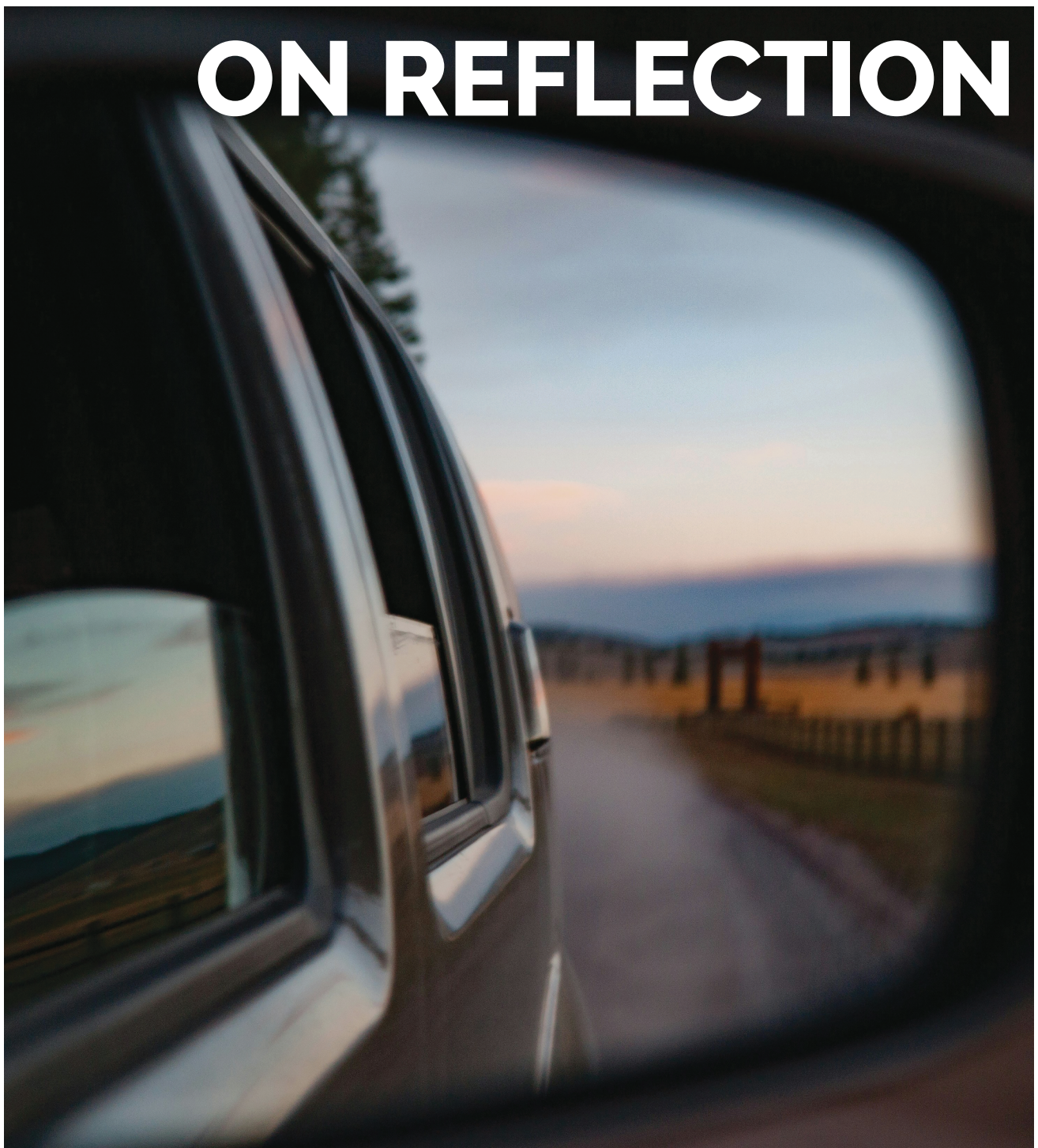


The newsmagazine of the American Historical Association

PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

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ON REFLECTION



AMERICAN
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

Careers for History Majors

A publication from the American Historical Association

Updated edition available January 2026—new essays, information, and resources for students seeking information on how majoring in history can set them up for career success!

Careers for History Majors, revamped and updated for 2026, 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 from 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

Julia Brookins • Loren Collins • Michael Edmonson • John Fea • Brendan Gillis • Maysan Haydar • Christine Kelly • Sarah Olzawski • Brent Purdue • Sarah Shurts • Frank Valadez



CAREERS FOR HISTORY MAJORS

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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.

To order copies, visit historians.org/booklets.
For additional resources, visit historians.org/whystudyhistory.

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ON THE COVER

What interests people in history? At Exeter Elementary, curiosity was piqued by learning about daily life in a time different from our own. Students enrolling in history courses through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute enjoy looking back on the events of their own lifetime with a broader view. And some preprofessional students look to learn lessons from the past to better understand the work they do today. Whatever your reason, what you see in the mirror of history may be closer than it appears.

Photo: Michael Skok/Unsplash

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HOPE SHANNON

BETTER TOGETHER

Community and Connection Across the Discipline

Small groups of dedicated people can achieve great things together, and our impact multiplies when we work collectively instead of in isolation. I am reminded of this every day, working on a small staff that accomplishes significant feats. But as I write this column in November, teamwork's benefits are especially evident in our work around the AHA annual meeting. Our ability to bring to fruition something as large and complex as the conference is a testament to collaboration and to our belief that we all have something important to contribute. No staff member alone can make the event happen, and the meeting is better for the diversity of ideas and approaches we each bring to the table.

The annual meeting is the most complex event we host but far from the only time we bring our members together. We organize numerous online programs, host regional teaching and learning conferences, facilitate asynchronous exchanges through our Member Forum, and travel far and wide to meet with departments, partner organizations, and others invested in the AHA's mission. Added to this are many other efforts, past and present, including our affiliated societies program and subgrant programs such as Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources and NEH SHARP grants, to support other organizations working in service of the discipline. All these activities advance one of the AHA's central priorities: creating spaces where our members can gather around shared interests, form connections, and exchange and build on ideas that keep our discipline vibrant. They also reflect a broader truth: The challenges facing history and historians are larger than any single person or organization can manage alone, and our work is strongest when done in partnership with others.

We launched the Community Action and Resource Exchange (CARE) network on November 6 as part of a larger call to action focused on encouraging members to participate in the AHA's work and use its programs and platforms to connect with other historians. CARE consists of working groups whose participants convene in online, in-person, and asynchronous settings to discuss issues of common professional

interest and develop strategies to address those needs and challenges. Created and led entirely by AHA members, these groups are intended to extend the Association's long tradition of convening historians by offering an additional structure through which members can generate and share insights that benefit their colleagues. In return, CARE offers participants opportunities for professional growth through shared problem-solving, as well as meaningful professional service that transcends institutional boundaries. At its heart, CARE invites members to build the kinds of coalitions the AHA itself relies on — coalitions that allow us to respond to pressing issues with collective strength.

CARE also reflects and supports the AHA's broader vision for a collaborative, welcoming, and well-connected discipline. Historians often work in settings in which they feel siloed, separated by geography, industry, professional expectations, research agendas, differing resources, or other barriers. In convening AHA members working across institutional boundaries, CARE is designed to counter those constraints and model a kind of collaborative approach necessary to meeting the many challenges facing the discipline. In addition, by providing lower-barrier entry points for participation and enabling members to form groups organized around emerging concerns, CARE provides a mechanism AHA members can use to respond to evolving, sometimes urgent needs. Working groups may choose to focus on issues needing immediate engagement, providing members with a way to mobilize quickly in times of particular need.

Most importantly, CARE reinforces an important truth: that we and our work are stronger when we learn from and collaborate with one another. Whether members create a working group to troubleshoot a specific professional issue, address an emerging advocacy concern, or simply find community in a shared interest, they are contributing to a system of mutual support that extends far beyond the annual meeting. **P**

Hope Shannon is director of engagement at the AHA.

Join the Conversation at AHA Communities



communities.historians.org

AHA Communities is an online platform for communication and collaboration. Historians can join ongoing discussions on teaching and learning, remaking graduate education, and the annual meeting, or launch their own forum, blog, or project space.

AMERICAN
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AHA CALL TO ACTION

In 2025, the historical discipline has faced unprecedented threats to academic freedom and the dismantling of support for history education and historians' work. On November 6, 2025, the AHA issued the following Call to Action to its members.

The American Historical Association defends the free pursuit of historical teaching, research, and scholarship and the right of all historians to practice our craft with integrity. We are proud to continue our long and respected legacy of informed and effective advocacy on behalf of historians everywhere: higher education faculty and students in the United States and abroad, K–12 history teachers and students, museum and nonprofit professionals, historians employed by federal and state governments, independent scholars, and all who value the critical role history plays in American public life. Our advocacy work is trusted because it is nonpartisan, evidence-based, and mission-driven — focused squarely on issues that matter to historians and the communities we serve.

In recent weeks, the AHA has established:

- A committee to support the Association's efforts to protect academic freedom
- A committee to provide guidance for the Association's efforts to aid Palestinian historians
- The Community Action and Resource Exchange (CARE) network, which brings historians together to discuss shared professional issues, exchange ideas, and collaborate on strategies that strengthen the discipline (see page 3 for more information)

This program and the work of these committees build on the AHA's advocacy efforts. Among our actions in the last year, we have:

- Supported international historians and historians under threat through our longstanding partnership with Scholars at Risk and our Committee on International Historical Activities
- Supported education exchange programs and foreign scholars through statements, action alerts, and the development of advocacy guides and resources

- Filed a lawsuit in defense of the National Endowment for the Humanities
- Hosted congressional briefings to educate the US Congress on the history of deportation, the federal civil service, tariffs, privacy and artificial intelligence, and other vital issues
- Provided expert testimony to legislatures, advised state boards of education on the revision of academic standards, and negotiated with state-level policymakers regarding legislative language on history education and academic freedom
- Issued statements and letters in support of history and the work of historians today, including statements condemning federal censorship of American history and defending the Smithsonian Institution
- Defended historians' right to academic freedom and supported historians confronting threats and harassment
- Collaborated with peer associations and institutional partners to take action and amplify our collective voices

Our work continues, as threats to the historical discipline, academic freedom, and freedom of speech persist and are escalating across the United States and beyond.

Now more than ever, we need your voice and your participation. We urge you to amplify the ongoing work of AHA committees and working groups, and we invite you to join our new Community Action and Resource Exchange (CARE) network. We also encourage you to make a donation to our advocacy fund. We must work together to uphold and elevate the essential role played by historians in the education of democratic citizens.

The AHA and our members are committed to ensuring that all people have the freedom to teach, research, and learn history in all its complexity, and to strengthening the institutions that make this work possible. **P**

SUZANNE MARCHAND

ON HISTORY AND FLATTERY

For the past decade and more, I have been pondering the modern afterlife of the writer Cicero dubbed “the Father of History,” Herodotus. Tracking the long legacy left for us by Herodotus, who was equally reputed to be “the Father of Lies,” has turned out to be a fascinating (and often hilarious) way to understand how we have made, and transformed, historical methods and ideals. Much more than that of his “just the facts” critic Thucydides, Herodotus’s kaleidoscopic reputation exemplifies our struggles to define what “good” history looks like, especially when it includes, as Herodotus does, women, non-Europeans, rivers, and flying snakes.

In the course of my researches, I have been astounded by the ways that ancient and early modern thinking about history — its ethics, its rhetoric, its truth claims, its proper practices — have shaped our own, sometimes by our reiteration of those ideas, and sometimes by our rejection of them. In this essay, I take up one strand of this tangled thread: the very long discussion of history’s relationship to flattery. This is a delicate subject, for patronage, partiality, or simple lack of self-consciousness has so often tempted us to use the past in this way, although we have repeatedly warned ourselves that this is perhaps the worst of sins. Reviewing some of these compulsions and counterarguments seems timely in this sesquicentennial year, one in which we face not unprecedented but renewed threats to historical expertise and integrity. Maybe the ancients — and our early modern forebearers — can offer some useful guidance.

Let’s begin with Herodotus, who famously set out to tell the great deeds of both the Greeks and the Persians. But the Father of History was no flatterer: He managed to have something offensive to say about pretty much everybody, which may just be his greatest claim to impartiality. Even in his famous lines praising Athens for saving Greece from Persian conquest, Herodotus admitted that his opinion “will be displeasing to most” — but he has to deliver this truth anyway. His younger contemporary Thucydides argued that a proper history should neither flatter nor, like that of Herodotus,

entertain, but be a “possession for all time.” Let us pause to note the time dimension Thucydides has explicitly added: To be a good historian means seeking an appreciative audience *beyond* one’s own times — because one’s contemporaries are not likely to thank you for truth telling.

For Thucydides, to be a good historian means seeking an appreciative audience *beyond* one’s own times.

The second-century Syrian Greek rhetorician Lucian of Samosata is worth quoting at greater length, from his treatise “How to Write History.” Lucian was responding, critically, to a torrent of heroic narratives that glorified recent Roman victories against the Parthians. Lucian argued that the worst fault of historians was to “neglect the events and spend their time lauding rulers and generals, extolling their own to the skies and slandering the enemy’s beyond all reserve.” It was okay for poets to praise heroes, but history’s task was different: to write in the public interest, but *not* to please public opinion. The best readers to write for were educated “fault-finders” who would catch the historian in errors or exaggerations, even if the majority applauded. And like Thucydides, Lucian thought the historian’s true judges would be not contemporaries but later, wiser readers. Here we have our time dimension again: Orienting one’s history to please the present was a grave vice. Lucian’s next metaphor reminds one of the instructions to courtly portrait painters to paint only the ruler’s good side: “He must not be concerned that Philip has had his eye put out by . . . the archer at Olynthus — he must show him exactly as he was.” And then, invoking his hero Thucydides, Lucian summarizes: “The historian’s sole task is to tell the tale as it happened. . . . If he has a friend he will nevertheless not spare him if he errs. . . . Whoever serves the present will rightly be counted a flatterer — a person on



Photo: Annette Hornischer

whom history long ago right from the beginning has turned its back, as much as has physical culture on the art of make-up.” The historian, in short, should not apply lipstick to Mother Nature and should put the public interest and posterity ahead of friendship, patronage, and national partiality. Not bad rules, in my humble opinion!

When Greek historiography was revived in the era of the Renaissance, Europe’s political conditions were much changed. Now most polities had a prince, queen, or king, most of whom delighted in seeing their acts ratified or amplified by history-writing courtiers. Some obliged, even placing their sovereigns in the company of great figures such as Scipio Africanus and the Persian King Cyrus. Courtly artists had the same dispositions. As if in direct defiance of Lucian, in about 1473, Piero della Francesca painted the Duke of Urbino’s left profile, concealing the fact that he had lost his right eye in a jousting accident.

“Mirrors of princes” flourished in the Renaissance.

But few ever confused pageantry or art with good history, and if sycophantic tributes threatened to conceal rulers’ flaws, historical accounts at the time also frequently served as a discrete means for counselors to teach princes difficult lessons, such as the virtues of temperance and the wisdom of staying within the laws. Already in antiquity, historical examples were functioning in this way in the genre of educational manuals that came to be known as “mirrors of princes.” This genre flourished in the Renaissance, as modern states began to form. The most famous—and most unconventional—of these, Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1513), devoted a full chapter to “how flatterers are to be avoided,” denouncing those who out of self-love or fear will not speak the truth. But one could praise the dead, as Machiavelli said in his treatise *The Art of War*, because then all cause for flattery disappeared; one could also use negative examples of tyrants or usurpers to warn rulers against those abuses. History was positioned here as a zone of neutrality where honest, frank speaking could prevail—*after* the events it recounted!

There were certainly writers of history who worked in this direction, especially in Latin and antiquarian works princes generally did not read. As Anthony Grafton has demonstrated, some clerics and mavericks did their best to assess evidence critically, despite the consequences. But historical writers employed by courtly patrons or religious institutions were



Piero della Francesca's portrait of the Duke of Urbino obscures his missing right eye.
The Uffizi

highly incentivized to paint their patrons in flattering light. Thus was 17th-century history writing embedded ever more firmly in the world of courtly patronage—or religious polemic. In despair, the deep-dyed skeptic François de La Mothe Le Vayer penned several treatises on historical truth, hoping the ancients would offer guidance. He praised Polybius for recognizing that historians “are obliged to forget all kinds of friendship and all other considerations than that of the exact truth.” And he begged contemporary historians to go back to Lucian, who taught that the best histories were the least beautified and the least pleasing; they were “rather like medicines, which can only be employed a long time after they are prepared.”

In the 18th century, new and wider readerships and less censorious princes encouraged history writers to shift attention to wider cultural histories, which sometimes entailed flattering nations—or factions within those nations—rather than princes and kings. Seeing this train of toadyism gathering

steam, the English critic Lord Bolingbroke deplored that “history very often [becomes] a lying panegyric, or a lying satire; for different nations, or different parties in the same nation, belie one another without any respect for truth, as they murder one another without any regard to right or sense of humanity.” He, too, retold Lucian’s story of the painting of the prince in profile, to disguise his imperfect eye. Voltaire worried more about the corrupting forces of tradition and superstition than flattery, and wrote histories meant to ridicule, or scathe. His histories did not earn the respect of the more meticulous scholars of the state-supported Parisian Académie des Inscriptions or the German historians of the Göttingen school, who denounced Voltairian dilettantism. An admirer of the Académie’s scholarship and Voltaire’s narrative flair, Edward Gibbon provided a model of what history without flattery might be—enabled by Gibbon’s private means. But he, too, had axes to grind, and in any case was rewarded with few plaudits in his day.

Changes in structure and patronage created the conditions of financial and intellectual independence necessary for more historians to choose controversial subjects.

The 19th century, particularly in the German states, witnessed two major changes in the structure and patronage of historical work: rising investment in state-funded universities, increasingly divorced from clerical influence, and the foregrounding of the so-called “research imperative”—the idea that scholars must seek out new knowledge, whether or not it is useful or flattering to contemporaries. These changes in structure and patronage created the conditions of financial and intellectual independence necessary for more historians to choose controversial subjects, though the temptation to flatter the nation—as did, for example, German historian Heinrich von Treitschke, British historian Thomas Macaulay, and Czech historian František Palacký—endured.

These 19th-century historians cared a great deal about the ancient world and fought many of their historiographical battles by way of ancient proxies. In fact, the so-called father of scientific history, Leopold von Ranke, wrote his now lost dissertation on Thucydides before becoming a modern historian. His most famous injunction to historians, that they should tell the story of the past “wie es eigentlich gewesen” (as it

actually happened), is a gloss on Thucydides, or perhaps Lucian. Having Thucydides as a model meant that all too many of these historians focused on power politics and wars, and often writers forgot to be critical of “great men.” After Ranke, it took more than a century of effort and advocacy by historians of non-Europeans, everyday life, women, the environment, and material culture to restore something like a Herodotean worldview to history writing. But expanding our compass did not, and should not, necessitate giving up that Thucydidean commitment to telling uncomfortable truths about nonprincely subjects as well.

Thanks partly to further structural changes and to the expansion and diversification of the discipline in the last half century, we have been able to fully take on board Lucian’s final words: “That, then, is the sort of man the historian should be: fearless, incorruptible, free, a friend of free expression and the truth . . . giving nothing to hatred or to friendship, sparing no one, showing neither pity nor shame nor obsequiousness, an impartial judge, well disposed to all men . . . in his books a stranger and a man without a country, independent, subject to no sovereign.”

These are helpful words to remember in 2026, reminding us that deep in our professional DNA are injunctions to be fearless and self-reflexive friends of free expression and evidence-based painting of the past—even when we disagree with our friends, and even when, like Herodotus, we dole out praise our audiences don’t want to hear. As before, we also have to fight for circumstances in which we can speak candidly; as Cicero told us, governments under which historians are fearful of speaking truthfully are not good governments. Modern scholars too often dismiss or disparage the legacies of the ancient world; in this case, I submit that we still have a great deal to learn from its lessons on history. **P**

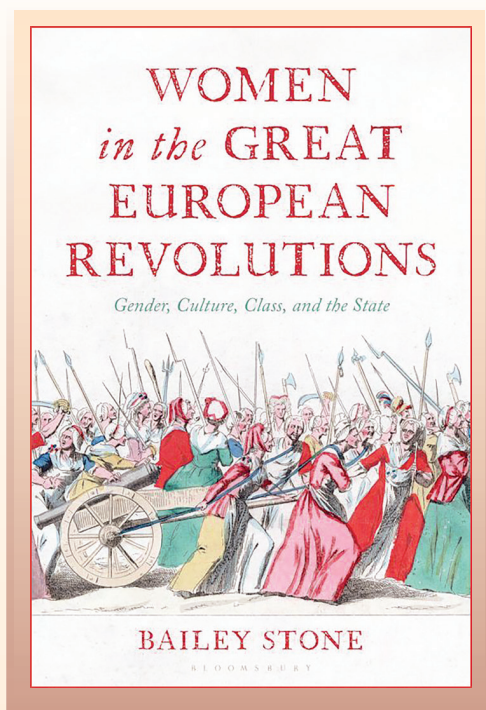
Suzanne Marchand is president of the AHA.

SCHOLARS REACT TO

WOMEN IN THE GREAT EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS: GENDER, CULTURE, CLASS, AND THE STATE

BY BAILEY STONE

This book explores and compares the roles, mentalities, and destinies of royal, elitist, and laboring-class women in Europe's classic sociopolitical revolutions: England's "Puritan Revolution" of 1640-60, France's Revolution of 1789, and Russia's Revolution of 1917. By showing as well how feminist historians, sociologists, and other specialists conceptualize gender, sexuality, and patriarchy, the author is also able to draw telling connections from these theoretical issues to the debate that is currently raging between structuralists and postmodernists over the causes, trajectories, and consequences of major revolutions.



"In this masterful, deeply researched study, Bailey Stone expertly dissects the roles and status of women in the genesis, course, and outcome of three European revolutions that defined the modern era. Arguing that gender as a historical phenomenon is best examined through its intersectionality with class, nationality, politics, and war, the author shows how the breakdown of public order and state collapse created a space for rethinking and recreating gender and family relationships in opposition to established patriarchies, only for this space to be narrowed once revolutionary regimes solidified or were replaced."

—Thomas E. Kaiser, Emeritus Professor,
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

"Bailey Stone's meticulously researched book....combines insights from feminist and revolutionary studies to show how, despite the centrality of women's agency to revolutionary movements,... post-revolutionary states confined women within new patriarchal

state structures. This is a powerful, if depressing, insight. It is also one that all students and scholars of revolutions should engage."

—George Lawson, Professor, Department of International Relations, The Australian National University

"In this much-needed work, Bailey Stone brings feminist theory into the mainstream history of the great revolutions. Examining queens and peasants, radicals and traditionalists, Stone shows how the patriarchal structure of European societies shaped revolutionary struggles and their outcomes. This is essential reading for fully understanding these crucial events."

—Jack A. Goldstone, Virginia and John Hazel, Jr., Professor of Public Policy and Eminent Scholar, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

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ADVOCACY BRIEFS

October and November 2025

This fall, the AHA has taken a variety of steps to support the work of historians and defend academic freedom.

We responded to a federal proposal to privilege academics who align with the administration's misguided view of "patriotic education" at the expense of those who maintain a nuanced, unvarnished approach to history. The AHA submitted a comment to the *Federal Register* on the Department of Education's patriotic education priorities and sent an action alert calling on members to do the same. The AHA also sent a letter to the president and chancellor of Rutgers University in support of a history professor and his partner (also a professor at the university) following threats made against them. In Texas, we called on our members to make their voices heard as the Texas State Board of Education revises the state standards for social studies. Finally, the AHA announced the establishment of two ad hoc committees supporting historians in distress, one on academic freedom and one on aiding Palestinian historians.

On November 6, we issued an Advocacy Call to Action, reminding members of the AHA's extensive work in support of history and its importance and urging them to join their voices with ours to amplify our work and to join our new Community Action and Resource Exchange network. This call to action is shared in full on page 5 of this issue. We continue to update our tracker compiling federal

actions affecting history; resources to support foreign scholars, federal historians, and historians under threat; and our compilation of amicus briefs, member op-eds, and other media offering historical context for today's events.

AHA Sends Letter to Rutgers University Addressing Threats Made to History Faculty Members

On October 13, the AHA sent a letter to Rutgers University president William F. Tate IV and chancellor Francine Conway expressing deep concern about recent threats made against Professor Mark Bray that extended to his partner, Professor Yesenia Barragan, both faculty members in the university's department of history. "The threats against Professor Bray and calls for his firing have no place in an intellectual community governed by mutual respect and constructive criticism. They are part of an escalating effort among some politically motivated groups to suppress the speech, teaching, and scholarship of faculty whose work does not conform to their movement's ideologies," the AHA wrote. "We commend Rutgers' decision to afford Professor Bray and Professor Barragan the ability to relocate and to offer their courses remotely in light of physical threats. We hope you can affirm that such harassment and threats to community safety have no place at Rutgers, as you continue to offer them support and to defend academic freedom."

AHA Submits Public Comment on Patriotic Education Priorities

On October 14, the AHA sent an action alert, developed in collaboration with the National Council for the Social Studies and the Organization of American Historians, urging members to oppose the Department of Education's plans to prioritize patriotic education in its discretionary grant programs by submitting comments to the *Federal Register*.

On October 17, the AHA submitted a comment of our own calling on the Department of Education to "avoid a narrow definition of patriotic education that excludes content, ideas, and perspectives necessary for a full and accurate understanding of the past." "The founding generation of the United States did not have a shared understanding of their history, their symbols, or their heroes; nor have subsequent generations," the comment reads. "US patriotism is diverse and multifaceted and it is capacious enough to include even those who are critical and skeptical about patriotism."

AHA Establishes Two Ad Hoc Committees Supporting Historians

On November 6, the AHA announced the establishment of two ad hoc committees to support historians.

In light of continuing threats to the historical discipline, academic freedom,

and freedom of speech, the AHA established the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Freedom to help the AHA use its authority to convene historians from many institutional backgrounds and other scholars and practitioners with relevant expertise to aid the Association in its work with affiliated societies and other scholarly associations to advocate collectively for academic freedom.

As part of the AHA's mission to defend, sustain, and enhance the work of historians in the United States and abroad, the AHA established the Ad Hoc Committee to Aid Palestinian Historians to provide guidance for the Association's efforts to aid Palestinian historians. AHA members have powerfully

expressed their desire for concrete action to support the needs of Palestinian historians and students in the wake of the destruction of universities, schools, archives, libraries, and museums in Gaza.

AHA Sends Action Alert on the Texas Social Studies TEKS Revision

On November 14, the AHA sent an action alert to members in Texas regarding the ongoing process to revise the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards for social studies. We encouraged Texans to submit testimony to the State Board of Education and to contact their elected officials to share concerns about attempts to politicize

the social studies TEKS. We also encouraged qualified Texans to apply to serve on a work group to help draft new social studies learning standards.

A field guide to the ongoing TEKS revisions has been published on the AHA website. The guide contains information about the TEKS standards, how the revision process works, what has happened in this process so far, and how Texans can get involved in trying to shape the revisions to ensure they are grounded in honest history and designed to support educators in preparing students for success. **P**

Ben Rosenbaum is public affairs associate at the AHA.

Check out New Episodes of



History in Focus

Visit historians.org/history-in-focus

"MIXED MASALA"

Zohran Mamdani and an African Indian Identity

In 2020, while running for New York State Assembly, Zohran Mamdani coined the slogan "Roti and Roses," a play on the political refrain "Bread and Roses." For the former rapper and MC once known as Mr. Cardamom, roti is key to his identity as a Ugandan of Indian origin as well as an immigrant to the United States.

Also known as chapati, the round whole wheat flatbread is a staple food in East Africa, carried from the subcontinent by migrants in the 19th and 20th centuries. Roti's popularity in Africa reflects centuries of engagement between South Asia and Africa through Indian Ocean trade networks. That history is a key element of Mamdani's cosmopolitan identity. "There's no question in my mind that I'm Ugandan. There's no question in my mind that I'm Indian. And there's no question in my mind that I'm a New Yorker," he said in a 2020 interview with *Jacobin*. "And I'm all of these things, yet in each of these places I've been made to feel that it's not actually my home to call."

Now the newly elected mayor of New York City, democratic socialist Mamdani soared in popularity through a campaign platform that centered the concerns of working-class New Yorkers. While he has been criticized for many of his political positions, his status as an immigrant and naturalized citizen

has been targeted as well. Revelations that he had self-identified as both "Asian" and "Black or African American" on his 2009 application to Columbia University came under the spotlight in a *New York Times* article in July 2025, based on information from a digital hack of university records obtained by a conservative eugenicist. The "scandal" called to mind other cases of politicians falsely claiming minoritized identities, including Elizabeth Warren's claims to Indigenous ancestry. Mamdani's claims to an African identity were, however, based on his birth in Uganda as the descendant of migrants from South Asia, a broader historical context that critics ignored. Rather than seeing these multiple forms of identity as being mutually exclusive, Mamdani has been open about, and celebrates, the transnational roots of both his private and political lives.

Mamdani's formative years were spent in Uganda and South Africa. His middle name, Kwame, is a tribute to the Ghanaian president and Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah, and his African identity is part of how he locates himself in the world. His family history in Africa dates back over a century, as does mine. Like Mamdani, I am a third-generation African, with no legal claims to Indian citizenship. My great-grandparents migrated from Gujarat in the early 20th century. My maternal grandfather was born in Rhodesia (today's Zimbabwe), as were both my parents. I was born and

raised in the capital, Harare. While I took part in South Asian traditions and culture, I grew up in a specifically African context.

Africa became a "New World" for both Hindu and Muslim migrants seeking new opportunities.

Sustained South Asian migration to Africa began with the British colonial indentured labor system created after the formal abolition of slavery in 1833 and the expansion of British imperialism in Africa. Unable to induce Black Africans to work for them in their new colonies, the British contracted laborers from the subcontinent to work on railways in East Africa and plantations in South Africa. Many died in these labors; of the survivors, some chose to stay rather than return to the British Raj. When indenture ended in the 1920s, Africa became a "New World" for both Hindu and Muslim migrants seeking new opportunities. They often worked in trade or as civil servants in East Africa. In imperial racial hierarchies, Indians were placed between white Europeans and Black Africans, discriminated against as colonized populations but accorded relatively more rights than the majority population.

An African Indian identity has thus always been a contested one. After independence, many African nations developed indigenization policies that would redress colonial inequalities by transferring economic control to Black Africans. In Uganda, president Idi Amin expelled nearly all 55,000 to 80,000 Asians who held British passports in 1972, and Asians' assets were seized and redistributed. While the policy targeted those who had not taken up Ugandan citizenship upon independence, even Indians with Ugandan passports were caught up in the expulsions, including Mamdani's father. India refused to take the refugees, leading many to seek asylum in the United Kingdom. Indians' wealth and privilege, along with their "foreign" origins, rendered them targets in the postcolonial period.

Mamdani's family is a product of this history. Descendants of Gujarati Muslim migrants, his paternal grandparents were born in present-day Tanzania. His father, Mahmood, was born in Bombay but grew up in Uganda. Mahmood studied in the United States, participated in the US civil rights movement, and taught in South Africa and Uganda before joining the political science faculty at Columbia University.

Mamdani's mother, Indian American filmmaker Mira Nair, met Mahmood in the 1980s in Kampala while conducting research for *Mississippi Masala*. The film tells the story of an Indian Ugandan woman, Mina, whose family flees Africa and settles in Mississippi. Mina falls in love with an African American man, their relationship transgressing the racial boundaries inflicted on them by society and their families. Mina's complicated relationship with her heritage as both African and Indian in the United States reflects the sense of confusion felt by many members of double diasporas. She describes herself as "mixed masala," a blend of multiple spices and origins.

Many of us, like Mamdani, know only Africa as a physical homeland. Indian communities across east and southern Africa have transitioned from being diasporic populations during the colonial era to becoming African. In Kenya, Indians are legally identified as the country's 44th tribe. In Zimbabwe, postcolonial legislation constituted Indian businesses as Indigenous economic institutions. Our families' lives and experiences call for a redefinition of an African identity beyond the colonial racial and ethnic categorizations that divided Black Africans into "tribes" and declared Indian migrants "alien" and "foreign." By deracializing an African identity, Mamdani's claims to being Ugandan make sense. Indians in Africa migrated as part of the imperial experience but lived as colonized subjects. They grounded their family's lives in African spaces and made historical and geographical claims to belonging, rather than racialized ones. In this framing, Indians are reconstituted as African peoples, not foreigners.

Yet an African American identity carries its own complicated history and

legacy. In response to Mamdani's Columbia application, outgoing mayor and political opponent Eric Adams stated, "The African American identity is not a check-box of convenience. It's a history, a struggle, and a lived experience. For someone to exploit that for personal gain is deeply offensive." The term came into popular usage in the 1980s, advocated by civil rights activist Jesse Jackson as a way to give Black Americans back their history and acknowledge their African ancestry. As a racial and cultural identity in the United States, it carries the weight of enslavement, oppression, and segregation, and who can claim that identity has been widely contested. Barack Obama, the child of a Black Kenyan father and a white American mother, had his heritage and identity debated during his 2008 campaign and his presidency. As the daughter of immigrants from Jamaica and India, Kamala Harris faced similar critiques for identifying as African American. However, both Obama and Harris were born in the United States, and their personal histories are part of the broader lived experiences of African Americans today.



South Asians arriving in the Netherlands after being expelled from Uganda.
Bert Verhoeff/National Archives of the Netherlands/public domain

While Mamdani has argued he was not claiming a Black identity in his college applications, Black Africans who have migrated after the end of slavery have also struggled to fit in with an African American identity. Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has grappled with this, calling herself “a Black person without America’s blighted history.” African migrants to the United States often feel disconnected from an African American identity, treated as a separate diaspora. South African comedian Trevor Noah has talked about being a “cultural chameleon” and the difficulties of seeking inclusion in the United States as a “Coloured” person—a term used specifically in southern Africa to describe those of mixed-race origins. A shared Black identity, however, has allowed African Americans and Africans to find common ground through the history of Pan-Africanism. But Africans who are not Black are often left out of traditional narratives of transregional connections and solidarity between civil rights in the United States and decolonization in Africa.

This leaves many of us unclear about how to define ourselves. When I graduated from Georgetown University with my PhD in African history in 2021, I had to choose between wearing a stole for the Asian and Asian Pacific Islander Desi American community and a Kente stole for African American and African diaspora students. I ultimately chose the former, not wanting to claim a designation that has typically been associated with a Black identity. But in retrospect, I wish that I had chosen to highlight my African roots instead. Like Mamdani, I believe that an either-or option did not reflect the complexity of our backgrounds and history of our communities.

There is space for migrants to locate themselves—ourselves—in these connecting histories. Rigid definitions of

race in the United States cannot always encompass Global South epistemologies and the experiences of Americans born abroad. Mamdani’s self-proclamation as African was not meant to dismiss the African American experience. An Afropolitan identity of cultural hybridity includes the African diaspora as well. Going beyond nativist Western and colonial definitions of the term “African” allows Africans in and beyond the continent to celebrate their global inheritances and legacies. It also allows migrant and diasporic communities to claim multiple forms of belonging.

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Mamdani’s and my family history recalls the words and legacy of Steve Biko, a leader of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa. Biko defined a Black identity as a commitment “to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being,” allowing Indian and Coloured South Africans who had experienced disenfranchisement under apartheid to find membership in a collective Black, and therefore African, political identity. Indians across Africa participated in nationalist movements, particularly in South Africa and Kenya, and connected with decolonization movements across the Indian Ocean as part of Global South forms of resistance.

While Africans of Indian origin in the United States like Mamdani are not part of the past encompassed by an African American identity, they can be part of the future of being African in America. Gambian journalist Sheriff

Bojang Jr. argued in June 2025 that “Zohran would not only be New York’s first Muslim and first Indian-American mayor. He would be the first to carry the intellectual legacy of postcolonial Africa into the political heart of the West.” Mamdani’s intersectionality, he stated, was a form of “power, not confusion.”

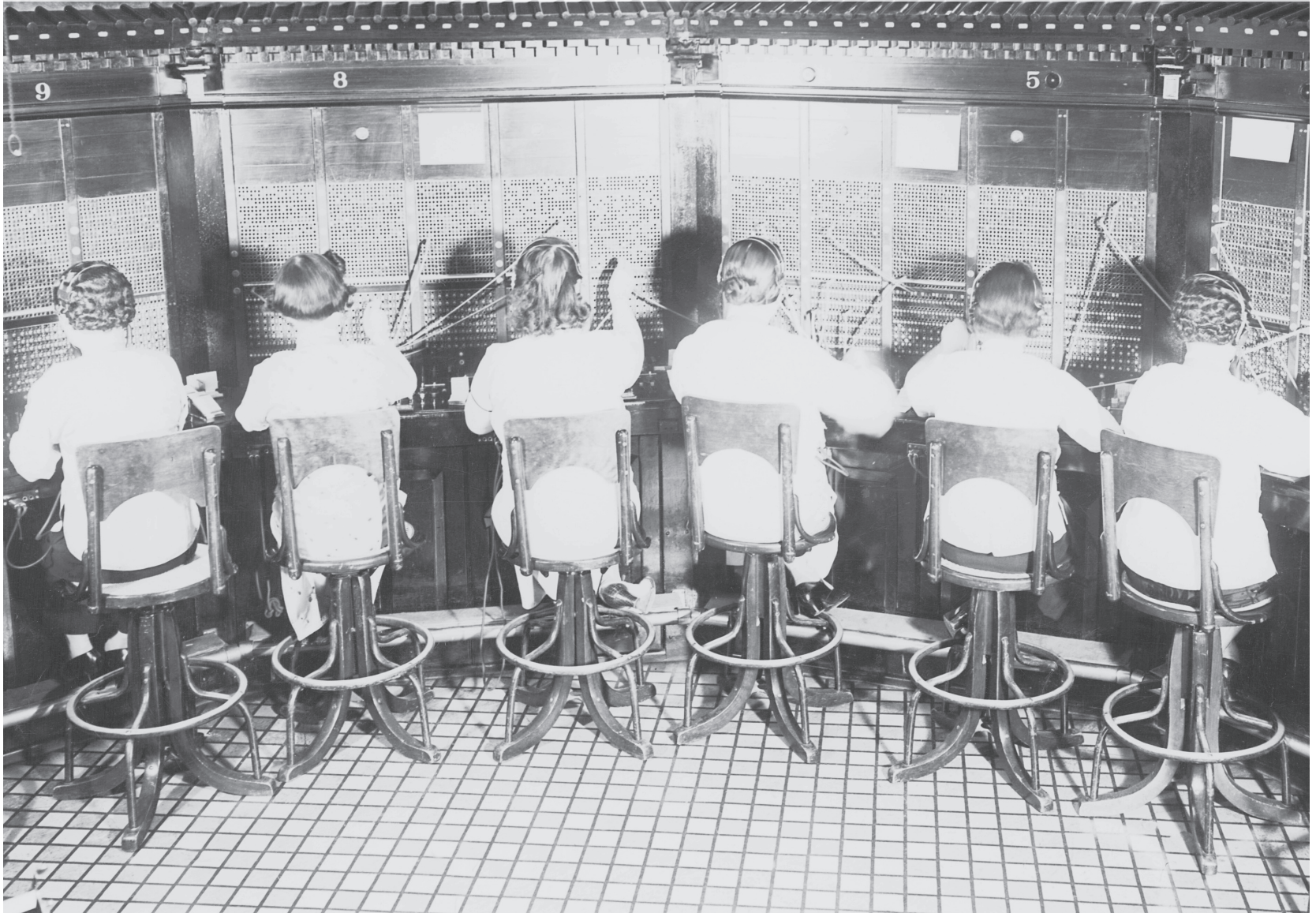
Mayor Zohran Mamdani is a first in many ways, and I see myself represented by him. We can be African and South Asian and American, all at the same time. Mamdani celebrates his hybrid roots and legacies, an identification that checking a box on a form can never quite encompass. **P**

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The logo for the American Historical Association, featuring the words "AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION" in a serif font, with "AMERICAN" on the top line, "HISTORICAL" in the middle, and "ASSOCIATION" on the bottom line. The text is white and set against a dark background.

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KELLY SCHRUM

WHY SHOULD I KNOW HISTORY?

Finding Meaning in the History of Higher Education



The higher education professionals who work on university campuses can benefit from understanding the history of such institutions.
Evan Cantwell/George Mason University

THE HISTORY OF higher education in the United States is taught hundreds of times each year, but not within history departments. Institutions of higher education expanded throughout the 20th century, as did a profession focused on higher education administration, leadership, academic affairs, student affairs, and student development. There are currently more than 280 higher education and student affairs (HESA) programs designed to train these professionals. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, a consortium of associations representing student affairs practitioners, includes history in their program guidelines. As a result, most HESA programs require students to study the history of higher education, but these courses are rarely taught or developed by historians and often lack a focus on primary sources and historical thinking.

History courses in higher education and students affairs programs often lack a focus on primary sources and historical thinking.

I am a historian who found my way, through digital humanities, digital pedagogy, and the scholarship of teaching and learning, to becoming a HESA professor. Teaching the history of higher education course presented a rare opportunity to merge my academic and pedagogical worlds. I quickly realized, though, that most students did not share my excitement about the topic. In fact, they actively dreaded it. One assumed that it “was going to be my least favorite class,” while another asked more pointedly, “Why should I have to take this? Why should I know history?” I saw this as both a unique challenge and an opportunity. Could this course engage student affairs professionals in examining the past while making meaningful connections to their work today and in the future?

As James Grossman wrote a decade ago, all students can find history engaging if we “figure out how to connect our courses to the curiosities and passions that students bring with them.” Incorporating this advice, I redesigned the course to connect those curiosities and passions with the study of the past. After the course ended, students shared their revised perspectives. One appreciated that history “helps us understand where we’re situated now . . . it really sunk in for me.” Another reflected that history can help you understand how challenges were addressed in the past: “Was that handled well? Was it handled badly? Is that something that we can bring up in the dialogue for change?” They concluded that history provides “a

road map to help conversations of the future.” Teaching the history of higher education in a HESA graduate program offered a valuable opportunity to expand historical thinking and appreciation for humanities among future higher education professionals and can, perhaps, serve as a model for other programs.

The first time I taught the history of higher education course, I started with the syllabus I inherited and looked for additional models nationally. Many used the same core text and followed a similar chronological structure. I did the best I could with the materials at hand, but in the end, I was disappointed. The core book focused heavily on elite institutions, and I struggled to find primary sources online. As noted, the students—who were required to take the course—approached it (at best) with reluctance and apprehension.

Drawing on my experience with digital humanities and higher education pedagogy, I spearheaded a redesign of the course. I focused on change and continuity over time, student access, and the contributions of diverse populations and kinds of institutions. Historical thinking is grounded in critical analysis of primary sources, and developing these skills requires practice and guidance. The redesigned course explicitly introduced primary sources and emphasized close reading, analytical questions, and attention to historical context.

Today’s higher education professionals are faced with a rapidly changing landscape and challenges including academic integrity, academic freedom, student protest, faculty governance, workforce preparation, financial uncertainty, and shifting federal legislation. Each of these issues, however, has a history that can expand our understanding of the complexities as well as efforts to address or resolve them over time. It is also critical to include a broad history of education that includes normal (teacher education) schools, community colleges, historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges, and vocational schools, among others, as these institutions have educated the vast majority of students since the late 19th century.

Collaboration played a key role in the redesign. As I began reimagining the course, I met D. Chase Catalano, an assistant professor in a HESA program who was teaching the history of higher education for the first time. We came from very different backgrounds, but we faced the same challenge of fostering student engagement in the history of higher education. Through conversation and experimentation, we found that our perspectives were equally important for reimagining the course with the goal of making it relevant for higher education professionals.

Together we designed and implemented a shared digital assignment requiring each student to create an online, asynchronous, primary source learning activity for their peers that examined the historical roots of an issue facing higher education today. This inquiry-based assignment encouraged students to think about knowledge creation and communication, including creative, interactive ways to engage classmates with primary sources. Students also learned digital skills and had the opportunity to think intentionally about pedagogy and peer learning. Topics included women's athletics, LGBTQ+ rights, campus quarantines, college entrance exams, federal legislation, and financial aid. The assignment was carefully scaffolded with feedback throughout the semester. Students then worked through classmates' activities and learned about a range of issues. The activity challenged students to experience doing history by producing student-centered, authentic work for an audience of peers.

The redesigned course centered primary sources, historical thinking, historical context, and real-world connections, but I wondered what students would take with them into their higher education careers. So I decided to conduct research, including five sections of the course taught by three instructors at two institutions. Seventy-three students completed the courses, and thirty-four (47 percent) participated in the research. Data, including student work and interviews, was collected, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis. We found that students' attitudes changed after completing the course.

Through scaffolded practice locating, analyzing, and curating primary sources, students developed an appreciation for the practice and craft of history. One student shared that it was "much more effective" to read about student experiences with hazing in the past than "just to speculate or assume what hazing would have previously looked like." Another was initially discouraged by the lack of archival material about Asian American students but came to appreciate that absence also tells a story. Students also developed an understanding of historical context. One explored the history of international students through US immigration laws. She reflected after the course that her research "gave more insight into the context that allowed me to have a really good holistic picture of why this Immigration Act happened, what it did, and why it's important now."

Inviting students to bring their interests to the course fostered an appreciation for the relevance of history to their future careers. Making this connection explicitly (and repeatedly) is essential. Students in these courses envisioned using their new skills to contextualize current issues, such as institutional ties to slavery, debates over affirmative action, and budget

shortfalls. One shared that the course "really changed my perspective. . . . By knowing the history of higher education—and particularly what's made it inequitable—I can hopefully use that as a jumping-off point whenever I start my career in higher ed to pinpoint those things to change." Another described a new appreciation for the discipline: "My big takeaway was that history is not something that just stays in the past." One student expanded that notion, sharing that the course "made me start to realize how important all general history is because I'm like, 'Wait, I can actually apply everything to what's happening now.'"

Building on our lessons learned, we expanded the project. We ran a 2024 summer institute for higher education faculty on teaching the history of higher education with the goal of deepening understanding and appreciation of the humanities in higher education programs nationally. We also created an open educational resource on teaching and learning the history of higher education that includes secondary sources, teaching modules, and a database of 700 digitized institutional archives. Institute participants have since shared what they learned through articles and conference presentations, including how they have integrated historical thinking into their higher education policy, law, administration, and qualitative methods classes.

Understanding the past and its role
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This project grew out of my commitment to strengthening humanities in higher education. It tapped into unexplored opportunities for expanding history and the humanities by introducing them to new audiences in professional programs. Understanding the past and its role in shaping the present and the future supports the work of student affairs professionals, helping to situate systemic issues within a broader historical context. Engaging students in this way can also provide a meaningful opportunity to introduce the value of history and historical thinking to new audiences and to shape the attitudes of current and future higher educational professionals. **P**

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KYLIE M. SMITH

NURSES NEED HISTORY TOO

Teaching Historical Fluency for Health Equity



Teaching history to future health care providers gives necessary context for understanding the systems they will work in today.
Menninger Foundation—Psychiatric Aides; Rockefeller Foundation records, Photographs, Series 219; Subseries 219A; Rockefeller Archive Center.

IT IS A difficult time to be a historian (and student) of health care. In my Historical Foundations of Health Disparities course last spring, we spent a week focused on the medical civil rights movement. We watched footage of activists and politicians coming together for the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which ended discrimination in health care, and students got to watch President Lyndon B. Johnson, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. come together for the common good. The joy and pride at that signing was palpable in the recording, and the students (and I) were all visibly moved by it.

Outside my classroom, the current administration is now using that same legislation in ways contradictory to its original intended mission. These laws were meant to undo decades of discrimination in health care, but now have led to shocking health disparities between people of color and white Americans. As secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Kennedy's son is dismantling the nondiscriminatory infrastructure of both the research and administrative arms of health care in this country, and telling lies about vaccines, psychiatry, and gender. These links between past and present illustrate how health care is always political, an important lesson that future doctors and nurses need to learn.

The health care system students will inherit is working exactly as it was designed.

I came to Emory University in 2015 as the inaugural Andrew W. Mellon Faculty Fellow for Nursing and the Humanities, a new role designed to bring humanistic perspectives into health education. As I'm one of only three non-nurse PhD-prepared historians working in US schools of nursing, sharing the social context of clinical decisions and health care systems with my students is essential knowledge, and it can be both rewarding and challenging as a humanist to find ways to integrate that into already crowded curriculums. The Emory School of Nursing has recognized the importance of this work through the creation of a Center for Healthcare History and Policy, which I direct.

I teach across Emory and work with both undergraduate and graduate public health, nursing, and medical-track students. One of my core arguments to these students is that the health care system they will inherit is working exactly as it was designed. They should learn what it was meant to achieve and where it succeeded but also where it fell short. They also need to understand how it is now being torn apart, piece by piece, in

ways that will affect their future careers, their future patients, and indeed even their own future health.

To make this connection between past and present has meant moving the history of medicine beyond stories about "great" nurses or doctors. Rather, my goal is to introduce students to the vast body of work in the history of health care broadly conceived, and to situate that history in broader social processes like colonialism, slavery, capitalism, and environmental change.

To that end, my approach has always been informed by what now composes the recognized field of "applied history," where we think carefully about what the specific lessons are that we want and need future professionals—in my case, health care providers—to take from history writ large, not just the history of their own profession. Health care students need to learn more than simply the scientific development of biomedicine. They also need to learn about the racist ideas that informed early physicians and nurses as they established their authority in the context of slavery. They need to learn how American capitalist structures shaped the impossibility of socialized health care. And they need to learn about how the New Deal and the Great Society, and ideas about these programs, shaped policy and legislation that still affect how we experience and navigate health care today.

The mission of nursing to provide holistic care to people in the context of their personal lives and social circumstances makes history particularly relevant. To do this, students need to learn a broad conception of history that explores the economic and political forces that shape their patients' lives, as well as their own profession. One key example is the story of the first Black trained nurse in the United States, Mary Eliza Mahoney, who worked at the New England Hospital for Women and Children and graduated from their school of nursing in 1879. Mahoney's story teaches students about the racial segregation that defined the nursing profession so long into the 20th century that Black women still make up only 25 percent of the profession. The story of Black nurses also needs to deal with the reality that they were taught the same false ideas as white nurses—that Black people were biologically different from white people. When we broaden the lens to situate nursing in the history of biomedicine, we can get closer to the origins of such disparities for patients. The goal of a history *for* health care approach (as opposed to the history *of* health care) is to enable all nurses, Black or white, to recognize the scientific racism that underpins all their practices.

I have sometimes been asked why I do not teach students more of the "good" things about American health and medicine.

Scientific discoveries are important, but in a course focused on health disparities, we study how patients and communities tried to negotiate this system in order to take care of their own health when the system failed them. Here, we focus on the role of community-based health activist collectives like the Young Lords, the Black Panther Party, SisterLove, and Black midwives, along with activism focused on HIV, disability, prison and mental health reform, and Indigenous and environmental survival tactics. Students find it empowering to hear these stories of grassroots organizations and loose collectives who have fought and continue to fight for the right to health and access to care in the face of oppressive forces at the intersection of racism and capitalism.

How do you engage and measure students' historical knowledge or competencies when they are not in training to be historians?


Teaching courses like this, which involve distilling complex histories into comprehensible formats for nonhistory majors, requires a careful consideration of participation and assessment measures. How do you engage and measure students' historical knowledge or competencies when they are not in training to be historians? Instead of paper or exams, I use activities and assessments that break down historical knowledge into digestible chunks that they can apply to current problems. To do that, I introduce them to the vast body of scholarly work, usually requiring a short reading on a topic and then providing extensive lists of supplementary materials. I ask that they read one supplementary article per week. Usually, I let them choose their own adventure, asking them to sign up for different readings so they can summarize for one another and we can pull out common themes in class.

The final assessment is a group project. Early in the semester, we review some of the major disparities that exist in health care, and we rank them in terms of class interest. The top seven to eight categories become that semester's group project topics. In groups of five or fewer, with guidelines for what I expect them to research (e.g., the nature of the current disparity, the historical policies that led to that problem), students design their own final project in any format that they like. Students have made video essays, podcast episodes, infographics, and virtual exhibits. The framework I'm using here is what Daniel S. Goldberg has called "historical fluency," and the final projects live online at the Historically Informed Policy (HIP) Lab.

The key here is the phrase "historically informed." This approach doesn't require students to undertake original research or produce new knowledge. Rather, I ask them to take a deep dive into what's already out there, and to synthesize that knowledge in ways that will help them, and others, in their future actions as health care providers or policymakers. In this approach, they learn about historical evidence, how the past shapes the present, and what can be learned from past practices, both good and bad.

The final project is scaffolded with smaller assignments: a group role contract that sets each individual's contribution to the project, a work-in-progress presentation, and a peer review component. The usual issues with wrangling group projects aside, students report that they enjoy the freedom of the project approach. Many of them are taking a full load of prenursing, medical, or science classes that are heavy on rote learning and exams. In class evaluations, they report their enjoyment in the chance to be creative, to dive deeply into a specific area they are concerned with, and to have some fun with a project that builds on their group's skills and that can be of practical use to others. They especially appreciate having their work published on the HIP Lab site.

One comment from last year sums up the general feeling about this type of course: The course lectures "opened my eyes to the historical factors and institutions that contribute to current inequities in health care. I also really enjoyed the final project and getting to dive deeper into a racial disparity of our choice. I like that we had the freedom to choose the format of the final product, and I loved hearing about everyone else's projects during the in-class presentations." Students report the impact long after they've graduated, with many telling me that in retrospect it was the most important course they took in nursing school and it should be mandatory for all students.

Does all of this work make a difference to the future of health care? Only history will tell, but these future health care providers and policymakers are at least equipped with the skills of historical fluency, and a recognition that current health care problems are a product of the past. 

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SUZANNE M. LITREL

NOT DEAD YET

Teaching History in an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute



For students in Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes, history courses offer opportunities to look back on their own life events or learn something new.

Michael Skok/Unsplash

ON A FALL afternoon, when wind beckoned winter with increasing urgency, the conference venue—a low-lying building in a Midwestern university—offered welcome warmth. So, too, did the attendees, a healthy mix of high school and college instructors. My interactive session, on strategies in teaching Latin American history, turned out livelier than I had hoped.

One participant, however, shied from discussion. He looked up for long stretches, scribbling furiously at intervals. I kept my eye on the slight, silver-haired attendee. Professor, publisher, editor? None of the above, as it turned out: A local resident and a member of the university's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), he had signed up to audit conference sessions. He waited until the room emptied out to speak up and introduce himself. He confided that he hadn't ever thought of history as told through the lens of women's experiences—an integral part of my workshop. Then he asked whether I would consider doing a talk for his group. Already an OLLI instructor at Kennesaw State University (KSU), where I design and teach four-to-eight-week history courses, I was interested. "You know," he said, "we may be old—but we're not dead yet."

Neither is the study of history. Pollyannaish thought, perhaps, as the number of undergraduate history *majors* has been on the decline for decades. As is well documented, so, too, have tenure-track positions in the field. But "history is our most popular subject," said Steve Thaxton, national director of resources for OLLI, an endowed noncredit program for adults over the age of 50. History courses rank first among OLLI students, confirmed Patricia Walker, executive director of Community and Professional Education (CPE) at KSU, which houses the school's lifelong learning program.

In the shifting landscape of our lives, historians, by dint of trade, raise questions, investigate, and reflect on the past—for many seniors, an accessible venture. But depending on presentation, the process and the "product" can be either a marvelous creation or a terrible bore. More than a few of my OLLI students had shied away from what they had felt was a tedious field taught by even more tedious instructors. Certainly, my own high school experience—quite literally, "chalk-and-talk"—was bad enough that I avoided history until graduate school.

Teaching methods, thankfully, have evolved over the intervening decades to include an emphasis on student engagement. Yet adult interest in noncredit continuing education—including and especially the humanities—is not new. Over 25 years ago, retired banker and CPE volunteer Dick Harp saw an

OLLI grant opportunity in a *Delta Sky* magazine. At the time, KSU already fielded a "Golden University" for seniors. Harp applied for and received a \$100,000 grant, the first of over \$4 million in funding for the program. Today, OLLI KSU is now a self-sustaining community program. And my "department" is growing, with 18 history courses scheduled for the first half of 2026.

Reaching out to older learners in a low-stakes environment, I've found, rekindles or even jump-starts their love of history. Walker suggested that the reason for the subject's popularity is that older adults now have the time and inclination to appreciate storytelling—so fundamental to sharing history. The outcomes are apparent in course enrollment—and beyond. At present, 25 states, Georgia included, offer tuition-free university to residents 62 or above. Noncredit courses for active adult learners can ease older students into part- or full-time study at accredited institutions. One new retiree, for example, took my eight-session world history course as partial preparation for future study. Having just earned his associate's degree, he's now pursuing a four-year history degree at KSU.

Reaching out to older learners in a low-stakes environment rekindles or even jump-starts their love of history.

History gets personal—another draw for seniors. "I'm interested in history now because I *am* part of history," a student shared. She confided about one tumultuous historic event: "I was supposed to be at the 1968 Democratic Convention—but my ride never showed up!" My students consider how the day's class intersects with their lives, past and present. Aware of my background in Asian studies, a Vietnam veteran brought me a centuries-old Chinese coin to translate; this he picked up during his tour of duty. We discussed China's expansionary efforts through the centuries. "Never could defeat the Vietnamese," he said. Another student brought in a *New York Times* article about an exhibit at the Louvre. "I can't believe it—we just discussed Jacques-Louis David and *The Death of Marat*!" She handed me the clipping. "And here he is!" Her friend nodded. "Happens to me all the time," she said, noting that since taking world history, "So much has come into focus."

"Old guys are hopeless, of course—we have to wait for them to die off," Isabel Allende said in a TED Talk as she argued for change in a world of injustice. But she could not have meant

my own students in the KSU lifelong learning program. Some—the minority—studied history in college. Prior to signing up, most of my students, now retired, had neither time nor inclination to pursue the subject; now they take an entire day (or more) diving in. “Thank you for taking us seriously,” wrote one of my students on a recent survey. Walker, who served as OLLI program manager from 2016 to 2019, recalls an OLLI day trip to the National Civil War Naval Museum in Columbus, Georgia. There, instructor and historian Michael Shaffer “held class” in front of a battle map “for over an hour!” Walker was surprised by the intensity of students as they took notes, asked questions, and raised issues. She reflected that people like a good story, one that “adds value” to their conversations with family and friends. For them, history courses—and the conversations they engender—expand social circles and enliven routines.

OLLI students come from all walks of life and include former executives, engineers, flight attendants, and insurance agents, as well as homemakers whose children have long launched.

A mostly retired crowd, like my students, want to circle back and pick up what they had forgotten—or what they never learned. Current OLLI program manager Melissa Conners noted that our average student age is close to 70 years old. They come from all walks of life and include former executives, engineers, flight attendants, and insurance agents, as well as homemakers whose children have long launched. A student explained her reason for taking my classes: “I never studied history beyond what was required in high school,” she said. “Now I want to know.” A retired airline executive wanted to learn about the history of places before he embarked on travel. Another student shared what she learned with her grandson, an honors world history student, delighting in their mutual love of history and deepening connection.

What’s unexpected, at times, is student reaction to method and material. “Why didn’t we ever learn about women [in history class] before?” exclaimed one student. She, along with over two dozen students, had signed up for my Women in World History series. “I don’t get why we just learned about men! And battles!” She had never pursued history beyond high school and is now hooked. “I can’t wait to tell my son about this,” she enthused after a lively discussion on 17th-century

Angolan Queen Njinga. OLLI instructors do not assign homework or administer exams, but we can provide suggestions for reading. After reading Linda M. Heywood’s *Njinga of Angola: Africa’s Warrior Queen*, an octogenarian burst into class the following week: “That Njinga was a badass!”

Lifelong learning is fueled by openness to new ideas and willingness to rethink old ones—a habit of mind that is honed by “doing” history. Historical thinking skills—so critical to navigating the present—can be shared at any age, but perhaps senior adults most appreciate how these can be put to use. Historians chase down, sift through, and, as needed, discard evidence to create a narrative that makes sense. And collective historical inquiry nurtures creativity and community; many of my students, of the same or overlapping age cohort, pounce on new stories with enthusiasm. They are especially intrigued to uncover and examine the voices of marginalized people.

Across my teaching career, my high school, undergraduate, and now lifelong learning students have understood that they were not expected to remember all they confronted in class—an impossible task, given the complexity of their own lives and sheer volume of content. But they *could* hone skills. This is especially true of my OLLI students, mindful that they are vulnerable to misinformation, scams, and hacks. We consider and apply Paul Veyne’s *Writing History: Essay on Epistemology*: “I believe that this document teaches me this: may I trust it to do that?” We sift, question, analyze, evaluate, and compare sources—an exercise, my seniors well know, so relevant to the present.

At best, teaching is an organic activity, an invigorating experience, and a shared venture. Teaching history to active adult learners invites them to reflect on the past, shake up fixed ideas, and dig into their own interests. It’s an exciting, collaborative experience as instructors and students learn from and share well beyond the classroom, sparking cross-generational exchange and more. For our most senior students are not only “not dead yet” but, when it comes to learning history, very much alive. **P**

Suzanne M. Litrel is an independent scholar, history education consultant, and part-time instructor at Kennesaw State University’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Her latest book is *The Battle for Brazil: Resistance, Renewal, and the War Against the Dutch, 1580–1654* (Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2026).

KIMBERLY ALEXANDER AND JESSICA M. LEPLER

CHURNING BUTTER AND PROMOTING HISTORY

STEAM Night at the Elementary School



A team of University of New Hampshire history faculty, students, and alumni worked together to bring a hands-on history lesson to a local elementary school.

Courtesy Jessica M. Lepler, sign design by Graye Morrison

IT WAS A chilly March New Hampshire night, but inside a bustling public elementary school, STEAM Night was just heating up. For two hours, the school's pop-up science museum attracted hundreds of children aged 5 to 12, along with their parents and caregivers. But this year, there was a new exhibit. Those who walked past the microscopes in the hallway, engineering games in the gym, and a 3D printer in the cafeteria found an art classroom packed with people. There, a team of enthusiastic undergraduate and graduate students instructed kids and adults to vigorously shake small jars filled with sloshing heavy cream. They were churning butter and, in the process, realizing through sore arms and tickled taste buds that the humanities had entered the building.

When they spread their hand-churned butter on saltines, grown-ups and kids alike raved about its flavor.

This spring 2025 butter-churning exhibit was an experiment aimed at injecting the humanities into the excitement around STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) by teaching the public about the history of food production. When they spread their hand-churned butter on saltines, grown-ups and kids alike raved about its flavor. They felt and tasted lessons about the value of history to understanding labor, consumption, and the technology of the past, present, and future. Meanwhile, the students leading the exhibit—undergraduates, graduate students, and recent alumni from the University of New Hampshire (UNH)—witnessed the power of public history. Interacting with more than 500 kindergartners through 5th graders, they saw young minds get excited about thinking about the past. In this way, it was a double experience-based learning experiment. The public and the students learned different but important lessons about the value of the humanities.

This experiment was a community effort. Since her now 10-year-old son entered kindergarten, UNH professor Jessica M. Leppler dreamed of the humanities being included in the fun of Exeter Elementary's annual STEAM Night. Each year as they played with the latest technological toys and games, she wondered whether the kids and their adults appreciated the change over time in ideas, institutions, trade, and labor that enabled the wonders at their fingertips. Considering her own scholarly interests in the history of culture, capitalism, and canals, she imagined how hands-on experiences of past technology might plant the seeds for future history majors, a

decade or more before they applied to college. And she thought about what lessons her current students might learn by getting involved in public history directed at very young people and their families. She decided this grassroots effort in cultivating passion for history was worth a try.

In fall 2024, with encouragement from Exeter Elementary STEAM teachers Sheena Haney and Jackie Carlozzi, Leppler reached out to Kimberly Alexander, head of the UNH Museum Studies program and faculty advisor to the History Club. Alexander embraced the idea; it was exactly her type of project. For five years, she has run a hands-on Flax Project that takes students through the historical linen production process from sowing seeds to spinning thread. As of fall 2025, she and her students have processed a large enough crop to weave the thread into linen and complete the cycle from plant to clothing. The project has involved UNH's agricultural resources, local museums, and even a documentary filmmaker. In comparison, the STEAM Night experiment seemed easy, short, and eminently doable.

Alexander proposed butter churning as a hands-on activity with relatively quick, tangible, and tasty results. The planning began well before the event. We recruited and trained a team of students and recent alumni to run the exhibit under Leppler's direction. We sourced materials. A \$500 grant from the UNH history department supported the purchase of supplies: glass jars and small plastic containers to be used for churning, eight quarts of cream, three boxes of crackers, salt, plastic tablecloths, paper plates, napkins, plastic knives, and posterboards for signs. We also gathered wooden spoons, a strainer, and an insulated cooler.

On STEAM Night, the students met Leppler at the elementary school. Alumna Olivia Mullins taught the team the easy process. Leppler then led a brief discussion about the activity's historical lessons. The group talked about how foods like butter have not always been available for purchase in grocery stores. Before widespread access to manufactured foods, whole families worked hard so they could eat. Rural children often milked cows and powered churns. Feeding their families and creating a commodity that could be sold, children contributed to their households' physical and financial health. Yet over the last century or so, this work changed with new technologies and societal structures. Now most cows are milked by machine, and most butter is churned in factories and sold in stores—a reminder that the way the world works now is not the way it will always work.

Soon the room was full of churning children expecting immediate results. As we know from historical scholarship, butter

making takes time and skill. As some kids lost patience, caregivers took over the task of shaking the jars. They talked about memories of fresh churned butter and their appreciation for not having to do this work on a daily basis. When finally the sound of the thick slosh of cream turned thinner, kids removed the container lids and found inside bright, off-white balls of butter swimming in buttermilk. After a quick trip to the sink, a pour through the strainer, and a sprinkle of salt, they relished their fresh butter on saltines. Satisfied families left the room and spread the word. Soon, all of STEAM Night was abuzz about the butter in the art room, and we ran out of cream and containers about five minutes before the end of the event. As they cleaned, the UNH students chatted about the highlights of the event. They enjoyed the smiles, the conversations, and the exercise for their biceps. They appreciated the fun of watching people, even small kids, make historical connections.

The infusion of history learning into the night's science-oriented events impressed the STEAM teachers, who gathered feedback from children and families. During the event, a 4th grader exclaimed, "Wow, this is like magic! I can't believe you can make it by just shaking it. My arm's getting tired, but it's so cool!" One adult remarked, "The butter-churning station was fun and engaging. It had our whole family talking about butter!" The experiment had lingering effects. One child said, "Mrs. Haney, guess what I learned last night! Butter doesn't come from the store. You can make it at home." Some families extended the experiment further. One child glowed: "I taught my grandparents how to make butter over the weekend because of STEAM Night." Clearly the lessons radiated out far beyond the elementary school's art room. Haney and Carlozzi reported, "The success of the butter-churning activity at STEAM Night was a direct result of the UNH history department volunteers' dedication and passion. Their ability to connect with participants and make history tangible underscored the importance of community engagement in fostering a love for learning."

We are planning to bring butter churning back to Exeter Elementary next year, but we hope that the experiment spreads even further. Some graduating students asked if they could join next year as alumni; others suggested they would try to organize similar events for kids in their future communities. A local farm invited us to do a public demonstration in the spring. This is exactly the momentum our discipline needs to recruit new generations of historically interested students. While we wait for these churning children to grow and enroll in history courses, their caregivers also benefit from a reminder of the value of the humanities. Straightforward to organize and inexpensive to run (at about a dollar per person),

the butter-churning public history experiment represented a real, actionable method to make tangible the importance of the humanities in people's lives.

For years, the UNH history department has been making its case to the public. Whether it is a hands-on butter-churning demonstration at a local elementary school; planting flax with our New Hampshire community at museums, historical societies, and local farms; hosting our department's popular History Day, which provides continuing education credits for New Hampshire teachers; or placing undergraduate and graduate students in internships, the department plays an active, interdisciplinary, and creative role in public-facing history and community engagement.

If we want a nation of historically minded thinkers and voters, we need to churn up support for the study of the past. Shaking and tasting are the types of hands-on tools of teaching that imprint historical thinking in muscle memory and make the value of history tangible. We hope this article offers a recipe for other history departments. In our time of reduced funding and hollowed-out faculties, this model can be copied by professors, teachers, and museum professionals in other communities to integrate the humanities into STEAM and bring historical change to their local communities. We hope such grassroots tactics for teaching the value of history gather STEAM! **P**

Kimberly Alexander is director of Museum Studies and senior lecturer in the history department at the University of New Hampshire. Jessica M. Lepler is associate professor of history at the University of New Hampshire.

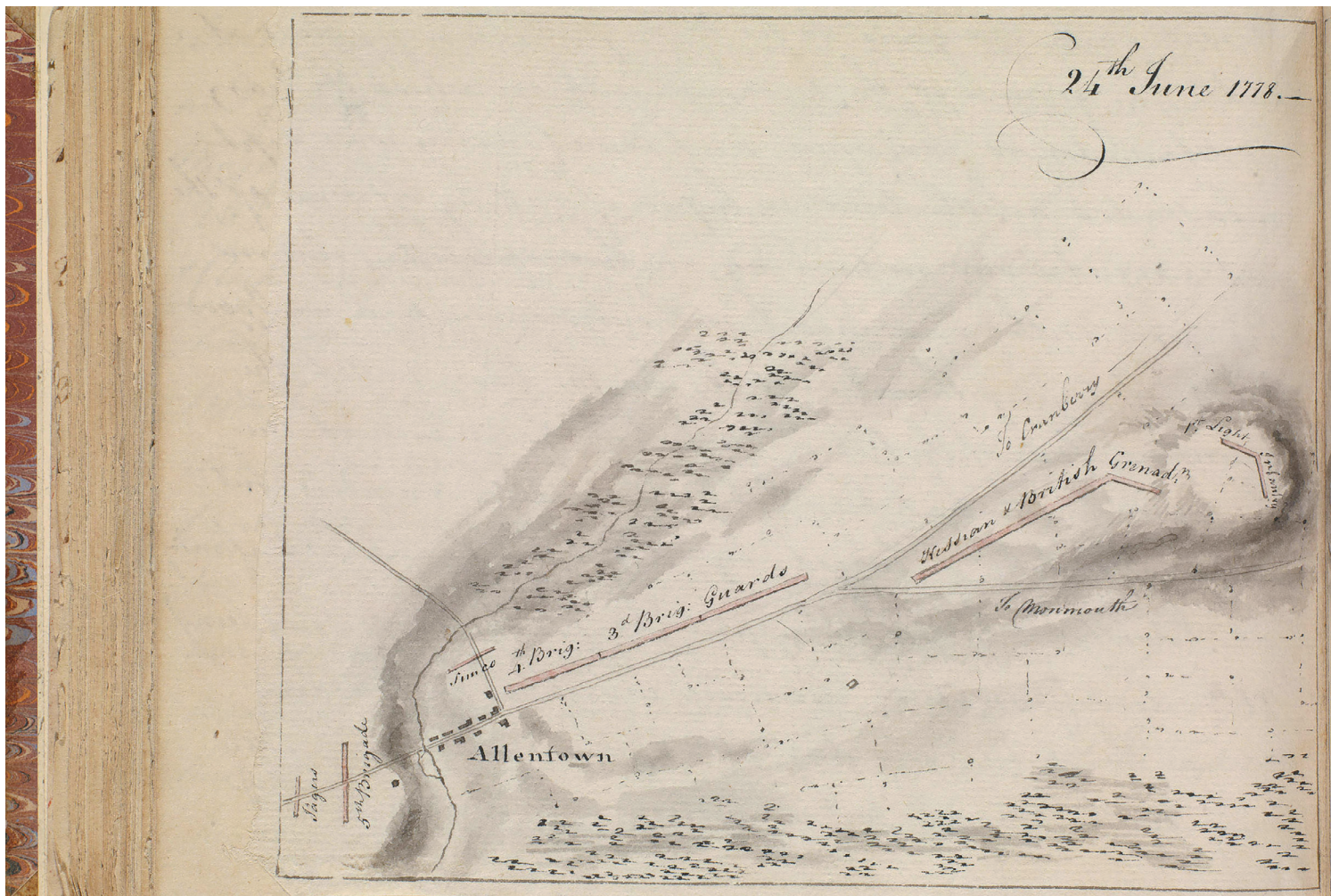
CHURNING YOUR OWN BUTTER

Pour room-temperature heavy cream into a canning jar with a tight lid. Fill the container no more than three-quarters full (one pint of heavy cream fits perfectly in a quart-sized canning jar). Shake the jar until cream begins to thicken. Eventually, a ball of butter will separate from the buttermilk. Once it has separated, strain the buttermilk from the butter through a sieve or strainer. After straining, press the butter in a bowl with the back of a wooden spoon or a spatula to squeeze out any remaining buttermilk. Rinse the butter under cold running water until the water runs clear. Sprinkle with salt, to taste, and turn over a few times to incorporate. Store in an airtight container. The butter will keep in the refrigerator for about three weeks or in the freezer for a few months. — Recipe by Olivia Mullins

SUE KOZEL

“I SWEAR TO TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH”

Serving as an Expert Witness



British Major John André's map of the British encampment at Allentown was a key piece of evidence in proving the area's historical significance.

Journal of John André, 1777, June 11–1778, Nov. 15., fol. 75av, HM 626, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

WAS asked to serve as a sworn history expert and “fact witness” by the Borough of Allentown, New Jersey, as part of neighboring Upper Freehold’s planning board application to build nearly 500,000 square feet of warehouses within 1,000 feet of a state and nationally designated historic district in Allentown. During the hearing process, which lasted for 10 months, I testified twice for just under three hours: first on the site’s history, and later as a fact witness regarding issues of bias. We opponents to this development called our fight the Battle of Monmouth 2.0, because the site in question is tied to the 1778 Battle of Monmouth, in which General George Washington rallied his troops and held off a British assault in a crucial moment in the American War for Independence.

Historians asked to serve as sworn expert history witnesses present and explain key facts that underscore the historical significance of land slated for development.

There are many ways for historians to assist their communities when controversies emerge over land-use proposals, from zoning and planning board applications to the development of historic preservation ordinances. Those asked to serve as sworn expert history witnesses present and explain key facts that underscore the historical significance of land slated for development, usually aiming to stop or modify an application. Historians looking for other ways to contribute might submit comments on government agency reviews of development applications and help interpret evidence to determine if land development projects will undermine or support historic preservation. The role of a sworn expert history witness sometimes transforms into a media-relations role, with research and scholarship quoted in news stories for print and electronic sources. Additionally, one can craft op-eds for publication; I published five about this case in New Jersey newspapers. Typically, a sworn history expert is hired by a developer, a township, or citizens opposing or supporting a particular project when a dispute over the historical record must be resolved. In this case, I volunteered my services, because I live in the town where mega-warehouses were poised to erase a historic site.

Starting in May 2023, I began research intended to help establish that approximately 10,000 British soldiers camped from June 24 to 25, 1778, in the village of Allentown, then part of Upper Freehold Township. I relied on primary sources from the Huntington Library, Founders Online, the George

Washington Papers, the Library of Congress, and other institutions. With the upcoming America 250 commemorations in view, I advocated for the preservation of the encampment site.

The developer hired a team of archaeologists to investigate the site, who argued that there was no proof placing the encampment on the land proposed for development. But their findings included contradictory numbers of soldiers present at the Allentown encampment. In response, on August 4, 2025, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), through its Historic Preservation Office (HPO), ordered the developer’s team to redo their archaeological study of the site using “systematic metal detection protocols” and to plow the land consistent with agricultural sites like this one, which has been farmed for centuries. Secondary metal detection after plowing might identify items not found in other ways. HPO challenged the conclusion of the developer’s archaeological team, which had dismissed primary source evidence. The NJDEP denied various permits, and a five-page memo to the developer’s archaeological team submitted on August 4 concluded: “Taking the aforementioned information into consideration, the HPO cannot recommend approval of the Freshwater Wetlands permit at this time.” Without a permit, the massive warehouse development plan in Upper Freehold could not proceed, but the developer continued to appeal these permit denials.

My tasks in this case included reading each of the rejected archaeological reports and HPO notes, commenting on inconsistencies in the first report, and putting key historical facts on the record before the Upper Freehold Planning Board hearings in June 2024. Subsequently, my testimony and report were placed in writing with the NJDEP. I shared public comments made on the archaeological report and on the New Jersey Open Public Records Act via Facebook and with the media. On June 26, 2025, I testified before the New Jersey Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee in Trenton when the developer’s representative presented the findings of his archaeological team. My chief role was to showcase significant primary documents, including maps, and secondary sources. In my testimony, I corrected misrepresentations of historical facts and inaccurate assertions made by members of the Upper Freehold Planning Board and the developer’s lawyer and team.

This is not a role for those uncomfortable with confrontation: Even as the developer’s attorney challenged my credentials, I could not get flustered. My job was to put on the record key facts regarding Washington’s role in directing troops to the site, to introduce and walk through British Major John André’s map of the British encampment, and to identify possible skirmishes

among the British, Allentown residents, and Continental forces as documented by primary and secondary sources.

In one exchange, officials who supported building the warehouses suggested that our primary document was forged. The Upper Freehold Township mayor, who served on the town's planning board, questioned the authenticity of André's map, held in the Huntington Library collection, noting that the spelling of Allentown was inconsistent with historical usage of the name. To refute the mayor's assertions, I found four variations of the spelling of Allentown in primary documents among the George Washington Papers and Founders Online. I also had the opportunity to educate the board members, explaining that Allentown was part of Upper Freehold Township until 1889, when the village was divided into separate townships. This matter of a name, which may seem foolish to argue about, was an attempt to undermine our credibility and that of the documents. In cases like this, the historical evidence can itself be the guide for discussion and argument. We prevailed on this issue: The developer's archaeologist ultimately agreed that the André map was an original.

This is not a role for those uncomfortable with confrontation.


Some community members suggested on social media that those of us advocating for the preservation of a British encampment were "traitors" to the United States — "transplants" who came from outside the community and were unable to understand Upper Freehold's historical roots. Part of the public testimony was designed to debunk these assertions and demonstrate that the British encampment posed an important military target. Following a comprehensive review of the primary documents, my 14-page report focused on five key exhibits of letters and orders to or from General Washington about the British encampment in Upper Freehold, which joined the division led by Lieutenant General Wilhelm von Knyphausen, encamped in Imlaystown, before marching toward the site that would become the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778.

One document made the clear case that Continental Army leaders were fixated on the British encampment. On June 24, 1778, General Washington ordered a detachment of 1,500 men to intercept the British. Washington and other military leaders focused on the British encampment in Allentown and British movement through the state (see Founders Online, "Council of War, 24 June 1778"). The intelligence briefing during the American Council of War described two moving columns, one headed for Allentown. The orders contained this directive: "A detachment of fifteen hundred men to be immediately sent to

act as occasion may serve, on the enemy's left flank and rear, in conjunction with the other Continental troops and militia, which are already hanging about them." The Council of War document also noted that "in addition to this force, from the amount given by Genl Dickinson there appear to be about 1200 Militia, collected in the Neighbourhood of the Enemy, who in conjunction with General Maxwell are hovering on their flanks & rear and obstructing their march."

I was the only sworn witness for Allentown on any subject to submit a written report with initial testimony. And though the planning board did not cite my report in its final application approval resolution, my research helped bolster support from national and local historical advocacy groups. The findings were shared with members of the media, the Monmouth County Commissioners, and the New Jersey Governor's Office and staff to assist with their efforts to justify preservation funding. Prior to my 2024 testimony, I prepared fact sheets for distribution to the media; Upper Freehold Township officials (who refused to accept them based on an attorney ruling); local, county, state, and national political officials; and historical advocates. Local and national media covered the hearing, the community protests, and its aftermath in subsequent interviews. The historical facts themselves received strong press coverage. But history did not influence the overwhelming majority of planning board members, who voted 8–1 to approve the warehouse application in December 2024. The matter headed for the courts, with Allentown Borough suing Upper Freehold to stop the warehouses, due in part to the site's historical significance.

On November 6, 2025, I learned that the Monmouth County Commissioners have agreed to preserve the Revolutionary War land in Upper Freehold Township. Commissioner Ross Licitra did not provide details, because as of this writing they are not yet publicly available, but I was given permission to share this good news and thank the national, regional, state, and local history groups and historians that helped fuel the successful preservation. This decision underscores that such advocacy can work. A coalition of community activists and citizens protesting, writing letters, signing petitions, and testifying at public hearings — along with historians and national, state, and local history groups; local leaders in Allentown; and the critical funding support of the Monmouth County Commissioners — won the Battle of Monmouth 2.0 and changed the fate of this historic place.

Sue Kozel is an independent scholar; co-editor of Quakers and Their Allies in the Abolitionist Cause, 1754–1808 (Routledge, 2016); and a former fellow with the International Center for Jefferson Studies. 

***Journal of Women's History* Prizes and Grants for 2025**

The *Journal of Women's History* Board of Trustees and Editorial Board congratulate the following scholars for their achievements in the field of women's and gender history:

Prizes:

Tamika Nunley

Prize for Best Article published in 2024 for "The Intellectual World of Phillis Wheatley and the Politics of Genius" *Journal of Women's History* 36, 1 (Spring 2024): 105-128.

Emmanuel Davidson

Prize for Best Graduate Student Paper for "Dysphoria and Euphoria in the *Lives* of Christina of Markyate and Christina the Astonishing."

Jessina Emmert

Honorable Mention for "The Home: Fancy Girls' Fugitive Geographies in 19th-Century New Orleans."

Research Grants:

Divya Kannan

Scholars Research Grant to support the research project, "Between Conscience and Code: Missionary Women, Colonial Law, and the Age of Consent in Nineteenth-Century India."

Misa Nguyen

Jean Quataert Dissertation Travel Grant to support the research project, "Mother, Heal Thyself: Pregnancy and Childbearing in Late Antique Rome."

TOTALLY DISPARATE INTERESTS

Meet Suzanne Marchand, the 2026 AHA President

The AHA welcomes Suzanne Marchand (Louisiana State Univ.) as president of the AHA during the 139th annual meeting.

A second-generation historian, Marchand earned her BA from the University of California, Berkeley, and her MA and PhD from the University of Chicago. She specializes in intellectual history and modern central European history, but her interests range widely, from the afterlife of the classical world and the history of the humanities to business history and material culture.

Marchand is the author of three books: *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1996), *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), and *Porcelain: A History from the Heart of Europe* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2020). She has just completed a manuscript about Herodotus's influence on Western thought, covering 1500 to the present. A dedicated teacher of both undergraduate and graduate students, she has co-authored two textbooks on European and world history.

Perspectives spoke to Marchand about her wide-ranging historical interests, the classes she loves to teach, and her goals as AHA president.

How did you first become interested in history?

This is a little hard to answer, as my father was a historian, and he always wanted my sister and me to love all the things he loved (which included not only US history but also music, theater, baseball, and gardening). I remember going to Williamsburg, Salem, and Sturbridge when I was about six years old, and loving the experience of time travel. But as is the case for so many of us, it was middle and high school teachers who inspired me to deepen my studies: Mr. Winters, Ms. Kendall, and Ms. Richardson, I owe you so much! Then in college at UC Berkeley I learned that I could be an “intellectual historian,” which meant that I could be a historian, but also study

and teach art, literature, philosophy, social theory, and (a little) music; how amazing was that?

You are a second-generation historian. What did your father think of you joining the discipline?

My father, Charles Roland Marchand, was a historian of 20th-century US history, and the most curious person I have ever known. I know he was proud of me for pursuing European history, but he was equally proud of my sister, who has devoted her career to classics. We have both been lucky enough to achieve what he would have said was the greatest goal: to be permitted to live the life of the mind and especially the opportunity to pass on our fascinations to the next generation. In fact, although he loved his research, my father was proudest not of his books but of his many, many students, and the most satisfying years of his career were those after he joined the California History Project and began to work with K–12 teachers. He died in 1997, but I am sure that he would have wanted me, as AHA president, most of all to emphasize our duty to the next generations, and to celebrate the profound and transformative power of teachers.

I am convinced that we modern historians do not pay sufficient attention to how greatly indebted we are to the ancient world.

Your work spans a number of fields—modern Germany, material culture, and most recently ancient history's connections to the modern world. Do you see a through line that connects these disparate topics across your career?

I have a long-standing interest in the afterlives of the ancient world, whether classical or Near Eastern; I am convinced that we modern historians do not pay sufficient attention to

how greatly indebted we are to these legacies. This, and my training as a University of Chicago graduate student in the history of the disciplines, explains much of my interest in the histories of archaeology, philology, art, and museums. In a way, my work on the history of the central European porcelain industry also stemmed from these interests, as it occurred to me, after a visit to the Silberkammer Museum in Vienna, that I might be able to count manufactories' design formats (classical or "oriental"?), and in that way better grasp popular affinities for the ancient past. When that turned out to be impossible, I decided that the business history of the industry was a fascinating way to tell an alternative history of modern German culture. The economic and social history I had to learn in the process, and the many provincial museums I visited, gave me a new "materialist" outlook on the past. Now I integrate into my teaching questions such as, How did the people of the past make, buy, and use the objects of daily life?

My most recent manuscript, on Herodotus's largely unmapped but massive impact on the history of modern scholarship, in a way brings together my work on classical and Near Eastern reception histories, as the "Father of History" aimed to bring together both the history of the Greeks and the history of the "barbarians." But I hope to extend my material culture and business history interests in whatever comes next.

In your research, what have been your coolest finds?

While writing the porcelain book, I had a terrible time finding images of people actually using porcelain. Museums preserve objects of artistic value, but only exceptionally do they describe how everyday objects were used. So I was thrilled to find in a descendant's book a photo of the Jewish German von Klemperer family in about 1911, seated before an elaborate wall display of their priceless collection of Meissen porcelain. Confiscated by the Nazis, the collection was lost from sight until part of it was discovered in 1991 and donated to the Dresden Museums.

But the object I love best is this porcelain figurine, made by the Frankenthal Porcelain Manufactory in about 1773. It depicts the barbarian queen Tomyris watching the severed head of the Persian King Cyrus being dipped in a vat of blood. The figurine was modeled after a painting by Rubens; and it showed me three things: (1) Luxury-buying audiences of the 18th century knew this Herodotean story well, (2) the medium of the porcelain figurine renders most scenes a little bit silly, and (3) occasionally my otherwise totally disparate interests actually do intersect!



Objects such as this 18th-century figurine, Tomyris with the Head of Cyrus, provide Suzanne Marchand with evidence of the modern world's fascination with stories drawn from the ancient Greek historian Herodotus's *Histories*.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, 1982/public domain

You've taught at two different types of institutions in Princeton University and Louisiana State University. What have you learned teaching there that you might not have experienced elsewhere?

Fortune first landed me at Princeton in 1992, where I was privileged to belong to the world's best research faculty in European history. My colleagues were also devoted to teaching, and I had the opportunity to teach fantastic students in a broad range of courses, many of them in the seminar format I prefer. When I moved to LSU in 1999, I began teaching larger lecture courses, and I encountered a broader range of student abilities: Here, some are exceptionally talented and hard-working, but need encouragement and inspiration; others need assistance in more basic skills such as note-taking, critical reading, and writing. LSU students typically have more and different challenges: Most are working, some upwards of 40 hours a week, in addition to taking courses. Some are veterans, some single moms. Our campus has a strong African American student body (approximately 20 percent) and many first-generation students. All these students need our dedication and care, and in teaching and mentoring students of all kinds, I hope I have done my part. I have loved it all—Princeton

was wonderful, formative, unforgettable. But I do feel that I make a bigger difference at LSU.

What are your favorite things to teach?

One of the things that was peculiar about my education is that I was trained as an intellectual historian rather than a German historian. So while my publications often focus on Germany and Austria, the kind of teaching I do is almost never restricted to Germany. In fact, this past fall semester I taught a course on Germany since 1871 – for the first time ever!

Among the courses I teach at LSU, my favorite is a half-lecture, half-seminar course on 19th-century Russian and French literature in historical perspective. Russian authors ask big, cross-cultural questions that students love to grapple with: What is crime, and what is punishment? How do autocracy, poverty, and political fanaticism contort the human soul? French literature of this era offers unparalleled insights into class, gender, and generational relations. A lot of it is very funny or ironic, which balances the Russians' existential intensity. The great novels from these traditions allow me to draw historical events as well as customs, local conditions, and even costumes into the conversation.

I also designed a new survey course for the sophomore or junior level on the history of the city in Europe. We visit a different city every session – Rome during the Catholic Reformation, London during the Civil War and Great Plague, Paris during the French Revolution, Ypres during World War I, Warsaw during World War II. The course is great fun to teach, because urban history is not event history. In each lecture, I provide a general history of the place, but we also talk about the built environment, walls, churches, prisons, sewage. It's a great course to bring in nonhistory students, like engineering or city planning students.

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

It is not an easy time to step into this role. But I think my greatest goal as president is not to be paralyzed by outrage or cynicism, but to encourage us all to speak openly about how much we love teaching history – wherever and however we do it – and how vital honest, evidence-based history is to the maintenance of our democracy and to living rich lives.

I also want to celebrate the “big tent” that is the historical discipline, one that includes ancient, medieval, and early modern historians, historians of science, of business, of gender, of military affairs: All historians should feel welcome to

present at our annual meeting, to serve on our committees, to publish their work in the pages of the *American Historical Review*. I would like us to work at the local, regional, and national levels on civic engagement and principled, history-focused advocacy, together with our many other partners.

All historians should feel welcome
to present at our annual meeting,
to serve on our committees, to
publish their work in the pages of
the *American Historical Review*.

Finally, I want to advertise the tireless, superlative, highly professional work the AHA staff performs every day. We owe them a great debt of gratitude for keeping the many-headed Hydra that is the AHA breathing fire and functioning at peak performance, day in and day out. No strong man is going to slay us.

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

After years of never quite getting around to listening to podcasts, I have recently begun to listen to the BBC's *In Our Time* series, *Historically Thinking*, and *Literature and History*. I especially enjoy interviews about subjects I know nothing about, and regularly find myself saying, “Wow! Why didn't I know that!” At LSU, we have a terrific interdisciplinary reading group called Aristotle Update that is beginning to remedy my deficient knowledge of classical philosophy. Every semester, we do table readings of plays: I'm looking forward to our December meeting, when we read Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Finally, I can't get enough of travel: The world's wonders never cease to amaze me. My friend Molly Greene (professor of Ottoman history at Princeton) and I recently visited Sarajevo, Mostar, and Ljubljana – that was a trip of a lifetime! **P**

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Laura Ansley is director of publications at the AHA.

REBECCA L. WEST

AWARDS, PRIZES, AND HONORS CONFERRED AT THE 139TH ANNUAL MEETING

The following is a list of recipients of the various awards, prizes, and honors presented during the 139th annual meeting of the American Historical Association on Thursday, January 8, 2026, in the Palmer House Hilton's State Ballroom.

2025 AWARDS FOR SCHOLARLY AND PROFESSIONAL DISTINCTION

AWARDS FOR SCHOLARLY DISTINCTION

William H. Chafe, Duke University



For more than five decades, William H. Chafe has been at the forefront of historical scholarship, reshaping how we understand 20th-century America. His early works, such as *The American Woman* (1972) and *Civilities and Civil Rights* (1980), were ground-

breaking—opening new paths in women's history and in community-centered studies of the Black freedom struggle. These landmark books changed the questions historians asked and set new standards for how we think about race, gender, politics, and power. His later works, ranging from biography to sweeping syntheses of modern US history, reflect his enduring interest in the intersection of those topics.

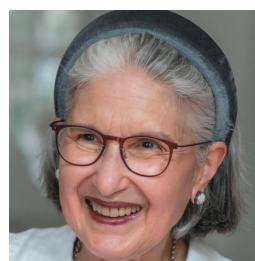
But Bill Chafe's contributions extend far beyond the printed page. He has been a builder of institutions that continue to shape scholarship and public understanding. He co-founded the Duke Oral History Program, the Duke-UNC Center for Research on Women, and the Center for Documentary Studies. Through his project *Behind the Veil: Documenting African American Life in the Jim Crow South*, which collected more than 1,000 oral histories, he created one of the most important archives of Black life under segregation. And his leadership of the more recent initiative SNCC Digital Gateway has expanded access to vital historical voices and set models for publicly engaged scholarship in the digital age.

Chafe's contributions as a teacher and mentor have been equally profound. Generations of students and colleagues have benefited from his guidance, his encouragement, and his vision. He has guided dozens of graduate students, many of whom are now leading scholars, public historians, and advocates for social justice. His service to the discipline is extensive, including leadership roles in the AHA, the Organization of American Historians, and numerous boards and editorial positions.

Throughout his career, Chafe has combined rigorous scholarship with a deep commitment to justice and democracy. Recognized with multiple book prizes, fellowships, and election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Chafe exemplifies the historian's role as a scholar, mentor, and engaged public intellectual. His lifelong commitment to illuminating the histories of race, gender, democracy, and inequality has enriched both the academy and the broader public.

For his extraordinary record as a scholar, teacher, mentor, and builder of institutions, the American Historical Association is proud to honor William H. Chafe with the Award for Scholarly Distinction.

Lorraine Daston, Max Planck Institute



Over the course of a remarkable career, Lorraine Daston has transformed the history of science and profoundly reshaped European, American, and global intellectual history.

Educated at Harvard and Cambridge, Daston held professorships at Princeton, Brandeis, Göttingen, and Chicago before taking on the role of director of Department II at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin, where she served from 1995 to 2019. There she reimagined what a scholarly community could be,

nurturing generations of historians and convening international collaborations that bridged disciplines, languages, and national traditions. Under her leadership, Department II became the world's premier site for intellectually rigorous, imaginative, and field-defining scholarship.

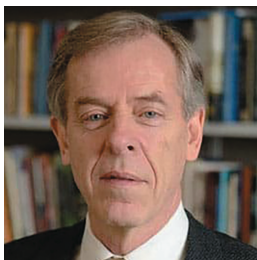
Daston's own research exemplifies the breadth and creativity of her vision. She has written on topics ranging from the history of probability and medieval "wonders" to Cold War science and the moral authority of nature. Her studies of objectivity, scientific personae, rules, bureaucracy, and collective observation have become touchstones across the humanities and social sciences. Equally adept at close archival work and ambitious conceptual synthesis, she has reshaped how scholars understand knowledge-making, authority, and intellectual practices across time.

At the Max Planck Institute, Daston fostered an atmosphere of collaboration that drew together historians of science, philosophers, anthropologists, and practicing scientists. Her vision made possible groundbreaking projects on a huge range of topics, including the histories of archives, paper, recipes, extinction, and the sciences of the Cold War, while reconceiving the study of canonical figures such as Leibniz and illuminating the shared practices of research communities. Few living historians have had such a broad and lasting influence on the methods and questions of historical scholarship.

Daston's brilliance has been recognized worldwide, with honors including the Pour le Mérite, the George Sarton Medal, the Dan David Prize, the Gerda Henkel Prize, and the Balzan Prize. She is a member of the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the German Academy of Sciences, and holds multiple honorary degrees.

For her transformative scholarship, visionary leadership, and profound service to the global historical discipline, the American Historical Association is honored to present Lorraine Daston with the Award for Scholarly Distinction.

Philip D. Morgan, Johns Hopkins University



Over the course of his career, Philip D. Morgan has reshaped the study of slavery, early America, and the Atlantic world through his groundbreaking scholarship, dedicated mentorship, and deep service to the profession. Morgan stands in the company of the greats of his generation—yet what distinguishes him most is

not just his scholarship but his generosity of spirit. His career embodies the best of what the historical discipline can be.

Morgan's *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (1998) stands as one of the most influential works of modern historiography. Monumental in scope and deeply humane in its insights, the book won 12 awards, including the Bancroft and Frederick Douglass Prizes, and remains a touchstone for scholars of slavery and early American society. Combining epic scope with fine-grained attention to lived experience, the book stands as one of the most important studies of slavery ever written.

Beyond this landmark achievement, Morgan has been an extraordinarily prolific and versatile scholar. His essays and book chapters have shaped multiple fields, often with the same field-defining force as his monograph. Equally remarkable has been his collaborative spirit. Through 11 co-edited volumes and numerous co-authored articles, Morgan has built intellectual bridges across time, space, and subfields, advancing Atlantic history, slavery studies, and comparative approaches to early modern societies.

His editorship of the *William and Mary Quarterly* was transformative, helping to expand the journal's purview beyond the 13 colonies toward the wider Atlantic world, laying the groundwork for what is now known as "Vast Early America." In this role and throughout his career, Morgan exemplified the quiet generosity of scholarly service, fostering the work of countless others.

Equally significant has been his generosity as a mentor and colleague. At Johns Hopkins University and beyond, Morgan has trained and supported generations of historians, combining intellectual rigor and deep personal support with unwavering commitment to his students' success. His career exemplifies the highest standards of scholarship, service, and collegiality.

For his unparalleled contributions to the study of slavery and the Atlantic world, and for his profound service to the discipline, the American Historical Association is honored to recognize Philip D. Morgan with the Award for Scholarly Distinction.

HONORARY FOREIGN MEMBER

Erika Pani, El Colegio de México



The American Historical Association is proud to honor Erika Pani as an honorary foreign member in recognition of her transformative scholarship, her teaching and writing that bridge borders, and her dedication to international scholarly collaboration.

A distinguished historian of 19th-century Mexico, Pani has reshaped the field through her penetrating studies of the “Second Empire” and the construction of Mexican nationalism. Her work has deepened our understanding of the tumultuous decades that defined modern Mexico, while simultaneously situating those struggles within a transnational frame that brings Mexican and US history into closer conversation. By examining political institutions, the challenges of naturalization, and the contested meanings of citizenship, she has illuminated the ways in which Mexico’s experiences resonate with global questions of identity and belonging.

Pani’s scholarship has not only advanced the historiography of Mexico but also enriched the teaching of US history beyond its borders. Her widely used Spanish-language text on American history provides students in Mexico and Latin America with critical access to US historical narratives, fostering new generations of scholars and citizens who approach the past from a comparative and international perspective. Her dual commitment—to advancing Mexican historiography and to teaching US history abroad—epitomizes the kind of cross-border engagement that strengthens our discipline.

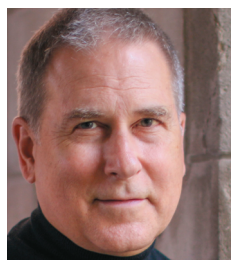
Equally notable is her record of collaboration with scholars in the United States. Pani has consistently participated in joint projects, conferences, and publications that bridge national academic communities, embodying the spirit of exchange that the AHA seeks to encourage through this honor. Her ability to navigate and connect distinct scholarly traditions has amplified dialogue across fields and national contexts, enriching historical scholarship on both sides of the border.

Erika Pani’s achievements have been widely recognized in Mexico and internationally, with awards and distinctions that attest to her standing as one of the leading historians of her generation. The AHA adds its voice to that recognition, honoring her not only for her contributions to history but also for her role as a bridge-builder between scholarly communities.

For her extraordinary scholarship, her commitment to teaching, and her dedication to fostering international collaboration, the American Historical Association proudly names Erika Pani as Honorary Foreign Member.

EUGENE ASHER DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD

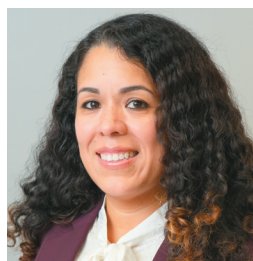
Lendol Calder, Augustana College



For over 20 years, Lendol Calder has been a leading light in history education. Through his writing, talks, and syllabi, he has been an innovator, a steward, and a provocateur for the best in history education. For example, his “uncoverage” model, a thoughtful response to the “coverage” impulse, prioritized historical thinking over content coverage and has become a widely used frame for history educators at all levels and across the nation.

BEVERIDGE FAMILY TEACHING PRIZE

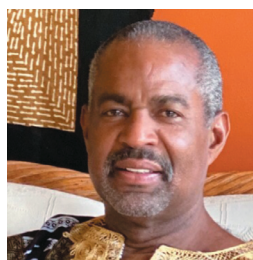
Jazmín Isaura Puicón, Bard Early College–Newark



Jazmín Isaura Puicón teaches at Bard Early College–Newark, where 97 percent of students identify as being of color. Her compelling and smart interdisciplinary course, Innovative Newark, requires students to work on real issues related to their community and provides a model for linking academic work with community engagement. Puicón’s portfolio shows her commitment to active learning and inquiry, historical thinking activities, and culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies.

EQUITY AWARD (INDIVIDUAL)

Michael A. Gomez, New York University



Michael A. Gomez has exhibited a long-term commitment to transforming the racial inequities that shape academia. His mentorship, advocacy, service, and scholarship have advanced the representation of minority students and faculty in the discipline, and as founder of the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora, he has promoted the study of Africa and its diaspora

within the broader discipline. He is a worthy recipient of the Equity Award.

LEPAGE CENTER AWARD FOR HISTORICAL WORK IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Saul Cornell, Fordham University



For decades, Saul Cornell has directly influenced precedent-setting Supreme Court cases on gun safety by entering rigorously researched amicus briefs and expert witness reports into the legal record. Taking advantage of the Supreme Court's "history-focused

tests" for constitutionality, he provides plaintiffs with historical backing to keep firearms from dangerous people, literally saving lives. Moreover, his historical gun laws database is a model of generosity and rigor, as are his how-to workshops, editorials, podcasts, and blogs.

JOHN LEWIS AWARD FOR HISTORY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Antoinette T. Jackson, University of South Florida



Antoinette T. Jackson's work to recover and restore Black cemeteries exemplifies the intersection of historical work and social justice. As the founder and leader of the Black Cemetery Network, Jackson has been able to retrieve a rich but forgotten history of

Black cemeteries as an integral part of Black life in the United States. Her historical research is creative and varied, ranging from site-specific recovery and interpretation to community oral history to historic preservation. Her work is collaborative, rooted in communities and civic organizations who want to preserve their histories as a resource for residents current and future. Jackson's work illustrates how community-based historical research can both expand our scholarly narratives and serve communities trying to recover and reclaim their histories.

JOHN LEWIS AWARD FOR PUBLIC SERVICE TO THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY

Sidney Lapidus



Sidney Lapidus's lifelong dedication to history has encompassed service as a collector, board leader, founder, and benefactor of numerous historical organizations. His guiding vision—that history is essential to our civic future—has inspired transformative contributions that advance access to sources, encourage scholarship, and strengthen the discipline.

From the moment he purchased a worn 1792 edition of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* in a London bookshop for five dollars, Lapidus began a lifelong pursuit of collecting and sharing the sources of history. From that moment forward, he became a steward of the past, committed to making rare materials available for research, teaching, and public engagement. His collections, now housed at Princeton University, the Schomburg Center, and the College of William & Mary, are not only preserved but made accessible through digitization and research support, extending his generosity to future generations of scholars.

Lapidus's vision has been transformative across the very institutions that safeguard and interpret history, including the American Antiquarian Society (AAS), the New-York Historical Society, the Center for Jewish History, the American Jewish Historical Society, and the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture. As chair of the AAS, he guided the organization through major renovations and stood alongside President Barack Obama to accept the National Humanities Medal. At Omohundro, the Lapidus Initiative for digital scholarship and publication has helped reshape the field of early American history.

Beyond strengthening existing organizations, Lapidus has also created new ones. He helped found the Institute for Thomas Paine Studies at Iona University and established the Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery at the Schomburg Center, which advances scholarship and awards the Harriet Tubman Prize.

Throughout his career, Lapidus has demonstrated a strategic vision grounded in his conviction that history matters. His investments of time, energy, and resources have strengthened the foundations of the discipline while inspiring historians to pursue ambitious new directions. For his unmatched

dedication to ensuring history's vitality in public life, the AHA proudly honors Sidney Lapidus with the John Lewis Award for Public Service to the Discipline of History.

NANCY LYMAN ROELKER MENTORSHIP AWARD

Vera Garg, American Embassy School, New Delhi



Students who have learned from and been shaped by Vera Garg's mentorship describe how she inspired them to pursue careers in history, cultivate more nuanced worldviews, and appreciate a deeper understanding of the way history works not just inside the

classroom but also in the food, streets, and people all around them. Garg teaches International Baccalaureate history but simultaneously models for students and colleagues alike how to bridge education with service. Administrators and fellow teachers note her unmatched, enthusiastic, prolonged commitment to history and generations of students. When returning alumni answer questions about their most influential mentors, they answer, "It is and always will be Ms. Garg."

TIKKUN OLAM PRIZE FOR PROMOTING PUBLIC HISTORICAL LITERACY

Jamelle Bouie, *New York Times*



It is often said that journalism is the first rough draft of history. Few embody that axiom more fully than Jamelle Bouie, whose work as a columnist, analyst, and writer demonstrates a rare ability to blend journalistic insight with deep historical understanding.

With clarity, eloquence, and rigor, Bouie brings to each of his columns not only sharp political analysis but also a deep engagement with the American past. He draws from the scholarship of historians of slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, immigration, labor, economics, and race, and in so doing, he ensures that his readers encounter today's events not in isolation but as part of the nation's longer, contested history.

Since 2019, Bouie has served as a columnist for the *New York Times*, where his writing reaches millions of readers each week. He has also been a political analyst for CBS News since 2015. His career began with fellowships at *The Nation* and the *American Prospect*, followed by staff positions at the *Daily Beast* and *Slate*, where he became chief political correspondent. At every stage, he has brought a historian's sensibility to the

practice of journalism, explaining the present through the lens of the past.

Bouie's *Times* columns — such as "If It's Not Jim Crow, What Is It?" (2021), "What If the Framers Got Something Critical Wrong?" (2023), and "The New Deal Is a Stinging Rebuke to Trump and Trumpism" (2025) — reveal his sustained engagement with the work of historians and his commitment to showing how historical knowledge shapes public life. His 2018 *Slate* essay "The Fight for a White America" is emblematic: Tracing nativism from the 19th century to the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924, he situated today's immigration debates within a long history of white supremacy, carefully crediting historians including Nancy MacLean and Mae Ngai.

Historians often lament that the press neglects or distorts their fields. Jamelle Bouie is a rare exception. He reads history. He cites it. And he makes it accessible to a national audience. For his extraordinary contributions to historical literacy and commitment to deepening public understanding of the American past, the American Historical Association is proud to honor Jamelle Bouie with the Tikkun Olam Prize.

2025 AWARDS FOR PUBLICATIONS

HERBERT BAXTER ADAMS PRIZE IN EUROPEAN HISTORY

Charlotte Lydia Riley, University of Southampton

Imperial Island: An Alternative History of the British Empire (Harvard Univ. Press, 2024)

In *Imperial Island*, Charlotte Lydia Riley skillfully reimagines the history of Britain since 1945. As Britain lost its empire, it remained, Riley argues, fundamentally imperial. Ranging widely across sources, she charts the centrality of formerly colonial subjects and cultures in the metropole, and shows that the British have continued to see the world and their island through an imperial lens. Engaging and highly readable, *Imperial Island* arrives with urgency.

AHA PRIZE IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Gloria McCahon Whiting, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Belonging: An Intimate History of Slavery and Family in Early New England (Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2024)

Belonging is a groundbreaking debut. Gloria McCahon Whiting reconstructs the lives of enslaved New Englanders with extraordinary care, weaving fragmented archival traces into intimate family portraits. The book is meticulously researched and crafted. Her luminous prose and emotional clarity draw readers into the heart of slavery and freedom, reshaping our

understanding of slavery in early New England. Whiting reveals the centrality of family and kinship to the creation — and ultimate destruction — of slavery in Massachusetts.

AHA PRIZE IN EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY

Samuel J. Hirst, Bilkent University

Against the Liberal Order: The Soviet Union, Turkey, and Statist Internationalism, 1919–1939 (Oxford Univ. Press, 2024)

Samuel J. Hirst’s field-changing book reframes standard accounts of interwar Europe. Mining archives from Moscow to Ankara, Hirst shows how the Soviet Union and the early Kemalist Turkish republic forged an unlikely bond due to shared outsider status and the imperative to militate against political and economic marginalization. Moving erstwhile peripheries to the center of European history, Hirst flips the globe and challenges us to rethink histories of anti-imperialism, anti-liberalism, and interwar economic development.

AHA PRIZE IN HISTORY PRIOR TO CE 1000

Paul J. Kosmin, Harvard University

The Ancient Shore (Harvard Univ. Press, 2024)

The Ancient Shore examines Mediterranean and Indian Ocean coastlines as distinct from seas, ports, or land. These liminal spaces united distant populations of “fish-eaters,” from lighthouse keepers to traders and geographers; they provoked confrontation with the cosmos through creation myths, scientific observations, and reflections on death. Neo-Assyrian, Achaemenid, Hellenistic, and Roman rulers alike attempted to control them through theatrical displays, from ritual weapons washing to ordeal-like marches. The book’s breadth, erudition, and elegant writing deeply impressed the committee.

JERRY BENTLEY PRIZE IN WORLD HISTORY

Diego Javier Luis, Johns Hopkins University

The First Asians in the Americas: A Transpacific History (Harvard Univ. Press, 2024)

This book exemplifies the power of world history as a discipline. Rooted in multilingual archival research on three continents, Diego Javier Luis focuses on the hitherto relatively underexplored place of Asians in the making of early modern America. The book not only redefines the place of Asians in the Americas but also compels us to reconsider our approaches to scale in world history, combining the microhistorical focus on lived experience with an attention to the broader structures of global migrations and transformations.

BEVERIDGE FAMILY PRIZE IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Seth Rockman, Brown University

Plantation Goods: A Material History of American Slavery (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2024)

In *Plantation Goods*, Seth Rockman traces how Northern-manufactured commodities — axes, cloth, shoes, whips, and more — circulated in the plantation South, exposing the entanglement of free and enslaved labor in American capitalism. Rockman blends economic and labor history with material culture to show how these everyday objects also served as sources of contention and valuation for the enslaved population. This innovative, beautifully written study compels a moral reckoning with consumption, production, and the foundations of US inequality.

RAYMOND J. CUNNINGHAM PRIZE FOR UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL ARTICLE

Claire DeVinney, University of Rochester

“‘This Popular & Malcontent Temper’: Pennsylvania Currency and Transatlantic Commerce, 1720–1723,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 92, no. 2 (Spring 2025)

Faculty adviser: **Tanya Kevorkian**, Millersville University

This well-written essay examines early 18th-century monetary policy in engaging and thoughtful ways. Claire DeVinney’s use of underutilized primary sources is excellent, her argument is clear, and her conclusions are reasonable. The article’s great strength is its ability to make an esoteric subject accessible and interesting to a nonspecialist audience.

PATRICIA BUCKLEY EBREY PRIZE IN EAST ASIAN HISTORY

Tana Li, Australian National University

A Maritime Vietnam: From Earliest Times to the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2024)

Like a densely woven tapestry, Tana Li’s magisterial work offers a meandering, often lyrical, account of over 2,000 years of Vietnamese history told through material goods, mercantile actors, and stories that arrived on its shores and departed via its seas. A masterful synthesis of primary analysis and scholarly literature in multiple languages, *A Maritime Vietnam* overcomes landlocked nationalist historiography to nourish a more integrated historical imagination of premodern maritime East Asia.

JOHN K. FAIRBANK PRIZE IN EAST ASIAN HISTORY

Matthew H. Sommer, Stanford University

The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China (Columbia Univ. Press, 2024)

Matthew H. Sommer's *The Fox Spirit, the Stone Maiden, and Other Transgender Histories from Late Imperial China* is a landmark study that recovers the hidden lives of gender-nonconforming individuals through meticulous archival research. By combining legal, medical, and literary sources with a nuanced transgender framework, Sommer broadens the field of modern East Asian history, illuminating how embodiment, identity, and social practice shaped Qing society and redefining global conversations about gender and modernity.

MORRIS D. FORKOSCH PRIZE IN BRITISH HISTORY

Charmian Mansell, University of Sheffield

Female Servants in Early Modern England (Oxford Univ. Press, 2024)

Charmian Mansell elegantly and clearly brings fresh sources, questions, and answers to one of the most important institutions in early modern British history. She follows servants from the household to the economic and social centers of their communities. The result is a humane and systematic portrait of work and life in early modern England that finds a less confrontational notion of agency, a less rigid understanding of household patriarchy, and a less disruptive transition from service to day labor in the 18th century.

LEO GERSHOY AWARD IN WESTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY

Amanda Wunder, Lehman College and Graduate Center, CUNY

Spanish Fashion in the Age of Velázquez: A Tailor at the Court of Philip IV (Yale Univ. Press, 2024)

This is a brilliant and original book that utilizes the little-known archive of the Spanish royal tailor Mateo Aguado, illuminating the deeper meanings and significance of the court clothing painted in such detail by Velázquez and his contemporaries. Amanda Wunder combines analysis of labor, gender, and royal and court politics with art and material culture, revealing the worlds of the people who made and who wore this elaborate clothing, and all that it meant to them and their contemporaries.

WILLIAM AND EDWYNA GILBERT AWARD FOR THE BEST ARTICLE ON TEACHING HISTORY

Amanda I. Seligman, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, and Jaclyn J. Kelly, Wisconsin Labor History Society

"Staging Historical Reenactments on Twitter: History, Methods, and Ethics," *The History Teacher* 57, no. 2 (February 2024)

Although many historians are resistant to new ways to engage students in historical thinking, judging them to be fads, this deeply researched article demonstrates how Twitter (or similar platforms) may be used to teach such competencies and to publish student work. The authors offer a nuanced discussion of the ethical issues of reenactments, which have a necessarily significant fictive element. Few students will become professional historians; this article pushes our creativity to meet those students where they are.

J. FRANKLIN JAMESON AWARD FOR EDITING HISTORICAL SOURCES

Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, University of Rochester

Mexico, Slavery, Freedom: A Bilingual Documentary History, 1520–1829 (Hackett)

Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva's volume is a remarkable achievement. Through a concise, rigorous introduction and a truly extraordinary range of archival sources, it reveals the central place of slavery in the legal, economic, political, and cultural histories of early modern Mexico. Attentive to Indigenous, African, Spanish, and Asian experiences, its bilingual format and original interpretations make *Mexico, Slavery, Freedom* a model of excellence in documentary editing as well as an indispensable resource for teaching and research.

FRIEDRICH KATZ PRIZE IN LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY

Marcy Norton, University of Pennsylvania

The Tame and the Wild: People and Animals After 1492 (Harvard Univ. Press, 2024)

Marcy Norton's *The Tame and the Wild* is a conceptually sophisticated and elegantly written history that redefines the role of nonhuman animals in the Columbian Exchange. Drawing on Spanish, French, and Nahuatl sources, Norton foregrounds Indigenous perspectives to reveal how colonization reshaped human-animal relationships both in the Americas and in Europe. This groundbreaking work contributes to the historiographies of Latin America, the Atlantic world, and the history of science.

JOAN KELLY MEMORIAL PRIZE IN WOMEN'S HISTORY

Alissa Klots, University of Pittsburgh

Domestic Service in the Soviet Union: Women's Emancipation and the Gendered Hierarchy of Labor (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2024)

Alissa Klots's excavation and use of archival sources and oral histories creatively uncovers a hidden history of domestic work and workers in the Soviet Union. She skillfully integrates women into the evolution of Soviet society and, in doing so, reveals the persistent tensions between egalitarian ideology and gendered realities. The questions that she probes about class, political economy, and gender are capacious and represent how the lens of feminist theory can uncover critical new insights.

MARTIN A. KLEIN PRIZE IN AFRICAN HISTORY

Admire Mseba, University of Southern California

Society, Power, and Land in Northeastern Zimbabwe, ca. 1560–1960 (Ohio Univ. Press, 2024)

In *Society, Power, and Land in Northeastern Zimbabwe*, Admire Mseba offers a deeply researched, elegantly written examination of land and power in Zimbabwe over a *longue durée*, showing how contemporary inequalities are rooted in older social, political, economic, and environmental dynamics rather than simply emerging from colonial dispossession. With impressive methodological range and conceptual clarity, the book brings fresh insights to a long-standing historiographical debate about land in Africa.

LITTLETON–GRISWOLD PRIZE IN AMERICAN LAW AND SOCIETY

Alison L. LaCroix, University of Chicago Law School

The Interbellum Constitution: Union, Commerce, and Slavery in the Age of Federalisms (Yale Univ. Press, 2024)

Gorgeously crafted and scrupulously researched, this original synthesis introduces the “interbellum constitution”: an era, stretching from 1815 to 1865, marked by ferment over the overlapping, unsettled boundaries of local, state, and federal power in the United States. Alison L. LaCroix is utterly persuasive in analyzing the competing “federalisms” that drove public debates over concurrent powers, the regulation of commerce, and states' rights. Her book illuminates a constitutional maximalism more dynamic, peopled, and capacious than we knew.

J. RUSSELL MAJOR PRIZE IN FRENCH HISTORY

Catherine Tatiana Dunlop, Montana State University, Bozeman

The Mistral: A Windswept History of Modern France (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2024)

In her beautifully written study, Catherine Tatiana Dunlop takes as her protagonist a natural phenomenon — the northwesterly wind known as the mistral, which has long shaped the climate and culture of southern France. From this angle, she offers innovative reconsiderations of key issues in modern French history, such as state-building, economic modernization, and regional identity. With its creative scope and impressive research, Dunlop's book is a major intervention in both environmental and French history.

HELEN & HOWARD R. MARRARO PRIZE IN ITALIAN HISTORY

Mark Gilbert, Johns Hopkins University

Italy Reborn: From Fascism to Democracy (W. W. Norton, 2024)

In *Italy Reborn*, Mark Gilbert revisits the foundation of Italy's democratic republic after 1945. Deeply researched, engagingly and humorously written, it makes the serious point that Italy does not get credit internationally, perhaps especially among Anglophones, for the durability of its institutions, the political savvy of its citizens, and the extraordinary abilities and dedication of the postwar leadership represented by Christian Democrat Alcide De Gasperi, Communist Palmiro Togliatti, and Socialist Pietro Nenni.

GEORGE L. MOSSE PRIZE IN EUROPEAN INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY

Catherine Tatiana Dunlop, Montana State University, Bozeman

The Mistral: A Windswept History of Modern France (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2024)

In *The Mistral*, Catherine Tatiana Dunlop has written a compelling cultural history of the famous winds that shaped Provence. Drawing on an expansive array of sources, this book captures the power of sensory experience in the formulation of ideas. Dunlop's deftly written book is both an ecological history of the lifeways in southern France and an examination of how state actors, scientists, and artists responded to nature in a modernizing world.

JOHN E. O'CONNOR FILM AWARD

Documentary: *Hannah Arendt: Facing Tyranny*

Jeff Bieber, director and writer; **Chana Gazit**, director and producer; and **Maia Harris**, writer (Jeff Bieber Productions, LOOKS Film & TV Produktionen GmbH, Suedwestdeutscher Rundfunk, and Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg in association with the Center for Independent Documentary and American Masters Pictures)

The committee awards this year's O'Connor prize to Jeff Bieber's stellar documentary, *Hannah Arendt: Facing Tyranny*. More than an autobiography of Hannah Arendt, the film is a study in the origins of totalitarianism that makes a timely and important intervention in the current historical moment. The film covers her private and public life, and, among others, the writing of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, published in 1951, and her famous and controversial articles on the Eichmann trial.

EUGENIA M. PALMEGIANO PRIZE IN THE HISTORY OF JOURNALISM

Ira Chinoy, University of Maryland

Predicting the Winner: The Untold Story of Election Night 1952 and the Dawn of Computer Forecasting (Potomac Books, 2024)

In *Predicting the Winner*, Ira Chinoy reveals how the news industry made election prediction part of its very identity, and how it inserted itself into the process of Americans finding out who their leaders would be. Focusing on CBS's partnership with UNIVAC and the rivalries it sparked, Chinoy tells a fascinating story about how journalists in partnership with technologists drove the push to forecast winners. Deeply researched and engagingly written, Chinoy illuminates journalism's role in transforming US elections into spectacles of speed, certainty, and competition—and thus shaping how the American public has understood elections.

JAMES A. RAWLEY PRIZE IN ATLANTIC HISTORY

Marc A. Hertzman, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

After Palmares: Diaspora, Inheritance, and the Afterlives of Zumbi (Duke Univ. Press, 2024)

After Palmares is a deeply researched and methodologically innovative Atlantic-world study that bridges Brazilian, North American, and Africanist scholarship. Marc A. Hertzman's book reconstructs the history of the famous maroon community from its 17th-century founding and debunks myths of total annihilation. The author traces the contested afterlives of Palmares and its legendary leader Zumbi, demonstrating their enduring significance for African and Indigenous

communities, as well as their crucial place in cultural politics and national narratives through the present day.

JOHN F. RICHARDS PRIZE IN SOUTH ASIAN HISTORY

Tithi Bhattacharya, Purdue University

Ghostly Past, Capitalist Presence: A Social History of Fear in Colonial Bengal (Duke Univ. Press, 2024)

Tithi Bhattacharya's original study historicizes fear in colonial Bengal, arguing that capitalist modernity reshaped the supernatural as Bengali intellectuals replaced the heterodox beliefs of the precolonial world with a homogenized modern concept of "ghosts." Victorian occultism, the spatial arrangements of colonial cities, and colonial regulation of death provided the context for changing representations of the afterlife that Bengali elites deployed to strengthen their class and caste status, revive Hinduism, and contribute to a nationalist consciousness.

DOROTHY ROSENBERG PRIZE IN HISTORY OF THE JEWISH DIASPORA

Jonathan Judaken, Washington University in St. Louis

Critical Theories of Anti-Semitism (Columbia Univ. Press, 2024)

This is a sharp, impressive volume of intellectual history on the most influential theories and theorists of antisemitism. From the Frankfurt school to Judith Butler, Jonathan Judaken situates these theorists within their own sociohistorical context and discusses the relevance of their ideas to the present moment. It is a principled book that rejects exceptionalist notions of Judeophobia and insists on placing the hatred of Jews into relationship with other forms of discrimination, animus, exclusion, and unbelonging.

ROY ROSENZWEIG PRIZE FOR INNOVATION IN DIGITAL HISTORY

Gergely Baics, Barnard College; **Meredith Linn**, Bard Graduate Center; **Leah Meisterlin**, Meisterlin Projects; and **Myles**

Zhang, University of Michigan

Envisioning Seneca Village (2024)

Envisioning Seneca Village exemplifies innovation in digital history through its groundbreaking integration of archaeological evidence, archival research, and spatial technologies to resurrect a lost African American community. By combining interactive 3D modeling, historical GIS mapping, and architectural reconstruction, this collaborative project transforms fragmented historical sources into an immersive, accessible experience that makes visible a community intentionally erased from New York's landscape, demonstrating how

digital methods can recover marginalized histories and sustain collective memory across generations.

SINCLAIR PRIZE FOR HISTORICAL PODCASTS

Mackenzie Martin, Suzanne Hogan, and KCUR's team of reporters, producers, and editors

A People's History of Kansas City (KCUR)

A People's History of Kansas City is engaging and clearly appeals to a very broad audience, encourages historical thinking through its use of diverse voices and scholarship, and gains structure and coherence through its focus on Kansas City as a lens. It is well produced without being overly slick, and the interviews, narrative history, and music are seamlessly incorporated, making for a dynamic podcast.

WESLEY-LOGAN PRIZE IN AFRICAN DIASPORA HISTORY

Beeta Baghoolizadeh, Columbia University

The Color Black: Enslavement and Erasure in Iran (Duke Univ. Press, 2024)

The Color Black is a groundbreaking historical excavation of 19th- and 20th-century Afro-Iranian children, women, and men through enslavement, abolition, and erasure. Creatively employing a myriad of archival sources, including film, family records, and caricatures, Beeta Baghoolizadeh demonstrates how blackface performances and anti-Blackness endured in an understudied country of the African diaspora. The book offers an essential correction to this painful historical amnesia while remaining attentive to the humanity and legacies of East Africans and Afro-Iranians. **P**

Rebecca L. West is marketing coordinator at the AHA.



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James R. Boylan

1927–2025

Journalist and
Historian of the
20th-Century
United States

Two communities of thought and practice were diminished by the death of historian-journalist James R. Boylan, who died peacefully on September 29, 2025, at age 97 in his home in Stonington, Connecticut.

A native of Charles City, Iowa, Jim was the son of two high school teachers who kept a cow and chickens. He graduated from Cornell College, where he studied music and majored in English. Boylan served in the US Army in Japan before moving to Manhattan, where in 1951 he earned a graduate degree in journalism from the Columbia School of Journalism (CJS). He inaugurated his work life at *This Week* magazine before returning to *Morningside Heights* in 1957 to join Columbia's journalism faculty.

Jim's principal achievement at CJS was as the founding editor of a journal that was his idea: the *Columbia Journalism Review*, since 1961 the leading publication of its profession as well as an emblem of the professional school that publishes it. After eight years at the top of the journal's masthead, he relinquished his post to pursue a doctorate in history a few buildings away while continuing to teach journalism. Studying under William E. Leuchtenburg's direction, he added the identity of "historian" to that of "journalist" with the completion of his dissertation "Reconversion in Politics: The New Deal Coalition and the Election of the Eightieth Congress," which was later published as *The New Deal Coalition and the Election of 1946* (Garland, 1981). With two degrees in hand, Jim remained on the CJS faculty until 1979, part of that time again at the helm of the *Review* when the publication needed someone to direct it following the sudden resignation of an editor. He then joined the journalism faculty of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he taught journalism and history until retiring in 1991. Boylan's status among journalists was reflected in his service as a Pulitzer Prize juror.

Jim's most important work of scholarship was without question *Pulitzer's School* (Columbia Univ. Press, 2003), a superb institutional history of CJS, which Anthony Lewis called "candid" and "fascinating." His other works included *Revolutionary Lives: Anna Strunsky and William English Walling*

(Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1998), a double biography concerning American socialism before World War I, which a review in the *Journal of American History* termed "a beautifully crafted gem"; studies about the press and school teaching; and with his wife, Elizabeth (Betsy) Wade, a local history of the Stonington Lighthouse. That work reflected his commitment to the coastal Nutmeg State town where he and Betsy maintained a second home and whose historical society he served as editor and president. He could also be found on the town's tennis courts or in a kayak on its waters.

Behind the scenes, Boylan was a superb multifaceted editor whose influence in developing and editing others' writings was strongly felt. After contributing in 1974 to a multiauthored historians' report, edited by C. Vann Woodward, about responses of presidential administrations to charges of misconduct against them, a report solicited by and submitted to the Impeachment Inquiry of the House Judiciary Committee, he returned to the project 45 years later by volunteering himself to peer-review and copyedit the essays added for its 2019 revision, *Presidential Misconduct: From George Washington to Today* (New Press, 2019). During its existence between 1996 and 2010, Jim worked with the History News Service, a distributor of historians' op-eds to North American newspapers. He was expert at turning normal prose into AP-styled newspaper-ready text. He did not, however, achieve that goal without protesting in Boylan-style slyness about some of the op-eds he polished and occasionally slipping last-minute changes into them with an editor's insouciant assumption of the final word.

All who knew Jim Boylan encountered a modestly spoken man of wide experience and strong core—someone from the country's geographical center who took happily to his adoptive city's brisk ways. His adaptation was surely helped along by his long marriage, begun in 1952, to Betsy, a formidable longtime *New York Times* editor and columnist who is remembered for her successful sex discrimination lawsuit against her employer. Predeceased by Betsy, Jim is survived by their sons Richard and Benjamin, their wives, six grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and a sister.

James M. Banner, Jr.
Washington, DC

Photo courtesy Boylan family



Elizabeth A. R. Brown

1932–2024

Historian of Medieval
Europe; AHA 50-Year
Member

I met Elizabeth A. R. Brown—Peggy to her friends, or, really, to anyone who met her—in Rome in the spring of 2008. An artist introduced us. “Peggy, this is Jay. He’s a medieval historian. Didn’t you write some medieval history too?” “Oh, I have done some in the past,” Peggy said dismissively, mentioning that she was now interested in funerary sculptures at the church of Saint-Denis near Paris. Something clicked in my brain. Hadn’t I read about someone working on the Saint-Denis sculptures recently? “Wait. You’re not Peggy ‘Feudalism: Tyranny of a Construct’ Brown, are you?”

For I had known of Peggy since my first college history class, when the professor assigned “the feudalism article” from the *American Historical Review*. At the time, I hated it. Students have always hated it, and many professors do too. No matter the intellectual fashion or political trend, people are strangely defensive about feudalism. The revolutionary argument that Peggy made—that it never existed and that historians should stop using it—is uniquely disorienting and infuriating, especially because she is so obviously right.

Peggy didn’t just argue that there was no word “feudalism” in the Middle Ages. The problem was that historians had transformed that anachronism into the central organizing principle of the medieval world, lumping together under its banner any number of disparate phenomena that contemporary medieval writers would not have seen as related. To speak of “feudalism” is to distance oneself from the conceptual world of the Middle Ages and to do violence to its history.

After that first meeting, Peggy and I became friends. It may have been our shared love of Paris or of the French language (and similar challenges in speaking it). But mostly I suspect it was our shared commitment to the study of manuscripts.

In the archive, Peggy was a hero, a star. Librarians in France would rush to greet when she returned after an extended absence. She was an artist, and people recognized her genius. She could take the plainest, most dully administrative

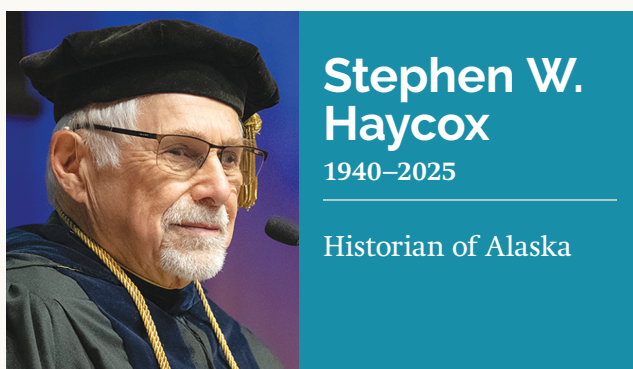
document and bring it to life. She never forgot that behind those scraps of parchment were human beings. When she wrote about the ruthless royal advisor Guillaume de Nogaret standing before King Philip the Fair, holding in his hand a plaintive final testament, composed in his own hand, desperate to cleanse his soul and reputation, you felt yourself standing in that room with him, a claustrophobic mixture of vulnerability and calculation closing in around you.

The last time I saw Peggy was in France, in the summer of 2023. We were participating in a symposium on conspiracy and conspiracy theory in the Middle Ages, held in a château in Brittany. The last few years had been difficult. Peggy had been battling cancer, and her circle of friends periodically braced itself to say goodbye. When the cancer returned that winter, I assumed that she would not attend. “Oh, I’ll be there,” she promised. And she was. Walking with a cane but without other assistance, she was charming, quick-witted, heavily implicated in all discussions. She offered ideas on manuscripts, historiography, nuances of historical personality and events with such facility that you didn’t even have time to marvel, “Is she really 91?”

The cancer returned a few months later, worse than ever. Still, I expected her to fend it off at least one more time. But reality sank in when I read her final email to me: “I am doing ‘poorly,’ as they say. How I hate it. But that is life. I’d love to think about getting back to France, but I am there often in my mind’s eyes as vividly almost as actually being there.”

There is much more to be said about Peggy. About her contributions to Capetian history. About her willingness to make daring, sometimes infuriating, arguments. About what a pioneer she was as a woman graduate student at Harvard University in the 1950s. About her lifelong connection with Brooklyn College, CUNY. About her term as president of the Medieval Academy of America. So many achievements, so few words. As a friend who came to her late in life and spent far too little time with her, I feel presumptuous even trying to capture a wisp of her essence. She is gone, and how I hate it. But then, there she is, often in my mind’s eyes, as vividly as actually being with her.

Jay Rubenstein
University of Southern California



Stephen W. Haycox

1940–2025

Historian of Alaska

Stephen W. Haycox, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), died on August 8, 2025, near Seattle while on a berry-picking excursion. He had recently celebrated his 85th birthday. He is survived by his wife, Dagmar Phillips; two children, Mary and Paul; one stepson, Robin Phillips; and several grandchildren. His son Peter and stepdaughter Alexandra Phillips predeceased him.

Born in 1940 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Steve grew up there and in New Jersey. After high school, he joined the US Navy as a bandsman playing trombone and served on the heavy cruiser USS *St. Paul* in Southeast Asian waters. He could play horn and guitar; scarcely a week went by after his leaving the navy that he did not play and sing one of Woody Guthrie's Dust Bowl classics: "California is a garden of Eden . . . / But believe it or not, you won't find it so hot / If you ain't got the do re mi." Upon leaving the navy, he enrolled at Seattle University, completing his BA in spring 1966. He began graduate study in early American history that fall at the University of Oregon under the guidance of Thomas Payne Govan. Govan was a brilliant and personable scholar much beloved by graduate students and junior faculty alike, and throughout his own long academic career, Steve continued to look to Govan as his model for teaching and scholarship.

After earning his doctorate in 1970, he joined the faculty of Anchorage Community College (ACC). After a short period, he was appointed to the small group of start-up faculty for the Anchorage Senior College. With ACC, the Senior College formed the first version of the University of Alaska Anchorage. From that beginning, for more than 40 years he led the development of UAA teaching, scholarship, and community service in historical study with an emphasis on American history, the history of the American West, and, above all, Alaska. He never tired of telling friend and foe that Alaska, with 375 million acres (586,000 square miles), is more than twice the size of Texas and nearly four times the size of California. Among much recognition, his teaching, scholarship, and community service culminated in the award of the University

of Alaska Foundation's Edith Bullock Prize and an appointment to the rank of Distinguished Professor.

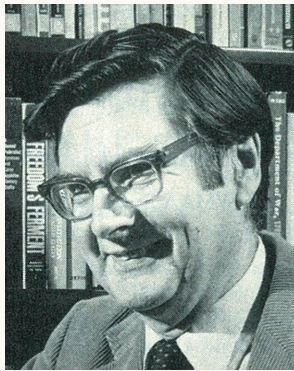
Steve authored or edited eight books and served Alaska as a public intellectual. His other scholarship includes a bevy of columns in the *Anchorage Daily News* and commentary on public radio. In many ways, he was a one-person clearinghouse for scholars, reporters, and bloggers from across the Lower 48 and Europe seeking plain facts or interpretations of disputed facts about Alaska history. Above all, he brought Alaska history scholarship into the New Western History scholarship pioneered by the historians he most admired (William Cronon, Patricia Limerick, Richard White, and Donald Worster). His intellectual capstones were "'Fetched Up': Unlearned Lessons from the *Exxon Valdez*" (*Journal of American History*, 2012); *Battle-ground Alaska: Fighting Federal Power in America's Last Wilderness* (Univ. Press of Kansas, 2016); and *Alaska: An American Colony* (Univ. of Washington Press, 2002; 2nd ed., 2020). Neither book neglected the mythic aspects of the state's precarious balance on its last-frontier pedestal. But his scholarship overall and especially those two books demonstrated that even in an extraction colony, the impacts of race, class, gender, and environment on the local level are as pivotal to people's lives as the immense powers of the federal government centered 4,250 driving miles away in the District of Columbia.

Steve leaves behind family, friends, scholars, and a legion of students who will remember him for many things. His mind a fountain of detail, Steve was a model DIY man, a builder and repairer of houses and machines; he was a good listener, a witty conversationalist, and just plain good company. He was a serious man, generous with his time, a helper of new faculty and a supporter of old colleagues. Outside the university, many remember his friendly encouragement and his carefully considered public commentary. Above all, he was a measured optimist, much like Tom Govan, his mentor of long ago. In his mid-80s, he continued to contemplate plans and projects. As a friend and former colleague has put it, "He could only be stopped by death."

Kenneth O'Reilly
University of Alaska Anchorage (emeritus)

W. A. Jacobs
University of Alaska Anchorage (emeritus)

Photo: James Evans/University of Alaska Anchorage



Reginald Horsman

1931–2025

Historian of the United States

Reginald Horsman, distinguished professor of history at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and eminent scholar, died on August 20, 2025.

Reg was born in Leeds, Yorkshire, England, in 1931. His family moved to Leicester, where Reg had his early education before attending the University of Birmingham, where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees in American history in 1952 and 1955. Reg then attended Indiana University, earning a PhD in 1958. There, he met Lenore McNabb and they married in 1955. The couple shared a passion for classical music, opera especially. They moved to Milwaukee in 1958 when Reg began his long tenure at UW-Milwaukee. Lenore pursued her singing career, and her talents gained wide recognition as she enjoyed tours in Europe and the United States. She died in 2023. The couple are survived by three children—Janine, Mara, and John—and six grandchildren.

Reg also leaves an outstanding legacy in his academic career. His scholarship included 13 books and many essays for academic journals, book reviews, and paper presentations at conferences. For years, he taught the department's two introductory survey classes in American history, each enrolling hundreds of students, and he won multiple university teaching awards. His colleagues always valued Reg for his loyalty and service to the department, including as department chair from 1970 to 1972. Reg was named UWM Distinguished Professor in 1973. He retired in 1999 after 41 years at the university.

Reginald Horsman did not champion a particular philosophy of history or adhere to one methodology. He often said he pursued a subject just because it interested him. A brief sampling of his many books illustrates this point. His most influential work, still used in colleges today, was *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1981). "A work of monumental scope," according to one reviewer, this book explored the contrasting cultures of the American founders, products of the Enlightenment, and the successive generation, products of

the Romantic movement. The first ideology posited a standard human nature and inscribed universal ideals of personal freedom into its political discourse. It envisioned "an empire of liberty" as its worldly mission. Romanticism turned away from these standards. Accepting German notions of nationhood and English glorifications of the Anglo-Saxon past, Americans of the early 19th century accepted the notion of racial distinctiveness. The new direction became more invidious when science advanced new theories of polygenesis and racial differentiation. As one reviewer wrote, the book "permanently changed the accepted scholarly understanding of racial Anglo-Saxonism."

Reg reinforced his work in scientific racism with the biography *Josiah Nott of Mobile: Southerner, Physician, and Racial Theorist* (Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1987). Nott (1804–73) had important achievements in medicine while turning his scientific ideas to the defense of white racial supremacy. Reg's next book, *Frontier Doctor: William Beaumont, America's First Great Medical Scientist* (Univ. of Missouri Press, 1996), was about a man with no formal education; "he carried out his bold experiments knowing nothing of the theoretical debates raging in London and Paris."

Reg had an active retirement, producing one more book with *Feast or Famine: Food and Drink in American Westward Expansion* (Univ. of Missouri Press, 2008). In this study, called "a gastronomic narration of nineteenth-century westering," Reg entered the domain of material culture, quite removed from the rarified theoretical outposts of *Race and Manifest Destiny*. Here we see the westering adventure up close—among trappers and explorers, in the army forts, on stagecoach, steamboat, and railroad. This book offered "a wealth of information from a seemingly limitless number of sources."

Such was the versatility of historian Reginald Horsman. His diverse scholarship is matched only by his value as a colleague. He had sound, rational judgments for us in the challenges we faced; he knew all the occult rivulets of the university system and pointed the way for our successful negotiations with them. Reg participated enthusiastically in the extracurricular life of the history department—attending social gatherings, dinners, picnics, and ceremonies of various kinds. We all came to know him by that robust laugh that could fill a room.

J. David Hoeveler
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (emeritus)



Stephan Thernstrom

1934–2025

Social Historian of
the United States

Stephan Thernstrom, the Winthrop Professor of History emeritus at Harvard University and a groundbreaking American social historian, died on January 23, 2025. Known for pioneering the use of quantitative data in historical scholarship, throughout his career he was driven by an underlying interest in the American dream's promise of social mobility. In the 1980s and 1990s, Thernstrom and his wife, political scientist Abigail Thernstrom, became nationally prominent critics of affirmative action and advocates of educational reform.

Born on November 5, 1934, in Port Huron, Michigan, Thernstrom saw in his own family history themes he would spend his life exploring. His working-class Swedish immigrant grandfather and his father worked for the Grand Trunk Western Railroad; his father climbed a career ladder from telegraph boy to Chicago division superintendent. Though Thernstrom was initially “a tremendous disciplinary problem” as a student, his life changed when he discovered a love for Latin and debate in high school. In 1956, he graduated from Northwestern University. To his father's horror, Thernstrom became left leaning in college; he recalled his father saying, “If you're a communist, I don't want you in my house.” During his graduate studies at Harvard University, Thernstrom engaged in political protests and belonged to a Marxist study group. On a blind date, he met fellow leftist student Abigail Mann; they married six weeks later, in 1959. A student of Oscar Handlin, Thernstrom earned his doctorate in the interdisciplinary History of American Civilization program in 1962.

His dissertation became his first book, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1964), which drew on census data, tax and savings bank records, and city directories to examine social mobility among working-class families in Newburyport, Massachusetts, from 1850 to 1880. Challenging earlier work on the city by W. Lloyd Warner, Thernstrom argued that the American dream of occupational mobility was not possible for most of the working class, but that they could achieve alternative measures of success through homeownership and personal savings.

Thernstrom's trailblazing work continued with a new foray into quantitative methods in *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880–1970* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1973). He compiled such enormous amounts of data that analysis necessitated the use of cutting-edge technology: formatting and running towering piles of IBM punch cards through a main-frame computer. *The Other Bostonians* won the Bancroft Prize, and the *American Historical Review* lauded it as “the best and most ambitious analysis of social mobility yet to appear.”

Thernstrom was the editor of the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1980), the first comprehensive treatment of more than 100 ethnic groups (“from Acadians to Zoroastrians”) in the nation. The book won the AHA's inaugural Waldo G. Leland Prize for the most outstanding reference tool in the field of history, as well as the Association of American Publishers' R. R. Hawkins Award. All told, Thernstrom would produce 11 books, including three with his wife.

Together, the Thernstroms wrote *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible* (Simon & Schuster, 1997), which celebrated the progress of Black Americans from 1945 through the 1970s and argued that subsequent affirmative action policies had undermined their success. The couple also co-authored *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning* (Simon & Schuster, 2003), which identified Black and Hispanic students' educational disadvantages as the main source of ongoing racial inequality in this country and the most pressing civil rights issue of the day. For *No Excuses*, the Thernstroms won a Fordham Foundation Prize for Distinguished Scholarship and the Bradley Prize for Outstanding Intellectual Achievement. Over the years, Thernstrom served as an expert witness in more than two dozen federal court cases that dealt with claims of racial discrimination, perhaps most notably in *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996), which overturned affirmative action in university admissions in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.

During his career, Thernstrom taught at Harvard University, Brandeis University, and the University of California, Los Angeles. In 1973, he returned to Harvard, where he would be named Winthrop Professor of History in 1981 and remained until his retirement in 2008. In 1999, he became a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. Former graduate students, including me, remember Thernstrom as a kind and supportive mentor who loved spirited debates, pastry, playing squash, and his family. Abigail predeceased Thernstrom in 2020. He is survived by his daughter Melanie, his son Samuel, and four grandchildren.

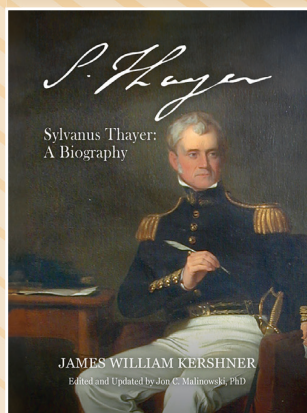
Nancy Elizabeth Baker
Sam Houston State University

Photo courtesy Melanie Thernstrom

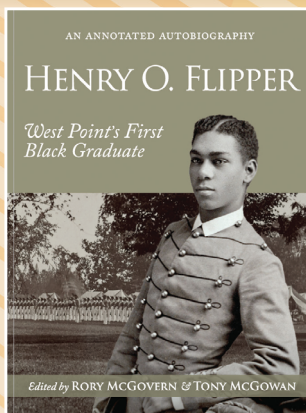


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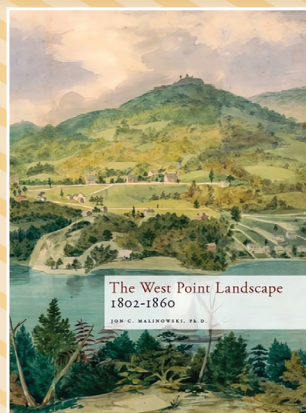
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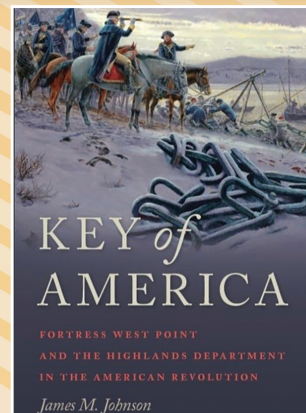
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(Signed)
Laura Ansley
Director of Publications, *Perspectives on History*

DAVID FARBER

THE HILTON CHICAGO

The 2026 AHA meeting is co-headquartered at the Hilton Chicago, one of the world's great convention hotels, whose storied past includes a feature role in the political tumult of the 1960s. Indeed, the Hilton has long played a vital role in American politics.

In May 1927, when the Hilton—then named the Stevens Hotel—opened for business in downtown Chicago, it was the largest hotel in the world, with some 3,000 rooms. Among its over-the-top amenities were the rooftop Hi-Ho miniature golf course, a 1,200-seat movie theater, and a barbershop with 27 chairs. Its first guest was the nation's vice president, Charles Dawes. Yet the Great Depression made it difficult to turn a profit. The federal government purchased the hotel in 1942; the US Army used it as a barracks and training facility during World War II.

After Conrad Hilton bought the hotel in 1946, it reemerged—racially integrated—as the place to be in Chicago for the nation's politicians and their party conventions. In 1952, the Hilton was the GOP's main delegate hotel, and in 1956, the Democrats set up shop there as well. The GOP returned in 1960; "Nixon girls" cheered the delegates as they entered and exited the Hilton.

In August 1968, when thousands of antiwar protesters massed outside the hotel during the Democratic convention, they were not there to cheer. Chicago's Mayor Richard J. Daley had assured Democratic officials that Chicago was "the city that worked," and their convention, he promised, would go off without a hitch. But he didn't account for the fast-growing anti-Vietnam War protest movement and the activists who intended to target the Democratic convention to make their voices heard.

On August 28, protesters held the convention's only officially permitted rally at the Grant Park bandshell, southeast of the Hilton. At the end of the rally, as many as 10,000 protesters sought to march to the convention center, more than five miles

away. Daley and the Chicago Police Department refused to allow the march, leading to an hours-long standoff. Told to leave the area yet hemmed in by the police and the Illinois National Guard, thousands unintentionally ended up on Michigan Avenue, right across from the Hilton. The subsequent police crackdown on the milling, overwhelmingly peaceful protesters produced the images that made "Chicago '68" infamous.

The police demanded that the protesters clear Michigan Avenue, yet provided no exit point. As the police moved in, hundreds tried to escape their wrath by moving onto the sidewalk in front of the Hilton's ground-floor Haymarket Lounge. The police shoved those protesters until the floor-to-ceiling windows of the Haymarket gave out, and protesters fell into the restaurant through the shattered plate glass.

Other protesters refused to move. A large group sat down in the middle of Michigan Avenue, right outside the hotel at the intersection with Balbo Drive. The police—though not all of them, by any means—attacked the protesters with fists, knees, and clubs. The protesters chanted, "The whole world is watching," as the cameras rolled. American democracy reeled. The only real winner emerging out of that week was Republican Richard Nixon, who would go on to defeat Democrat Hubert Humphrey in the November presidential election.

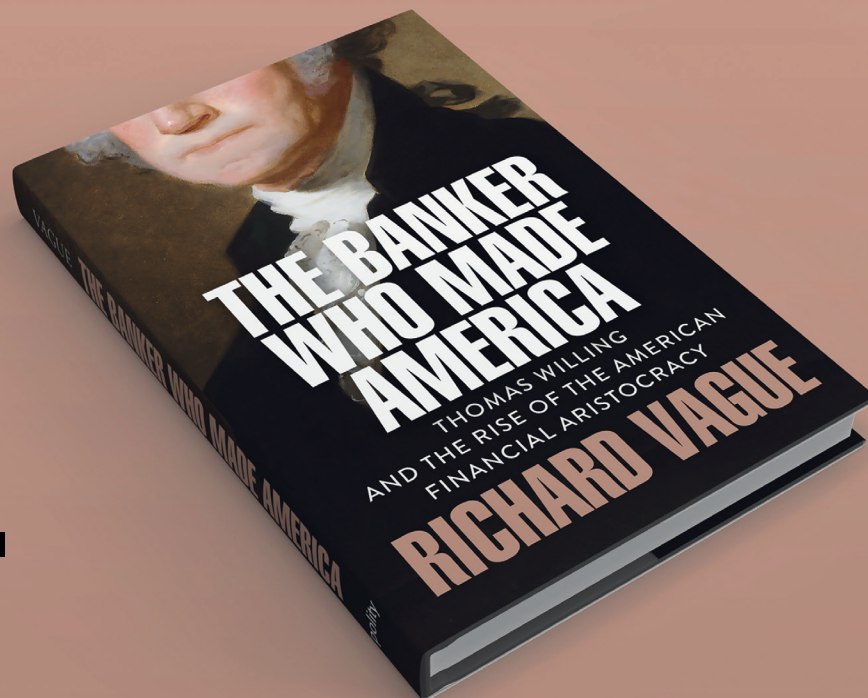
Chicago '68 was certainly not good for Chicago's, or the Hilton's, political convention business. It was not until 1996 that Bill Clinton decided it was time for the Democrats to return to Chicago, and the party convened there again in 2024. Still, they have not returned to the Hilton Chicago. The AHA, on the other hand, has met there across the hotel's history, first in 1938, when it was still the Stevens. Undeterred by Chicago '68, the AHA convened at the Conrad Hilton in 1974. And in 2026, the Hilton Chicago hosts the AHA for the 12th time.

David Farber is a Visiting Bye-Fellow at Selwyn College, University of Cambridge. **P**

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