS

Late Summer Advocacy at the AHA

In the late summer of 2024, the AHA continued its work to support history and social studies education by signing on to a letter recommending strong funding for Title VI programs in fiscal year 2025 and writing to Oklahoma's governor and board of education urging them not to undergo a detrimental overhaul of their current learning standards. Additionally, the Association signed on to an amicus curiae brief in *United States v. Skrmetti* and wrote to the president of the Republic of Sierra Leone, expressing concern for the personal safety and academic freedom of Chernoh Alpha M. Bah, a historian facing threats and harassment.

AHA Signs On to CIE Letter Recommending Strong Funding for Title VI Programs in FY 2025

On July 18, the AHA signed on to a letter from the Coalition for International Education (CIE) recommending strong funding for HEA–Title VI International Education and Foreign Language Studies programs in FY 2025, including Fulbright-Hays programs. The recommended funding, the letter stated, "would continue the gradual progress of restoring funding to FY 2010 levels, which is ever so urgent for addressing rising national needs for international expertise and global competencies in our increasingly contested world."

AHA Urges Oklahoma to Retain Current Social Studies Standards

On August 26, the AHA sent a letter to Oklahoma Governor J. Kevin Stitt and the members of the Oklahoma State Board of Education expressing alarm about State Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters's plans for a "complete overhaul" of Oklahoma's existing state academic standards for social studies, urging the state to instead retain their current standards. "The Oklahoma Academic Standards for Social Studies are among the best in the nation," the AHA wrote. "[Walters] would sacrifice historical accuracy and carefully framed learning outcomes to his extreme ideas about 'American exceptionalism' grounded more in ideological commitments than in historical evidence."

AHA Signs On to Amicus Curiae Brief in *U ited States v. Skrmetti* Supreme Court Case

On September 5, the AHA, along with the Organization of American Historians, the LGBTQ+ History Association, and several individual historians, signed on to an amicus curiae brief in *United States v. Skrmetti*, a case considering Tennessee's ban on gender-affirming care for minors slated to be heard by the US Supreme Court. The brief, based on decades of study and research by professional historians, aims to provide an accurate historical perspective of the long history of gender-affirming care and sex-identity transition.

AHA Sends Letter in Support of Sierra Leonean Historian Facing Threats

On September 5, the AHA sent a letter to Julius Maada Bio, president of the Republic of Sierra Leone, expressing "concern for the personal safety and academic freedom of Dr. Chernoh Alpha M. Bah," a historian and journalist who has faced threats and harassment for his reporting on alleged corruption among Sierra Leonean government officials. "The harassment Bah has been subjected to—which includes death threats—has prevented him from returning to Sierra Leone to continue his academic research," the AHA wrote. "These threats from government officials represent a clear violation of his freedom to pursue historical scholarship."

Rebecca L. West is marketing and operations associate at the AHA.

ALLISON S. FINKELSTEIN

FINDING FULFILLMENT AS A FEDERAL HISTORIAN

From PhD to Arlington National Cemetery

Every day at work, I teach, research, and write history. My drive to the office takes me through the solemn, grave-filled sections of Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), where I serve as senior historian. I often drive past a funeral or see a grave covered in fresh flowers. Each time, I reflect on the mix of feelings aroused within me—sadness, for the loss of life being remembered, and gratitude, that I have the privilege to work at ANC.

This position is a dream job. Though the federal government may not be the first employer public historians think of, jobs like mine can be a fulfilling, exhilarating, and constantly challenging way to practice history.

Since childhood, I have loved visiting museums and historic sites, and my undergraduate experiences instilled in me a passion for public history. My time as a history and theater double major at the College of William & Mary

Allison S. Finkelstein discusses ANC history with French President Emmanuel Macron and First Lady Brigitte Macron after their visit to the grave of Pierre L'Enfant.
Elizabeth Fraser/US Army/public domain

proved pivotal for my ultimate career choice. The history department opened my eyes to public history. With the National Institute of American History and Democracy, an interdisciplinary program focused on American history, material culture, and public history, I dove into public history. I learned from prizewinning scholars and public historians who taught me the value of material culture, architectural history, and historic preservation. During a thrilling summer at an archaeological field school in Colonial Williamsburg, I dug my trowel into the remains of an 18th-century structure and used my theatrical skills to interpret our excavation to curious visitors. By my senior year, I began discussing graduate school with my advisor but was not yet ready to commit.

Instead, I received an incredible opportunity to spend a year as a history and drama teaching assistant at Lord Wandsworth College, a boarding school in England. That year was both personally and professionally fulfilling. I learned that teaching at the secondary school level is not for me, but I confirmed that I wanted to be a public historian as I explored museums and historic sites across Europe. My time in a British history classroom also sparked a new interest in the First World War. While taking students on field trips to the Western Front battlefields, I wondered why that war's memory did not have the same hold on the United States as it did on Great Britain, a question that eventually led to my book.

After several months in England, I began applying to graduate programs where I could combine a traditional history PhD program with public history. I chose to attend the University of Maryland, College Park, where the history department faculty had diverse areas of expertise and, most importantly, I also could study with the historic preservation department. UMD also gave me easy access to the National Archives and the opportunity to apply for internships at museums in the DC area. When I arrived at College Park, I quickly learned—to my surprise—that I was one of only a few students pursuing a dual-track degree. Most of my peers were set upon a "traditional" academic career path. While my department supported my goals, I got the sense that I was going against the grain and was encouraged to consider academia after graduation.

Being just outside DC turned out to be critical for my career. Each summer, I secured a paid public history internship, starting with a National Council for Preservation Education internship at the Department of the Interior Museum. I found my dissertation topic during two internships at the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC). I joined the Society for History in the Federal Government (SHFG), which offers job workshops, welcoming conferences, and networking opportunities. Even while ABD, I maintained my foothold in federal history and earned extra income through an internship at the Federal Judicial Center and a consulting job at the Department of Defense Vietnam War Commemoration Office. I loved working as a federal government historian, even as an intern: I could use my skills to support an agency's mission, teach the public, and have an impact on policy.

Finding my first full-time federal job, however, did not come easily, and as my dissertation defense neared, I got nervous just like my friends on the academic job market. Despite applying for dozens of jobs, nothing came through. In my final semester, ABMC offered me a full-time, temporary consultant position. It would last only two years, but it provided a salary, health insurance, and work I loved while I searched for permanent employment. Between working, managing the commute, and completing my dissertation, I was exhausted that final semester, but I counted myself as fortunate. I got to research and write exhibit content and online articles connected to my dissertation and expertise in World War I!

As professional historians, we are trained to read and gain expertise in any area of history.

Getting a foot in the door, even in a temporary position, was vitally important. Before my ABMC position ended, I secured a permanent job as a historian at the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) History Office and Library (within the Department of Homeland Security). I initially worried how I would fare without being an immigration history specialist. But as professional historians, we are trained to read and gain expertise in any area of history. I did a comps-like set of reading in US immigration history, and it fascinated me. I found this field meaningful on a personal level, as I connected it to the immigration stories of my family. From genealogy to immigration policy, I loved the work and my colleagues—I even organized a Department of Homeland Security–wide project to commemorate the World War I Centennial. Our team created an award-winning documentary film about Ellis Island and began to envision a museum exhibit for the agency's new headquarters. Each day brought new inquiries from USCIS staff, genealogists, researchers, and scholars that took me to the National Archives or our own library, research that expanded my own knowledge of immigration history.

I loved working at USCIS, and it was only the opportunity to apply for a job at ANC that took me away. As an ANC historian, I could use my expertise to honor our nation's veterans, and the position combined military history, memory studies, historic preservation, and museum curation in a way I could not resist. Changing jobs as a federal employee is thankfully simple—all your benefits remain in place.

> We curate two exhibit spaces, write a blog and social media, organize webinars, lead public programs, provide tours to dignitaries, and more.

At ANC, I joined a team composed of two other historians and a curator. Our office works on standard army history projects like the Annual Command History, but we also have public-facing duties. We curate two exhibit spaces, write a blog and social media (follow us @ArlingtonNatl), organize webinars, lead public programs, provide tours to dignitaries, and more. I continue to do archival research and write as part of my job. My current book project is an official history of the origins and creation of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, using primary sources from the National Archives and other repositories to dive deep into the specifics of this story and the Tomb's many meanings.

If it sounds like I love my job, I do! But I don't want to downplay the challenges of working as a federal historian. The good days are really good, and the bad days are very hard. At ANC, our team has been confronted with interpreting controversial history, with all the negativity associated with the current culture wars. It is difficult to find time at work to do required writing and archival research in such a fast-paced environment, and we cannot always get the days away from the office or money needed to travel to repositories. As federal employees, we don't have as much intellectual freedom as academics, and we must gain approval for all outside-of-work scholarship. While I managed to revise my dissertation into my first book, it had to be completed entirely outside of my jobs at USCIS and ANC. My supervisors supported me, but I had to accept that I would have no social life until the book was done.

If you're interested in having a direct impact on policy and the American public, consider a career as a federal historian. With millions of visitors each year and hundreds of thousands of followers on social media, the history my colleagues and I write at ANC reaches far more people than any book I write or classroom lecture I might give. Our work matters—to the families of those buried here, to visitors, and to colleagues. I can delve into any topic that connects to ANC, and I am part of important projects to diversify the narratives interpreted at the cemetery. And I sometimes get to mentor interns who are exploring federal government careers in history and historic preservation just like I once was.

Where to start? Get involved with SHFG and network with federal historians. We are a friendly bunch and happy to talk! If you're still in graduate school, take courses outside the history department, seek internships, and develop other skill sets. These choices made me a better scholar and were essential to helping me get federal employment.

As I enter the grounds of ANC each day, I am thankful for the journey that led me here. Whether I'm speaking to tourists or dignitaries, writing a blog post or a book, I have opportunities each day to use my historical skills for the benefit of our nation. P

The views in this article are only those of the author and do not represent the federal government, US Army, or official policy.

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NATASHA ZARETSKY

A HISTORIAN ON THE SCHOOL BOARD

The Joys and Challenges of Running for Local Office

I decided to run for local office on November 10, 2016. Twenty-four hours earlier, I had learned the outcome of the presidential contest while on a transatlantic red-eye flight to London. As our plane descended into Heathrow Airport on the morning after Election Day, I asked a flight attendant whether he had heard any news about the race. With a poker face, he told me in a near whisper that Hillary Clinton had conceded a few hours earlier. The news rippled through the cabin, with some passengers looking delighted and others looking ill. The poor crew members were on the job and could betray no emotion whatsoever.

Until that time, I had never considered running for elected office, as I did not believe I had sufficient knowledge or skill to do so. But, like many other women, I found myself newly empowered by Donald Trump's political ascent. If a real estate mogul and media personality could become president, then surely I could find a way to be of service in Carbondale, Illinois, my home for almost two decades. And while no one knew what would happen next, I predicted that in the coming period, it would be important for people to do what they could to defend the most vulnerable members of their

In 2017, Natasha Zaretsky ran for and won a seat on her local school board in Carbondale, Illinois.
Steve Shook/Flickr/CC BY 2.0

communities—to try to make the places where they lived better, even as national politics grew more polarized and volatile. I also recognized that 2016 was turning out to be a truly historical year: both Brexit and Trump's victory signaled a populist upsurge across the West. As a scholar, I knew that historians would be puzzling through the meaning of this upsurge for years to come. But sitting in my London hotel room, I realized that I wanted not to just watch history in the making but to become part of it, even in a small way.

I decided to run for the local school board. There would be an election the following April for four open positions on the board of District 95, the K–8 public school system. The district had excellent teachers and facilities, but it struggled to address the needs of a diverse student body. The student body is majority African American. Many students come from low-income households. But Carbondale is also a college town, home to Southern Illinois University, where some parents start fretting about their own children's college prospects from the time they are very young. My two sons, aged eight and thirteen, were enrolled in the district, which technically made me a stakeholder. But that was not why I ran. Before 2016, I prided myself on being a laissez-faire parent when it came to the goings-on in the school district. As an educator, I trusted the teachers to do their best, and I bristled at parents who challenged their expertise. And I was alarmed at what I perceived to be the excessive anxieties of my white upper-middle-class parental cohort.

My choice to run for the school board had less to do with my status as a parent than with my knowledge of recent US history. Between the decisive defeat of Barry Goldwater in 1964 and the victory of Ronald Reagan in 1980, grassroots activists on the right, many of them women, recognized school boards as places where they could reclaim power and rebuild their movement from the ground up. In living rooms and at kitchen tables, they pursued incremental, small victories that eventually culminated in the realignment of American politics in the late 20th century. Now with the tables turned, progressives like myself needed to do the same slow and steady painstaking work. There would be no shortcuts or work-arounds.

My choice to run for the school board had less to do with my status as a parent than with my knowledge of recent US history.

I also predicted that, if I were elected, my work on the board would dovetail with my scholarly interests. That turned out to be true. So many of the themes I cared about as a historian—from racial and class inequality to gender politics and labor history to historical memory—came alive for me when I joined the board. How could the district narrow the racial achievement gap? How was it addressing the needs of gender nonconforming students? How could the district improve a strained relationship between the administration and the teachers' union? What were students learning about American national identity in their classrooms? When I joined the board, themes that I had only read about became far less abstract. So, too, did the racialized poverty that divided my town between the haves and the have-nots. Behind closed doors, I heard firsthand the heartbreaking stories of students who came to school hungry, who were too exhausted to stay awake in class, whose families lacked stable housing. The dissonance between their experiences and those of my own children deepened my understanding of my town. I gained a new appreciation of the struggles of school districts like ours that worked to simultaneously provide for the most elemental needs of some children (such as food, heat, rest, and medical care) while convincing the upwardly mobile parents of others to reject the impulse to flee for a wealthier and whiter neighboring district with better test scores.

But first there was the matter of getting elected. The race was competitive: there were seven of us running for four open seats on the board. Except for a few days of knocking on doors for Barack Obama in 2008, I was a campaigning novice. But I did have certain advantages. I had more time than usual (I was on sabbatical in the spring of 2017) and enough money in my savings account to loan myself some initial campaign funds. I am an extrovert who enjoys meeting new people and is comfortable with public speaking. Also, I was running in a college town where I could be open about my progressive political leanings. The race itself was nonpartisan, but I didn't pretend that I was anything other than a Bernie Sanders–inspired Democrat.

My real secret weapon was that I was not afraid to ask for help. And help I received, because universities and colleges are treasure troves of talent. Colleagues in the political science department helped me develop a plan for door-to-door canvassing. Artist friends designed campaign signs and stickers, and contacts in my faculty union put me in touch with a unionized print shop. My older son's best friend was an aspiring filmmaker who made a 30-second campaign video we circulated on social media. I visited churches and

community centers, organized a fundraiser at a local bar, and invited people to my house for phone banking, where I rewarded them with pizza, beer, and playtime with our new puppy. People were eager to pitch in, relieved to be able to do something in early 2017 other than doomscrolling. And campaign contributions came in too. Some of the money came from locals whom I did not know but who sent me checks with sticky notes cheering me on. Others came from old family and childhood friends from across the country who expressed their gratitude to me for running for office. These included people disillusioned by both parties, but who nonetheless grasped the crucial role that elections play in creating durable majorities, sustaining communities, and building social movements.

On April 4, 2017, five months after I first decided to run for office, I won a board seat. I even turned out to be the top vote-getter, prompting another winning candidate to tell me with a laugh that I had "run the table." It felt good to win, especially as a rookie. And it was very cool to tell my kids that their mom would soon be sworn in as an elected official. It mattered to me that down the road, this would be part of their childhood memories, something they could carry with them into the future. I felt proud. At a moment of crisis, I decided to try something new and had prevailed.

My subsequent two years on the board (2017–19) were deeply gratifying ones. People sometimes ask me whether the experience made me less of an idealist, and the answer is no. Of course, there was the painful (if also predictable) realization that the deepest inequalities embedded in our schools could never be resolved by the district alone. But I also watched as teachers, parents, and administrators came together and tried to act in the best interests of children. My board service encompassed everything from the threat of gun violence and youth mental illness to teacher grievances and bilingual education, from how to recruit teachers who reflected the demographics of our student body to the hiring of a new superintendent. When I won the election, I told my father that I was scared that I would disappoint people. No one will fault you for failing, he told me, only for not trying. During my time on the board, I saw so many people *trying* to do good. Sometimes they succeeded and sometimes they failed, but bearing witness to the effort was profound. When I moved away from Illinois two years into my four-year term, I felt sad to say goodbye prematurely to the board and predicted correctly that I would miss the work.

People sometimes ask me whether the experience made me less of an idealist, and the answer is no.

That work had taught me a deeply personal lesson. Throughout my life, I always had struggled to ask for help from others. This time, I knew I had no choice. Colleagues, friends, relatives, neighbors, and strangers made me feel like I had the wind at my back. Thanks to them, I experienced the singular joy that comes from being part of something bigger than oneself. Once on the board, I gained a tangible understanding of just how much children paid the price for the enduring poverty and racial segregation that plagued our town. But unlike in the past, I now had a seat at the table: I could make decisions that made their lives better. Running for local office is a powerful democratic tool that we can use to look out for one another, gain access to real power, and imagine a different future. P

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MIKE AMEZCUA

CHASING THE "LATINO VOTE"

What Politicians Miss by Treating Voters as a Monolithic Bloc

For more than 60 years, national campaigns have struggled to understand and reach Latino voters.
Erik (HASH) Hersman/Flickr/CC BY 2.0

NATIONAL POLITICAL campaigns have a long and checkered history when it comes to understanding and engaging Latino voters—ranging from not thinking about them at all, to making symbolic overtures, to actively disenfranchising them. It can be tempting to talk about a single entity called the "Latino vote," but that idea simplifies a rather complex polity of communities whose historical linkages to the United States and ties to Latin America are manifold. Latinos defied (and defy) any notion of monolithic political behavior. And yet, as historically marginalized peoples, they share with Black, Asian, and Indigenous people an equally complicated history of fighting for recognition and securing some semblance of political power.

Simultaneously, the major political parties have struggled to understand what ignites Latino voters at the polls. From donning sombreros in East Los Angeles to the jibaro pava hat in East Harlem, "cultural" strategies focused on the three main groups (Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans) predominated the playbooks of both parties, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. From Kennedy to Nixon, party strategists wrote a flurry of memos and reports on appealing to the "Spanish-speaking voter." Kennedy's strategists emphasized Catholic identity, while Nixon's team tried to water down the Mexican American and Puerto Rican Democratic support by covertly promoting leftist Latino third-party groups.

> Catchall terms helped congeal these diverse communities into one group.

Both parties were trying to understand a monolithic "Latino vote" that does not actually exist. But where did this conceptualization come from? Before 1960, regional, state, and municipal races drew from local organizers' strategies to appeal to, say, Mexican Americans in Los Angeles or Puerto Ricans in the Bronx. But in national races, the "Spanish-speaking" American eluded political understandings, even as their importance increased alongside the Latino population. Realizing this, the Kennedy, Nixon, and Johnson campaigns all had "Latino whisperers" among their advisors who could help parse the distinctions and inclinations among Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans. But the problem was one of language. Governments, news outlets, and corporations alike deployed catchall terms like "Spanish-speaking," "Hispanic," and "Latino"—to say nothing of the political ideological origins of each term—that helped congeal these diverse communities into one group. Political theorist Cristina Beltrán reminds us that part of the problem of these collective identities is that they imply "unity" when there might be none at all.

Political campaigns' misguided efforts did not extinguish Latino voters' desire for electoral power, with grassroots registration drives springing up within their own communities. Historian Max Krochmal has detailed how political currents in Texas led to the formation of an important 1974 drive to create the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project. In 1976, Mario Vizcaino, chairman of the Cuban National Planning Council, spoke to the many Cuban refugees who lacked a political voice due to the lengthy red tape to attain citizenship when he told the *Miami Herald*, "We have taxation without representation." In 1970s New York City, Puerto Ricans increased their electoral power, according to historian Sonia Lee, through a "leadership that conceptualized bilingual education [and bilingualism] as the base of a Puerto Rican–specific civil rights agenda and paved the way for its construction as an exclusively Hispanic program." A decade's worth of tactical collaborations and of civil suits by Puerto Rican and Mexican American legal defense organizations to challenge the discriminatory exclusions of English-only ballots led to the historic 1975 amendment to the Voting Rights Act, mandating the availability of bilingual voting materials.

Gains made to increase the Latino electorate in the 1970s did not translate to political power in the decades that followed. A well-funded nativist movement arose that promoted anti-Latino policies in the form of antibilingualism, draconian border enforcement, denial of federal and state services, fearmongering about "overpopulation," and criminalization of undocumented immigrants. This movement tried to sway both parties by donating money to candidates all too willing to accept it. The Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations, to varying degrees, kept company with nativist groups while simultaneously trying to increase Latino support. In 1984, Ronald Reagan ran a national Hispanic campaign in his reelection bid that, as historian Geraldo Cadava explained, "combined his aggressive foreign policy with appeals to their religious traditionalism and belief in free-market capitalism." Yet Reagan's foreign policy led to increased immigration by new groups, who not only changed the face of Latino communities but impacted local and global politics.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, voter drive canvassers had to become highly conversant in local and global matters of concern to Latinos. No perfect calibration of positions on taxes, immigration, affirmative action, and foreign policy guaranteed a person's vote. Demographic shifts deepened this challenge, as new immigration altered the makeup of Latino communities. Central Americans, mainly Salvadorans

and Guatemalans, began settling in San Francisco, Los Angeles, the Midwest, and DC. Latino political culture was further altered by Dominicans arriving in New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, as well as indigenous Mexicans and Black Caribbeans. Canvassers working in distinct locales from El Paso, Texas, to Jackson Heights in Queens, New York, in the 1980s noted the fluidity of local and global politics in the living rooms of this diverse polity of peoples.

In a 1984 resolution, the Washington-based League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) identified some of what canvassers were seeing with respect to US foreign policy in the barrios of Latino USA. "The political and economic stability of Central American countries has direct implications for every American, but most importantly for the Hispanic community." This mattered, they argued, because "they are fellow Hispanics who have suffered overwhelmingly for decades from the lack of political rights and economic opportunity. While their struggle is much more intense and difficult to overcome, it is one which we Hispanics share in the United States." LULAC authored a resolution to denounce Reagan's foreign policy in Central America and promote humane migratory pathways to those fleeing its violence.

In the mid-1980s and early 1990s, officials in both parties finally realized that "costume politics" was no substitute for substantial grassroots voter outreach and soon hired proven and experienced canvassers for Latino outreach efforts. The Democrats hired Andy Hernandez, an organizer who had cut his teeth with the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project. The Republicans empowered Cuban American lawyer Alberto Cardenas to craft a voter outreach plan that would expand beyond the power base of South Florida to reach Latinos in Louisiana, Colorado, and California, particularly on issues related to Reagan's hawkish position on fighting communism in Central America. As historian Benjamin Francis-Fallon has recounted, Cardenas argued that his messaging, which looked beyond the Mexican American majority, could potentially turn out Latino Republican voters in Democratic strongholds like Illinois, New Jersey, and New York.

Yet engaging the diversifying distinct groups within Latino USA continued to confound the two parties. During the 1996 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, as convention goers danced the "Macarena," immigrant rights activists protested Bill Clinton's punitive policies against undocumented immigrants. They were inspired by a wave of immigrant-led rebellions and marches that had arisen in the 1980s and early 1990s. One such flash point came in May 1991, when the Salvadoran community in Washington, DC, rebelled violently against police brutality, forcing the city to confront the systemic disenfranchisement of poor and working-class Latin American immigrants with no ability to vote.

It's against this backdrop that conversations around the so-called "Latino vote" should be situated. These conversations are not new but have taken on renewed significance since the 2016 election. Pundits have been playing catch-up on measuring the impact and direction of the Latino vote: that year, prognosticators evoked either shock or predictability in learning of the significant outpouring of Latino support for Donald Trump, a candidate who delivered a more bombastic version of the very playbook that anti-Latino nativists crafted back in the 1980s.

As convention goers danced the "Macarena," activists protested Clinton's punitive policies against undocumented immigrants.

Historians are not in the business of predictions, but some very recent and simple analysis of national campaigns show that the costume politics of yesteryear remain with us today. In the 2024 campaign, both parties have dusted off old playbooks: tour the candidate through X and Y barrios; make buttons that say "Viva" this and "Adelante" that; be seen with popular Latino performer here and there; and teach the candidate a few choice words in Spanish that can be uttered during a rally. Anti-immigrant fervor remains a central thread of our 21st-century politics, shaping the discourse on the left, center, and right. But with each election, questions remain: Can campaigns raise policy issues separate from immigration that animate the very different constituencies that compose the "Latino vote"? How will they address the differing viewpoints on the economy, health care, housing, affordability, the military, and foreign policy that concern the vast polity of Latino voters? And lastly, for historians of US politics, what clarity might we glean on the enigma of the "Latino vote" across history, a group composed of aspiring citizens whose political behavior—and potential linkages across diverse Latino ethnic politics—deserves exploration? Easy answers are hard to come by, but the significance of these questions grows only larger, and more perplexing, with each passing election cycle. P

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JOHN LAWRENCE

HOW CONGRESS IS WRITTEN OUT OF HISTORY

The Port Chicago Exoneration Case

Explosions at the Port Chicago Naval Magazine led to massive destruction, including the deaths of 320 men.
Mare Island Navy Yard/US Naval History and Heritage Command/NH 96823

IT IS AN AXIOM among historians of Congress that, both in history and in journalism, disproportionate attention is focused on the role of the president. No monograph focusing primarily on the role of Congress, for example, has ever won the Pulitzer Prize for History or the Bancroft Prize. Bookstore shelves groan under the weight of books about presidents, while the much rarer studies of Congress almost always focus only on prominent leaders. "Overshadowed by presidents and social movements," historian Julian Zelizer has noted, "legislators remain ghosts in America's historical imagination," the institution itself "a mystery" to most Americans.

The enactment of the Affordable Care Act in 2010 provides a recent but hardly unique example. An enormously complex statute, the ACA consumed over a year of congressional deliberations, the longest Senate deliberation in modern history, legislative drafting by three major House committees, and extraordinary parliamentary maneuvering to achieve a final product. Yet the law is often generically described as "Obamacare," originally a disparaging term that President Barack Obama and the press came to embrace. Only rare accounts focus on the months of consensus building on Capitol Hill that produced the bill that the president signed.

A far less prominent illustration of this executive branch bias occurred earlier this year. In July 2024, the US Navy finally bowed to three decades of congressional pressure to exonerate African American sailors who had been wrongly punished following the 1944 Port Chicago Naval Magazine disaster. While welcome and worthy of praise, Secretary Carlos Del Toro's decision came too late for the 258 men involved, including 50 sent to federal prison on a bogus mutiny charge. Despite steady pressure from Congress, presidents and secretaries had refused for decades to act on the very same evidence that prompted Del Toro's decision.

California's Port Chicago Naval Magazine was one of the largest munitions loading and shipping facilities on the West Coast during World War II. It was also a rigidly segregated facility, as was most of the US military at the time. White officers supervised hundreds of Black sailors who, although trained for combat, instead were shunted into loading and mess operations. The dockworkers complained about the lack of training for the hazardous loading procedure, and representatives of the longshoremen's union warned that the facility was courting disaster. The officers dismissed the warnings and assured workers that the bombs could not explode.

The officers were wrong, tragically so. During loading operations on the night of July 17, 1944, a series of massive explosions ripped through the piers. One 440-foot ship simply vaporized, as did a locomotive and hundreds of sailors, mostly Black loaders. Fragments of a second ship were found hundreds of yards away. Bits of ships, railcars, piers, and bodies were blown 12,000 feet into the air. The force of the explosion, which registered as far away as Nevada, equaled one-third the force of the atomic bomb that would be dropped on Hiroshima the following year. The worst home-front disaster of World War II, 320 men died and hundreds more suffered physical and emotional injuries, many permanent.

In the aftermath, white officers were given hardship leave while the surviving Black sailors were ordered to gather up the body parts of their colleagues. Then, before the cause of the explosion was determined and without additional training or adoption of safety procedures, they were ordered back to loading bombs on ships.

Secretary Carlos Del Toro's decision came too late for the 258 men involved, including 50 sent to federal prison on a bogus mutiny charge.

Over 250 sailors—all Black—refused, citing safety concerns. Threatened with wartime crimes that could result in their execution, 50 stood their ground. Charged with mutiny, a crime rarely prosecuted in the US Navy, they were convicted quickly in an all-military trial that reeked of prejudice. Despite interventions by NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, their appeals were rejected, and the convicted were imprisoned. Only after the war ended were the men released. With rare exceptions, accounts of the explosion, the trial, and the convictions disappeared from history. Few survivors mentioned their experience, even to their families.

In 1989, Berkeley sociologist Robert L. Allen published *The Port Chicago Mutiny*, the first scholarly effort to shed light on the all-but-forgotten historical record. At about the same time, as a staff member for Congressman George Miller, who represented the California district where the tragedy occurred, I began an investigation that culminated in hearings at which Port Chicago survivors finally could testify about their mistreatment and how they had lived for decades in fear of their story being disclosed. When I tracked down one survivor of the explosion to explain the congressional inquiry, his first words were "I have waited 40 years for this phone call."

Within a few years, Miller—then chairman of the Natural Resources Committee—passed legislation establishing a national memorial at the site. In 1999, President Bill Clinton responded

to an appeal from Miller and issued a pardon to one surviving sailor, Freddie Meeks. But efforts in Congress to clear other sailors' names met with bureaucratic indifference over the next quarter century. In conjunction with House Armed Services Committee chair Ron Dellums and Senator Barbara Boxer, Miller legislatively compelled a navy review in the mid-1990s that admitted chronic racism in the base's operations but implausibly argued it did not affect the verdict, and so the convictions remained on the men's service records.

> It was only protracted efforts by Congress and advocates that pressured the navy into a belated reversal of the charges.

Over the years, as those who had been imprisoned passed from the scene, relatives rejected any effort to secure pardons, believing an acceptance of one would constitute an admission of guilt. Led by Miller, and then his successor, Rep. Mark DeSaulnier, a memorial support organization called the Friends of Port Chicago joined with veterans' organizations and civil rights, legal, and other activists to continue efforts to clear the sailors' names. DeSaulnier won inclusion in several House defense bills of a provision directing the navy to exonerate the men, as Congress had done for Captain Charles McVay, who had been unjustly court-martialed following the sinking of USS *Indianapolis* in 1945. Unfortunately, opponents in the Senate repeatedly refused to accept the House language.

The advocates persisted, imploring successive administrations from Bush to Obama to Trump to Biden to reconsider the case. Navy officials, including the commander of the base that now occupies the Port Chicago site, embraced wiping the slate clean, but no formal action was taken until Del Toro instructed his legal staff to review the case's sordid record after he became secretary in 2021. On the eve of the 80th anniversary of the explosion, the secretary announced he would sign the exoneration order. After more than 30 years of effort, the records of the Port Chicago sailors were wiped clean at long last.

Largely missing from the events and statements surrounding the exoneration celebration that followed was recognition that these officials did not act alone. It was only protracted efforts by Congress and advocates that pressured the navy into a belated reversal of the charges. The secretary's press release announcing the exoneration included no mention of the work by Congress to persuade a recalcitrant navy, Pentagon, and White House to clear the names of the sailors. The statement issued by President Biden proclaimed that "after conducting a careful and deliberative review, the U.S. Navy has determined that the courts-martials . . . were fundamentally unfair, plagued by legal errors, and tainted by racial discrimination." Similarly, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin asserted that "the Department of Defense has moved to rectify an old injustice," which furthered the misimpression that the navy had initiated the exoneration effort.

These statements did not acknowledge Miller, who spent half his 40-year House career pressuring the navy to reverse the convictions, or the crucial roles played by DeSaulnier, the Friends Committee, and other groups and individuals, like Thurgood Marshall Jr., who rallied in favor of the action. Most news accounts reflected this same distortion. The *New York Times* proclaimed "Navy Exonerates Black Sailors Unfairly Convicted After World War II Disaster," and yet nowhere in the story was the lengthy congressional campaign recognized.

The important lesson here is already familiar to those who study Congress: a chronic emphasis on the executive branch that minimizes or ignores altogether the difficult and protracted work on Capitol Hill required to implement a successful policy. Commonplace phraseology like "President Obama passed the Affordable Care Act" or "President Trump passed a sweeping tax cut" is a familiar illustration of this misallocation of credit that ignore the months and years of drafting legislation, holding hearings, considering amendments, negotiating to assemble the votes to convert the recommendations of presidents (as well as congressionally initiated policies) into laws. Indeed, absent the diligence of Congress, the president would have no bills to sign into law. Directing attention to the essential role of representatives and senators in shaping public policy not only provides a more accurate account of such history but also helps enhance the often disparaged or overlooked contributions of the legislative branch.

The successful effort to exonerate the Port Chicago sailors demonstrates how important events that have been scrubbed from our national memory can be resurrected into the historical narrative. But the story also demonstrates why it is crucial for those who investigate and write our history to embrace a more complex and nuanced view of how important successes are achieved. With the welcome exonerations, the arc of the Port Chicago story has been at long last completed—but innumerable other long-overlooked and distorted cases await additional revelation. P

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ANNE E. LESTER

NOTRE-DAME ARISES

Five Years after the Cathedral Burned

The scaffolding of Notre-Dame, photographed by the author on June 16, 2024, highlights the artisans working to rebuild the cathedral.
Anne E. Lester

ON APRIL 15, 2019, the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris caught fire and burned. Alongside people across the world, I watched in horror and disbelief as flames engulfed first the scaffolding erected to repair the cathedral's spire, then the roof, and finally the spire itself. In shock, we were glued to our screens as smoke billowed from the middle of the building and the fire devoured the timbers beneath the lead roof. By 7:30 p.m. in France, the fire had compromised the central crossing tower. The majestic 19th-century spire collapsed and fell through the roof of the nave. By late evening, the "forest of Notre-Dame," the oak timber lattice framework that held the roof aloft above the chevet, crossing, and nave, had almost entirely burned. The fire grew so hot (between 600 and 1,300 degrees Celsius) that it melted the lead roof and sent great plumes of eerie greenish smoke into the evening sky.

Rescue crews and firefighters worked tirelessly to save what they could and to put out the blaze. The chaplain and a group of canons recovered the cathedral treasury's most precious relics, including the Crown of Thorns and the chemise of Saint Louis, which were taken to the Louvre. At 11:30 p.m., President Emmanuel Macron addressed the public, vowing to rebuild within five years. By midmorning on April 16, the fire was out, and the work of resurrecting Notre-Dame began.

A historian of medieval religion and society and a specialist on medieval France, I found myself answering questions from the US media about what the cathedral meant in the past and in the present; speculating about what had been saved and what was lost; and reflecting on what the building meant for me, for "history," and for the people of France.

In the process, two points emerged for me. First, while Notre-Dame has tremendous personal and religious meaning to Christian believers in France, it is also a symbol of national and international significance, and it remains one of the most visited pilgrimage and tourist sites in Europe. The loss of parts of Notre-Dame is culturally and historically jarring; it ruptures a deep continuity. This was palpable as we gathered around the globe in front of our televisions and live streams to gasp, cry, wonder, lament, and share the shock and loss.

Second, the loss was something more than a medieval edifice. As I emphasized at the time, we also lost the know-how of past artisans and laborers; now gone was the unwritten archive that held the knowledge of how to construct a monumental timber roof structure, vaulting, and columns. The efforts of nameless medieval workers are now effaced. Although the cathedral is being rebuilt, it will not and cannot be the same building. We do not have the same skills or resources. The medieval woodlands and great oak trees that supplied Notre-Dame's "forest" roof framework are gone. Nor can we source the same stone from the same quarries or replicate the tools and techniques in the same manner. Our material world is different. Although parts of the building could be restored, the central crossing and much of the timber and stonework have had to be built anew.

Rebuilding Notre-Dame has been a complex undertaking. The building we know now was constructed over an older Merovingian cathedral structure that had been somewhat enlarged during the ninth-century Carolingian period. The Gothic edifice was begun in 1163 and continued over the next 150 years. During that time, techniques shifted—as researchers have discovered—and new feats of engineering enlarged the windows and give the illusion of floating the stone roof above parishioners.

Notre-Dame remains one of the most visited pilgrimage and tourist sites in Europe.

Notre-Dame continued to evolve. It was prey to the iconoclastic destruction of the French Wars of Religion and the Revolution, when the gallery of kings that ran along the facade was torn down and the statues decapitated (the heads, which had been buried nearby, were found in 1977 and are now on display in the Musée de Cluny) and the cathedral was briefly "converted" into the Temple of Reason. By 1804, however, it was the site where Napoleon crowned himself emperor, and within a year Pope Pius VIII recognized Notre-Dame as a minor basilica. Between 1844 and 1864, Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc and Jean-Baptiste Lassus restored its towers, buttresses, and roof, adding "medieval" flourishes including gargoyles and the iconic 19th-century spire. Paris's cathedral is and always has been a living building, and therein lies some measure of consolation. The fire and subsequent rebuilding and restoration efforts will be part of its continued history.

Indeed, in the aftermath we have learned a tremendous amount due to incredible scholarly and state initiatives. In the days after the fire, leading researchers and politicians formed the Association of Scientists in the Service of the Restoration of Notre-Dame Paris to offer guidance to the rebuilding project. A second panel formed to coordinate and supervise the practical realities of rebuilding under the direction of Jean-Louis Georgelin, an army general who oversaw nearly 1,000 artisans around France. Initially, the association brought together over 175 researchers and scientists tasked with an expansive research agenda grounded in history, archaeology, geology, chemistry, and many other disciplines.

In announcing their goal in rebuilding, the team cited French medievalist Jacques Le Goff, who stated that "to be reborn is not to return, it is to start again."

The new research that has emerged is staggering, encompassing medieval cathedral construction, repair, building techniques, and more. Under the leadership of Maxime L'Héritier and Philippe Dillmann, nine working groups endeavored simultaneously to evaluate and understand the wood, stone and mortar, glass, metal, structure, decor, acoustics, digital data, and meanings of Notre-Dame as a heritage site.

> The new research is staggering, encompassing medieval cathedral construction, repair, building techniques, and more.

Digital models helped scholars recognize the structure's proportions, stresses, acoustics, and engineering. Others studied the surviving and charred roof timbers using chemical analysis, carbon-14 dating, and other techniques to examine the wood's origins; understand how it was treated, cut, dressed, and assembled; and assess what could be gleaned about the climate during the medieval period when the trees were felled. The charred stones underwent similar analysis. Another team uncovered a series of iron pins used in the construction of the interior limestone walls, revolutionizing our understanding of how building forms transitioned from the late 12th century into the 13th, when Notre-Dame leapt into the Gothic style. Chemists, botanists, and environmental scientists analyzed the lead used in the medieval and 19th-century roof and stained glass. To evaluate the lead released by the roof as it burned, others monitored state-maintained beehives within a measured radius around Paris to determine lead levels in new honey. Another team built on an earlier sound map of Notre-Dame's interior to reconstruct a space acoustically as close to the original as possible, in the process learning much from the cathedral's original soundscape, where new musical forms and variations like the polyphonic motet were first composed in the mid-13th century.

A host of studies emerged about cultural heritage and monumentality, in turn advancing techniques of digital modeling and aspects of data science. Anthropologists, sociologists, and cultural theorists have analyzed reactions and responses to the fire and to ideas around rebuilding and cultural heritage more broadly. Several studies focus on materiality and sentimentality of building spaces. Analysis of the emoji used in social media posts in the five days after the fire showed that feelings of mourning and resolve briefly united people across the globe. The idea that space and materials endure through time suggests why it is that cultural heritage—spaces and sites that are deemed of specific significance—can hold a special status for communities locally and globally. And there is no doubt that in the decades to come, far more research will emerge from the ashes. As Maxime L'Héritier's team put it, "Notre-Dame thrives on science, but science thrives on Notre-Dame."

Finally, we have much to learn from those involved in the reconstruction itself. Researchers assessed how best to rebuild while using medieval techniques as a precedent. The contemporary experience of rebuilding—the use of massive cranes, layers of scaffolding, and "spiders" (*cordistes*), workers who "fly" or hang over the building site in harnesses—illuminates medieval construction techniques and what feats of engineering were possible in the cathedral's initial construction. And while advertising was banned from the worksite, portraits of workers graced the scaffolding flanking the cathedral's iconic flying buttresses. Although we know little about those who originally built the cathedral, having in public view the stories and labors of today's workers shows what expertise and efforts lie behind the making of a monument.

Unfortunately, political pressures to meet Macron's promise and complete the project in 2024 have limited the extent of research undertaken. For example, although archaeological work was conducted, much remains buried under the nave. One hopes that in time selected trenches can be opened for additional excavation. Certainly, a great boon of information and new techniques will continue to deepen our understanding of the medieval cathedral and its long afterlives. Meanwhile, ethical questions remain about how best to use public funds and private donations in cultural heritage projects like rebuilding Notre-Dame, and they deserve future scrutiny.

As I write this in October, the cathedral's major structural elements have been repaired or rebuilt. Crews have removed much of the exterior scaffolding, the Grand Organ and the damaged stained glass windows have been repaired, and decorative iron work and railings have been restored or replaced. The timber framework of the nave roof and choir has been completed, the interior stonework refaced and repainted, and the rebuilt spire set in place, visible now from across the city as it once was. The lead roof is being reset as I write. Notre-Dame is scheduled to reopen to visitors on December 8, 2024, a feat that seems nothing short of miraculous. P

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DENNIS BOGUSZ

HOW DO YOU SAY COLONIALISM IN …?

Bringing History into Language Instruction

With this map of North America, Dennis Bogusz's French students learn about language and place-names, including ones familiar to them today.

Carte de la Florida, de la Louisiane, et pays voisins: Pour servir à l'Histoire générale des voyages, *1790. Library of Congress / public domain.*

WORLD LANGUAGES are sometimes just a footnote in the teaching of history. When I started teaching French, I thought the same about history. I occasionally peppered my lessons with the historical ties between France and the Francophone world. Most textbooks identify these different regions but gloss over the main reason why French is spoken there: colonialism. I spent some time trying to figure out how to engage students with this historical aspect of language learning. I found it best to bring colonial history directly into the classroom.

This frank approach helps students learn language through history, and sometimes vice versa. Having experimented with teaching about colonialism at different levels of French in middle and high school classes over the last few years, I've seen this approach unlock a deeper understanding for students. I share some examples below of what I find specifically helps students connect the historiography of language with colonial history.

For starters, even nonlinguists can appreciate how easily things can get lost in translation. When my students study French in North America, one of the first people they learn about is Jacques Cartier. When Cartier inquired about the inhabited parts along the river he was exploring, the Iroquois told him the area was called "kanata," by which they meant a small village or settlement. Students quickly grasp the irony of the term that Cartier and other Europeans used for what would later name the world's second-largest country by area.

On a map of colonial Florida and Louisiana, students find not only French but many Native American names they had not seen before on maps written in English. When students sound out in French the phonetic transcription of Native American terms, such as Cheraquis for Cherokee and Checagou for Chicago, they understand that English spelling was just one representation of Native American spoken languages. I also draw their attention to the phrase on the map "Ces Contrées et les Nations Sauvages sont peu connues" (These lands and savage nations are hardly known). I first check that students understand the literal French. Then I ask why they think the cartographer chose these words. Distinguishing between lands that were known and unknown highlights the relative ignorance of a Eurocentric view of America.

As a simple thought experiment, I prompt students to discuss how they know France exists if they have never been there. Drawing on their knowledge from history classes, we also take on directly what they think Europeans meant by "savage." We discuss how English speakers use that term today, whether to describe people, places, or animals. (I point out that referring to historical people as savage is definitely passé in both France and the United States today.) Discussing who got to name things from different cultures in the past helps students appreciate that language itself has history. That these "savage nations" were labeled as such pushes students to develop their own questions. One question posed by a student that sticks with me was whether European settlers thought they could tame or civilize other peoples, which invited a larger discussion about the goals of the colonial project in North America and how it was perceived in Europe. We return to this concept when we visit the civilizing mission of later waves of French colonization elsewhere.

When my students later study migration in North America, they learn the difference between two words associated with Louisiana but often conflated. One is Cajun, derived from the word Acadian, which refers to the French speakers the British displaced from Canada and who settled in Louisiana. The other is Creole, originally from the Spanish *criolla*, which refers to the mix of language and culture from Caribbean immigrants who also settled in Louisiana. The term would eventually distinguish Louisianans by race as well. My students learn the distinctions between these terms as they also evolved in relation to music, food, and culture more broadly.

Drawing on their knowledge from history classes, we take on directly what students think Europeans meant by "savage."

This year, I invited a Louisianan to visit the class. He explained the race-based connotations of the terms, with Cajun being generally more associated with whites and Creole with people of color. This alerts students as to how language evolves yet can retain a race-based legacy. My students had read about legal changes in Louisiana, which once accommodated French as an official language until it was ultimately suppressed not long after the state's admission to the union. Our guest speaker shared how previous generations in his own family were forbidden from speaking French in school. There is a resurgence in demands, however, to bring the language back through educational programs and the media. Students then learn that today the word Creole in English is more geographically limited to Louisiana and the Caribbean, but that European French speakers use *créole* to describe a host of language communities stretching to the Indian

and Pacific Oceans that blend French and other native languages.

Once students are primed to connect language with history in class, they do so outside too. I once chaperoned a class trip to Boston that was designed with a joint English-history curriculum. Not willing to let the opportunity to sneak in some French go by, before the trip I showed videos of French-speaking tourists on the Freedom Trail, which we would soon visit. During our time in Boston, students naturally stuck to speaking English most of the time. Then during a visit at the Museum of African American History, one student asked me why the Frederick Douglass calling cards on exhibit were labeled by their French name: *carte de visite*. Indeed, the term in English is historical; in modern French, it means business card. The student was impressed that Douglass was associated with an artifact that used French to distinguish its bearer as someone of high social status.

> Students had to think critically about how they use both *liberty* and *freedom*.

After our trip, I invited students to write a summary of their visit for a French-speaking audience. We then used these summaries to prepare for an in-class debate on terminology. Referring to our lesson before the trip and our Freedom Trail visit, students explained when to use the words *freedom* and *liberty* in English, since *liberté* can be translated into either word. Playing the role of naive French speaker, I further pushed them to explain why the French-gifted Statue de la Liberté is not called the Statue of Freedom. Students had to think critically about how they use both *liberty* and *freedom*, providing an insight they admit would not necessarily have been gained from a colonial history class taught only in English.

A related use of literature is also central to understanding language and colonial history, revealing connections students may not make in history classes alone. I offer my students the chance to celebrate the literary giants who hail from Francophone America. For instance, they read excerpts from Guadeloupean novelist Maryse Condé, who wrote about Tituba and the Salem witch trials in *Moi, Tituba sorcière . . . Noire de Salem*. References to Tituba in English, whether in historical context or in related works of fiction like Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, usually refer to her as a secondary character. Condé shifts the narrative in her novel to Tituba's perspective and makes her the protagonist. Likewise, my students' perspective about the Salem witch trials shifted after reading from her perspective in French. (This novel is also available in English translation as *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*.) Though one of my objectives in the exercise is to get students to apply various past tenses in French, the more abiding lesson I have found is that students express how race, religion, and language collided in colonial Massachusetts, which may be less attainable in English-only literature.

I often ask students to write reflections on their learning throughout the year. Inevitably, they express, even if in imperfect French, the new and complex connections between language and history they are learning to see. Importantly, they deepen their knowledge of history through learning another language. Implicating students in the historiography of language can help them better understand social and cultural history more broadly. Teaching about France's role in the North American history of colonialism also helps them understand the impact other European languages, especially English and Spanish, likewise had on the world students have inherited. Plus, as I point out to them, this approach offers a timelier approach to studying France itself, which like the United States is reckoning with its colonial past in the teaching of history today.

As these examples show, understanding how language and history are in conversation with each other yields deep student engagement. The pedagogical task is also mutual: Whereby language teachers can certainly bring history into the language classroom, history teachers can bring the study of languages into the history classroom. This interdisciplinary approach can afford students opportunities to make new connections and to appreciate the power of language in making history. P

Dennis Bogusz has taught middle and high school French in New York City and Connecticut.

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Designing Introductory History Courses for Student Success

A publication from the American Historical Association

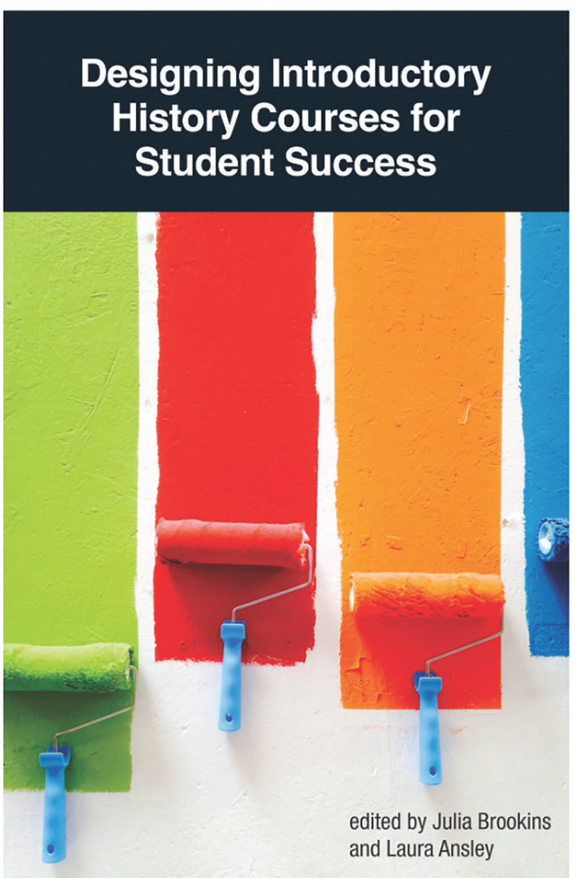
What is the value of an introductory college course in history?

What are the most effective ways to train all incoming students in core elements of historical thinking?

How do we improve student success in these foundational courses?

The AHA's new booklet *Designing Introductory History Courses for Student Success* collects data and perspectives on what instructional faculty and other higher education decision-makers can do to put the history discipline to work for today's students. Even small, incremental changes can produce measurable improvements in student learning and success.

Available at historians.org/booklets.



AHA members receive a 30% discount on AHA booklets. Visit **historians.org/booklets** to learn more.

THAVOLIA GLYMPH

ABSTRACT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT THE 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

"Paper Tracings in the Spectacularly Boisterous Archive of Slavery"

The archive has never been what its most fervent champions desired it to be. Despite its appearance of stateliness and decorum, its inner life often betrayed any sense of good taste or decency. The noisiness of everyday life intrudes unwanted—the rumblings of kingdoms and dynastic rivalries, gender conflict, imperial conquest, revolution, peasant and slave rebellions, and religious conflict impervious to efforts at containment or constraint. For historians of slavery, as for scholars in other fields, the archive is punctuated with noise and less than majestic matter. Though loath to admit it, the archive cannot help being a rowdy, boisterous place. Here, enslaved people who are not supposed to be "seen" or "heard," raise their voices and are spectacularly visible.

This address pays homage to the spectacular visibility to be found in "paper tracings." Disregarded by those who left them, the tracings spill out of archival folders and boxes stuffed with the letters, diaries, and papers of slaveholders, merchants, and bankers. Here, unchecked by the expected decorum, enslaved people run away and give themselves revolutionary names like "North Star." Here, a refugee given the option to work as a domestic servant for a northern white family chooses "to do for herself." As scholars, we cannot but wish for many more such voices, but in their absence we might linger in the archives where we do find them, linger with "paper tracings" that leave far more than a trace.

The presidential address will take place on Saturday, January 4, 2025, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the New York Hilton's Trianon Ballroom.

Thavolia Glymph is president of the AHA.

A worker stands between the columns during the construction of the National Archives building in Washington, DC, in 1935.
National Archives/public domain

Hotel and Rate Information

	SINGLE	DOUBLE	TRIPLE	QUADRUPLE
1 **New York Hilton Midtown (hdqrs.)** 1335 6th Ave.	$214	$234	$254	$274
2 **Sheraton New York Times Square (co-hdqrs.)** 811 7th Ave.	$209	$209	$239	$269

Rates are subject to hotel occupancy tax and will be honored three days before and three days after the official meeting dates of January 3–6 based on availability. No additional destination fee will be charged. Information on booking a room at the discounted rate is available at historians.org/hotels.

Dates and Deadlines

NOVEMBER 1	Program mailed to members.
DECEMBER 12	Last day to make hotel reservations through the housing service. Subsequent reservations taken on a space-available basis at the convention rate.
DECEMBER 15	Last day for preregistration pricing.
DECEMBER 15	Deadline to submit registration refund requests.
JANUARY 3, 2025	Annual meeting opens at 11:00 a.m. Exhibit Hall opens January 4, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Hilton.

Meeting Registration

Take advantage of reduced rates by preregistering for the conference. Make sure your membership is up to date so you can enjoy member pricing at each level. Register online at historians.org/myaha.

	MEMBER		NONMEMBER	
	PREREGISTRATION	AFTER DEC. 15	PREREGISTRATION	AFTER DEC. 15
Attendee	$256	$297	$385	$453
Speaker	$256	$297	$256	$297
Student	$120	$138	$169	$199
Un-/Underemployed	$75	$88	$183	$213
Retired	$148	$169	$218	$253
K–12 Teacher	$123	$139	$191	$219
Bring Your Graduate/ Undergraduate/K–12 Student discount	**For members only.** Add students to your registration for only $15 each ($30 on-site). Bring as many high school, undergraduate, and graduate students as you want for only $15 each!			

Advance registration must be completed by midnight EST on December 15, 2024. Thereafter, on-site rates will apply. Everyone attending the meeting is expected to register. Admission to the Exhibit Hall requires a registration badge. **Special note for speakers: All US-based historians presenting on AHA sessions must be AHA members, and all participants must register.**

Advance registrants who are unable to attend the meeting may request a refund of their registration fee. Refund requests must be emailed to ltownsend@historians.org by December 15, 2024, and will incur a $20 fee. Refunds will not be processed after that date.

Book a Room and Save $50

Reserve a hotel room in the AHA block through the AHA housing service, Maritz, before registering for the meeting and receive a $50 discount off meeting registration. (You will not receive a discount refund if you register before booking a room.)

RESOLUTION FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE JANUARY 2025 BUSINESS MEETING

Article VII of the AHA Constitution states that the Association's Council shall call a business meeting, open to all members of the Association in good standing, to convene at the time of the annual meeting. The business meeting of the 138th annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 5, 2025, from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. in the Mercury Ballroom of the New York Hilton.

Bylaw 11(4), which provides procedures to carry out the business meeting, states that any member of the Association may present resolutions or other motions that introduce new business to the agenda of the annual business meeting. Such resolutions must

- be received in the office of the executive director not later than October 1 prior to the annual meeting, to allow time for publication;
- be in proper parliamentary form;
- be signed by members of the Association in good standing and by at least two percent (2%) of the total Association membership as of the end of the previous fiscal year;
- be less than 300 words in length, including any introductory material; and
- deal with a matter of concern to the Association or the discipline of history. Such resolutions must be in accord with the Association's *Guiding Principles on Taking a Public Stance.*

Resolutions submitted by the deadline and meeting the criteria for consideration are published in the November issue of *Perspectives on History* and will be added to the business meeting agenda. The following resolution, signed by 252 AHA members in good standing as of October 1, 2024, was submitted to the executive director for consideration at the January 5, 2025, business meeting. A full list of signatories can be viewed online at historians.org/business-mtg.

Resolution to Oppose Scholasticide in Gaza

Whereas the US government has underwritten the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) campaign in Gaza with over $12.5 billion in military aid between October 2023 and June 2024;

Whereas that campaign, beyond causing massive death and injury to Palestinian civilians and the collapse of basic life structures, has effectively obliterated Gaza's education system;

Whereas in April 2024, UN experts expressed "grave concern over the pattern of attacks on schools, universities, teachers, and students in the Gaza Strip" including "the killing of 261 teachers and 95 university professors . . . which may constitute an intentional effort to comprehensively destroy the Palestinian education system, an action known as scholasticide."

The bases for this charge include:

- The IDF's destruction of 80 percent of schools in Gaza, leaving 625,000 children with no educational access;
- The IDF's destruction of all 12 Gaza university campuses;
- The IDF's destruction of Gaza's archives, libraries, cultural centers, museums, and bookstores, including 195 heritage sites, 227 mosques, three churches, and the al-Aqsa University library, which preserved crucial documents and other materials related to the history and culture of Gaza;
- The IDF's repeated violent displacements of Gaza's people, leading to the irreplaceable loss of students' and teachers' educational and research materials, which will extinguish the future study of Palestinian history;

Whereas the United States government has supplied Israel with the weapons being used to commit this scholasticide;

Therefore, be it resolved that the AHA, which supports the right of all peoples to freely teach and learn about their past, condemns the Israeli violence in Gaza that undermines that right;

Be it further resolved that the AHA calls for a permanent ceasefire to halt the scholasticide documented above;

Finally, be it resolved that the AHA form a committee to assist in rebuilding Gaza's educational infrastructure.

AHA Communities Forum on the 2025 Business Meeting

As required by the AHA Bylaws, the Council will establish procedures to enable a democratic and fair discussion that includes a variety of perspectives and voices and that adheres to the time limitations of the meeting. Details about the speaker selection process and rules for conducting discussion during the business meeting will be made available online by early December at historians.org/business-mtg.

In advance of the 2025 business meeting, AHA members are invited to discuss the resolution on the AHA25 Business Meeting online forum. We encourage all members who wish to participate in the conversation to join the online forum via the AHA Communities site.

To join, visit historians.org/business-mtg-forum. Log in with your email address and your AHA password. Then click the blue Join Community button. If you have a problem, please email info@historians.org, and someone will reply within 24 hours on weekdays.

Participation in the business meeting is restricted to members only. Please confirm in advance that your AHA membership is up to date by visiting historians.org/renew.

AHR STAFF

HISTORIES OF RESILIENCE

In the December 2024 Issue of the American Historical Review

With the December 2024 issue, the *American Historical Review* inaugurates the annual publication of a special issue. Each will advance innovative themes, approaches, and methods to the past that can contribute to reshaping contemporary historical practice. This issue addresses histories of resilience.

Overseeing the issue was an editorial collective of Shelly Chan (Univ. of California, Santa Cruz), Yoav Di-Capua (Univ. of Texas at Austin), Catherine Cymone Fourshey (Bucknell Univ.), Joshua L. Reid (Univ. of Washington), and Wendy Warren (Princeton Univ.). They encouraged contributors to explore how resilience has been expressed historically in various cultural contexts and informed the ways that communities and nations rebuilt or crafted futures after, for instance, slavery, civil war, displacement, or environmental disaster.

The resulting articles offer rich understandings of how historical context and contingency shape and inflect resilience. Opening the issue is "Resilience in Environmental History Discourse" by Lee Mordechai (Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem) and John Haldon (Princeton Univ.), who rethink the use of resilience in histories of environmental and climactic change. With historians the latecomers in engaging resilience theory, medievalists Mordechai and Haldon review resilience as a paradigm of institutionalized knowledge across the disciplines.

Two articles examine Asian histories. In "Lines of Fate," Ian M. Miller (St. John's Univ.) and Chris Coggins (Bard Coll. at Simon's Rock) explore protected fengshui forests in subtropical southern China over the last millennium. Combining textual, ethnographic, and scientific evidence, Miller and Coggins examine how these forests have fostered community resilience and sustainability over centuries. Their article is accompanied by a visual essay that details their fieldwork practices. Alex Jania (Univ. of Chicago) turns to Japan in "Between the Emergency and the Everyday," exploring the history of Miyagi Prefecture's tsunami memorial halls. In investigating the challenges of using memorials and collective memory to build resilience to future and recurring threats, he also examines new memorials, including a collaboration of architects, designers, and historians to build more resilient structures that reflect ideas of continuity and adaptability.

Indigenous histories are the subject of several articles. While the history of Rapa Nui (Easter Island) has often been told as a cautionary tale of the destructive tendencies of civilization, Gregory T. Cushman (Univ. of Arizona), Trisha Jackson (PrairieFood), and Johannes J. Feddema (Univ. of Kansas and Univ. of Victoria) call the island a "parable of survival, adaptation and resilience" in their "Ecologies of Resilience." The authors showcase the complex ways Rapanui peoples encoded historical and ecological knowledge and maintained an archive over generations.

> The issue offers rich understandings of how historical context and contingency shape and inflect resilience.

In "History on the Lost Coast," Kathleen C. Whiteley (Univ. of California, Davis) exemplifies how historians can use a resilience framework to craft narratives that highlight Indigenous agency amid the cacophony of settler violence. She bookends her intervention around a 2019 Wiyot Nation reclamation of over 200 acres on Northern California's Tuluwat Island, the site of a catastrophic massacre in 1860. Like other scholars of Indigenous resilience, Whiteley draws from Wiyot ways of knowing and remembering the past, including storytelling and oral accounts, many of which were collected in the Wiyot History Papers and supplemented with photos.

Finally, California's Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe (NCRNT) is the subject of Megan Renoir (Univ. of Cambridge) and Shelly Covert's (NCRNT) "Recognition as Resilience." The story of NCRNT, a nation that is not federally recognized, highlights how Indigenous resilience can become something

The image from *Forest*, on the cover of this "Histories of Resilience" special issue of the *AHR*, is part of a set of 16 large-format gelatin silver prints that capture temporary installations developed by the Singaporean-born artist Simryn Gill in the late 1990s. These installations involved grafting strands of pages from books and meticulously wrapping them onto trees and plants in tropical landscapes. With the project, Gill addressed issues around the decolonial and resilience, selecting English language works with colonial associations and former colonial military sites in Malaysia as the locations for her installations. Page fragments were intentionally left to decay and return to the raw fibrous material from which books are made. In exploring the epigones of empire in postcolonial Southeast Asia, Gill uncovers how the English language was used as a colonial tool for exploiting natural resources and fostering inequalities. But she also suggests that, in the end, the language forced on colonial subjects was overwhelmed by the resilience of local ecosystems.

considerably more than just a tool for survival. Renoir and Covert highlight resilience in practice, especially through NCRNT collaborations with educational institutions, NGOs, and state and federal offices to combat historical inaccuracies and to address contemporary environmental issues.

Other articles examine the role of resilience in relationships between citizens and the state. In "State-Led Development and Migrants' Resilience in the City of the Forest," Thaís R. S. de Sant'Ana (Univ. of Houston–Clear Lake) analyzes strategies deployed by workers in the Brazilian state of Amazonas from the 1910s to the 1930s as they repeatedly maneuvered to avoid state-controlled labor projects. Sant'Ana draws on interviews and newspaper articles to move beyond conventional narratives about Amazonia and offers readers new possibilities for understanding the region's complex socioeconomic transformations and growth.

Tammy Wilks (Univ. of Cape Town) in "Kenyan Nubians and the Myth of Nubian Resilience" examines how resilience informed claims for citizenship by a stateless community in Kenya in the late 19th century. She traces a particular myth to illustrate how the notion of Nubian soldiers' exceptionalism informed, authorized, and, at times, undermined the colonial project in Kenya as well as the political realities of Nubian soldiers.

In "The Lancashire Plague Petitions," Rachel Anderson (Durham Univ.) explores an untapped archive of petitions for poor assistance to the Lancashire Court of Quarter Sessions, written following plague outbreaks in England during the early 17th century. Through an analysis of select petitions, Anderson achieves what she calls a "street-level perspective of an early modern society recovering from moments of intense crisis." Anderson joins a body of scholarship critical of resilience studies that emphasize individual skills and traits over the importance of community and external assistance.

The issue concludes with three digitally focused projects that explore additional dimensions of how resilience works as a historical and analytical category. Jessie Ramey (Chatham Univ.) and Amelia Golcheski (Emory Univ.) in "Love, Hope, and Joy" use the career of activist Kipp Dawson to examine how resilience can operate in social movements even as they encounter setbacks, losses, and violent repression. Ramey and Golcheski's multimedia, open education website, Kipp Dawson: The Struggle Is the Victory, develops the idea of "radical collaboration" and focuses on movement networks, interconnections, and affects. Their contribution includes an introduction to Dawson's work and a video on the making of the site.

Bob Reinhardt's (Boise State Univ.) "Exploring Submerged Resilience" reflects on the Atlas of Drowned Towns, a public digital history project that seeks to identify, explore, and interpret the histories of places in the United States that moved or disappeared to make way for big dams. Currently under development and focused on 13 dams in Oregon's Willamette Valley, the artifacts, stories, and memories shared with the Atlas reveal acts of resistance, insistence, and persistence in the past, and those acts of sharing and participation themselves provide opportunities to express and define resilience in the present.

In his textual essay "Setting History in Motion" and video essay "Visualizing Resilience from the Periphery," Daniel McDonald (Univ. of Oxford) explores what he sees as the central role of the visual in the construction of social resistance in Brazil during the civil-military dictatorship (1964–85). Infused with images of urban landscapes, public life, neighborhood organizing, and open protest, social movement paraphernalia provided a visual lexicon, he argues, that helped activists make sense of substantial inequalities in urban housing, employment, and social services as well as envision new forms of protest and direct action. The video essay assembles these dispersed illustrations along with soundscapes and clips from films into distinctive phases of a metanarrative connecting the rise of the megacity to collective social action. P

The James M. Banner, Jr. Lecture
on the State of the Discipline of History

at the 138th annual meeting of the American Historical Association

Saturday, January 4
3:30 – 5 p.m.

Empire Ballroom East
Sheraton New York

Established in 2023, the James M. Banner, Jr., Lecture on the State of the Discipline of History examines historians' work and seeks to suggest improvements to fundamental aspects of the discipline including its structure; the institutions that support, preserve, and convey historical knowledge; and the education and practices of historians.

The Re-enchantment of American History

Johann N. Neem, Western Washington Univ.

Around the world, citizens and leaders are seeking to realign collective identities with political boundaries. These aspirations are reshaping the ways we discuss—and the ways we divide over—history. In the inaugural Banner lecture, Johann Neem asks whether the history discipline is prepared to respond to the changes taking place around us. He will explore how schools, museums, public history sites, and college classrooms might respond to the revival of nationalism. What are the histories that need sharing in a fast-changing world? What responsibility do we, as historians, have to the nation and its people?

historians.org/annual-meeting

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BEN ROSENBAUM

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS, ONE YEAR IN

In July 2023, the AHA relaunched our Congressional Briefings series, which had been on pause during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, nearly a dozen briefings have brought historians to Capitol Hill to share their expertise with congressional staff on today's major policy issues. In the first year of the program's revival, congressional staff have learned about foreign affairs issues such as the southern border, US-China relations, sanctions, and American military alliances; public infrastructure like housing and transportation; civil rights concerns such as gerrymandering and academic freedom; and policy regulating technologies such as social media and artificial intelligence. Even among such a diverse array of topics, a few themes still emerge from the last year.

Briefing topics are chosen with consideration for their relevance and timeliness. When the door plug blew off an Alaska Airlines flight in January, it called attention to aviation safety

Most AHA Congressional Briefings take place at the Rayburn House Office Building.
Domenico Convertini/Flickr/CC BY-SA 2.0

regulations. With increasing scrutiny of self-driving cars and the February 2023 train derailment and chemical spill in East Palestine, Ohio, still fresh in the public's mind, a briefing on transportation safety regulations was welcomed. Panelists Janet Bednarek (Univ. of Dayton), Jeff Davis (Eno Center for Transportation), and Peter Norton (Univ. of Virginia) each emphasized that regulations in the transportation sector typically only followed significant, often fatal accidents, a trend clearly reflected in current events. In the wake of major campus protests over Israel's war in Gaza, and with consideration for recent government intervention in academic affairs and curricular content, a briefing on academic freedom in July provided historical context to frame the choices before universities and policymakers. Following David M. Rabban's (Univ. of Texas School of Law) explanation of the judicial history of academic freedom as a subset of free speech, and David A. Bell's (Princeton Univ.) history of academic freedom policies in practice, Natalia Mehlman Petrzela (New School) confronted the present moment directly. She discussed how students and professors grappled with controversial rhetoric around the Middle East, a "turn towards the therapeutic" in how universities discuss campus safety, and present discourse on what rhetoric makes students feel unsafe and what makes them uncomfortable.

Panelists often focus on what policies have not worked just as much as those that have been successful. In February's briefing on international sanctions, Bruce W. Jentleson (Duke Univ.) explained that "sanctions are a limited instrument, [and] they need to pursue a limited objective." His presentation characterized sanctions as a "Swiss Army knife," a useful but limited tool. Jentleson introduced numerous examples of sanctions failing to achieve their goals or backfiring. However, panelists affirmed the symbolic value of sanctions, saying that they send a message to the country under sanction, the international community, and the voters of the country imposing the sanctions. In May's briefing on gerrymandering, Julian E. Zelizer (Princeton Univ.) spoke on the "possibilities and limitations" of redistricting reform. He argued that reform would not do much to ameliorate the political polarization that has overtaken the electorate, or even prevent the practice of gerrymandering. He discussed the benefits redistricting reform could provide by making elections more competitive, which would increase civic participation and make legislators more responsive to voters' concerns. In November's briefing on housing policy, D. Bradford Hunt (Loyola Univ. Chicago) described the failures of the public housing policies of the 1970s, highlighting the disincentives for improvement created by large housing projects and their funding structures.

Our panels establish a strong foundation to present the history of these issues. At the briefing on transportation regulations, Davis began by explaining the constitutional basis for federal transportation regulations, originating in the federal government's power to regulate foreign and interstate commerce and to provide for the common defense and general welfare of the public. From there, he identified the ninth law ever passed by Congress, a transportation regulation: the nationalization of all lighthouses and declaration that a new one be built at the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay. The briefing on the history of gerrymandering went back even further than Elbridge Gerry, the namesake of the term, and his efforts to draw favorable legislative maps for the Federalist Party in 1812. Joanne Freeman (Yale Univ.) described how the practice evolved over the early years of the republic. She explained that the concept of legislative districts was fluid, and varied state to state, but as partisanship increased, gerrymandering was increasingly employed to secure advantages for the party in power.

> Sanctions are a Swiss Army knife, a useful but limited tool.

Taking an expansive approach to the history of an issue has been a useful tactic as the AHA has tried to get ahead of new and emerging regulatory challenges with these briefings. Artificial intelligence is a new technology with few obvious parallels, and governments have struggled to regulate it. At October's briefing on the topic, panelists demonstrated that the technology's history is longer than one might expect, with origins in the Cold War. Jeffrey R. Yost (Univ. of Minnesota) and Janet Abbate (Virginia Tech) used this background to describe some of AI's limitations. Yost emphasized AI's inability to appreciate context and nuance, a ubiquitous critique of today's large language models that were also invoked about a major medical diagnostic AI system of the 1970s that struggled to appreciate some of the broader detriments of its suggested courses of treatment. Abbate highlighted moral concerns around AI, explaining that even if systems have been built with verbal intelligence, they lack social intelligence and moral reasoning. She framed its propensity to "hallucinate" supposed facts as a function of its purpose to deceive users into thinking it is human. Matthew Connelly (Columbia Univ.) offered a case study, discussing using AI to assist in the declassification of government documents. Recent legislative and judicial actions connected to social media including X and TikTok inspired a briefing on the history of media regulation in June.

As with AI, social media's fast and frequent evolutions have made it a tricky industry to regulate. At first glance, there is

little precedent for policy on technology like this. The US Supreme Court has been dealing with exactly that challenge, deciding cases like the 2020 suspension of a high school student over posts on Snapchat and the 2024 lawsuits over attempts to regulate content moderation by Texas and Florida. Despite the short history of social media itself, panelists went as far back as the 1790s with the government's role in regulating the postal service, telegraph networks, radio, and television to provide context and help policymakers make sense of how they might address social media, before exploring the development of the internet, smartphones, and social networks.

> Even if systems have been built with verbal intelligence, they lack social intelligence and moral reasoning.

Some of the most interesting moments from the last year of briefings came from attempts to reframe long-standing issues through a new lens. At the November briefing on federal housing policy, N. D. B. Connolly (Johns Hopkins Univ.) began with Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* to introduce his primary question, "What is a house?" Connolly argued that American housing policy answered this question in four ways: "policies that understand a house as shelter, policies that cast it as an investment, policies that consecrate the house as a cultural symbol, and policies that treat the house as a base unit of national prosperity." Connolly's question addressed both the standards and amenities required to amount to a proper home and what homeownership represents symbolically, and how these have each changed over time. At May's briefing on transportation policy, Norton gave a sobering assessment of the dire state of traffic fatalities in the United States, before reminding the audience that conversations on traffic fatalities have been ongoing and have changed little since the invention of the automobile. Quoting a "cabinet-level secretary" who called for the "annual carnage on American streets to be checked" in order to meet the "crisis of tens of thousands of [traffic] deaths annually," he revealed that the words came from then commerce secretary Herbert Hoover in 1924. Norton similarly reframed the debate over traffic policy as a more straightforward question: whether streets should be for cars at the exclusion of pedestrians or vice versa. These two examples exemplify what the briefing program brings to the Capitol: a fresh perspective using lessons from the past, looking at the long arc of history to frame the decisions before today's policymakers.

These briefings have been attended by staffers and interns from both congressional chambers and both parties; from cabinet departments, regulatory agencies, and the White House; from advocacy and direct service nonprofits; and from universities and historical associations across the country. They are an eager audience, always posing more questions than there is time to address, and often staying behind to chat with panelists and gain further insight into the issues they work on. Attendees have reported that the briefings have informed their work and how they think about policy, influencing conversations and decisions made to improve the lives of their constituents. Little by little, these briefings are bringing historical consciousness into the nation's policy, an effort the AHA is eager to continue.

Ben Rosenbaum is program assistant at the AHA.

LIZ TOWNSEND

NOMINATIONS INVITED FOR AHA OFFICES, TERMS BEGINNING JANUARY 2026

Under the AHA Constitution and Bylaws (Article VIII, Section 1; Article IX; and Bylaws 11 and 12), the executive director invites all members of the Association to submit, on or before January 6, 2025, recommendations for the following offices:

President-elect

Vice President, Professional Division (member of the Council, chair of the Division)

Council Member, Professional Division, one position (Council—governance of the organization; Division—responsible for overseeing matters concerning working conditions and practices of historians, primarily by articulating ethical standards and best practices in the historical discipline)

Council Member, Research Division, one position (Council—governance of the organization; Division—responsible for promoting historical scholarship, encouraging the collection and preservation of historical documents and artifacts, ensuring equal access to information, and fostering the dissemination of information about historical records and research)

Council Member, Teaching Division, one position (Council—governance of the organization; Division—responsible for the Council's work relating to history education, including efforts to promote and improve teaching and learning of history at all levels of education)

Committee on Committees, one position (nominations for large number of Association committees, including book awards and prizes; member begins serving immediately after election)

Nominating Committee, three positions (nominations for all elective posts)

Members of the Council and elective committees ***as of January 6, 2025***, are listed below. Positions being replaced in the June 1–July 15, 2025, elections are in **bold**. Unless otherwise indicated, terms expire in January of the listed year.

President

2026 Thavolia Glymph, Duke Univ. (slavery, emancipation, plantation societies and economies, gender, women)

2027 Ben Vinson III, Howard Univ. (African diaspora, colonial Mexico)

2028 Suzanne Marchand, Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge (European intellectual, history of humanities/material culture/arts, Germany and Austria 1700–1945)

Professional Division

2026 Anne Hyde, vice president, Univ. of Oklahoma (19th-century North American West, Indigenous America, race)

2026 Tony Frazier, Council member, Penn State Univ. (social and legal history of Blacks in 18th-century in Great Britain, Atlantic slavery and emancipation, African American)

2027 Kristin O'Brassill-Kulfan, Council member, Rutgers Univ. (19th-century US, social, public)

2028 Jennifer McNabb, Council member, Univ. of Northern Iowa (social and legal, medieval and early modern Europe)

Research Division

2026 Erin Greenwald, Council member, The Working Historian LLC (French Atlantic world, colonial Louisiana)

2027 William G. Thomas III, vice president, Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln (American legal, digital scholarship)

2027 Jana Lipman, Council member, Tulane Univ. (20th-century US, US foreign relations, US immigration, labor)

2028 Cemil Aydin, Council member, Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (global, modern Asia and Middle East)

Teaching Division

2026 Charles Zappia, Council member, San Diego Mesa Coll. (corporatization of higher education, transformation of work and the American labor movement)

2027 Jennifer Baniewicz, Council member, Amos Alonzo Stagg High School (US, AP US and European, Western civilization)

2028 Serena Zabin, vice president, Carleton Coll. (early America, American Revolution)

2028 Edward Cohn, Council member, Grinnell Coll. (Soviet Union/Russia/central Europe, policing and surveillance)

At Large

2027 Pragya Kaul, Univ. of Michigan (Europe, Asia, global)

Committee on Committees

7/2025 Rashauna Johnson, Univ. of Chicago (Atlantic slavery and emancipation, 19th-century African diaspora, US South, urban and regional)

7/2026 Julio Capó Jr., Florida International Univ. (20th-century queer Miami, transnational Caribbean-US sexuality)

7/2027 Carol Harrison, Univ. of South Carolina (religion, gender, France 1750–1914)

7/2027 Linh Vu, Arizona State Univ. (war dead in 20th-century China, virtue and citizenship)

Nominating Committee

2026 Carlos Kevin Blanton, Texas A&M Univ. (Chicana/o history, education, civil rights, Texas)

2026 Bianca Murillo, California State Univ., Dominguez Hills (modern Africa, global capitalism/economies/markets, race and gender studies)

2026 Kaya Şahin, Ohio State Univ. (early modern Ottoman Empire, religion, history writing, governance)

2027 Amanda Moniz, Smithsonian's National Museum of American History (early America, humanitarianism)

2027 Matthew Restall, Penn State Univ. (colonial Latin America, Maya history)

2027 Anthony Steinhoff, Univ. du Québec à Montréal (modern Germany/France, religion, opera, urban)

2028 Hiromi Mizuno, Univ. of Minnesota, Twin Cities (cultural history of science in Japan, colonialism, environmental)

2028 Hilary Green, Davidson Coll. (Black education in Reconstruction, Civil War memory)

2028 Dana Rabin, Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Great Britain, race, 18th-century empire)

Email suggestions to committees@historians.org. Please specify the individual's academic or other position and field, and include a brief statement of their qualifications. Refer to the *Statement on Diversity in AHA Nominations and Appointments* (historians.org/ahadiversity), which encourages suggesting individuals from diverse backgrounds for both appointments and nominations. All suggestions received will be forwarded to the Nominating Committee for consideration.

Schedule for Nominations and Elections of AHA Officers

January 6, 2025	Deadline to make suggestions to executive director.
February 2025	Nominating Committee meets to determine slate.
March–May 2025	Slate published in *Perspectives Daily* and *Perspectives on History*.
June 1, 2025	Link to ballot emailed to AHA members.
July 15, 2025	Final deadline to record votes.
August–September 2025	Results announced in *Perspectives Daily* and *Perspectives on History*. Committee on Committees elected member begins term immediately.
January 10, 2026	Results announced at business meeting during 139th annual meeting in Chicago.
January 11, 2026	Terms of office begin.

Liz Townsend is manager, data administration and integrity, at the AHA.

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Careers for History Majors

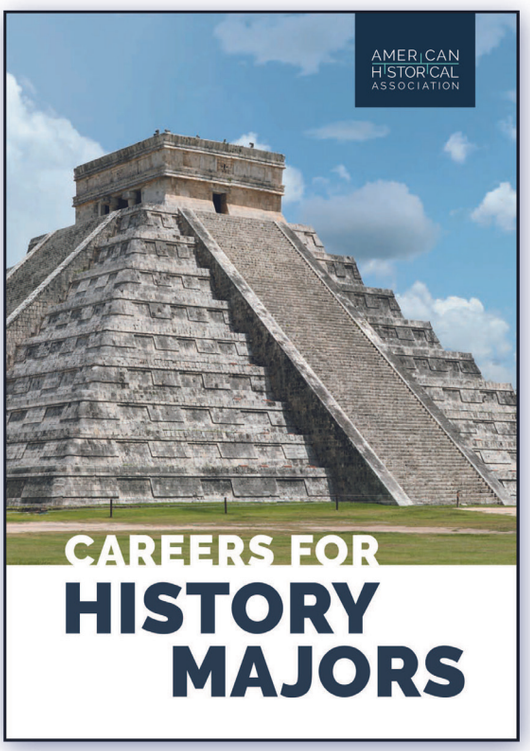
A publication from the American Historical Association

We must "uphold at every possible turn the inherent value of studying history."
Elizabeth Lehfeldt, former Vice President, AHA Teaching Division, *Perspectives*

Careers for History Majors conveys the value of the undergraduate study of history through clear graphs and informal prose. Readers will find hard data, practical advice, and answers to common questions for students and their parents.

Contributors explore the breadth of career options available to history majors and provide tools to help students get the most out of their degree.

The booklet also includes the personal stories of history majors who work in a range of occupations, including data analysis, finance, and the law. You'll find out what employers want and learn about the personal transformations that many history majors experience.



Contributors

Loren Collins • John Fea • Anne Hyde
Sarah Olzawski • Johann Neem
Claire Potter • John Rowe • Sarah Shurts
Paul Sturtevant • Frank Valadez

Reinforcing the value and utility of a history BA, *Careers for History Majors* is perfect for directors of undergraduate studies, career center advisers, prospective majors, and their parents.

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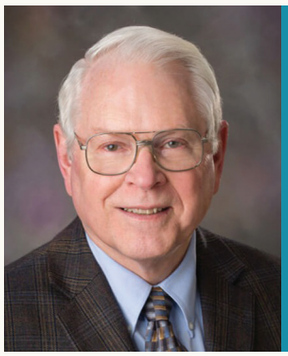


Lloyd E. Ambrosius

1941–2024

Historian of US Diplomacy; AHA Member

Lloyd Eugene Ambrosius, the Samuel Clark Waugh Distinguished Professor of International Relations emeritus at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL), died unexpectedly on May 7, 2024, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He was 82 years old.

Lloyd was born on August 21, 1941, to Sterling and Grace (Baxter) Ambrosius. He grew up in Huntsville, Illinois, and attended school in nearby Augusta. He entered the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) in the fall of 1959 as a premedical major but later switched his major to history with a philosophy minor. Lloyd completed his BA with honors in liberal arts and sciences and high distinction in history in 1963. He married Margery Marzahn on August 24, 1963, while working on his MA in history at UIUC, which he completed in August 1964. Marge earned her BA and MA degrees in history while Lloyd began his doctoral studies under the direction of Norman Graebner. He earned his doctorate in 1967, with a dissertation titled "The United States and the Weimar Republic, 1918–1923: From the Armistice to the Ruhr Occupation."

Lloyd taught in the UNL Department of History from 1967 until his retirement in 2015. At Nebraska, he taught the US history and diplomatic history surveys, as well as upper-division and graduate classes on US-German relations, international politics, European politics, and the US presidency. Eminently approachable, he celebrated the successes of colleagues and students alike. His graduate students relied on his keen grasp of institutional politics as they navigated the early years of their professional careers. He also taught abroad, with two Fulbright fellowships at the University of Cologne in 1972–73 and the University of Heidelberg in spring 1996, and as Mary Ball Washington Chair of American History at University College Dublin in 1977–78.

Lloyd's influence at UNL reached beyond the history department. He was the founding coordinator and chief adviser for the university's international affairs program and interim director of the university's Institute for International Studies. Within the College of Arts and Sciences, he served as parliamentarian for nearly a decade. He also chaired the program committee for the university's E. N. Thompson Forum on World Issues, working tirelessly to bring national and international figures to Lincoln. Upon his retirement, Lloyd received the university's Louise Pound-George Howard Distinguished Career Award. In 2022, alumni donations established the Lloyd Ambrosius Graduate Student Support Fund in his honor.

A prolific author, Lloyd wrote four books on Woodrow Wilson published over a 30-year span: *Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987); *Wilsonian Statecraft: Theory and Practice of Liberal Internationalism during World War I* (Scholarly Resources, 1991); *Wilsonianism: Woodrow Wilson and His Legacy in American Foreign Relations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); and *Woodrow Wilson and American Internationalism* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2017). In these works, as well as in countless book chapters and journal articles, he offered his trenchant assessment of Wilson's diplomacy and how Wilson's liberal internationalism influenced any number of 20th- and 21st-century policymakers as they pursued ill-conceived and misguided policies in the name of democracy. In his later writings, Lloyd would assert that Wilson's Protestant Christianity and racism shaped his world view and influenced both his domestic and foreign policies.

Lloyd made significant leadership contributions to the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR) and the Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era (SHGAPE). A member of SHAFR since its founding in 1967, he served on various committees, the editorial board of *Diplomatic History*, and council. At SHGAPE, he served on the editorial board of the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* and as a council member, vice president, and president. Even in retirement, he looked forward to attending the annual meetings of those organizations, as well as of the AHA and Organization of American Historians, to reconnect with friends and mentor younger scholars.

Lloyd Ambrosius was preceded in death by his wife, Margery Marzahn Ambrosius. He is survived by his sons and daughters-in-law Walter Ambrosius and Leslie Underwood, and Paul Ambrosius and Valerie Daugherty; his grandchildren Michael Ambrosius and Em Ambrosius; and his brother and sister-in-law John Ambrosius and Margaret Adams.

Kristin L. Ahlberg
Office of the Historian,
US Department of State (retired)

Peter S. Carmichael

1966–2024

Historian of the Civil War Era

Peter S. Carmichael, a leading historian of the Civil War–era United States, passed away on July 21, 2024, the 163rd anniversary of the first Battle of Bull Run. He is survived by his wife, Beth, and their twin daughters, Isabel and Cameron. A host of historians also mourn the premature loss of a guiding light in our field and our lives.

Pete was a Hoosier through and through, earning his bachelor's degree at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. Building on a youthful interest in the Civil War cultivated by road trips to battlefields with his family, Pete worked as a seasonal historian and living history educator at several National Park Service (NPS) sites in Virginia. At Fredericksburg, a meeting with Gary Gallagher led Pete to enroll in the graduate program at Pennsylvania State University. Pete's MA thesis and PhD dissertation, written under Gallagher's direction, became drafts for Pete's first two books, *Lee's Young Artillerist: William R. J. Pegram* (Univ. of Virginia Press, 1995) and *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion* (Univ. of North Carolina [UNC] Press, 2005). He edited the essay collection *Audacity Personified: The Generalship of Robert E. Lee* (Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2004), and UNC Press published Pete's masterpiece, *The War for the Common Soldier: How Men Thought, Fought, and Survived in Civil War Armies* (2018), as part of its Littlefield History of the Civil War Era series.

Pete's research and writing made significant contributions to military, social, and cultural history by revealing a multitude of connections across these subfields. To understand the experiences of Civil War soldiers and officers, Pete contended, we must attend not only to the complexities of military campaigns but also to the social relationships, cultural scripts, and perceptual lenses that embedded these men in their communities, regions, and nations. At the time of his passing, he was writing a narrative history that made these interpretive claims about ordinary soldiers who fought in the Gettysburg Campaign. Pete's impact on the field of Civil War studies goes beyond his own scholarship. As co-editor of UNC Press's Civil War America series, he helped numerous authors hone their arguments and prose as they brought their books to publication.

Pete left an indelible mark on the history departments in which he taught: Western Carolina University; UNC Greensboro; West Virginia University; and, since 2010, Gettysburg College, where he also served as director of the Civil War Institute (CWI). He was a generous colleague and a phenomenal instructor. He continuously sought to break down perceived boundaries between academic and public historians, and he took every chance to apply the insights of scholars in both of these communities. He brought the past to life in the lecture hall and on the battlefield. He had high expectations for his students and took great care in mentoring them. Many of Pete's students carry on his legacy in jobs at the NPS and at academic institutions.

The first thing people may have noticed about Pete was his idiosyncratic sartorial choices. He wore scarves to complement impeccably tailored suits just as often as he would don casual Indiana Pacers gear, to the delight of CWI summer conference attendees. But even chance acquaintances were struck by his larger-than-life presence. Pete had an ebullient personality, deep intellectual curiosity, and razor-sharp wit. I will miss our laughter together, for one of my favorite roles was playing the straight man in Pete's jokes. But I'll also miss being able to talk to him about my work, my family, and my life. He always gave me valuable advice, and I know that many historians can say the same. For lots of us, Pete was the best friend who encouraged us, ribbed us, and set us straight. His absence—in Gettysburg, at conferences, and in the exciting scholarship he was unable to finish—seems oppressive. I hope, eventually, that all he gave to us will be a comfort. He taught us so much about history, being a historian, and living our best lives.

Brian P. Luskey
West Virginia University

Photo courtesy Beth Carmichael

Gwendolyn Midlo Hall

1929–2022

Historian of Slavery; AHA Member

Historian Gwendolyn Midlo Hall died in Guanajuato, Mexico, on August 29, 2022. She was 93.

Easily one of the most influential historians of her generation, Hall changed the landscape of African American history and the history of slavery in the Americas. When her book *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Louisiana State Univ. Press) appeared in 1992, it opened exciting avenues of inquiry for scholars of the Atlantic world, including historians, ethnographers, and anthropologists. With her research findings, she created the database Afro-Louisiana History and Genealogy 1719 to 1820, with information on more than 100,000 enslaved Africans, Indigenous people, and their descendants. Many of the documents Hall used came from archives few historians had explored: the rural courthouses of southern Louisiana, containing some of the richest evidence of Africans and their descendants anywhere in the Americas.

Born in New Orleans in 1929, Hall was exposed early to the fight for racial justice through the work of her father. A civil rights attorney and a Jewish immigrant, Herman L. Midlo was often the only lawyer in the city willing to take the cases of African American clients. As a young white woman, Hall became a member of the interracial New Orleans Youth Council and the Southern Negro Youth Congress. She married Black Marxist and civil rights activist Harry Haywood in 1956, and the two organized and wrote together and lived in Mexico and New York City. They lived separately after 1964 but remained married until his death in 1985.

Hall viewed her work as a historian as a powerful tool against racism. She had been doing legal research for her father when she first realized the evidence Louisiana court records contained: the names, ethnicities, and nationalities of enslaved Africans. Years later, after earning a master's degree in history and anthropology from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and in 1970 a doctorate from Rutgers University, she returned to New Orleans. With its French and Spanish colonial history, Louisiana still seemed an aberration to many scholars of US history when Hall began her research. But her work demonstrated Louisiana's critical importance to the history of the Atlantic World.

To know the true significance of Hall's work, however, is to talk to descendants who live in and around New Orleans. They call *Africans in Colonial Louisiana* "the purple book" because of its distinctive cover. In the era before digitized census records and ship manifests, dog-eared copies of that book made African American genealogy seem possible for many people for the first time. And it highlighted the central roles African people played in Louisiana's development. Her work also inspired New Orleans–born musician Wynton Marsalis's Pulitzer Prize–winning jazz piece, *Blood on the Fields*.

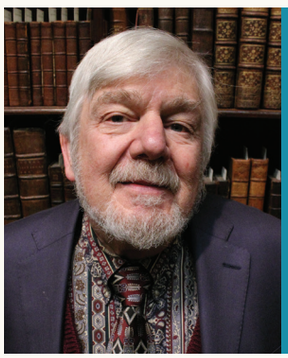
Hall soon realized that the details of the lives she uncovered, and the patterns that emerged from the vast collection she had assembled, could only be discoverable in digital form. When she released the database, it was front-page news in the *New York Times*—above and below the fold. The names of the people she recovered from the archives are also engraved in the Allées Gwendolyn Midlo Hall at Whitney Plantation in Edgard, Louisiana. Hall's work was foundational to Whitney and its mission to tell the story of slavery from the perspective of the enslaved.

A pioneer in the digital history of slavery, Hall was also attuned to the ethics of that work. Asked in 2015 about her decision to make a database, she recalled her male colleagues in the field were skeptical: "What do you want to do that for? We're just interested in statistics." Hall told them, "I'm interested in statistics too, but I'm also interested in human beings and what they were like . . . what their names were and how they were related to each other. They said, 'That'll slow you down,' and I said, 'Well, it'll just have to slow me down.'"

She left New Orleans in 2005 at the time of Hurricane Katrina. She spent her last years in Guanajuato, Mexico, with her son and his family. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall is survived by her son, Haywood Hall; her daughter, Rebecca Hall of Utah; and four grandchildren. Her ashes are scattered at the Allées at Whitney Plantation. The AHA honored Hall with a posthumous Award for Scholarly Distinction in 2023.

Mary Niall Mitchell
Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies, University of New Orleans

Photo courtesy Haywood Hall



Phillip S. Lapsansky

1941–2024

Curator and Historian of African Americana

Phillip Lapsansky, the longtime chief of reference and curator of African American history at the Library Company of Philadelphia, died on April 9, 2024, in Philadelphia. For generations of scholars, Phil was more than a librarian; he was an essential resource whose efforts in building the African Americana Collection offered critical insights on Black protest, reform, and writing before the 20th century.

Born in Seattle, Phil briefly attended the University of Washington, where he participated in labor and political struggles. After sojourns at home and abroad, he went to Mississippi in 1964 to join the Civil Rights Movement. He ran the Freedom Information Service and wrote about his experiences for national publications (he was proud to have an FBI file). In Mississippi, he met activist and historian Emma Jones; they married in 1966—though they wed in Wisconsin because Mississippi banned interracial marriage. They had three children, Jordan, Jeannette, and Charlotte, before divorcing. After many years together, Phil married Bernice Andrews in 2012.

Phil took a job at the Library Company in 1971 and resumed his studies at Temple University (BA, 1973). Hired to identify and catalog the voluminous collections of African and African American materials in both the Library Company and the neighboring Historical Society of Pennsylvania, he hit the stacks with what became his signature combination of passion, discernment, and commitment. Realizing that African American history was a burgeoning field, Phil and the Library Company published a massive reference volume, *Afro-Americana, 1553–1906: Author Catalog of the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania* (1973). Phil ensured that the Library Company remained at the forefront of archiving and disseminating material on the Black experience. The Library Company eventually created a Program in African American History, including lectures, internships, and fellowships. In many ways, it all rested on Phil's exhaustive archival work and knowledge of the field.

For nearly 40 years, Phil delighted in showing historians his accordion-like folders relating to new material in the archives. He paid close attention to academic trends so that he could acquire materials relating to new areas of inquiry, such as print culture, Caribbean protest, and visual culture. Phil was responsible for acquiring 2,500 new items for the African Americana Collection (which eventually grew to over 13,000 items). In 2008, the Library Company published a revised edition of the African Americana catalog, which remains a key resource for scholars around the world. Phil also wrote articles, co-edited the important *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of Early African American Protest Literature, 1790–1860* (2001), and curated significant exhibitions on subjects as varied as political cartoons and antislavery women.

But no matter how large the collection grew, every document mattered to Phil, and he shared his enthusiasm with others. For example, he kept in his wallet a small photocopy of a document acquired in the early 2000s: a series of devotional lines from the Qur'an written down in Arabic by an enslaved person in the French colony of Saint-Domingue and collected by a curious Swiss visitor in 1773. For Phil, it was a testament to human resilience and a reminder that archives could indeed uncover lost stories from the past. When Phil showed the original document to scholar Laurent Dubois, he was inspired to research Islamic survivals in the Americas. "I learned that day what so many others have known," Dubois later wrote, "that Phil seamlessly combined his roles as researcher, curator, and host and was a font of endless generosity and curiosity."

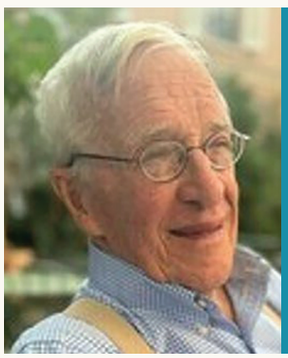
As the publication of a festschrift at his retirement in 2012 showed, many scholars agreed with this assessment. Entitled *Phil Lapsansky: Appreciations*, the volume—available online—included reminiscences from 50 scholars praising Phil's impact on their work. According to Library Company director John C. Van Horne, the book illustrated the "universally high regard in which Phil is held."

Appropriately for a curator at a library launched by Benjamin Franklin, Phil was delightfully mischievous, a bit of a bon vivant, and ever curious about the world beyond the archive. Yet he believed deeply in the power of knowledge to change society and saw the past (especially the liberation struggles of oppressed people) as a pathway to creating a more just future. He will be missed but remembered every time someone calls out material from the African Americana Collection.

Randall M. Miller
Saint Joseph's University

Richard S. Newman
Rochester Institute of Technology

Photo courtesy Library Company of Philadelphia



Standish Meacham Jr.

1932–2024

Historian of England

Standish Meacham Jr., historian of Victorian and Edwardian England and Sheffield Regents Professor emeritus at the University of Texas at Austin, died on June 13, 2024, in Portland, Maine. He was 92 years old.

Born on March 12, 1932, in Cincinnati, Standish attended the Taft School in Watertown, Connecticut, before graduating from Yale University in 1954. After a year's study at King's College, Cambridge, he served for two years as a lieutenant in the US Army. Standish earned his PhD in history from Harvard University in 1961. He taught at Harvard for five years and became senior tutor of Winthrop House. In 1966, he joined the history department at the University of Texas at Austin, where he remained until his retirement in 1998. Standish was attracted to Texas as an "academic frontier," free from the restrictions of the Ivy League.

The arc of Standish's scholarship began at Harvard, where he researched his first two books, biographies of two prominent religious figures: *Henry Thornton of Clapham, 1760–1815* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1964) and *Lord Bishop: The Life of Samuel Wilberforce, 1805–1873* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1970). These gracefully written, meticulously researched, and deeply humane biographies remain the standard treatments of their lives.

At the University of Texas, Standish's scholarly life featured two points of departure. Drawing on the extensive resources of the Gernsheim Collection of photography at the Harry Ransom Center, Standish helped organize an exhibit on street photographer Paul Martin. This experience and the increasing importance of social history awakened in him an enduring interest in the history of the British working class and leftist politics. Standish explored social history, progressive politics, and culture in *A Life Apart: The English Working Class, 1890–1914* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1977); *Toynbee Hall and Social Reform, 1880–1914: The Search for Community* (Yale Univ. Press, 1987); and *Regaining Paradise: Englishness and the Early Garden City Movement* (Yale Univ. Press, 1999). In "'The Sense of an Impending Clash': English Working-Class Unrest before the First World War" (*American Historical Review*, 1972), he argued that "a historian's particular task is the tracing and untangling of connections," a commitment that marked all his work, whatever the topic.

Standish passed on his devotion to historical study and his high standards of scholarship to his students. He taught both large lecture surveys and small specialized seminars to appreciative undergraduates. He also mentored graduate students, not only during their student years but also throughout their careers.

Standish chaired the history department in 1970–72 and 1984–88, during which time he pushed for greater faculty input in university decision-making and more diverse faculty hires. From 1989 to 1991, he served as dean of the College of Liberal Arts, becoming embroiled in debates over higher education's role while he advocated for a more inclusive and multicultural university. When he approved a new English course on issues of racism and sexism, conservative faculty and administrators denounced it as "propaganda," and the controversy attracted national media coverage. The university president "postponed" the course, and Standish resigned the deanship. Outside the university, Standish was active in progressive causes, serving on the board of Planned Parenthood of Central Texas and as a board member and president of Texas Housers, the state's leading affordable housing authority.

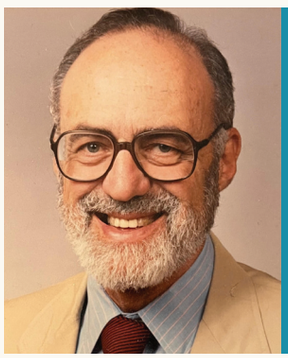
Standish married Sarah Shartle in 1957, with whom he raised three children, Edith, Louisa, and Sam, who in time increased the family with eight grandchildren. Standish and Sarah divorced in 1993. His subsequent marriage to Steven Salzman ended in divorce in 2013.

A devotee of theater and music, Standish was an accomplished pianist. He will be remembered by his colleagues and friends for his wry sense of humor and his wealth of anecdotes. When his good friend, the late Ann Richards, was governor of Texas, she invited him to a dinner in honor of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip of the United Kingdom in 1991. Richards introduced Standish to the royal couple as "an expert on the British Labour Party." Unimpressed, Philip responded tartly, "Good luck with that!"

George Robb
William Paterson University of New Jersey (emeritus)

Gail Savage
St. Mary's College of Maryland (emerita)

Photo courtesy Meacham family



Alan B. Spitzer

1925–2024

Historian of France;
AHA 50-Year Member

Alan B. Spitzer, professor emeritus at the University of Iowa, passed away July 23, 2024. His scholarship placed him in the front rank of historians of France's Restoration period. Spitzer's books, including *The Revolutionary Theories of Louis Auguste Blanqui* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1957); *Old Hatreds and Young Hopes: The French Carbonari against the Bourbon Restoration* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1971); and *The French Generation of 1820* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), established him as a major interpreter of the revolutionary currents that animated the Bourbon Restoration period.

His work led him to critically examine how generational experience, not aging per se, marks the development of historically consequential political ideology and activism. As both an intellectual and a social historian, he melded the history of ideas and quantitative social science methods to document the animating ideas and the social boundaries faced by a revolutionary generation, what he termed "the generation of 1820." Spitzer provided an astute and critical rendering of the conflicting interpretive currents of generational analysis in "The Historical Problem of Generations" (*American Historical Review*, 1973), and of the "moral choice" behind the disciplinary standards for historical truth-telling in a volume of essays, *Historical Truth and Lies about the Past* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996), published after he retired from teaching. His scholarship brought him regard from his field, leading to election as 1982–83 president of the Society for French Historical Studies and appointment to the editorial boards of the *Journal of Modern History* and *French Historical Studies.*

Spitzer was born in Philadelphia on March 27, 1925. He attended Penn State University before enlisting in the army at age 18 in 1943. In the winter 1995 issue of *The Palimpsest*, a journal of the State Historical Society of Iowa, he shared his moving reminiscences, including how he was wounded in November 1944 not long after seeing first combat. As he wrote in that essay, he was haunted all his life by the "malevolent ingenuity" through which humans have slaughtered one another. After recovering from his war wounds, Spitzer resumed his studies, graduating with a BA from Swarthmore College in 1948 and a PhD from Columbia University in 1955. After teaching at Boston University for four years, he joined the history department at the University of Iowa, where he taught until his retirement in 1992.

When the times required a thoughtful, moral, and critical presence on campus, Spitzer stepped forward. He engaged a generation of student activists, coordinated a conference on civil rights (1964), spoke out forcefully against the Vietnam War (1965), led the effort to form a "free university" (1968), and chaired a committee advocating the end of funding for the war (1970). He insisted that university space is public space dedicated to tolerance and free speech. As chair of a Joint Committee for Amnesty, he presided over a mass meeting in early 1974 on behalf of those facing retribution for opposing the war; no one in attendance will forget how he facilitated an occasion for reasonable people on both sides to articulate their deep commitments.

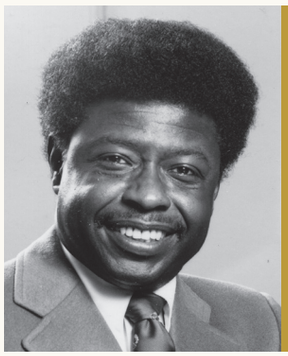
Spitzer was an outstanding teacher of undergraduates and graduates. His innovative teaching was characterized by the incorporation of nontraditional kinds of evidence and guiding students through hands-on analysis of quantitative data. In the 1970s, Spitzer invented a fresh alternative to the standard Western civilization course. Instead of lectures to hundreds of students, the Problems in Human History course introduced undergraduates to the study of history in a seminar setting, taught by the department's most experienced and gifted graduate students. With a cadre of dedicated teaching assistants, he helped to create new thematic "problems" courses, carefully read and took seriously student evaluations, and sustained a model for quality general education in a large public university. In 1989, Spitzer was awarded the university's Faculty Achievement Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Spitzer was an avid fly fisherman in the streams and rivers of the West. He enjoyed hiking in national parks, was enthusiastic about playing golf, and was a lover of jazz and blues. He is survived by his wife, Mary F. Spitzer, sons Mark and Robert, three grandchildren, and four stepchildren. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Anne Larcher Spitzer, in 1997.

Linda K. Kerber
University of Iowa (emerita)

Shelton Stromquist
University of Iowa (emeritus)

Photo courtesy University of Iowa



Leslie B. Rout Jr.

1935–87

Historian of Latin America

As historians, we typically put an individual's birth and death dates after their name. With Leslie Brennan Rout Jr., this is not as easily done. Rout grew up in the housing projects of south Chicago. To meet welfare requirements for benefits, he had to claim that he was younger than he was. This has led to confusion as to Rout's age, but he stated that he was born in 1935. Rout never forgot his upbringing; for example, often the only thing his family had to eat was cereal, so he refused to eat it in adulthood.

What saved Rout was his intelligence and drive. But one school stood out for him. His office at Michigan State University (MSU) had no indications of where he went to college, but a large sticker on the door touted St. Ignatius High School in Chicago. The rigor and discipline learned there stayed with Rout his whole life. Rout went on to earn his bachelor's and master's degrees from Loyola University Chicago and his PhD in history from the University of Minnesota. He joined the MSU faculty in 1968.

An accomplished jazz musician, Rout toured Latin America for the Department of State playing saxophone with the Paul Winter Sextet, which helped pay for graduate school and which confirmed his decision to pursue Latin American studies. Upon his return, he performed with musicians such as Lionel Hampton and Woody Herman. Later in his career, Rout wrote articles on jazz and started his own small band at MSU.

Rout was a consummate historian. He excelled at drawing disparate events from his encyclopedic memory and bringing them together in a cogent analysis. He saw world history as a battle for position in which having the most money or the biggest guns and the willingness to use them was paramount to understanding the world. His first two publications were *Politics of the Chaco Peace Conference, 1935–39* (1970) and *Which Way Out? A Study of the Guyana-Venezuela Boundary Dispute* (1971), which both dealt with power, politics, money, and military capability. Though Rout felt less comfortable delving into social history, nevertheless, as a Black man, he was drawn into Black history. One reason he decided to publish in the area was that he always resented, from personal experience, those who claimed that Latin America was a racial paradise. Indeed, he started on a book examining race relations in Brazil, only to have his effort eclipsed by Carl N. Degler's award-winning *Neither Black nor White*. Rout agreed with Degler's analysis and abandoned his Brazil project, instead writing *The African Experience in Spanish America, 1502 to the Present Day* (1976).

Among the opportunities that Rout garnered during his career was a lengthy stay with the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. The newly released papers dealing with World War II led us to co-author *The Shadow War: German Espionage and United States Counterespionage in Latin America during World War II* (1986), which won the National Intelligence Study Center's Best Book Award. In writing the work, we learned of the information about Pearl Harbor that Serbian spy Duško Popov received from the Germans via microdot before December 1941, and that J. Edgar Hoover did not share this information with the president or intelligence services. The *American Historical Review* published the finding as a research note, and newspapers and television publicized the discovery.

Rout was a superb teacher, as evidenced by his prestigious Teacher-Scholar Award from MSU. He was very rigorous. Writing had to be clear and lucid, and any research had to be complete. For graduate students, he required papers to be of publishable quality and that students include in the heading on each assignment the journal to which it would be submitted.

When his students get together, they can fill an evening telling Les Rout stories. He was unique, and while many found him difficult, it was a joy to learn from him. He died in 1987 of complications from hepatitis. Those who knew Leslie B. Rout Jr. still miss him, and I suspect always will.

John F. Bratzel
Michigan State University (emeritus)

Photo courtesy Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections

AHA CAREER CENTER

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NEW YORK

VASSAR COLLEGE

Poughkeepsie, NY

Modern Central European and German History. The Department of History at Vassar College invites applications for a full-time tenure-track position in modern Central European and German history at the rank of assistant professor beginning August 2025. Any area of research in modern (19th/20th century) Central European and German history is welcome. Candidates are expected to teach at least one course on the Holocaust. We encourage applications from candidates interested in participating in Vassar's rich array of departments and multidisciplinary programs, such as International Studies. Teaching load in the first year is four courses; after that it is four courses plus a tutorial style "intensive," which may include supervision of senior theses. Candidates must have the PhD in history or related field in hand at the start of employment. The annual base starting salary range for this position is $92,000–$102,000 USD. This range includes new faculty appointments beginning the first year of a standard tenure clock as well as assistant professors with previous tenure-line experience who will be on an accelerated tenure clock. When extending an offer of employment, Vassar College considers factors such as (but not limited to) candidate's education/training, work experience, internal peer equity, as well as market and organizational considerations. This salary range represents the College's good faith and reasonable estimate at the time of posting. The starting salary for an assistant professor in this position with a PhD beginning the first year of a standard tenure clock in Fall 2025 is $96,000. Candidates should submit a letter of application; CV; writing sample (no more 40 pages); graduate transcript (an unofficial copy is acceptable for initial application); teaching statement; a statement highlighting contributions to or future plans for promoting diversity and inclusion through teaching, research, and other involvements; and three letters of recommendation. Applications should be addressed to the Modern Central European and German Search Committee Chair, Department of History, Vassar College and submitted online at https://employment.vassar.edu/postings/4079. Address any questions to Ismail Rashid, Search Chair, at israshid@vassar.edu. Review of applications will begin on October 15, 2024. There is no guarantee that applications received after October 15, 2024, will be reviewed. Vassar College is deeply committed to increasing the diversity of the campus community and the curriculum, and to promoting an environment of equality, inclusion, and respect for difference. Candidates who can contribute to this goal through their teaching, research, advising, and other activities are encouraged to identify their strengths and experiences in this area. The College is an AA/EOE, and especially welcomes applications from veterans, women, individuals with disabilities, and members of racial, ethnic, and other groups whose underrepresentation in the American professoriate has been severe and longstanding. Vassar is a highly selective, coeducational liberal arts college of about 2400 undergraduate students, located in the Hudson Valley, seventy-five miles north of New York City. Vassar stands upon the homelands of the Munsee Lenape. The College is located in Poughkeepsie, home to a culturally diverse community, and benefits from convenient commuter rail access to New York City. Vassar faculty are committed teachers/scholars who bring research and creative discovery to life for students in classrooms, labs, and studios and in individually-mentored projects. They teach broadly in the curricula of their departments, advise students, and serve on college-wide and departmental committees. The College maintains a generous leave policy, provides strong support for research, and encourages multidisciplinary approaches to teaching.

SCOT MCFARLANE

THE CANOE

George Caleb Bingham, Fur Traders Descending the Missouri, *Metropolitan Museum of Art, public domain*

Canoes dating back at least 8,000 years have been found from China to Nigeria and the Netherlands. Their history represents a global convergence of problem-solving and a unique story of place and culture. As a self-described river historian, I sometimes think of canoes as particular to rivers, but they have long been used along oceans, estuaries, rivers, and lakes and portaged across dry land. Canoes and their history can help teachers engage students by making connections across time and space that are grounded in the material world of flowing water or wooden boats.

During the colonial period, the Wabanaki's birchbark canoes empowered them as the dominant force on rivers in what is now Maine, limiting European settlement in the interior until much later than in places to the south. Birchbark canoes required large birch trees that did not grow in southern New England, where the majority of white settlers were located. Using a single peeled sheet of birchbark meant a canoe would have fewer seams that might leak. The canoes also used split cedar to strengthen them, spruce roots as thread to tie the bark to the frame and along its seams, and pine pitch or spruce gum to seal—all materials that came directly from the forest. European boats, in contrast, depended on wooden planks from mills or nails from a foundry. The birchbark canoe's relatively narrow hull and paddle unattached to creaky oarlocks allowed the Wabanaki to stealthily attack British forces. When pursued, the Wabanaki could travel up smaller streams until the water turned to land, then carry their canoes into the next waterway. With their much heavier craft made from planks, exhausted Europeans usually gave up chase.

The birchbark canoe intersects with a key moment at the outbreak of the American Revolution. Before he became a famous traitor, Benedict Arnold led a daring mission to wrest control of Quebec from the British, with approximately one thousand Continental Army soldiers making a surprise attack from Maine. He planned to follow a Wabanaki portage route that linked the Kennebec River to the St. Lawrence River via smaller streams between. Hundreds of men died or deserted during this arduous journey. A portage route that could be traversed easily by Wabanaki people carrying 50-pound birchbark canoes was ill-advised with wooden boats weighing 400 pounds that rubbed soldiers' shoulders raw.

The history of local waterways and canoe-like craft offers teachers an opportunity to connect students to local histories. Although few K–12 schools offer environmental history, many places, including Maine, mandate the teaching of Native history. Yet these mandates' implementation has lagged because teachers often lack the resources to teach Native history and wish to learn more from historians. Canoes and the waterways navigated by Native people are one place to start. The global history of canoes is rooted in specific places, which can be useful even if you're not Benedict Arnold trying to get to Quebec from Maine on a boat. In Maine, a common folk saying is "You can't get there from here," which is certainly true if you don't know the history of canoes.

That history reverberates into the modern day. By the late 1800s, inspired by the birchbark canoe, several Maine-based canoe makers produced canvas canoes for recreational use. Many of the original employees of Maine's Old Town Canoe Company, which eventually became the world's largest and most influential canoe manufacturer, were Wabanaki Indians from the Penobscot Nation, whose reservation is just upstream on the river of the same name. Mass production has since replaced their handcraft, and today's canoes are molded from plastic, not made from bark, wood, or canvas. Still, the next time you find yourself in a canoe, remember that its design is inspired by Wabanaki technology developed thousands of years ago. P

Scot McFarlane is a former researcher at the AHA. He now focuses on bringing river history into K–12 classrooms.

CORINNA ZELTSMAN

PAPEL SELLADO


Dos reales.
SELLO TERCERO, DOS REALES, AÑOS DE MIL OCHOCIENTOS SEIS, Y OCHOCIENTOS Y SIETE.
Papel sellado.
DOS REALES
Mexico 4 de Noviembre de 1806.

Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico. Hacienda Pública/Papel Sellado / Caja 4 / expediente 11.

This document caught my eye while I leafed through a sheaf of papers in Mexico's national archives. I was reading government accounts prepared by government functionaries in 1825 in Mexico City, just a few years after national independence. But my eyes soon shifted to the margins, cluttered with stamped seals descending the edge.

At the top are several medallions featuring crowns, a coat of arms, and the names of two Spanish kings; at the bottom, an eagle grasping a serpent, encircled by blurry text that named *La República Mexicana*. Here, I realized, was a story about the momentous changes that accompanied the unraveling of the Spanish Empire in the Americas, visualized in a succession of stamps. It was also a tale of continuity, about how functionaries of the new nation-state, despite trumpeting the rupture with Spain, reused old materials to build a new political project.

Spain's sprawling early modern empire ran on paper. Beyond administering paperwork, an army of scribes helped ordinary people navigate the justice system and conduct official business. Resulting texts were registered, beginning in the mid-17th century, on *papel sellado*, a stamped paper issued by the crown. Requiring this paper for key transactions—like wills, contracts, or legal petitions—gained the crown important tax revenue. Many European empires adopted stamped paper, generating grumbling and even fueling explosive anticolonial protests in the 18th-century Atlantic world. Its ubiquity impressed a certain "look" on Mexico's colonial archives, which are filled with sealed documents. The example here shows the basic formula. Across the top, under a small cross, text proclaims that this is third-class paper, costs two *reales*, and is valid for use in 1806 and 1807. To the left is the coat of arms of King Carlos IV, reiterating the crown's authority to issue this official paper.

The seals' story continues in the next two descending stamps. Fernando VII ascended the throne. And clearly, officials produced more *papel sellado* than they used during 1806–07, because the sheet was stamped again for 1810–11 and a third time for 1820–21. The "reseal" of 1810 indexes the loyalty and endurance of the viceregal regime amid imperial turmoil: in 1808, Napoleon had invaded Spain and deposed Fernando VII, but on this sheet, the king continued to rule. He was restored in 1814, and thus reappears in the 1820 stamp. Resealing as a common practice, meanwhile, reveals a world where it made more sense to restamp an unused sheet of paper than to throw it away. Imported European paper was not to be wasted.

The story takes a dramatic turn with the final stamp. The Napoleonic invasion triggered a crisis of legitimacy in the Spanish Empire. Over a tumultuous decade, a drawn-out struggle for independence culminated in 1821 with the creation of a short-lived Mexican Empire and, in 1824, a new republic. In the final stamp, the new nation's coat of arms—the eagle clutching a serpent atop a cactus—again reseals the sheet for 1824–25. Gone were the castles and rampant lions of European nobility. Instead, Mexican leaders embraced neo-Aztec imagery that evoked a pre-Columbian empire's foundational myth. In 1825, two decades and four seals later, someone finally used this particular sheet of paper: an administrator organizing the new branch of government tasked with making and distributing *papel sellado*. At the end of empire—or, at the beginning of a new national story—Mexico embraced *papel sellado*, appropriating a familiar taxation method and ensuring that the republican archives resemble their colonial predecessors.

Administrative seals may seem peripheral to a document's content. Yet this sheet's stamps speak to the material realities that accompanied broader processes of political change. In 1824, Mexico had a flashy new symbol—but also an economic crisis, making the old regime's paper, still sitting in the capital's warehouses, more valuable than ever. Until Mexico could secure its own paper supply, bureaucrats embraced the leftover materials of empire to begin a new project of nation building—by adding a final stamp. P

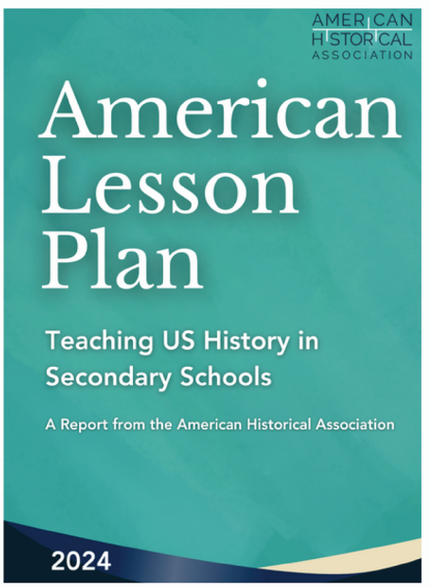
Corinna Zeltsman is assistant professor at Princeton University.

American Lesson Plan:
Teaching US History in Secondary Schools

A Report from the American Historical Association

What are K–12 students learning about US history?

The AHA's *American Lesson Plan* summarizes key findings from the most comprehensive study of secondary US history education undertaken in the 21st century.



In 2022, we launched a project to analyze what is actually happening in classrooms across the country. Are teachers distorting history or indoctrinating children? Careful research transcends the heat and noise surrounding history instruction and enables us to provide a helpful and reliable source of information to parents, administrators, legislators, journalists, historians, and the many other stakeholders invested in the future of public education.

The resulting report distills insights gathered during a two-year exploration of secondary history education. Combining a 50-state appraisal of standards and legislation with a nine-state deep-dive into local contexts, we commissioned a National Opinion Research Center survey of over 3,000 middle and high school US history educators, conducted long-form interviews with over 200 teachers and administrators, and collected thousands of pages of instructional materials from small towns to sprawling suburbs to big cities. The US education system—diverse, devolved, and divided—could never be captured by the blunt slogans that have dominated sensationalist media and drawn attention from even more careful observers.

Read the entire *American Lesson Plan* report on the AHA website. Scan here or go to **historians.org/american-lesson-plan**

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION