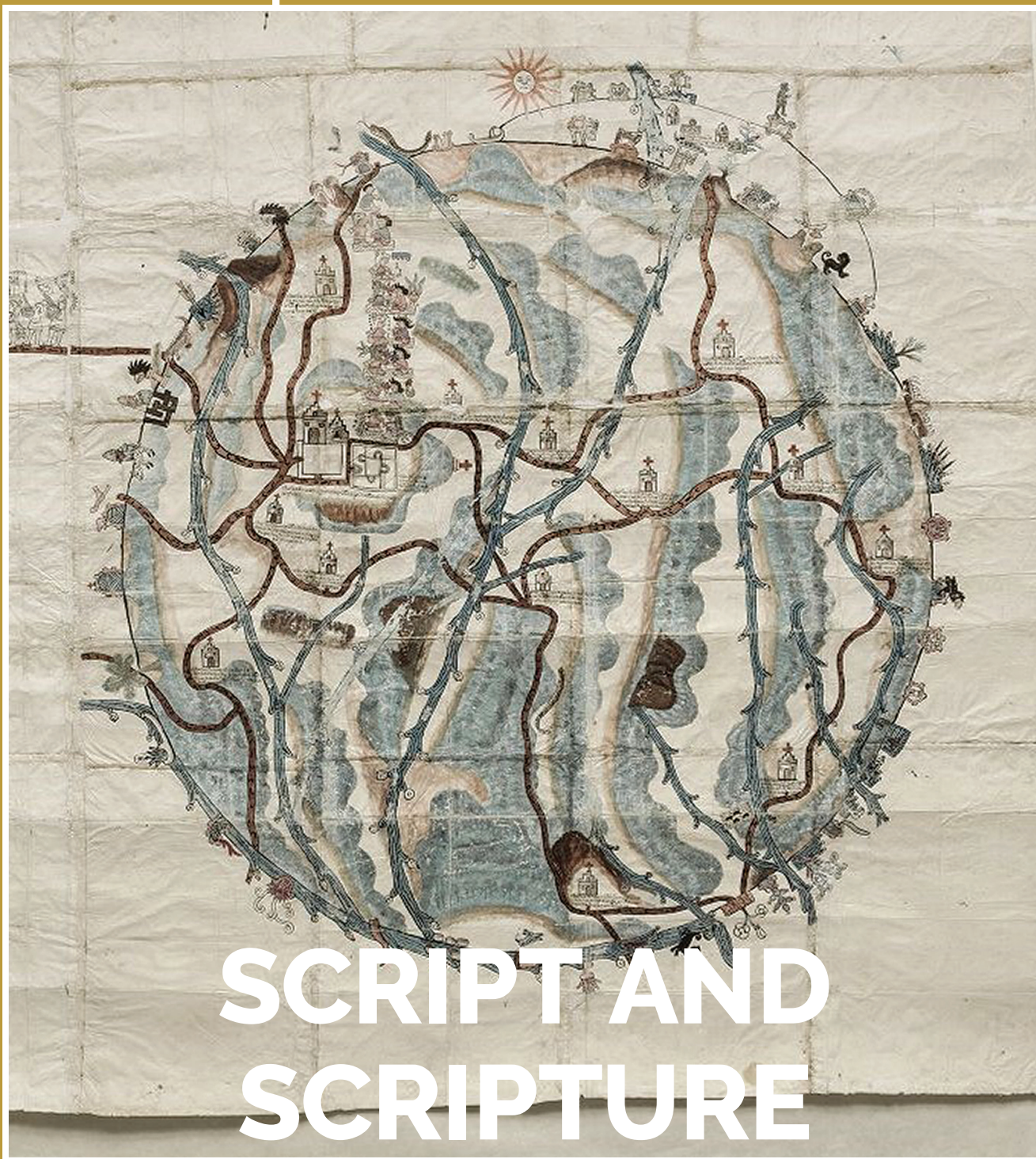


The newsmagazine of the American Historical Association

PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

Volume 62: 6
September 2024



Designing Introductory History Courses for Student Success

A publication from the American Historical Association

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

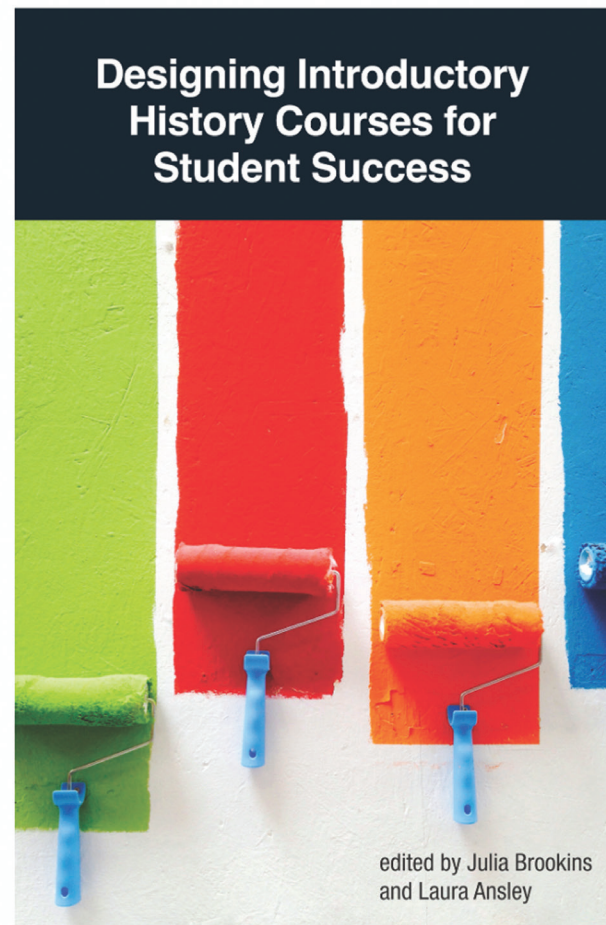
What are the most effective ways to train all incoming students in core elements of historical thinking?

How do we improve student success in these foundational courses?

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

Available at historians.org/booklets.

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



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ON THE COVER

Texts are part of the backbone of the historical discipline. Some have been read and reinterpreted for millennia, inspiring art around the globe, as Luke Clossey, Kyle Jackson, and Isaac Schoeber found. Others are handwritten and could be more ephemeral, if we don't put in the work to learn to read them, as Bonnie J. Morris argues. Scraps of paper can be kept for centuries within a community, as in the "Convent Tabla." And others are preserved by the essential work of archives, as "The Long Conference" highlighted. But whether you have rediscovered a source or are revisiting a classic, you could uncover something new.

Image: LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, University of Texas at Austin/public domain

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FPO

LAURA ANSLEY

AGING LIKE A FINE WINE

Perspectives over the Years

When the *AHA Newsletter* launched in December 1962, it declared, “This publication marks the beginning of a new Association venture.” Scheduled for five times a year (bimonthly except for the summer months), the newsletter would include professional news from members like promotions and retirements; “educational developments of professional interest”; job listings; Association news; and announcements of other historical associations’ meetings.

The newsletter became monthly during the academic year in 1974, and its name changed in September 1982 to *Perspectives* and again in 2008 to *Perspectives on History*. But over its 62 years, this publication has maintained many of those early goals. Historians found a place where they could publish on the hot topics of the day, from long-running columns “Teaching History Today” and “Advanced Placement Teaching” to discussions of computing and historical films. In 1980, the AHA began publishing obituaries of historians in the newsletter, a genre that had previously appeared in the *American Historical Review*. Announcements of individual members’ new jobs, sabbaticals, and retirements faded away, presumably as the membership became too large to publish all such transitions.

The newsletter expanded both its scope and its page count as it transformed into a magazine. The newsletter announced in September 1981 that the AHA Council had been “studying the feasibility of launching a popular magazine of history.” They envisioned that such a periodical would be “entertaining, relevant, intellectually challenging, and visually appealing.” Such a publication never materialized, but over time, *Perspectives* itself became a magazine. By 2000, some issues were printed with a color, or even two, to spice up the black-and-white format. Glossy covers appeared in 2008 with its new name and its rebranding as the “newsmagazine of the Association.” Ad sales brought news of the latest books, conferences, and job openings. Over time, *Perspectives* became known for its incisive reporting on the

discipline itself, including annual articles that tracked academic job openings and PhD conferrals. And eventually, like most publications, *Perspectives on History* went online, publishing all its print content on the web as well and, with the incorporation of *AHA Today* as *Perspectives Daily* in 2018, additional online-only articles too.

This history brought you the magazine you hold in your hands today (or the version you’re reading online). And again, *Perspectives* is facing a changing world, including rising costs for printing and mailing. So the magazine is returning to its roots as a periodical that will arrive five times a year (September, November, January, March, and May). We are striving to ensure that our readers will still enjoy the high-quality articles they have come to expect from the magazine, including articles by historians across the discipline and news from the Association—though more of this content might appear online instead of in print, especially for time-sensitive material.

What never changes about *Perspectives* is our commitment to serving the AHA membership and the discipline more broadly. We always welcome feedback from our readers at perspectives@historians.org. We also hope that you’ll consider pitching us an article on your research (broadly defined), teaching, or other professional issues.

When the newsletter announced that it would increase from five issues a year to nine, the headline read that this was “old wine in new bottles.” Perhaps we are moving back to old bottles, but the wine is so much more complex than it was 50 years ago. **P**

Laura Ansley is senior managing editor at the AHA.

AHA STATEMENT ON OKLAHOMA MANDATE FOR RELIGIOUS CONTENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The American Historical Association condemns the recent order from Oklahoma State Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters requiring “all Oklahoma schools . . . to incorporate the Bible, which includes the Ten Commandments, as an instructional support into the curriculum.” This proclamation invokes the authority of state government to assert that the Christian Bible had a “substantial influence” on the founding generation and the Constitution, as if this were a settled question among professional historians, legal scholars, and the judiciary. This is not true, and Oklahoma students deserve history education that is accurate and consistent with professional standards.

The character and extent of the influence of the Christian Bible in the Founding era has stimulated decades of thoughtful historical investigation. This order, rather than helping students participate in and learn from those conversations, inhibits their ability to understand the culture of revolutionary America and the early republic. Moreover, the superintendent’s proclamation imposes a rigid and dangerously undefined assertion about the Christian Bible’s “influence” into a Constitution famously lacking even any direct reference to the Bible or Christianity. Indeed, Article 6 specifically guarantees that “no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.”

What will this order mean for Oklahoma students? The declaration fails to recognize that many Oklahoma public schools justifiably already teach *about* the Bible and its influence in both US and global history. The state’s Academic Standards for Social Studies require students to learn about the origins, beliefs, and influence of Judaism and Christianity alongside other major world religions. In this context, students consider and interpret the Bible as a historic primary source to help understand how religious principles have shaped their adherents and influenced American culture. To do so is consistent with broad and deep traditions of professional historical scholarship.

But Walters’s order goes far further. It demands that schools treat the “Bible, which includes the Ten Commandments,” as “Foundational Texts in [the] Curriculum” to guide instruction and specifies that Oklahoma’s Department of Education “may supply teaching materials” to “ensure uniformity in delivery.” When presenting his order to the state Board of Education, Walters insisted that “every teacher . . . in the state . . . will be teaching from the Bible in the classroom.” These requirements predict narrow and official assertions about the Christian Bible’s influence in revolutionary and early national America that students may be expected to learn by rote. This “uniformity” precludes wide-ranging, interesting classroom inquiry into the extent, character, and role of the Bible in a new republic awash with multiple Protestant, Jewish, traditional African, Catholic, Native American, and Islamic religious traditions.

The silence of the Constitution on religious matters beyond Article 6, and the provisions of the First Amendment guaranteeing no “establishment of religion or prohibiting its free exercise” did not go unnoticed in the republic’s earliest years. The 1796 treaty between the United States and Tripoli stipulated that the young nation’s government was “not in any sense founded on the Christian religion.” Writing to Baptist supporters in Connecticut in 1802 Thomas Jefferson described the First Amendment protection of the free exercise of religion as “building a wall between church and State.”

Oklahoma students deserve to learn about the complex and nuanced conversations among early national America’s already diverse religious traditions, the Constitution, and the First Amendment. This order violates that right, threatening the integrity of history instruction in public education and the basic constitutional rights of Oklahomans. **P**

Approved by the AHA Council on July 9, 2024. For a full list of signatories, please see the online version of this statement.

JAMES GROSSMAN

EXCHANGING IDEAS AND WIDENING ACQUAINTANCE

The AHA Annual Meeting after 140 Years

This September issue of *Perspectives* marks the 140th anniversary of the first annual meeting of the AHA on September 9, 1884, in Saratoga, New York. It also invites you to attend our upcoming conference, held in New York City from January 3 to 6, 2025. I'm struck by the resonances as well as the differences, aware that even the resonances don't necessarily represent continuity. (I can't resist noting that the "special rates at the United States Hotel" trumpeted in the meeting's announcement remain a tradition—this year's hotel rooms start at just \$209 a night.)

Consider the call for the 1884 meeting, signed by five men. Two were officers of the American Social Science Association. As a US Army officer during the Civil War, John Eaton established refugee camps in the Mississippi valley and schools in Tennessee. By 1884, he had been federal commissioner of education for 14 years. Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, a former supporter of John Brown, had built a career as a journalist, and at the time of the meeting to form the AHA, he was the Massachusetts state inspector of charities. Neither identified as a historian or wrote history. The three historians—Charles Kendall Adams, Herbert Baxter Adams, and Moses Coit Tyler—served as faculty members at institutions public, private, and, in the latter's case, uniquely hybrid; they hailed from the Midwest, South, and Northeast, respectively. They did not divide in some other ways: all were white, all Protestant, all men.

I suspect that the racial demographic and cultural homogeneity made it easier for the 25 attendees to navigate their occupational differences. Along with historians, this initial convening also included a librarian, representatives of historical societies, and "several other college graduates and men of affairs." Only later would the AHA's leadership skew sharply toward leading research scholars employed largely at elite universities.

The ensuing years remind us that progress is often anything but linear. The group would remain white and nearly all men. It took the influence of one of those founding Adamses (Herbert Baxter) to get W. E. B. Du Bois onto the 1909 program. Perhaps his thorough and cogent critique of the prevailing, and racist, Dunning School interpretation of Reconstruction had something to do with the 31-year interval before the Association again would dare to allocate an annual meeting slot to a Black scholar. More likely, it was the same racism that lay at the heart of the histories produced and legitimated by the AHA for much of the 20th century.

Progress is often anything
but linear.

That 1940 session on "The Negro in the History of the United States" was a small step in the thorough revision of that historiography, a process that would take a generation. Du Bois chaired the panel, which included papers by Charles H. Wesley (belatedly memorialized in this issue of *Perspectives*) and Rayford W. Logan, the distinguished scholars whom the AHA and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History continue to honor with an annual book prize.

That session took place at the Hotel Pennsylvania, a mile south of the site of our gathering this January. New York has changed in the intervening decades; the 1940 conference hotels are no longer standing, although one can take the same subway lines that existed at that time directly to today's site. And the AHA has changed. The presidential address that year, by Max Farrand (whose name graced the fellowship that enabled me to travel for my dissertation research many years ago), stated unequivocally that "history is the experience of the race."

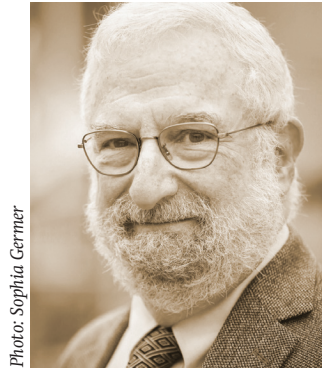


Photo: Sophia Gerner

A review of the 1940 program suggests that Farrand was probably closer to the discipline's zeitgeist than the conversation that Du Bois chaired in the hotel's roof garden. At that time, the *American Historical Review* still refused to review books by Black scholars, the AHA's obituaries generally ignored occasions of their passing, and it would be two decades before a Black scholar would be elected to serve on the AHA Council—and then two more before the same historian, John Hope Franklin, would wield the same gavel that Farrand used to call the 1940 meeting to order.

Historians no longer question the centrality of African American history to broad narratives of American and world history. And it is no longer remarkable that our annual meeting would open with a plenary that focuses on Black history. At the 2025 meeting, it will be a reconsideration of the context and influence of one of the most influential texts in African American history: Alain Locke's 1925 compilation *The New Negro*, initially published as a special issue of *Survey Graphic* magazine.

Historians no longer question the centrality of African American history to broad narratives of American and world history.

That distinguished opening panel will include not only historians but also a journalist and an art historian employed as a museum curator. The second plenary will feature filmmakers Ken Burns and Sarah Botstein along with historians and others involved in the making of the upcoming six-part PBS series, *The American Revolution*. The session will include short clips from the film. We await the outcome of the presidential election on November 5 to plan a third plenary to discuss historical perspectives on what happened and perhaps even how and why.

A striking aspect of this year's program is the diversity of sessions on the many ways of being a historian—a major theme in the work of the AHA over the past decade. The founders of four major national museums—the 9/11 Museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the National WWII Museum, and the Tenement Museum—will reflect on those accomplishments. Two sessions will bring historians together to discuss “Historians Writing about Themselves and Their Ancestors.” We will discuss “What Robinson Crusoe Tells Us about Race.” A panel of major funders will offer insights (and answer questions)

about how historians can obtain financial support for our work. We will have sessions on how to create podcasts, how to write op-eds, and how to do all sorts of innovative digital scholarship. There will be conversations on publishing, career transitions, archives, and historical work at small liberal arts colleges. Historians who spend a large proportion of their time in classrooms might find the five State of the Field for Busy Teachers sessions especially useful. Those teaching at all levels will find multiple opportunities to share insights in both formal and informal settings. The program will highlight various aspects of the New York metropolitan area, including conversations focused especially on teaching, a panel chaired by the creator of the iconic *Encyclopedia of New York*, and tours of local historical institutions organized by our Local Arrangements Committee. And we'll all find out, amid the national clamor about historians supposedly “indoctrinating” their students, what is actually taught in K–12 classrooms, when an AHA research team presents results of a two-year national study of state standards, district-level mandates, and classroom practices.

This just scratches the surface of the hundreds of sessions on the program, which will be posted on the AHA website in mid-September. Everything does indeed have a history, and I can assure everyone reading this column that they will find something (more likely, many things) of interest.

I should also note that the annual meeting is far more than the sessions. The organizers of the 1884 gathering referred to “the exchange of ideas and the widening of acquaintance.” As the *Nation* explained a few days before the inaugural meeting, “It is not so much the reading of papers that advances science in these American and British associations—it is the association itself; it is the meeting of men and the exchange of ideas.”

We have moved well beyond a “meeting of men.” And we are now exchanging a broader range of ideas with a wider circle of acquaintances. **P**

James Grossman is executive director of the AHA.

REBECCA L. WEST

ADVOCACY BRIEFS

AHA Advocacy in Spring and Summer 2024

In the spring and summer of 2024, the AHA continued its state-level advocacy work by providing testimony on social studies learning standards in Maine and Idaho, writing to the governor of Iowa about social studies legislation, and issuing a statement opposing Oklahoma's mandate for religious content in public schools. We also wrote to Tarleton State University expressing concern about the nonrenewal of a historian's contract, released a statement on campus protests in May, and signed on to an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) statement on the same issue. Additionally, the AHA endorsed a letter to Congress asking for recognition of the US Army's first uniformed female combatants, the "Hello Girls" of World War I, and signed on to a letter from the Coalition for International Education (CIE) supporting funding for Title VI programs.

In this period, the AHA also issued action alerts to members in Indiana, Iowa, and Nebraska encouraging them to contact their state legislators about proposed legislation related to history education, and one to the membership at large urging them to contact their federal representatives in support of increased funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities in the fiscal year 2025 budget.

AHA Endorses Letter Asking for Congressional Recognition of the US Army's First Uniformed Female Combatants

On April 22, the AHA endorsed a letter from 55 professional historians asking members of Congress to cosponsor S 815 and HR 1572, bills that would award the Congressional Gold Medal to the US Army's first uniformed female combatants—the switchboard operators who connected calls between the front lines and army command during World War I. "When survivors sailed home in 1919, the Army informed them that their dog-tags and dedicated service did not entitle them to the same Victory Medals, cash bonuses, or hospitalization for disability granted other soldiers," the letter states. "A group of descendants and the World War One Centennial Commission have spearheaded an effort to obtain the Congressional Gold Medal on their behalf. Doing so would not only honor these pioneers, but every woman in uniform since."

AHA Responds to Maine Social Studies Standards

On April 24, Scot McFarlane testified on behalf of the AHA to the Maine Department of Education (DOE) regarding the state's current social studies standards; he also shared prepared remarks at a public hearing in Augusta on April 29. "Maine's social studies standards . . . emphasize skills with little specificity

about content. This is a missed opportunity. State-level social studies standards can help teachers engage their students by placing local, state, and regional history in a context that connects to national and global themes," he stated. "Good, history-rich standards can guide parents, teachers, and school administrators as they prepare future generations of Maine students for success in a complex and interconnected world."

The AHA reviewed the existing Maine Learning Results for Social Studies and, on April 30, submitted testimony to the Maine DOE as part of the state's process for standards revision. This testimony included suggested revisions and "encourages the DOE to provide more robust guidance to districts and teachers about themes, topics, ideas, and developments with which students should ideally be familiar by the completion of their K–12 education," emphasizing the importance of teaching students to think historically.

AHA Urges Veto of Iowa Social Studies Bill

On April 25, the AHA sent a letter to Iowa governor Kim Reynolds urging her to veto HF 2545, a bill "riddled with distortions and inaccuracies" that "overrides the state's mandated process for developing public school curricula, while imposing unprecedented restrictions on the content and structure of key courses in US and world history." The AHA wrote

that “this bill is a Frankenstein’s monster constructed out of five out-of-state model bills that share little more than the support of a small group of lobbyists with an overt political agenda.”

AHA Provides Testimony on Idaho Social Studies Standards Review

The AHA reviewed the draft Idaho Content Standards for Social Studies and, on May 1, submitted testimony to the Idaho Department of Education offering suggestions to improve student learning in specific content areas. “Additional attention to state and local history would enhance this framework by engaging students through exploration of the pasts that shape their experiences and the communities in which they live,” the AHA wrote. “Taking advantage of this opportunity to revise the standards by bringing in more of Idaho’s unique story, especially in relation to Native history, westward migration, mining, and public land use, as well as specifying more than a single line about the Civil Rights Movement would further strengthen them.”

AHA Statement on 2024 Campus Protests

On May 13, the AHA issued a statement “deplor[ing] recent decisions among college and university administrators to draw on local and state police forces to evict peaceful demonstrators.” Pointing to historical events on campuses such as Kent State University and Jackson State University in 1970, as well as the “Orangeburg Massacre” of 1968, the AHA “urges everyone involved to learn from that history and turn away from the violent escalation we are now seeing on campuses.” The AHA “urges administrators to recognize the fundamental value of peaceful protest on college and university campuses.” As of August 1, 42 organizations have signed on to the statement.

AHA Signs On to ACLS Statement on 2024 Campus Protests

On May 30, the AHA signed on to the ACLS Statement on 2024 Campus Protests, which addresses the use of state and local police forces by universities against student protestors and the “excessively punitive attitude taken toward protesting students.” The ACLS wrote, “As scholars, we believe that suppressing the expression of unpopular or uncomfortable ideas by students or faculty engaged in peaceful protest does not do justice to the values at the heart of the university.”

AHA Signs On to CIE Letter Urging HEA–Title VI Funding for FY 2025

On June 21, the AHA signed on to a letter from CIE to leaders in the US House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations. The CIE letter endorses a letter from 98 House members requesting that the Committee on Appropriations include \$91 million in funding for International Education and Foreign Language Studies in the FY 2025 budget. “To safeguard our nation’s capacity on all world areas and languages during current and potential future global crises, we must continuously replenish our pool of professionals with international expertise,” the letter states. “Robust federal funding is also essential to ensuring that students from all racial and socio-economic backgrounds can access these high-quality educational programs.”

AHA Sends Letters to Tarleton State University Leadership concerning Nonrenewal of Historian’s Contract

On July 1, the AHA sent letters to president James Hurley, provost Diane Stearns, and chief of staff Credence

Baker at Tarleton State University expressing “deep concern” about the decision not to renew the contract of historian Ted Roberts. “According to media reports, the nonrenewal was . . . the outcome of an event unrelated to Mr. Roberts’ performance as a member of the faculty,” the AHA wrote. “The AHA objects to Tarleton University’s decision to fire a faculty member for comments made outside of the context of his university employment and extraneous to his role as teacher and historian.”

AHA Statement on Oklahoma Mandate for Religious Content in Public Schools

On July 9, the AHA issued a statement condemning the recent order from Oklahoma state superintendent of public instruction Ryan Walters requiring “all Oklahoma schools . . . to incorporate the Bible, which includes the Ten Commandments, as an instructional support into the curriculum.” “Oklahoma students deserve to learn about the complex and nuanced conversations among early national America’s already diverse religious traditions, the Constitution, and the First Amendment,” the statement reads. “This order violates that right, threatening the integrity of history instruction in public education and the basic constitutional rights of Oklahomans.” As of August 1, 17 organizations have signed on to the statement. See page 4 for the full statement. [P](#)

Rebecca L. West is operations and communications assistant at the AHA.

BONNIE J. MORRIS

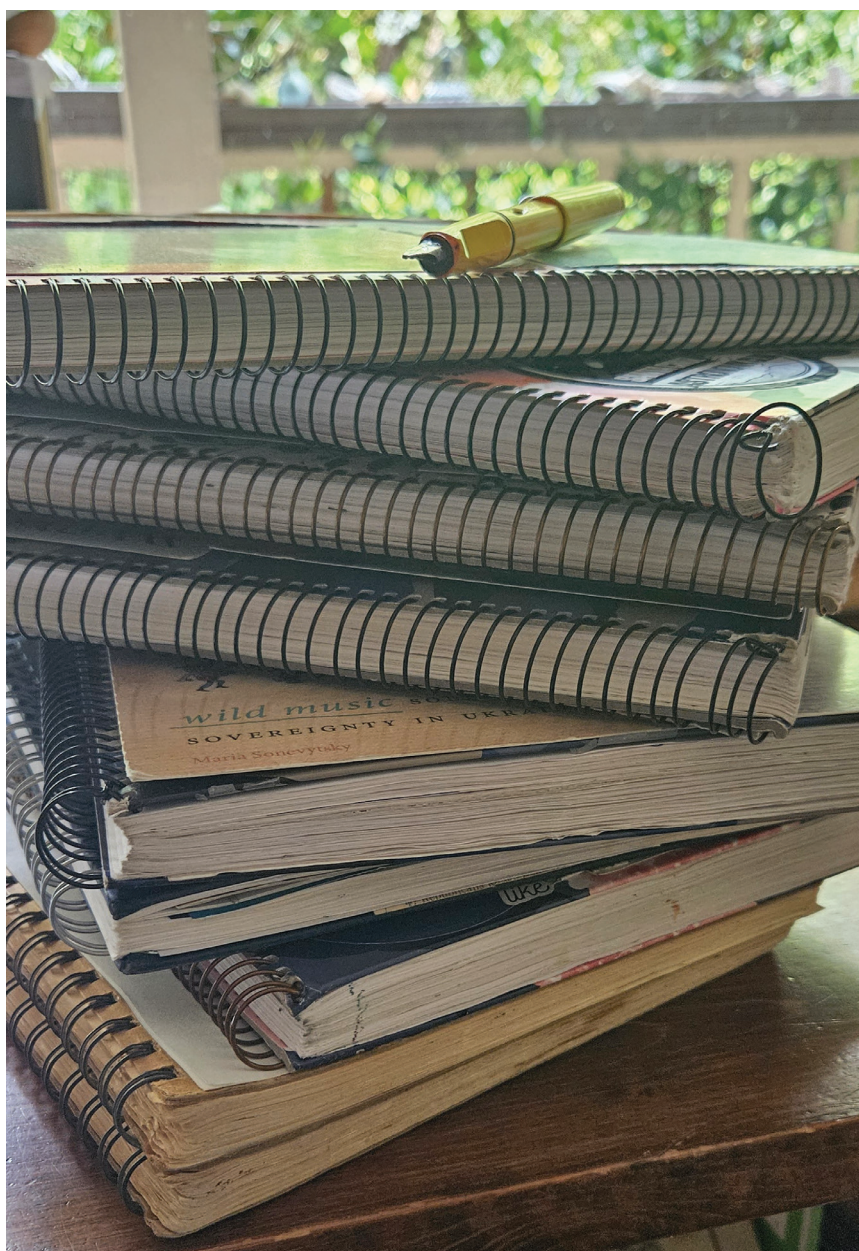
CURSIVE CONVERSATIONS

Handwriting's Place in History Classes

Big handwriting is part of America's origin story; think of all those upstart signatures on the Declaration of Independence. The phrase "Put your John Hancock here" is an American inside joke, a reminder of revolutionary sass and rebellion against the Crown.

When I pick up a fountain pen to write about today's world, I write in a format connecting me to the same founding fathers who did not expect women to make—or record—US history. But writing by hand in my journal, inscribing world events as I personally witnessed and experienced them over the last 50 years, has shaped my approach and identity as a historian.

I filled my first 200-page college-ruled spiral notebook in 1974 at age 12, soon putting aside Bic Banana felt-tips for the more grown-up Sheaffer cartridge fountain pen, which could be obtained at any Peoples Drug where I lived in Bethesda, Maryland. As I recorded notes on historical events of the 1970s, starting with Watergate and Nixon's resignation speech, I knew that I was no Anne Frank writing under wartime conditions. Nonetheless, I hoped I might contribute useful reflections from the perspective of an adolescent girl, as I watched second-wave feminism emerge and women gaining new rights never before written into American law, from Title IX to *Roe v. Wade*.



Through 50 years of journaling, Bonnie J. Morris has created an account of the late 20th and early 21st centuries—but who will be able to read her handwriting?
Bonnie J. Morris

As it turned out, in the 50-year span of my own writing life, I have filled more than 200 journal volumes and followed astounding shifts in sex roles, sexuality, gender, race, and power. I came of age with radical feminism, the LGBTQ+ rights movement, the so-close-to-being-ratified Equal Rights Amendment, Black Americans winning greater roles in public office, and the development of women's history as a field of scholarship. As these cultural changes continue to be revisited and interrogated in public life and academia, my journals map out a halcyon era for the women's communities and activism I joined. The entries recorded in Sheaffer ink speak to coming out as a teenager, my college and graduate school years pursuing women's history, becoming an archivist of the women's music movement, and writing lesbian history texts with all the joys and implied responsibility of documenting a still-marginalized population I belonged to myself. Reaching for an old notebook today, I can use my eyewitness notes as a primary source on protest marches, feminist speeches, bar nights, academic conferences, election cycles, abortion rights rallies, the events of 9/11, and collective planning efforts to get women's history into museums.

But this entire record is written in cursive, a format for communication that today feels almost as obscure as the tin-can telephone. What I thought would be a record for the ages has become less accessible to future generations than I had hoped.

My naive assumption that I had done all I could to inform future generations changed in October 2023, when I visited the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives in West Hollywood.

After a tour of rooms filled with other women's handwritten journals and letters, our guide raised the problem of

finding interns capable of helping interpret such collections. Today's college students were excited to encounter California's LGBTQ+ past and signed up for archival work hoping to study their own heritage. But many donated artifacts were in cursive writing, the signature scrawl of other women who once dared to keep a preinternet record of their lives. And today, far fewer interns are adept at reading cursive, the medium of a time long past.

The keystroke and email correspondence have mostly replaced the pen in hand.

For those born after the mid-1990s, the keystroke and email correspondence have mostly replaced the pen in hand, and the distance from handwriting increased when various US states phased out instruction in cursive writing. Cursive survives mainly as a signature on the dotted line, and even that can be generated by a computer. Women's personal journals today more often take the form of online blogs or social media feeds. I was aghast to realize the scope of change, and what it meant for my work as a well-meaning diarist of the late 20th century. Who will be able to interpret my inked journals when I'm gone? But the visit to the Mazer also forced me to reconsider my work as an instructor of present-day history students. How might I express to them the blessing and curse of cursive and its powerful place in America's written past?

I soon found the question of cursive handwriting raised in other public conversations and in local education initiatives. Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva introduced California bill AB 446, requiring that cursive be taught from

first to sixth grade beginning in 2024. The law, signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom in October 2023, generated a flood of mixed opinions. Responses across social media ranged from "When was it taken off state standards?" to "My own kids don't know it; it's like a secret language now" to "Face it: today, your fingerprint is your signature."

In *Education Week*, Elizabeth Heubeck laid out the facts and figures of this debate in the article "More States Require Schools to Teach Cursive Writing. Why?" US schools began teaching cursive as early as 1850, but by 2010, new Common Core State Standards favored "keyboarding skills." Heubeck explored the great contradictions of our era, in which some teachers see handwritten exams as a way around AI plagiarism, though elsewhere AI is a new tool for translating ancient script. At the same time, John Woolfolk pondered the timing of AB 446 in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*. In an era burdened by so many other education controversies, he wrote, is cursive handwriting instruction a waste of class time, or a necessary equalizer, giving all students the ability to read historical documents? At the end of the day, fluidity in reading cursive material might be an asset for the next generation of historians, but being able to write it is less urgent.

Writing, after all, is a motor skill, one that does not come naturally to everyone. In past classrooms, difficulty in mastering the formal swoops and loops of cursive uppercase shamed the otherwise bright students who scored poor grades in penmanship. The computer keyboard thankfully leveled the playing field for disabled, injured, and neurodivergent students, and ADA directives assist disabled students to complete high school and college assignments on a laptop. Thus, typed print has amplified and diversified

academic, political, and artistic voices, a progression I see and celebrate in my own classrooms.

I watched that gradual change from the scrawled intimacy of old-style written responses during the 20 years I worked as a reader scoring Advanced Placement US history exams. From 2001 to 2021, anyone hired for AP scoring sessions navigated bracing waves of cursive, most of us challenged to comprehend over a thousand handwritten essays during one week each June. But during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, the Educational Testing Service moved to touchless online scoring, with students uploading typed essays. This has been easier on everyone, without any loss to the intended goal of measuring historical analysis and comprehension.

Their two hands observe, record, and critique US history with the same energy as my younger fountain pen.

In my history classes at the University of California, Berkeley, I plan to phase out timed in-class exams requiring students to write long essays in a bluebook with a pen. Undergraduates explained that no one else had asked them to dash off a humanities essay *by hand* since ninth grade. And what takes me mere minutes to decipher and grade equals hours of translation work for my graduate assistants, who are less cozy with wide-ranging handwriting styles. These generational differences lead me to conclude that I am unreasonably penalizing students who would otherwise perform well on a typed test. Their mind-hand connection for rapid response has simply been trained differently over time.

Though I may be at my happiest and most expository while my fountain pen nib flies over a blank page, that medium is hardly the preferred format used today by my own students. Their creativity lives on glass, the vertical computer screen a writing tablet filled by two hands on plastic keys—or, even more likely, their work is tapped out directly on a phone screen. Their two hands observe, record, and critique US history with the same energy as my younger fountain pen.

Still, I would argue that there are plenty of ways and reasons to keep cursive in the classroom. The feel of an old-fashioned pen in my hand did connect me, in my own school days, to the inkwell-strewn American past and the struggles of our diverse ancestors to claim literacy as a right. As tensions flare over how best to teach the history of slavery, women's rights, and immigration, the ability to interpret handwriting is a gateway to reading past documents on who counts as an American: the slave-ownership and manumission documents, naturalization papers, and birth certificates of our family histories. When students—ideally, along with their parents—watch the Henry Louis Gates Jr. series *Finding Your Roots* on PBS, viewers' eyes are directed to the looping handwriting of America's past slave auction posters, ship manifests, wartime musters. Often, such lush cursive documents draw the eye, only to reveal heart-wrenching content.

As archaeologists and paleographers have made meaning out of Egyptian hieroglyphics and Dead Sea Scrolls, as those students of the 15th or 17th or 19th century must learn to read the handwriting of those periods, students looking back at the 20th century will have to learn to read cursive. Today, dedicated students may catch a sense of excitement in mastering cursive for

historical purposes. Handwriting may be less and less a function for daily use in the 21st century and beyond. But bringing confident deciphering skills to the treasure hunt of history has its rewards when “old writing” shares the past with us. **P**

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LUKE CLOSSEY, KYLE JACKSON, AND ISAAC SCHOEBER

DESANCTIFYING SCHOLARSHIP

Bringing Students into Research and Writing



Kyle Jackson taking photographs in the ruins of the Jesuit Reduction Jesús de Tavarangue in Itapua, Paraguay, in April 2012.
Luke Clossey

CLASSROOM BEGINNINGS

LUKE CLOSSEY

Concerned about history's standing among potential students and their future employers, I've long been on the lookout for specific, experiential, and marketable life skills to teach in the classroom—and for exciting ways to present them. As a history nerd, though, I don't have many such skills to share beyond the usual abstractions of analysis and communication.

But there is one skill that I and most other historians share: writing history.

In 2008, I got serious about researching my new book on Jesus and the 15th century. Concurrently, I decided to show students the side of the job that they don't often see, the research, writing, and revising process. That fall, I taught the first of many "Global Jesus Seminars" at Simon Fraser University, courses that helped me to develop a pedagogical practice I call "publication-informed learning."

These courses offered a variety of ways to engage with the developing book project. Some years, students delivered presentations and composed essays on primary sources I had found. They also collected their own sources, which we then categorized and sorted collectively. Assigned readings brought scholarly debates—from art history, religious studies, musicology, and other fields—into our classroom, allowing me to formulate my responses even as students worked out their own. In more open-ended creative projects, students applied my medieval-epistemology theoretical apparatus to topics unrelated to Jesus history. One aspiring elementary school teacher even reworked it as a children's book.

In the first seminar's first week, even before turning to the Gospels, we read a markedly nonsacred text: a failed grant proposal I'd written. This took some courage, but I was keen for feedback on the proposal itself. More broadly, I wanted to create a course framework wherein subsequent work would be done in the context of my research. I hoped that this would be mutually beneficial: I'd be more invested in teaching as it directly impacted my research, and students would be more invested in learning, contributing as they were to a "real" ongoing research project.

One student in that first seminar was Kyle Jackson, now a history professor himself. His work that semester earned him an

A+ and the invitation to travel as my research assistant to India. Over the next two years, we worked together "hunting Jesus" in 10 more countries across Africa and South America.

FAILURE AND FLEXIBILITY

KYLE JACKSON

That first Global Jesus Seminar was formative for me. Seeing the failure, but also the ambition, of Dr. Clossey's grant proposal encouraged us students to attempt big things without fear of embarrassment or setbacks. I experimented that semester, in one project raiding my grandmother's basement for 1960s Sunday-school materials. Today, much of my risk-taking in the classroom—and the big swings I might take in seminar topics—is inspired by that revelation. Failure isn't a big deal.

Previously in my world history major, I'd encountered primary sources only as printouts or pixels: curated, easy to access, ephemeral, intangible. In the field, I was shown a different reality. Access to historical sources could be denied by histories still unfolding. We arrived in Ecuador amid a nationwide protest of mining on Indigenous lands. Four of our five research sites were closed off behind brass bands, riot police, and problems that really mattered. In Kerala, India, we discovered that the crucifix we sought had been long ago relocated from our destination church to a distant museum. In the rural outskirts of Axum, Ethiopia, we located research treasures in darkened churches, one a cross-legged Jesus sitting with four evangelists represented in animal form yet with angel wings and human fingers—but photography was consistently forbidden. Though the work could be frustrating and sources elusive, failure was to be expected and even embraced, not feared.

I learned to devise work-arounds on the fly. Ethiopian priests unreceptive to church and museum photography were happier, we discovered, with old-school pencils and inks. Using headlamps and a notepad, I pressed my dormant artistic skills into service of a history project. Sometimes our "solutions" were unnecessary. Believing ourselves locked out of a compound in Gondar, Ethiopia, we defaulted to a military-style "boost" up a nearby wall for a photo of a cross at the Mentewab-Qwesqam Palace—before a puzzled security guard pointed us to the open front door.

These journeys were academically transformative too. In India, I encountered the British Library's Endangered Archives

Programme (EAP). With Dr. Clossey's support, my digitization experience led to a major EAP proposal on Northeast India that profoundly shaped the next stages of my career. Today, I take the next generation of history students to local archives to challenge their sense of the immateriality and "ease" of source work. Regional fieldwork expeditions challenge them to read the landscape. I teach recent histories of Asian investment in African infrastructure with photographs snapped between Jesus targets in Ethiopia, of workers' roadside accommodations scrawled with numbers in Chinese.

My global history classroom is oriented toward experiential learning and undergraduate research because I was once invited to learn and research—and take risks—through global experiences. A decade later, my teaching remains steeped in these early experiences and the idea that, sometimes, the best move to make in a history classroom is to get outside of it.

DEVELOPMENT OVER 15 YEARS

LUKE CLOSSEY

That seminar and research residence in India both proved to be the first of many. Subsequent trips happened intermittently, often benefiting from assistants' language skills or other familiarities with foreign countries. Ultimately, students traveled with me to two dozen countries. I funded these trips mostly through university and external grants, with my salary covering gaps in that support. Former students also sent back Jesus images from their own travels, as far afield as Iceland and Mongolia.

The undergraduate Global Jesus Seminar series developed alongside our research, as field notes coalesced into drafts that evolved into a manuscript. Narrowing focus as the book found its own, the seminars began on Jesus, then early modern Jesus, then finally 15th-century Jesus with a focus on epistemology. Often, topics zigzagged: from pacifism and vegetarianism to Renaissance art to manuscript critique, with Jesus remaining a protagonist. Sometimes, I had to back-pedal: one disastrously theory-heavy opening week overwhelmed all but a few keen students and stymied our following discussions. Shaped by copious feedback, the next year's seminar began more gently. Attracting grant funding, the art course led to a database of Jesus images for which students—in class and as paid research assistants—developed some of the metadata. The final seminar, held in 2023, had just one required reading: the completed book manuscript.

At the same time, I was following scholarship on research-engaged teaching. The main differences between it and the "publication-informed learning" I had developed were that I had stretched this project across multiple cohorts of students and that I aimed to publish the book that grew across these courses. When teaching a more traditional Introduction to Historical Research course, I found students regularly struggled to find topics or felt overwhelmed by the overall process of writing history. In contrast, seminar students simply had to contribute to a project already in motion. For many of them, adding a few tiles to a larger mosaic was less daunting (and more fulfilling) than painting their own, smaller canvases.

For my own research, the most valuable aspect of these seminars was the consistent feedback I received from successive minicommunities of scholar-readers. Writing for students I knew proved easier than writing for an abstract and imagined audience. Their feedback helped a lot too. Commenting on the manuscript, students were quick (happy?) to flag everything from typos to missing links to confusing passages. Students helped me simplify, even to the point of renaming key terms. Between their responses and their own related research projects, they also gave me some good ideas. The published book cites three student assignments—papers on Melaka's Islamization, Byzantine ecclesiology, and Eucharistic hashish.

During a break in last year's last seminar meeting, I received Open Book Publishers' acceptance of the manuscript. It was a fitting end to the semester and to the final Global Jesus Seminar. One of the most engaged students present was history major Isaac Schoeber, who also is pursuing a minor in print and digital publishing. Between a subsequent directed readings course and a paid research assistantship, he helped shepherd the manuscript into a published book, working on everything from copy-editing to creative marketing strategies to cover design.

REVISING AND REFRAMING

ISAAC SCHOEBER

I declined my first invitation to take a Global Jesus Seminar in December 2019. Having only just finished my first semester, I found the idea of critiquing a professor's manuscript daunting and unseemly. I had come to university to learn; Dr. Clossey was there to teach—what could I, or any undergraduate, have to offer? As I know now, I made a mistake. Fortunately, the final seminar gave me a chance to fix it.

Taking other courses for three years helped me to better appreciate everything that this seminar did differently. I had been assigned my instructors' own work before but had always found it awkward. Of course, my professors always encouraged us to engage critically, but I sometimes felt that we were just being humored. The historians and publishers and peer reviewers had had their say — what was left for us students? My deference to scholarship was normal for an undergraduate, but it was also obstructing my learning. Dr. Clossey's invitation to "kick the [manuscript's] tires, go rooting around through the trunk . . . and drive it to unforeseen places" was a shock to my system.

Each week before class, students read, highlighted, and commented on chapters from Dr. Clossey's manuscript. Noticing small grammatical and syntactical errors reinforced for me that the work was not yet done and could truly benefit from our help. My classroom experience bolstered these feelings — Dr. Clossey jotted down critiques and new ideas eagerly and often during our group discussions. I remember his good-natured exasperation at our group decision that his manuscript was exactly the wrong amount of funny (some of us loved the occasional humor and wanted more, others found it jarring and improper). I realized that even though I could not evaluate his research, I could still meaningfully respond to how persuasively it was presented.

My time as a research assistant on this project further changed my conception of academic writing. Previously, I had seen articles and monographs as complete and authoritative, near sacrosanct. Seeing Dr. Clossey's drafts helped me to appreciate the research, writing, and editing that goes into academic work. Seeing paragraphs and sections moved around in the manuscript taught me — more concretely than anything else — that structure is variable. Reading and disagreeing with his peer reviewers gave me the satisfaction of thinking that, in some cases, I'd understood the book better than they had.

Over time, I realized that I had absorbed a false distinction between my schoolwork and my professors' publications. Seeing Dr. Clossey's manuscript in 12-point Times New Roman — the submission standard for students — I recognized that, in writing history, both students and our instructors are doing the same thing. Scholarly articles are more rigorous, well researched, and revised than undergraduate essays, but both fall within the same genre. In critiquing Dr. Clossey's work, and seeing him change it in response, I stopped enshrining scholarship and came to respect it instead.

These realizations helped with my future coursework too. The semester after the seminar, I was struggling with an article

that I'd hoped to cite for an upcoming paper. Claims seemed disjointed and ill considered. Specific arguments were built on vague assumptions. Eventually, I figured out the problem: I just didn't find it convincing. I wouldn't have come to this conclusion before taking the Global Jesus Seminar.

PROJECT'S END

LUKE CLOSSEY

In *Jesus and the Making of the Modern Mind, 1380–1520*, I explain how 15th-century European thinkers embraced messiness. Historians soon followed suit, and today we value it as an indication of authenticity: frank failings in the sources enhance our confidence in them. Developing this book, I came to appreciate how chaotic and undignified historical research could be. In rural Slovakia, we politely asked a local farmer to unlock the village church. He replied that he'd prefer to continue shoveling manure. A church warden in Serbia dared us to defy the prohibition on cameras, warning that supernatural powers would render our photographs murky. Given the messy nature of history writing, it shouldn't be surprising that my co-authors' recollections here are linked by frustration and disenchantment.

Hearing about this project, some colleagues worried about the potential for exploitation, which prompted me to reflect, and to consult with students. Others were impressed by the courage involved in being vulnerable, in sharing my dirty academic laundry — a courage born from joy in teaching (and from wanting validation of my rejected grant proposals). Imposter syndrome makes us want to be experts in student eyes. In some ways, this pedagogy flows from the opposite impulse.

This experiment has informed my teaching in other courses too. A discussion question for my upper-division seminar: What should my next book be about? I'll be taking notes. **P**

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LINA DEL CASTILLO, ADAM CLULOW, CAMILA ORDORICA, RAFAEL NIETO BELLO,
JANETTE NÚÑEZ, AND GABRIELLE ESPARZA

THE LONG CONFERENCE

Reimagining Intellectual Exchange in a Postpandemic World



With the 2022 Lozano Long Conference, Latin Americanists were able to connect across the globe via presentations, discussions, and articles.
LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, University of Texas at Austin/public domain

ACADEMIC CONFERENCES DO indispensable work. Yet this work is often rendered invisible by their sheer ubiquity. The COVID-19 pandemic and its disruptions helped bring into sharp relief the many needs in-person spaces of intellectual sociability served. In 2020–21, surging case numbers caused whole conferences—from small workshops to sprawling international events, including the AHA’s 2021 annual meeting—to shut down.

After a short pause, many such events moved online. Intended as a temporary fix, these events modeled themselves on pre-pandemic conferences, with the goal of permitting academic discussion to continue until researchers could resume “normal” in-person meetings. The results were mixed at best. Online accessibility meant attendance soared, especially at international conferences. And yet a common (and fair) critique was the lack of opportunities for connection, extended dialogue, or informal chats. The loss was felt most acutely by graduate students, who found themselves marooned on the edges of many online conferences with few, if any, chances to network effectively with senior scholars.

We sought to expand knowledge about Latin America with a new conference format.

This was the backdrop that informed our experiment with the Lozano Long Conference, held online in spring 2022 by the University of Texas at Austin in celebration of the Nettie Lee Benson Library and Collections’ centennial. Focused on “Archiving Objects of Knowledge with Latin American Perspectives,” this fully online event was an opportunity to reimagine parts of the conference model. Teresa Lozano Long’s generous endowment to the Institute of Latin American Studies in 2000 helps fund this annual event, and her passing in March 2021 made it especially poignant. In her honor, we sought to expand knowledge about Latin America with a new conference format that would better address entrenched obstacles to accessibility, open new routes for participation and engagement, and expand networking opportunities for all participants, especially graduate students.

The result was something more than a standard academic gathering. We call it the “long conference” in part to honor Teresa Lozano Long but also because the event experimented with standard conferencing timelines. By incorporating an extended prelude, a publication series, and a permanent online presence, we sought to address the major weaknesses of

the online conference format in particular and the academic conference in general.

First, we worked to build momentum by creating networking and publication opportunities for graduate students in the lead-up to the event. Second, we flipped the conference format, creating more room for bilingual discussion by requiring prerecorded presentations. And third, precisely because the conference focused on archival questions, we sought to turn the conference into an enduring academic resource by hosting all the videos online. In the end, the long conference opened intellectual exchanges that allowed participating graduate students (roughly 30 in total) to gain significant professionalization and networking opportunities, while also connecting academics at universities located around the world.

We began planning for the February 2022 conference in January 2021. This was an especially uncertain moment in the rolling crisis that was the pandemic. Although vaccines were available, access was significantly restricted. Homeschooling young children and caring for the sick imposed additional restrictions on mobility. Cross-border travel was difficult at best as the pandemic rendered the already time-consuming process of fulfilling visa requirements slower or sometimes simply impossible.

Faced with this environment, we opted for an entirely online conference. In addition to the obvious public health benefits, switching to Zoom (the platform most participants were familiar with) came with several clear advantages, especially for a conference focused on Latin America. While in-person conferences can be extraordinarily cosmopolitan and productive, these events rest on some hard economic realities. Attendees tend to come from a small subset of elite academics who enjoy financial support from their home institutions and are fully comfortable in English. Graduate students, early career scholars, and scholars at underfunded institutions who are unable to afford the costs of travel, accommodation, and registration fees are too often marginalized from precisely the opportunities that only international conferences can provide. Scholars from developing countries face additional constraints. While academics from rich countries can travel around the world without applying for a single visa, their counterparts from low- and middle-income countries are required to obtain them, which necessitate a time-consuming, expensive, and sometimes humiliating application process. The environmental impact of long international flights adds yet another layer of concern.

By contrast, the online format allowed us to invite a diverse list of participants. They included prominent scholars like Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo (Univ. of Chicago) and Miruna Achim

(Univ. Autónoma Metropolitana Cuajimalpa); public intellectuals like author Cristina Rivera Garza, and Adriana Pacheco, the founder and producer of *Hablemos Escritoras* podcast; and community archivists and activists such as Inez Stampa and Vicente Arruda Câmara Rodrigues from the Centro Memórias Reveladas in Brazil, and María Paz Vergara from the Fundación de Documentación y Archivo de la Vicaría de la Solidaridad in Chile. In a postevent survey, one speaker noted that an online event of this nature “is the only feasible way to have a robust and varied participation of scholars, archivists, and activists from the whole of Latin America.”

While going online solved some problems, it created others. As we planned the event, several of us had firsthand experience of the most common critique leveled against online conferences: the lack of genuine opportunities for substantive engagement outside of formal presentations, especially for graduate students. We therefore deliberately created spaces for interaction between graduate students and the scholars, archivists, and activists we planned to invite.

As our starting point, we identified three graduate students (co-authors on this piece) whose research interests resonated with the conference’s archival theme. We formed a special directed readings course where they collaborated with the faculty organizers to identify, read, and analyze significant scholarship that addressed the archival turn in the humanities, with a focus on Latin America.

Outside this core group, we identified a wider cohort of UT Austin graduate students whose research interests intersected with the specialties of conference presenters. We invited these students to interview and write extended profiles of conference participants. Because we were no longer paying for international travel, we redirected funds to pay honoraria to graduate student writers for 25 profiles. The result was a series of fascinating and illuminating pieces published by the digital magazine *Not Even Past*, including “Knowledge and Power Are Not the Same,” “Archives and Their Afterlives,” and “Archiving the Brazilian Dictatorship.” By pairing student writers with presenters based on shared interests and expertise, we ensured that dozens of our graduate students had a clear path toward building out their professional networks.

Beyond the benefits to graduate students, these profiles served to contextualize the work of the scholars and activists presenting at the conference. In traditional conferences, brief introductions rarely do justice to presenters’ work. These articles went deeper, identifying career trajectories, the significance of published work, and the impact archivists and

activists had on their communities. As Camila Ordorica noted in her piece on Miruna Achim, “Through our conversations I have found that talking with the authors of the books we like and the ideas we respect humanizes and demystifies both the research process and the researcher.” In the postevent survey, participants praised these profiles as both “one of the most interesting aspects of the conference” and “a great way for students to have that networking opportunity.” By publishing them in the weeks leading up to the conference, we succeeded at the same time in generating momentum for the event.

On February 24, 2022, the Lozano Long Conference went live for two consecutive days, with speakers zooming in from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Germany, Mexico, Russia, and across the United States. Without the cost of travel, hotels, and per diems, we could offer participants honoraria for their work. In exchange, participants agreed to precirculate not just their written presentations but also video recordings of their talks.

During the live stream of each panel, bilingual graduate students translated conversations in Spanish and English.

By asking them to prerecord their presentations, we ensured that presenters could discuss complex ideas in the language they preferred, thereby helping to tear down language barriers. Panelists submitted their prerecorded video presentations a few weeks earlier, which allowed for translation and subtitles for greater accessibility. All conference participants and the viewing public could view the prerecorded presentations prior to the live-streamed panels. Audience members who preregistered (at no charge) could watch the prerecorded panels up to two weeks in advance of the conference, and they could submit questions to the conference organizers on the days of the panel.


The precirculation of presentations and conference papers enabled us to open more space for discussion among the discussants, panelists, and the audience. As the conference proceeded, online conference tools also helped reduce some of the standard problems associated with a multilingual event. During the live stream of each panel, bilingual graduate students translated conversations in Spanish and English via the chat function. Live-streamed panels and keynotes were recorded and subsequently transcribed and translated, a strategy praised by our presenters.

What we accomplished through the published profiles, pre-circulated materials, and language accessibility quickly became clear during conference proceedings. Rather than starting from scratch, we had already created a community where graduate students, senior academics, archivists, and activists were all able to participate effectively.

Conferences often feature remarkable presentations, but the traditional in-person format can make them strikingly ephemeral. Once the conference ends, it largely disappears as a scholarly resource for anyone beyond those participants who were present. While some conferences become edited volumes, they seldom capture the excitement of the original discussion. To address this problem, we created a website (notevenpast.org/2022-lozano-long-conference) to transform the 2022 Lozano Long Conference into an enduring online resource. It includes recordings of presentations, panels, and keynotes, as well as the 25 interviews and related articles. Surveyed participants noted that they “consider this aspect fundamental. The memory of conferences must be adequately preserved and disseminated.”

A website transformed the 2022 Lozano Long Conference into an enduring online resource.

The academic conference is a strange creature. It is an immensely powerful tool for sharing preliminary work, keeping up with scholarship in related fields, forging collaborations, and establishing and maintaining relationships with scholars at different stages in their careers. As such, conferences have been a standard fixture of academic life for decades. Thousands of academic conferences and workshops are convened each year, at enormous cost in terms of time and money. And yet, despite its centrality to processes of scholarly production, the traditional in-person conference format itself has generated comparatively little reflection.

As the pandemic era recedes, the return of the in-person conference is decidedly welcome. But we should also recognize that online conferences can significantly enhance academic exchange by making scholarly meetings more accessible and equitable. Innovations such as our long conference experiment represent one path forward for turning conferences into an engine for broader engagement and graduate student professionalization while also creating enduring resources and access to knowledge. 

Lina Del Castillo is an associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin. Adam Clulow is a professor at the University of Texas at Austin. Camila Ordorica is a PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin. Rafael Nieto Bello is a PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin. Janette Núñez graduated from the dual MA program in Latin American studies and information science at the University of Texas at Austin and is now Latin American and Caribbean studies librarian at Michigan State University. Gabrielle Esparza is a PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin.

BRUCE W. DEARSTYNE

THE AHA DEFENDS HISTORY—A CENTURY AGO

Teaching History with Integrity in the 1920s



A facsimile of the Liberty Bell hung at the entrance to the 1926 Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia.
John D. Cardinell/Library of Congress/public domain

THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL Association is leading the fight these days for teaching history with integrity, independent of political interference and partisan agendas. As it happens, the Association led a similar struggle a century ago, defending historians' rights to write and teach about the American Revolution as they thought best, based on their research and professional judgment.

In the late 19th century, the writing of American history largely had been dominated by facile writers who were not trained historians. Their texts idealized the founders and presented the revolution as a heroic revolt against tyranny. But by the second decade of the 20th century, history textbook authorship shifted to professionals trained in recently established PhD programs. These historians replaced the previous generation's simplistic accounts with more complex narratives that drew on a wider array of sources and sometimes questioned the motives and tactics of the patriots.

This new approach brought attacks from a variety of newspapers, politicians, and patriotic groups in the early 1920s, calling for more patriotic books. These demands for more "Americanism" in the history texts resonated with the conservatism and complacency of the times. This decade was the heyday of the Ku Klux Klan and the erection of statues commemorating the Lost Cause of the Confederacy. In 1924, the US Congress severely restricted immigration from nations outside northern and western Europe. And most relevant here, the 150th anniversary of the American Revolution fell in 1926, one of several patriotic commemorations that decade.

Critics wanted a return to less nuanced, more patriotic accounts.

Critics cherry-picked textbook passages that they deemed disloyal to America, claiming these books would teach students to disrespect the founders and their ideals. For instance, the argument that both colonists and the British bore some responsibility for the crises that ended in war drew criticism for not blaming only the British, as earlier writers had. The critics objected to the description of patriot John Hancock as a smuggler, Thomas Jefferson as a demagogue, and Benedict Arnold as someone with some legitimate complaints, while railing against the omission or mere mention of heroes such as Nathan Hale, Anthony Wayne, and Henry Knox. Overall, critics wanted a return to the less nuanced, more patriotic accounts that had previously prevailed.

It was in this context that the textbook controversy burgeoned into a broad public debate. Some schools threatened to ban

"disloyal" books; the mayors of New York and Chicago, among other cities, called for banning specific books in their city schools; and a few states passed laws outlining criteria for judging whether books were sufficiently patriotic and giving school administrators broad authority to ban books that they deemed fell short. Historians who found their books on the banned lists scrambled to explain and defend their works in speeches and letters to newspaper editors. But for individual historians fighting alone, it was an uphill battle.

That is where the AHA stepped in. Founded in 1884, the Association promoted the development of PhD programs, pushed for expanded coverage of history in K–12 education, and advocated for better training for history and social studies teachers. By the early 1920s, its membership had grown to over 2,500 members, including the country's leading historians and writers of the books under attack, and it was recognized as the nation's most prominent history organization.

The Association was taken by surprise by the textbook controversy. The AHA had been concentrating on maintaining history courses in the schools even as it was working to integrate into the emerging field of social studies. Yet it had never defended the discipline against such a widespread public attack.

American Historical Review editor and former AHA president J. Franklin Jameson led the way. An editorial in the journal's July 1923 issue titled "A 'Pure History Law'" mocked a new Wisconsin censorship statute. This censorship, Jameson wrote, was aimed at books written by "first-rate historical scholars" whose work has been marked by "an increasing ability and desire to see both sides" in historical controversies. People pushing censorship reflected "the prejudices of the uninformed . . . whose notions of American history have never advanced beyond the point at which they or their fathers were left . . . by the stale textbooks of an earlier time."

That December, the Association also addressed the controversy at its annual meeting. Bessie Pierce (Univ. of Iowa) had been following developments closely (she would publish a study of this controversy in 1926). Pierce pushed for the membership to pass a strong resolution at the 1923 business meeting. The resolution, supported by AHA president Edward Cheyney (Univ. of Pennsylvania) and enthusiastically approved by the convention, noted the "agitation" and "propaganda" by newspapers and patriotic societies in favor of censorship. Teachers and textbook writers strive to present "a truthful picture of past and present." Criticism should be based not on "grounds of patriotism but only upon grounds of faithfulness to fact as determined by specialists or tested by consideration of the evidence." Ignoring or glossing over episodes where Americans

have fallen short of their proclaimed ideals would not do. There must be “a willingness to face unpleasant facts” in history. “Attempts, however well meant, to foster national arrogance and boastfulness and indiscriminate worship of national ‘heroes’ can only tend to promote a harmful pseudo patriotism.” The assertion that many leading scholars are engaged in “treasonable propaganda” and that thousands of schoolteachers and school officials are “so stupid or disloyal” that they would give students treasonable books is “inherently and obviously absurd.” The Association made the resolution available to the press, and Cheyney told reporters that “history should teach facts and not propaganda and should be written by broadminded historians giving unbiased, fair information.”

The AHA made the public case for historians' expertise and independence.

Over the next few years, the AHA emerged as the public face of the historical discipline, responding to attacks, explaining what historians really do, and defending objective history. It made the public case for historians' expertise and independence more forcefully than it had ever been made before. It also condemned attacks and censorship proposals, such as when the mayor of Chicago threatened to ban a list of books from the city's schools. The AHA's resolutions were cited and quoted in the press. Individual historians began referencing AHA statements in defending works by themselves and their colleagues. Teachers' organizations, which already had begun to stand up to censorship as an attack on their integrity and judgment, began citing the AHA as a powerful ally and authority.

The controversy was a wake-up call for historians. In his 1924 presidential address, Charles M. Andrews (Yale Univ.) noted that the public did not question the validity of science, medicine, and other professions, but “no such popular deference has been paid to the opinion of historical experts.” Andrews said, “There are those who decry the work of the historical specialist, believing that every man can be his own historian. . . . Among the people at large there would appear to be no accepted standards or principles to which historical writing is expected to conform.” (In 1931, Carl L. Becker would address his version of this idea in his presidential address, the oft-cited “Everyman His Own Historian.”)

These attacks demonstrated the difficulties historians faced in writing textbooks for public schools. Though controversy was cooling, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* managing editor

Milo M. Quaife wrote in 1928 that historians should understand “the simple fact, now demonstrated afresh, that the writing of history textbooks can never be made a purely scholarly matter.” Historians walked a fine line because their “subject matter constantly involves the dearest interests and most deeply cherished prejudices of the public for which he works.” Quaife concluded that “the scholar who would ignore the lesson [the recent debate] conveys must be exceedingly shortsighted. The public which controls the schools will dictate, whenever it sees fit, the history that is taught in them.”

The controversy died down by the end of the decade. Though a few states passed censorship laws, most were lightly enforced. School authorities exercised broad latitude in interpreting and applying censorship restrictions when selecting books. Some historians revised their texts. The press and the public lost interest in the topic, and so politicians turned to other issues.

These debates presented an opportunity for the AHA to expand its membership to include more high school teachers. But, as Robert B. Townsend explained in *History's Babel*, the Association did not continue its newfound role as a champion of history textbook writers. Instead, the AHA turned its attention back to scholarly research, postsecondary teaching, and promoting the inclusion of history in schools (without focusing on the content or the texts being used). As the AHA did little to recruit teachers as members, they gravitated to other organizations such as the National Council for the Social Studies.

But the issues of what is taught in schools, the role of historians' expertise, and who controls what young people learn about their nation's history would arise repeatedly across the subsequent century. The AHA's engagement with K–12 education has ebbed and flowed over many decades. Today, the AHA has re-established itself in the landscape of K–12 education. With teachers serving in leadership roles on the AHA Council and committees and the AHA becoming the rallying point for several organizations on education advocacy, the Association has reprised and expanded the role it played a century ago.

Former AHA president Dana Carleton Munro explained in 1928 that “the surest way to avoid mistakes in the future is by teaching our young people the truth, by showing how our institutions have developed, the bad features in the past which have been discarded, the evolution which is still continuing.” Today's historians continue to emphasize the need for history to be taught in all its complexity. **P**

Bruce W. Dearstyne has taught history at SUNY Albany, SUNY Potsdam, and Russell Sage College; and was a professor at the University of Maryland College of Information Studies.

AMERICAN
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Careers for History Majors

A publication from the American Historical Association

We must “uphold at every possible turn the inherent value of studying history.”

Elizabeth Lehfelddt, former Vice President, AHA Teaching Division, *Perspectives*

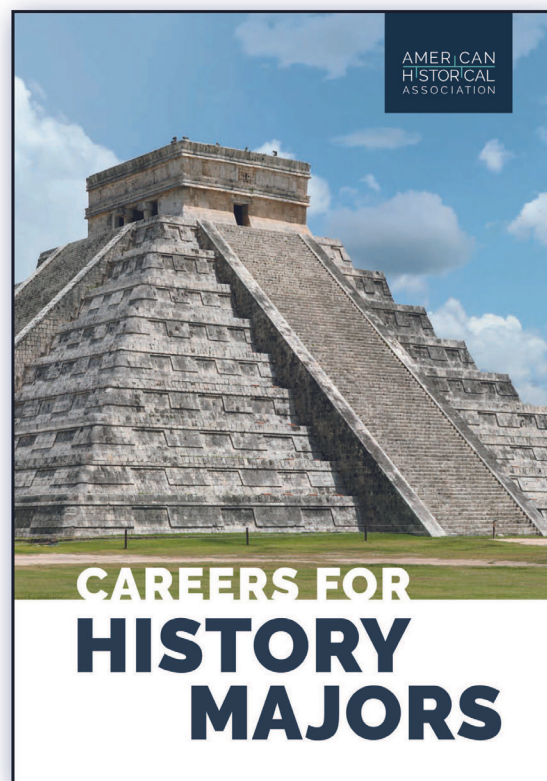
Careers for History Majors conveys the value of the undergraduate study of history through clear graphs and informal prose. Readers will find hard data, practical advice, and answers to common questions for students and their parents.

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

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

Contributors

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



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

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

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ON TO NEW YORK

The 2025 Annual Meeting at a Glance

The 138th annual meeting of the American Historical Association will be held Friday through Monday, January 3–6, 2025, in New York City. The online program will be posted on the AHA website in mid-September, and members can look forward to receiving the printed program in mid-November. A meeting app will also be available for smartphones and tablets. Annual meeting sessions and events are scheduled at the New York Hilton Midtown and the Sheraton New York Times Square. The hotels are across the street from each other.

Preregistration begins in late September. The lower preregistration rates will be in effect through December 15; after that, the higher on-site rates apply. Registration will be available online from September 23 until the end of the meeting, and in person beginning at 11:00 a.m. on January 3 on the Second Floor Promenade of the New York Hilton.

Admission to the Exhibit Hall requires a 2025 meeting registration badge.

Hotel reservations: Attendees will make hotel reservations through the AHA's housing service, Maritz. Reservations can be made online or by calling a toll-free number, beginning September 16. AHA rates are available three days before and after the meeting dates, depending on availability. See the AHA website for detailed information.

The last day to make or change reservations through the housing service is December 12, 2024. After that date, rooms will be available at the AHA's convention rates on a space-available basis, and all reservations, changes, and cancellations must be made directly with the hotels. Hotel no-show policies will apply for reservations not canceled at least 72 hours before the first night's stay.

Health and safety: The AHA and our meeting hotels are working together to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines to make meeting attendance as

safe as possible. We expect that all attendees will be vaccinated for COVID-19 at the time of the meeting. Attendees should comply with all health and safety rules and guidelines established by the AHA, the CDC, the conference hotels, and the local government.

Group meetings and reunions: Societies and groups that have not already made arrangements to hold receptions or other meetings should send requests for room space as soon as possible to annualmeeting@historians.org.

Resolutions for the business meeting must be submitted to the office of the executive director by October 1, to allow time for publication. They must be in proper parliamentary form; must be signed by members of the Association in good standing at the time of submission, and by at least 2 percent of the total Association membership as of the end of the previous fiscal year (214 people); must not be more than 300 words in length, including any introductory material; and must deal with a matter of concern to the Association or to the discipline of history. Such resolutions must be in accord with the Association's *Guiding Principles on Taking a Public Stance* at historians.org/public-stance. Signatures in support of such resolutions must be collected no earlier than January 1, 2024. Resolutions submitted by the deadline, and meeting the criteria for consideration, shall be published in the November issue of *Perspectives on History*. For complete information about business resolutions, please consult the AHA Bylaws at historians.org/constitution.

ASL interpretation: The AHA offers complimentary sign-interpreting service upon request to our attendees. Please notify the AHA of the sessions you plan to attend and register for the meeting by November 1, 2024. This service is also available upon request for the presidential address and business meeting. Please submit requests to annualmeeting@historians.org by November 1, 2024.

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

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



Dates and Deadlines

SEPTEMBER 16	Housing opens.
SEPTEMBER 23	Preregistration opens.
SEPTEMBER 30	Deadline to submit membership dues and address changes in order to receive the program in the mail.
NOVEMBER 1	Program mailed to members.
DECEMBER 12	Last day to make hotel reservations through the housing service. Subsequent reservations taken on a space-available basis at the convention rate.
DECEMBER 15	Last day for preregistration pricing.
DECEMBER 15	Deadline to submit registration refund requests.
JANUARY 3, 2025	Annual meeting opens at 11:00 a.m. Exhibit Hall opens January 4, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Hilton.

Meeting Registration

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

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

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

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

Book a Room and Save \$50

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

HUMANITARIANS, HISTORICAL FICTION, AND MATERIAL CULTURE

In the September 2024 Issue of the American Historical Review

The September 2024 issue of the *American Historical Review* features articles and forums that rethink approaches to environmental, humanitarian, and welfare history, and includes pieces on historical fiction, archives and libraries, and history education.

In “Looking for the Soul in Environmental Lament: Civil Religion, Political Emotion, and the Handling of the Earth in the New Deal Era,” **Michael G. Thompson** (independent scholar) and **Clare Monagle** (Macquarie Univ.) explore the history of New Deal environmental policy and practice, in particular the use of biblical language and imagery in the New Deal soil jeremiad. Thompson and Monagle frame the environmental “sins” of this lament, namely land overuse and soil erosion, against the backdrop of the growing convergence of ecumenical missionaries and conservation efforts. They argue New Deal environmentalism defies typical categorization used in environmental politics and invite an interfield discussion of religious and environmental methodologies.

Melanie Schulze Tanielian’s (Univ. of Michigan) “‘We Found Her at the River’: German Humanitarian Fantasies and Child Sponsorship in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries” discusses German humanitarian work in the late 19th century. She challenges previous scholarship that focused on Anglo-American humanitarianism and traces the influence of pious German efforts, particularly its openness to international and ecumenical collaboration and the promotion of individual development, on modern humanitarianism’s ideologies and practices. She highlights the success of the Armenisches Hilfswerk (Armenian Relief Works) one-to-one child sponsorship program to promote an imagined humanitarian community among the evangelical moral counterpublic and traces its contribution to interwar international humanitarian practices.

In “Carceral Recycling: Zero Waste and Imperial Extraction in Nazi Germany,” **Anne Berg** (Univ. of Pennsylvania) investigates the use of carceral recycling—camp-based waste labor—in the Nazi regime. She traces connections between Nazi paranoia about resource limitations and ideas about cleanliness and order, and demonstrates how waste utilization lay at the heart of the system that exploited camp and prison labor in the service of racial purification and imperial expansion. Such framing, Berg argues, firmly grounds the Nazi system of plunder and murder in the trajectory of Western imperialism and its enlightened rationality.

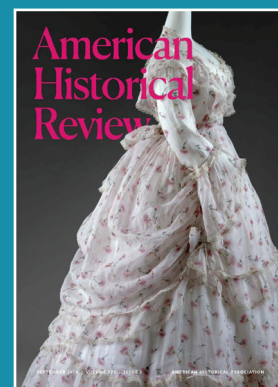
What can historical fiction tell us
about the past that works of
history cannot?

The History Lab opens with a forum of 21 reviews of contemporary historical fiction, including novels, graphic narratives, films, and plays that take on historical issues across time and space. Instead of focusing on historical veracity, reviewers were asked to consider what historical fiction can tell us about the past that other works of history cannot, the innovative forms and voices through which these works engage with their readers, and what reviewers saw as the gains, and losses, of these fictionalized histories. Taken together, we hope these reviews will offer readers a kaleidoscopic perspective on the making of historical fiction today.

New histories of the American welfare state make up a second forum in the Lab that foregrounds the work of three early career scholars who met as National Fellows in the University of Virginia Jefferson Scholars Program: **Salem Elzway** (Univ. of Southern California), **Salonee Bhaman** (New-York Historical Society), and **Bobby Cervantes** (Harvard Univ.). Their doctoral research self-consciously explored what they

The late 19th-century cotton dress that floats across the cover of the September *AHR* offers a marvelous illustration of the diversity of histories and methods that make up this issue of the *AHR*. In the #AHRsYllabus module “A Case for Objects: Material Culture in the History Classroom,” Sarah Jones Weicksel introduces an object analysis worksheet to help students create a biography of a single object and ask historical questions about the object’s life cycle. She offers a short biography of the dress on the cover of this issue of the *AHR* to illustrate the kinds of stories objects can tell.

Image: Dress, 1872, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Acc. No. 2003.426a, b.



saw as new approaches for understanding the operations of the welfare state, with Elzway examining the rise of artificial intelligence and the industrial robot, Bhaman the politics of care in the era of HIV/AIDS, and Cervantes the social lives of communities along the US-Mexico border that are among those experiencing the most extreme concentrations of poverty in the United States. **Linda Gordon** (New York Univ.), **Alice O'Connor** (Univ. of California, Santa Barbara), and **Karen M. Tani** (Univ. of Pennsylvania) offer commentary to situate these essays in the longer arc of welfare history.

Gabrielle Dean's (Johns Hopkins Univ.) “Ghost Records in the Archival Empire: Africana Cultural Heritage Stewardship at Historically White Institutions” returns the Lab to one of its central concerns, the connections between archives and libraries and the work we do as historians. Drawing on her expertise as a curator of rare books and manuscripts, she discusses how interrelated financial, epistemological, and cultural mechanisms contribute to persisting challenges for collecting African American rare books and archival materials in historically white institutions. Dean advocates for sustained and multifaceted collaborations with archivists at historically Black colleges and universities to support broad efforts to build more robust primary collections of Black history, along with collecting practices informed by community participatory archives programs.

The September Lab includes two new modules for the #AHRsYllabus. In “Good Question: Right-Sizing Inquiry with History Teachers,” AHA researchers **Whitney E. Barringer**, **Scot McFarlane**, and **Nicholas Kryczka** develop a set of guidelines for asking students questions about the past that reveal the motives of historical actors, address the interplay of structure and agency, and investigate the collision of long-run continuities and sudden contingencies. For their module, they trace curricular initiatives around “inquiry” from the late 19th century to the present to suggest practices for today’s

classroom that allow, as they put it, “students to see what history can do for them, and what they must do for themselves.”

Sarah Jones Weicksel's (AHA) module, “A Case for Objects: Material Culture in the History Classroom,” provides an easy-to-use method and set of exercises for exploring history through objects. She provides an object analysis worksheet that can help students create a biography of a single object and ask historical questions about the object’s life cycle; a lesson plan that interweaves an array of objects, images, and texts as sources through which students can analyze Northern civilian encounters with the American Civil War; and a “found objects” activity, in which ordinary objects are used to introduce students to doing history through material culture.

Three History Unclassified articles close out this issue’s Lab. In “Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death,” **Anthony David** (independent scholar) draws on his experiences writing a biography of a German Benedictine monk to reflect on how historians can unwittingly propagate inaccuracies. A central figure in the monk’s life, he came to believe, was a Nazi war criminal. But while working on this book, David encountered new evidence that suggested that might not be so, which led him to reassess his work and challenge his own underlying beliefs. **Melani McAlister's** (George Washington Univ.) “Promises, Then the Storm” crosscuts between observations about the first months of the Gaza war in the fall and winter of 2023 and her ongoing work on the history of Palestinian and Third World solidarity movements in the United States during the 1980s, particularly the place of music and art in them. In “My Brother’s Story,” **Nico Slate** (Carnegie Mellon Univ.) draws on his experiences as a white historian writing a memoir on the life and death of his mixed-race older brother, along with the work of other memoirists and historians, to discuss the challenges of writing about race, memory, guilt, and gratitude. **P**

ACTIONS BY THE AHA COUNCIL

January to June 2024

Through email communications from January 22 to May 16, 2024; at a teleconference meeting held on March 8, 2024; and at meetings on June 8 and 9, 2024, the Council of the American Historical Association took the following actions:

- Approved the text of “In Defense of the Right to Learn,” the resolution passed at the 137th business meeting of the AHA (held on January 6, 2024).
- Sent a letter to Manhattan College administrators opposing the termination of history faculty members.
- Appointed Nicole Mahoney (New-York Historical Society) and Nike Nivar (American Council of Learned Societies) as co-chairs for the Local Arrangements Committee for the 2025 annual meeting in New York.
- Sent a letter to members of the Nebraska Legislature opposing LB 1064, a proposed bill that would eliminate tenure in state universities and colleges.
- Sent a letter to members of the Indiana House Education Committee opposing Senate Bill 202, which would “create a policy for granting tenure and terminating the appointments of tenured faculty based on how well that faculty member has fostered ‘intellectual diversity’ within the classroom.” The AHA’s letter made it clear that the Association agrees that a diversity of ideas and perspectives is important to higher education institutions. This bill, however, would establish processes that violate academic freedom.
- Sent a letter to members of the Iowa House of Representatives opposing HF 2544, which would impose alarming and ill-advised requirements for social studies curriculum in the state.
- Sent a letter to members of the Florida House of Representatives and Senate opposing HB 1291 / SB 1372, a “heavy-handed and inappropriate intervention in college curricula, classroom instruction, and professional learning.”
- Sent a letter to leaders at South Carolina State University expressing concern about a plan to cut majors in history, African American studies, and social studies teaching.
- Approved changes to the Equity Award description to remove references to academic departments. This change aligns with the AHA’s efforts to broaden historical scholarship.
- Established a co-editor model for the *American Historical Review* (AHR) and a process for the 2031 AHR co-editor search to accept applications from teams of historians. Applicants would be encouraged to include historians representing different fields.
- Authorized a search for a second editor of the AHR. The co-editors’ five-year terms would begin in August 2026.
- Approved revisions to the Inclusive Language section of the AHA Style Guide.
- Reappointed Kalani Craig (Indiana Univ.) and Joshua Reid (Univ. of Washington) to three-year terms on the AHR Board of Editors beginning July 1, 2024.
- Appointed Michelle Armstrong-Partida (Emory Univ.), David Biggs (Univ. of California, Riverside), Mark Hanna (Univ. of California, San Diego), Quinn Slobodian (Boston Univ.), Rhiannon Stephens (Columbia Univ.), and Fei-Hsien Wang (Indiana Univ.) to three-year terms on the AHR Board of Editors beginning July 1, 2024.
- Reappointed Rose Miron (Newberry Library) to a three-year term as associate review editor of the AHR beginning July 1, 2024.

- Appointed Sharika Crawford (US Naval Academy), Andrew Denning (Univ. of Kansas), Joan Flores-Villalobos (Univ. of Southern California), and Doug Rossinow (Metropolitan State Univ.) as associate review editors of the *AHR* for three-year terms beginning July 1, 2024.
- Sent a letter to Chinese president Xi Jinping expressing concern for Professor Rahile Dawut, a historian-folklorist of Uyghur studies in China who has apparently been sentenced to life in prison and whose specific whereabouts are unknown.
- Approved the charge for a Working Group on K–12 Education.
- Appointed the following members of the Working Group on K–12 Education: Kathleen Hilliard (Iowa State Univ.), Jenny Baniewicz (Amos Alonzo Stagg High School), Daniel Gutierrez (Harvard-Westlake School), Katharina Matro (Walter Johnson High School), Craig Perrier (Fairfax County Public Schools), Brenda Santos (Brown Univ.), and Shane Carter (Univ. of California, Berkeley).
- Endorsed a letter to members of the US Congress requesting approval of a Congressional Gold Medal for the first women to serve our nation in uniform, the “Hello Girls” telephone operators of World War I.
- Admitted Wiki Education and the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church as AHA affiliates.
- Issued a statement on the 2024 campus protests, “deplor[ing] recent decisions among college and university administrators to draw on local and state police forces to evict peaceful demonstrators.”
- Signed on to the ACLS Statement on 2024 Campus Protests.
- Approved the minutes of the January 4 and 7, 2024, Council meetings and the March 8, 2024, Council meeting.
- Approved the interim minutes and ratified the votes of the Council from January through May 2024.
- Appointed Melissa Byrnes (Southwestern Univ., Texas) as a member of the Small Liberal Arts Colleges Working Group.
- Approved the charge of the Working Group on AI in Research and Publications.
- Appointed Toshihiro Higuchi (Georgetown Univ.) and Pablo Sierra Silva (Univ. of Rochester) as members of the 2026 Annual Meeting Program Committee.
- Officially thanked Lee White for his years of service as executive director of the National Coalition for History.
- Updated AHA Bylaw 4, pursuant to Article IV, Section 6, by changing all references to the *AHR* “editor” to “co-editors.”
- Admitted Historians for Peace and Democracy as an affiliate of the AHA.
- Changed the name of the Committee on Minority Historians to the Committee on Racial and Ethnic Equity.
- Authorized the solicitation of bids from Detroit, Toronto, New York, and Boston to hold future AHA annual meetings.
- Approved a policy for handling concerns raised about sessions accepted by the Program Committee.
- Approved changes to the *Investment Objectives and Guidelines* to allow, but not require, investment in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) funds.
- Approved changes to the *Investment Committee Statement of Responsibilities* to clarify the committee’s oversight of the Association’s retirement plans for employees.
- Approved changes to the *Guidelines for Academic Tenure-Track Job Offers in History* to better reflect variations in departments’ hiring authorities and decision-makers.
- Approved changes to simplify the *Statement on Age Discrimination*.
- Approved nominations for the 2024 Awards for Scholarly Distinction, the Tikkun Olam Prize, John Lewis Award for Public Service, and the Troyer Steele Anderson Prize, to be announced in October. **P**

COMPILED BY LIZ TOWNSEND

2024 AHA ELECTION RESULTS

Lisa Leff (US Holocaust Memorial Museum and American Univ.), chair of the Nominating Committee, announces the following results of the 2024 balloting for officers and committee members of the American Historical Association. The committee wishes to thank all candidates who stood for election; their willingness to serve is much appreciated.

President

Ben Vinson III, Howard University

President-elect

Suzanne Marchand, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge

Vice President, Teaching Division

Serena Zabin, Carleton College

Council Member, Professional Division

Jennifer McNabb, University of Northern Iowa

Council Member, Research Division

Cemil Aydin, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Council Member, Teaching Division

Edward Cohn, Grinnell College

Committee on Committees

Slot 1: Carol Harrison, University of South Carolina

Slot 2: Linh Vu, Arizona State University

Nominating Committee

Slot 1: Hiromi Mizuno, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Slot 2: Hilary Green, Davidson College

Slot 3: Dana Rabin, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 

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

Visit the AHA's new website at historians.org.



Explore our resources,
learn about our advocacy,
read our publications,
manage your membership,
register for upcoming
events, and much more.

AMERICAN
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July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024

The Association relies on the generous contributions of members and other patrons to support its prizes, awards, and other programs and activities. The following list records—with our considerable gratitude—the many members who made significant gifts to the Association during the past fiscal year.

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Frank Proctor
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Renee Romano
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Dorothy Ross
Sarah Ross
Vicki Ruiz
Leila Rupp
Donald Schilling
Zachary Schrag
James Sheehan
Pamela Smith
Jean Soman

Marc Stein
Landon Storrs
William Thomas
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Michael Wibel
Karin Wulf

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Susan R. Boettcher

1969–2024

Historian of
Reformation Germany

It is difficult to convey how much we have lost with the death of Susan Boettcher, a consummate teacher and scholar, a voracious reader and thinker, and a devoted friend. She displayed an exceptional curiosity about the world and an eagerness to interrogate received wisdom, engaging with everything from critical theory to contemporary culture. Driven by a desire to make difficult ideas legible to readers, she taught and wrote with lucidity and passion.

Susan identified first and foremost as a person of faith. Raised in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in Greenville, Wisconsin, she memorized large parts of the Bible at a young age, a practice that drove her to undertake exegetical readings of opaque texts throughout her life. She did not remain in the Lutheran Church, however. As an undergraduate at Trinity College in San Antonio, she found herself drawn to Judaism, to which she converted while earning her PhD at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She found great joy in her Jewish communities, particularly a congregation she helped to form in Göttingen, Germany, and later Young Israel of Tampa, Florida, and the Moses Montefiore Congregation of Appleton, Wisconsin. Susan was a skilled leader of prayers and loved singing at the Shabbat or holiday table.

Susan often bore her intellectual abilities with unease, but they were marvelous. She was able to take a concept, a premise, or an idea and carefully turn it over, seeing it from many angles. She loved falling into conceptual rabbit holes and following threads through their many implications. She offered her insights effortlessly and generously, without pretention, often laughing a cheery and disarming chuckle as those observations came to her. Sometimes she paused and bought time with a long “yeah. . .” when she sensed something problematic, dangerous, or contradictory in an idea. Those of us used to sharing our thoughts with Susan learned to read those reactions like signs, because she was such a thorough, candid, and useful critic.

Internationally recognized for her scholarship, she wrote on the formation of German Lutheran confessional culture and

the commemorations of Martin Luther in the period after his death. She focused especially on practices of preaching in the confessional age and sought to understand various attempts at Lutheran identity formation, scrutinizing popular literature, memory, and polemic alongside theology and religious sermonizing. In her teaching positions at the University of Missouri–Rolla and the University of Texas at Austin, she published some 17 influential book chapters and journal articles and dozens of book reviews, while also editing reviews for *H-German*. She received numerous prestigious research fellowships. The University of Texas nevertheless denied her tenure in 2010, at which point she took an untenured position at the University of South Florida.

In the classroom, Susan came alive. She worked tirelessly to improve her effectiveness, seeking vivid and instructive analogies and inspiring students with her enthusiasm and unabashed quirkiness. Gifted with a powerful voice, she sang early modern hymns to her students, performances that produced wild applause. As both a teacher and a friend, Susan had a seemingly endless compassion for others. Particularly because her own path through life was not easy, she was especially sensitive to the issues that wrinkled people’s lives.

Being far away from her family proved increasingly intolerable, so in 2016 she returned to Wisconsin from Tampa to care for her father alongside her brother and his family. There, she taught classes at Marian University of Wisconsin and the state prison on subjects ranging from history, geography, and political science to mathematics, writing, and the nuances of applying for jobs. One of the prison guards later confessed to her that they had initially taken bets on how quickly she (like her predecessors) would quit the job, only to find themselves marveling at her success. “You’re not afraid of anything, are you?” he asked her.

Susan was not afraid, even of death. When she received a diagnosis of a rapidly growing form of liver and gallbladder cancer, she was philosophical. She died within weeks. We have lost a brilliant and singular scholar, a dear friend, and a person who was unapologetically herself.

Carolyn Eastman
Virginia Commonwealth University

Philip Levy
University of South Florida

Photo courtesy Henning Jürgens



Jeffrey M. Diefendorf

1945–2024

Historian of Germany;
AHA 50-Year Member

Jeffrey Mindlin Diefendorf, an imaginative historian who excavated the ruins and illuminated the reconstruction of post-World War II Germany, died on March 23, 2024, in Dover, New Hampshire. He was 78 years old.

Born in Pasadena, California, Jeff grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he became a standout student and outdoors enthusiast. At Stanford University, his plans to study engineering began to go awry when his freshman adviser suggested he take German, the language best suited to an aspiring engineer. An early teaching assistant—James Sheehan, future distinguished historian of modern Germany and president of the AHA—turned Jeff’s attention to German history.

Jeff’s 1965 study abroad proved decisive, as he lived with a German family in the small town of Beutelsbach only 20 years after the war’s end. The experience nurtured in him “a deep and very personal interest in Germany’s present as well as its past,” his wife recalls. Jeff became fluent in German, made new and lasting friends, and acquired through further travel and study a lifelong appreciation for European art, music, and culture.

After earning his BA from Stanford in 1967 “with great distinction” and honors in both history and humanities, Jeff undertook graduate work in German history at the University of California, Berkeley. His 1975 doctoral dissertation focused on the era of the French Revolution and became the basis of his first book, *Businessmen and Politics in the Rhineland, 1789–1834* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1980). While at Berkeley, he met fellow graduate student and his future wife, Barbara (Boonstoppel), now an eminent historian of early modern France, in a seminar on the French Revolution.

Jeff accepted a position at the University of New Hampshire in 1976, where he advanced through the ranks from assistant professor to an endowed chair as the Pamela Shulman Professor of European and Holocaust Studies. A dedicated, highly skilled, and rigorous instructor, Jeff made lasting contributions

to the teaching of history at the university. As an assistant professor, he introduced a course designed to teach skills in critical analysis and writing that remains a rite of passage for undergraduate history majors. Likewise, his required graduate seminar on historical methods became a memorable proving ground for generations of master’s and doctoral students. According to one student, the class was “the most challenging, invigorating, and helpful course” of their academic career.

The alchemy came from Jeff himself. He was, a doctoral student recalled, “an all-star professor who had a stake in the material and his students. He wrote copious, typed comments on each of my assignments and read my work carefully. He introduced us to the major changes in historiographical thinking over the years and allowed us to develop a research proposal that fit into them. Most importantly, he was a model of how to be a good professor . . . and helped me to understand that being a historian is not just a job, but rather a vocation. It’s a career, but it’s more importantly a way of thinking and being.”

An exacting department chair in the 1990s, Jeff played a major role in recruiting new history faculty during years “of unequaled growth,” his colleague Janet Polasky noted. His unswerving institutional loyalty led to service on numerous departmental and university committees and appointment as senior faculty fellow in the College of Liberal Arts.

Despite these commitments, Jeff’s scholarly work flourished. His acclaimed book, *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), proved especially influential in deploying local sources to unmask environmental, architectural, legal, and political dimensions of West Germany’s massive reconstruction effort. Jeff demonstrated, fellow German historian Andrew Demshuk observed, how comparative local research could elucidate “big historical questions.” He skillfully edited seven wide-ranging volumes on the Holocaust, comparative post-war reconstruction, and environmental history. A planned comparative history of Cologne, Basel, and Boston was interrupted when Jeff was diagnosed in 2017 with primary progressive aphasia, the disease that ended his life.

“What can I say?” a former student responded when asked his impressions of Jeff upon his retirement in 2016. “An old-school intellectual powerhouse. Snappy dresser. Music lover. Oenophile.” All true and more. He would have enjoyed the epitaph.

Ellen Fitzpatrick
University of New Hampshire (emerita)

Photo courtesy University of New Hampshire



Ronald P. Formisano

1939–2024

Historian of the
United States

Ronald P. Formisano, one of the founders of the “ethnocultural school” of US political history, died peacefully at home in Lexington, Kentucky, on February 20, 2024, following a period of declining health. He was 84 years old.

Ron was born in Providence, Rhode Island, on March 31, 1939, and grew up next door in Bristol, a proud son of the Ocean State’s vibrant Italian American community. He earned a BA at Brown University, where he played football, and an MA from the University of Wisconsin–Madison before receiving his PhD from Wayne State University. Ron taught at the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Rochester, Clark University, and the University of Florida before becoming the William T. Bryan Chair of American History at the University of Kentucky, where he taught until his retirement in 2015.

Ron was the author of 10 scholarly books on US political history from the 19th century to the new millennium. He published more than a dozen articles in scholarly journals, including the *American Historical Review*, the *Journal of American History*, and the *American Political Science Review*. After retiring, he tried his hand at what he called “muckraking fiction” with a series of four detective novels, culminating in *Auditioning for Hell* (2023).

Along with his Wayne State mentor, Lee Benson, Ron was among the first US historians to analyze census data and voting records quantitatively to highlight the importance of religion, race, and ethnicity in electoral politics. His first two books, *The Birth of Mass Political Parties: Michigan, 1827–1861* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1971) and *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s–1840s* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), showed how social movements intersected with political ideology to undermine America’s “second party system” during the first half of the 19th century.

Before long, Ron shifted his focus to the rise of grassroots politics in New England during the mid-20th century. In *Boston*

against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1991), he showed how resentment against the city’s liberal elite combined with racism to ignite working-class activism in Boston’s ethnic neighborhoods. And in *The Great Lobster War* (Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1997), he pieced together the little-known story of Maine lobstermen who banded together in the 1950s to challenge corporate control of their livelihood only to find themselves on the wrong end of a federal antitrust lawsuit.

By the end of his career, Ron was determined to help the American public understand the historical roots of our 21st-century dysfunctional politics. To this end, he published a provocative tetralogy—*For the People: American Populist Movements from the Revolution to the 1850s* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2008); *The Tea Party: A Brief History* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2012); *Plutocracy in America: How Increasing Inequality Destroys the Middle Class and Exploits the Poor* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2015); and *American Oligarchy: The Permanent Political Class* (Univ. of Illinois Press, 2017).

Beyond his wide-ranging scholarly work, Ron was also an outstanding teacher and mentor. He won teaching awards in Worcester and Gainesville; he supervised more than 20 PhD dissertations at Clark, Florida, and Kentucky; and he held Fulbright lectureships at the University of Rome and the University of Bologna. Ron’s commitment to the discipline was equally impressive. Over the years, he was elected president of the New England Historical Association, he served as the AHA’s representative on the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and, most recently, he was a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of the Early Republic*.

Whether Ron was reinterpreting political history at a conference or playing a pickup game of touch football, he was a fierce competitor who hated to lose. He fell in love with the Maine coast during the 1970s and spent his summers on Chebeague Island in Casco Bay. Those of us who knew Ron will remember him not only for his sharp wit and his fiery temper but also for his kindness and his unstinting devotion to his friends and colleagues. He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Erica Chiquoine-Formisano, and two children, Laura and Matthew.

Dana Caldemeyer
Alabama A&M University

Douglas Little
Clark University

Photo courtesy Erica Chiquoine-Formisano



Marta Petricioli

1940–2024

Historian of
International
Relations

Marta Petricioli, a prominent Italian scholar in Middle East studies and professor of history at the University of Florence, died on February 14, 2024.

Born in 1940 in Tuscany's Lunigiana district, Marta earned a bachelor's degree, *summa cum laude*, from the University of Florence under the guidance of diplomatic historian Rodolfo Mosca. In November 1966, as a graduate student, Marta gained international recognition as one of the leading "Angels of the Flood," volunteers who diligently rescued manuscripts and artworks during a devastating flood. This act showcased Marta's deep attachment to her adopted city, her dedication to public service, and her meticulous preservation of historical artifacts.

After graduating in 1970, Marta held positions within the University of Florence's political science and international history departments. She established one of postwar Italy's pioneering Middle Eastern history programs and founded the prestigious Italian group Sesamo (Society for Middle Eastern Studies). During the Cold War and its aftermath, Marta was among the most active elected members of the bureau of the Association internationale d'histoire contemporaine de l'Europe, linking scholars from a dozen countries, in Eastern and Western Europe.

Marta's interdisciplinary approach combined area studies, social history, and traditional diplomatic relations across a wide chronological spectrum. Her notable debut, *Italy in Asia Minor: Balance of Power and Imperial Ambitions in the Pre-World War I Era* (Sansoni, 1983), drew from archives spanning five nations and cemented her reputation as a historian renowned for navigating pivotal moments in European and Middle Eastern history. Long before the term "transnational history" came into vogue, Marta intuitively embraced this methodology with precision and flawless storytelling.

Marta's subsequent research continued in this vein, yielding numerous essays in international journals and notable monographs, including *Archaeology and Mare Nostrum: Archaeological Missions and Italy's Mediterranean Policies, 1898–1943* (V. Levi,

1990) and *Beyond the Myth: The Italian Settlements in Egypt (1917–1947)* (Mondadori, 2007). Her collaborative efforts led to the co-editing of several books covering diverse topics, including the post-World War II European Left, European peace movements and integration, war crimes in Italy and Japan during World War II, and the shaping of national identities in the Mediterranean and its borderlands.

Marta, as she was known to her students, was above all a dedicated mentor. With a profound grasp of diverse academic fields and genuine empathy, she enriched the learning experiences of countless undergraduate and graduate mentees. What began as simple tutorials evolved into personalized sessions, addressing career aspirations and personal matters, offering invaluable life advice. To Marta, many of her students became akin to an extended family. In an era where scholarly output often overshadowed faculty availability, she struck a delicate balance, preserving traditional mentoring while adapting to evolving career demands. Nestled in Florence's prestigious Palazzo Vasari, she deliberately shunned modern distractions like social media and television. Despite her secluded lifestyle, Marta frequently welcomed fellow scholars, from local or worldwide institutions, and provided them valuable mentoring for their research in Italian archives. She also occasionally hosted larger gatherings of colleagues and students in her home. Surrounded by a vast library, these gatherings evoked the intellectual salons of the past, blending academic discourse with conviviality.

Friends and colleagues fondly recall Marta's unwavering commitment to cultivating cosmopolitan connections, often in challenging circumstances, including her well-known fear of flying. That phobia did not deter her from traversing long distances, through her more congenial and—as many things in her life—romantically time-bound modes of travel, such as train rides extending as far as Moscow or boat journeys to Turkey and neighboring regions. To colleagues able to witness such an arrival at a Mitteleuropean station, Marta exuded a practical elegance that belied the strains of her lengthy journey, carrying an aura of stoicism, determination, and historical resonance, resembling the subjects of her own studies.

A brilliant historian and master teacher, Marta Petricioli was one of the leaders of a generation renowned for their ambitious archival research and their consummate cosmopolitanism. She is missed by her family of relatives, as well as her large academic family, to whom she was always "Marta."

Alessandro Brogi
University of Arkansas



Dorothy Ross

1936–2024

Historian of Ideas;
AHA 50-Year Member

Dorothy Ross, a historian of modern social science, died on May 22, 2024. Ross was the Arthur O. Lovejoy Professor Emerita at Johns Hopkins University.

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 13, 1936, Ross attended Smith College before earning a PhD at Columbia University under the supervision of Richard Hofstadter. Ross attributed her career-long understanding that history was as much an analytic as a storytelling enterprise to Hofstadter's influence. In 1958, she married Stanford G. Ross, a lawyer who would become commissioner of Social Security in the Carter administration. The couple, who were married for 62 years before Stanford's death, are survived by their two children, Ellen Finn and John Ross.

In 1971, Ross became special assistant to the newly formed Committee on Women Historians of the American Historical Association. This was the AHA's first paid staff position to support a committee, in this case charged with trying to redress the discriminatory pattern of employment and opportunities in the profession. While serving in this capacity, Ross completed *G. Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1972), detailing the life and career of the first prominent advocate of psychoanalysis in the United States.

During the next two decades, while holding faculty appointments at Princeton University, the University of Virginia, and Hopkins, Ross won respect with a series of analytically penetrating articles extending her scope well beyond the history of social science. The most influential of these was "The Liberal Tradition Revisited and the Republican Tradition Addressed," in the widely discussed volume edited by John Higham and Paul K. Conkin, *New Directions in American Intellectual History* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1979), to which Ross was the only woman contributor. This essay convinced a generation of scholars that the political theories of classical republicanism had more influence on American history than they had recognized.

Ross's most important book, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), showed how American social science modeled itself on natural science and liberal politics, and argued that the field was informed by the ideology of American exceptionalism. In a detailed analysis of political science, sociology, and economics, Ross showed how each discipline responded to changes in historical consciousness, political needs, professional structures, and prevailing conceptions of science. In 1994, she edited *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences, 1870–1930* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press), collecting articles she had commissioned for international conferences she convened in Bellagio, Italy, and Bielefeld, Germany. Ross also co-edited, with Theodore Porter, volume 7 of *The Cambridge History of Science: The Modern Social Sciences* (2003).

Ross was a graduate teacher of legendary authority and sensitivity. "She was not the type of professor who just explained things to students," her Hopkins doctoral student Motoe Sasaki (Hosei Univ.) wrote. "I recall many times she let students find their own way to make sense of specific academic issues or problems," Sasaki continued. "When I was unsure of things, Dorothy would bombard me with questions from a number of perspectives so that I could realize the direction in which to proceed. This always brought me to a new place." In 2023, Ross established a fund at Hopkins to support history graduate students.

Ross was a regular presenter and discussant at conferences and symposia, and continued to produce a steady stream of articles and conference papers into the 21st century. In 2021, *Modern Intellectual History* published "Whatever Happened to the Social in American Social Thought?" This was an ambitious, two-part article that brought to a climax Ross's long-term, critical engagement with both journalistic and academic writing about society in the modern United States.

Ross is recognized by the Dorothy Ross Article Prize, awarded annually to an emerging scholar by the Society for US Intellectual History, and by the Dorothy Ross Professorship, established in 2023 by Johns Hopkins University. Ross was as perspicacious in intellect as she was modest in demeanor. Refreshingly independent, she knew her own mind and was an unfailingly honest and constructive interlocutor, never overbearing and always responsive.

David A. Hollinger
University of California, Berkeley (emeritus)

Linda K. Kerber
University of Iowa (emerita)

Photo courtesy Ross family



Steven M. Stowe

1946–2023

Historian of the
US South; AHA
Member

Steven M. Stowe, a historian of the US South, passed away on October 3, 2023, from complications of lymphoma. He was 77.

Born in Long Beach, California, to Mac and Joanne Stowe, Steve started his career as a writer early. As a high schooler, then as a college student at California State University, Long Beach, he became interested in journalism and worked at the *Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram*. When he decided to go to graduate school a few years later, he was drawn to history, as he felt that writing history gives imagination more scope and depth. He studied US Southern history at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, in the 1970s, when anti-Vietnam War protest raged and new social and cultural history was on the rise. Steve became an avid participant of both.

After earning his PhD, he taught briefly at New York and Penn State Universities, before he settled at Indiana University Bloomington in 1987. He was an excellent teacher and taught popular courses on US antebellum history, the history of the South, Civil War history, and the history of medicine. He mentored a great cohort of graduate students, who remember Steve as smart, kind, generous, and curious. He always wanted to know what they thought. Steve was famous for his densely typed, multipage comments on their work, which always encouraged them to bring out their own voices.

Steve was central to shaping the direction of the field of Southern history. His first book, *Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), confirmed his standing as a leading scholar in US Southern history. He helped establish the Southern Intellectual History Circle (SIHC) in 1989 with Michael O'Brien, Drew Faust, Eugene Genovese, and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, among others. With this group, he broadened our understanding of the discipline, encouraging literary scholars to attend SIHC's meetings, and mentoring early career scholars well before established mentorship programs existed. Steve

showed what it meant to be a historian to generations of scholars. He was generous with his time and always eager to hear what people were working on. As one colleague said, "Steve was the best of us."

At Indiana, Steve served as associate editor of the *Journal of American History* three times, with editors David Thelen, Dave Nord, and Joanne Meyerowitz. During his tenures, he read a manuscript almost every day and became known for joining his perceptive criticism with a quick, disarming sense of humor. And yet, his utmost passion was reserved for writing. In one of his letters in 2003, he described his thoughts on writing history this way: "When I write, when I create with words, which I dearly love to do, history's balance of 'heat' and 'light' . . . is a very good one for me . . . [and] for the mysteries and absurdities and small, forgotten beauties of life. . . . When it works right, writing is almost a physical pleasure for me." Colleagues admired his books—after his first came *Doctoring the South: Southern Physicians and Everyday Medicine in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2004) and *Keep the Days: Reading the Civil War Diaries of Southern Women* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2018)—for keen analysis, beauty of writing, and empathy. Throughout his writing career, Steve's love for letters and diaries shone. Before he passed away, he was writing a book on the California missions.

After retiring from Indiana in 2010, Steve went to Michigan State University as a visiting scholar, where he was welcomed into a new circle of historians. He avidly read their work, curious and generous at once as he always was. His friends responded with warm regards and friendship.

Steve is survived by his wife, Naoko Wake; his children Benjamin Stowe and Sarah Stowe; their partners, Heather and Doug; his grandchildren Samuel, Hazel, and Fern; and his three siblings. Steve is buried in Lansing, Michigan, and Hiroshima, Japan, two homes where he is dearly loved and remembered.

Sarah E. Gardner
Mercer University

Naoko Wake
Michigan State University

Photo courtesy Naoko Wake



Charles H. Wesley

1891–1987

Historian, College President, and Churchman

The contribution of landmark volumes to a range of fields in American and African American history is an enviable achievement for any historian. Charles H. Wesley, who published in labor, religion, the American South, and women, and in studies of Black fraternities, both Greek letter and mass based, showed breadth and mastery of the African American experience. Moreover, in numerous essays, Wesley explored the transatlantic impact of British abolitionism, with research support in Great Britain from the Guggenheim Foundation, and other transnational issues in the 19th and 20th centuries pertaining to African Americans. Wesley's popular books included addenda to Carter G. Woodson's Black history textbooks, editing and contributing to the 10-volume *International Library of Negro Life and History* (1967), and special studies that traced a succession of constitutional and civil rights initiatives to attain and safeguard Black civic equality.

Historian Michael R. Winston noted that Wesley "recognized the need to study the history of the black people of the world from the 'inside out' rather than the customary reverse. Thus, you will observe that most of his work was on the history of black institutions, organizations, and movements placed at the center of the historical canvas rather than the margins." Hence, Wesley's signature studies both disrupted the broader sphere of American history and chronicled the multifaceted infrastructure that remarkably sustained African Americans in subverting their subaltern status in American society.

Wesley, while earning his BA from Fisk University (1911), MA from Yale University (1913), and PhD in history from Harvard University (1925), nurtured an independent intellect. Though Albert Bushnell Hart, one of his Harvard professors, viewed the defeat of the Confederacy as owing to superior US force and resources, Wesley countered that it was Confederate demoralization that undermined the South's willingness to fight. To sidestep Hart's likely opposition, Wesley switched his dissertation topic to an examination of African American labor. The book that emerged, *Negro Labor in the United States, 1850–1925* (1927), tracked the emergence of Black workers as

crucial contributors to the nation's industrial development. Nonetheless, Wesley returned to his original topic and published *The Collapse of the Confederacy* in 1937, in which he identified an extraordinary proposal to recruit Black soldiers to the Confederate army as one factor that showed the South's general collapse of morale.

Wesley's other major works related to his Black organizational affiliations and revealed his obsessive objectivity. Attending to a fraternity he served as national president, he wrote *The History of Alpha Phi Alpha: A Development in Negro College Life* (1929), as well as a biography of APA co-founder Henry Arthur Callis. From the 1950s through the 1980s, he also wrote histories of Sigma Pi Phi, the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World, the Prince Hall Masons in Ohio, and the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, and a biography of Black freemasonry founder Prince Hall.

Wesley had a deep connection to the African Methodist Episcopal Church, for which he was a pastor and then a presiding elder, a role in which he oversaw several congregations. Prior to publishing *Richard Allen: Apostle of Freedom* (1935), the first scholarly biography of the AME founder, Wesley directed a three-year national survey of the "Negro Church" focused on Baltimore, an urban setting, and Suffolk, Virginia, a rural community. This collaborative sponsorship between the Institute for Social and Religious Research of New York City and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History spoke to the wide recognition of Wesley's scholarly expertise in African American religious history.

Wesley's scholarly productivity and vocational versatility defined his lifetime from his birth in Louisville, Kentucky, on December 2, 1891, to his death in Washington, DC, on August 16, 1987. Despite the ongoing deployment of his busy pen to historical writing, Wesley was history department chair and dean of the graduate school at Howard University, president of the AME-affiliated Wilberforce University, and founder and president of Central State College. His administrative proficiency extended to his role as executive director of the renamed Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASAALH) and as the founding executive director of the African American Museum in Philadelphia, built for the city's 1976 bicentennial commemoration. Since 1994, the AHA and ASAALH have jointly sponsored the Wesley-Logan Prize, named in his honor and awarded annually to an outstanding book in African diaspora history.

Dennis C. Dickerson
Vanderbilt University

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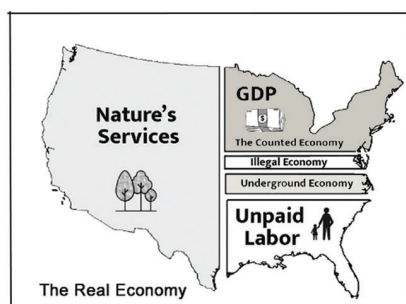
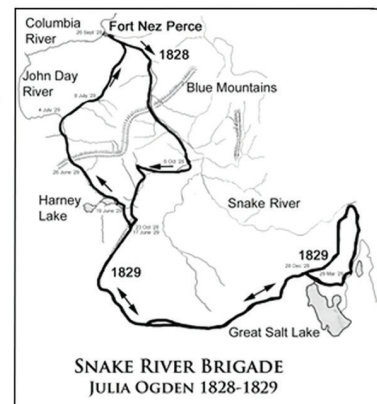
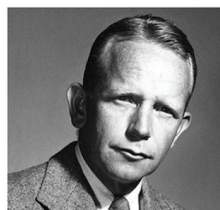
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Established in 2022, the **James G. Stofer Fund for Community College and Public High School Teachers** provides grants to support the participation of community college and public high school teachers in AHA activities and programs. Community college and public high school faculty applicants, who are members of the Association, will be considered for the **Stofer Annual Meeting Travel Grants**, regardless of participation in the program.

The application deadline is November 15. Successful applicants will be awarded travel subsidies of up to \$400 each.

Only community college or public high school faculty who are members of the AHA are eligible to apply for the Stofer Travel Grants.

The fund is named in honor of James G. Stofer, who dropped out of a Brooklyn public high school to join the Navy. He entered active duty on December 12, 1940, serving as a Radioman First Class on the USS Portland. While on the "Sweet Pea," he edited the newspaper and served as the ship's historian. He credited his high school teachers for his ability to write and think historically. He was a veteran of the Battles of Coral Sea, Midway, and the Guadalcanal Campaign. When Stofer was honorably discharged from the Navy in 1946, he attended community college at what is now SUNY Plattsburgh, and he finished his education at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

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Modern Russia. The Department of History at the University of Michigan invites applications for a tenure-track assistant professor in the history of modern Russia and/or Russian empire, late 19th century to the present, including the late imperial, Soviet, and/or post-Soviet periods. This is a university-year appointment with an expected start date of August 25, 2025. The department has a 2/2 teaching load. Areas of teaching responsibility include introductory, upper division, and graduate classes. Michigan's Department of History remains committed to rigorous archival research and publishing. Additionally, we have undertaken a number of initiatives intended to increase the range of perspectives and experiences within our unit and the larger field. These include recruitment and mentoring programs for prospective graduate students; building new programs to train current graduate students for multiple career paths, including public facing scholarship. Applicants must demonstrate evidence of excellence in teaching and research. Candidates who have experience working with a diverse range of people, and who can contribute to a climate of inclusivity, are especially welcome. Applicants must have a PhD in history or a related field by the start date.

Applications received by September 20, 2024, 11:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time will be assured full consideration. Qualified persons should submit all application materials via <http://apply.interfolio.com/148847>. Please include the following components (each submitted as a separate PDF file): cover letter including descriptions of your current and future research, as well as your teaching experience and philosophy (please address your letter to Professor Valerie Kivelson, Chair, Search Committee); CV; writing sample (limit to 25 pages); and the names and contact information of three references. Persons whose applications are selected for further review will be individually asked to provide additional materials, including a diversity statement, research statement, and teaching statement. As part of the application process, you will be asked to complete a voluntary EEO-1/Affirmative Action Voluntary Self Identification form for the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Upon receipt of your preliminary application you can expect an email acknowledgement from Interfolio. The University of Michigan is committed to fostering and maintaining a diverse work culture that respects the rights and dignity of each individual, without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, gender expression, height, weight, marital status, disability, medical condition, age, or veteran status. The University of Michigan is

supportive of the needs of dual career couples and is an AA/EOE. Women and members of minority groups are encouraged to apply. Offers for this appointment are contingent upon a successful background screening. Candidates must meet all degree requirements prior to the start date of the position.

WCEE Postdoctoral Fellowship. The Weiser Center for Europe and Eurasia (WCEE) at the University of Michigan invites scholars with a recent PhD in social sciences, humanities, public policy, and related fields with expertise in Ukraine and Ukrainian affairs to apply for a two-year WCEE Postdoctoral Fellowship, from August 2025 to July 2027. WCEE Postdoctoral Fellows are expected to focus on their own research, participate in the center's events, present at least one public lecture during their two-year fellowship, and teach one course per year at the University of Michigan while in full-time residency. Eligibility is restricted to applicants who have obtained their PhD no earlier than January 1, 2023. Current doctoral candidates are eligible to apply but must have defended and filed their dissertations by July 31, 2025. Apply at <http://apply.interfolio.com/146559>.

AD POLICY STATEMENT

Most job discrimination is illegal, and open hiring on the basis of merit depends on fair practice in recruitment, thereby ensuring that all professionally qualified persons may obtain appropriate opportunities. The AHA will not accept a job listing that (1) contains wording that either directly or indirectly links race, color, national origin, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, ideology, political affiliation, age, or disability to a specific job offer; or (2) contains wording requiring applicants to submit special materials for the sole purpose of identifying the applicant's race, color, national origin, sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, ideology, political affiliation, veteran status, age, or disability.

The AHA does make an exception to these criteria in three unique cases: (1) open listings for minority vita banks that are clearly not linked with specific jobs, fields, or specializations; (2) ads that require religious identification or affiliation for consideration for the position, a preference that is allowed to religious institutions under federal law; and (3) fellowship advertisements.

The AHA retains the right to refuse or edit all discriminatory statements from copy submitted to the Association that is not consistent with these guidelines or with the principles of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The AHA accepts advertisements from academic institutions whose administrations are under censure by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), but requires that this fact be clearly stated. Refer to www.aaup.org/our-programs/academic-freedom/censure-list for more information.

For further details on best practices in hiring and academic employment, see the AHA's Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct, historians.org/standards; Guidelines for First-Round Interviews, historians.org/hiring; and Policy on Advertisements, historians.org/adpolicy.

ELIZABETH A. LEHFELDT

CONVENT TABLA

Part wall calendar, part database, this early modern painted wood convent *tabla* was meant to be hung on a wall—as it is now in the small museum at the convent of San Joaquín and Santa Ana in Valladolid, Spain. There is no label describing it, and the viewer is left to discern its meaning. Close examination reveals it to be a repository of the sacred obligations of the convent. Its use and display allowed the nuns to assert their fundamental role in the city's spiritual life.

The center panel's text is an early 18th-century accounting of the masses that the convent's nuns were required to observe for donors each year. As an act of memorialization and to ensure the peace of dead souls, it was customary for the Catholic faithful to commission masses. The chosen institution received an endowment to fund these observances, which were performed by a priest within its church. Additional clues to the *tabla*'s meaning come from the composite of both printed and handwritten (in several different hands) sheets of paper, affixed to the three boards with nails. The papers on the side panels appear especially worn—perhaps because they would have suffered the most wear and tear as the triptych folded open and closed. The ability to both attach and remove these papers, though, suggests the possibility of updating the information—a kind of bulletin board. Thus, the contents of the *tabla* were provisional; at the same time, they speak to the enduring obligations and spiritual identity of the convent.

Early modern European society routinely entrusted convents with prayers and masses, and this *tabla* would have been an important memory device to help meet these obligations. For nuns, who were denied sacramental or other more active service roles outside the convent, these responsibilities held a particular sacred significance and allowed them to forge relationships with local patrons. The bequests that secured these masses would have begun transactionally. Behind each name and mass listed on the *tabla* was a deeper paper trail, a will or contract prepared by a notary. Convent archives collected such documents (some are even referenced by number on the *tabla*),

but the *tabla* provided a succinct accounting of actionable items—in this case, requests for masses. The most essential information was pulled from the bequests, listed on a sheet of paper, and attached to the *tabla*. Masses often transcended generations, with many requested for perpetuity. Nuns present at the original declaration of the bequest would not be there decades later. New requests were always coming in—thus the need to update and replace the sheets of paper. In all these ways, the *tabla* was a valuable and adaptable reminder.


One could imagine, though, the use of an alternative, smaller memory device. A small book that could be consulted, for example (and we know that nuns kept informal account books and other tallies like this). This *tabla*, however, is large—at least three feet tall—with painted illustrations atop each panel. The penmanship is neat and careful. It was meant for display. It was likely hung in a semiprivate space like the sacristy, a reminder of devotional obligations to both the nuns and the priests who performed the masses. Nuns, as women, could not wield this sacramental power. But were the *tabla* only meant as a memory device, it would not require this kind of presentation. The *tabla* was not just a tally; it served another purpose.

Despite not being able to perform the masses themselves, with the *tabla*, the nuns could visibly assert their part in this sacred responsibility. Donors could endow masses at any number of religious institutions. Valladolid was replete with churches, monasteries, and even other convents. But the donors listed on the *tabla* chose *this* convent as the place that would protect their souls and legacies and those of their beloved relatives. The *tabla* serves as a declaration that transcends the ecclesiastical limitations placed on nuns. Its creation and display materially attest to the nuns' enduring roles as vital participants in the spiritual economy of the community. **P**

Elizabeth A. Lehfeltdt is professor of history at Cleveland State University and was vice president of the AHA's Teaching Division in 2016–19.



Elizabeth A. Lehfeltdt



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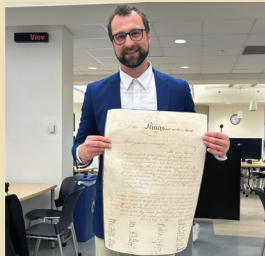
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