

Reviews

Real War vs. Reel War: Veterans, Hollywood, and WWII, by Suzanne Broderick. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015. 157 pages. \$30.00, cloth.

As a survey of *The History Teacher* and other historical journals will attest, the study of cinema has found a place in historical scholarship and the history curriculum. In *Real War vs. Reel War*, Suzanne Broderick, who teaches an interdisciplinary course on film and American history at Illinois State University, examines how Hollywood has depicted the Second World War. Broderick is primarily concerned with investigating whether Hollywood portrayals of the conflict are generally historically accurate, testing the accuracy of selected films, most of which were made during or shortly after the war, with veterans and working women from the World War II era.

Harry Miller, a combat veteran of the war in Europe, examined the film *Battleground* (1949) and discovered its depiction of the Battle of the Bulge to be surprisingly realistic. Miller appreciated that it did not romanticize the conflict and captured the exhaustion of soldiers. For the ground war in the Pacific, Broderick examines *Guadalcanal Diary* (1943), *Back to Bataan* (1945), and *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949) through the eyes of infantryman Lynn Simpson, who gave all three films high marks for historical accuracy. Broderick acknowledges that films made during the war certainly employed racist stereotypes of Japanese, but nevertheless fails to consider the extent to which these portrayals of the Japanese as subhuman and as the perpetrators of atrocities paved the way for the Japanese American internment camps and eventual deployment of the atomic bomb.

Broderick gives considerable attention, as did Hollywood, to the air war. Naval aircraft carrier pilot Jim Hoisington discusses *Wing and a Prayer* (1944), finding that it did a good job of portraying daily life on a World War II carrier, despite having a rather ludicrous plot. B-17 bomber pilot Jim Oberman was impressed with the documentary *The Memphis Belle: A Story of a Flying Fortress* (1944), but found the fictionalized remake *Memphis Belle* (1990) to be somewhat contrived. Oberman was most enthusiastic about *Twelve O'Clock High* (1949), arguing that it was a testament to “the terror experienced and bravery exhibited by the boys who ‘rained bombs’ over Germany” (p. 53). The pilots and Broderick, however,

pay little attention to civilian casualties or question whether bombing was actually effective in reducing enemy morale. B-17 copilot Ernest Thorp, who was shot down and imprisoned by the German Luftwaffe, maintains that the big-budget Hollywood production *The Great Escape* (1963) resonated with his experience of American and British officers constantly making escape plans. Thorp nevertheless observes that the Germans would have never tolerated the rebellious actions of Captain Virgil Hilts (played by Steve McQueen), and believes that the film fails to adequately convey the drain upon German resources that the escape constituted.

Real War vs. Reel War essentially fails to capture the World War II experience for racial minorities, but there is a nice chapter on the Navajo Code Talkers, such as Thomas Begay, who found *Windtalkers* (2002) to be a falsified account of their war experience. The film focuses upon Joe Enders (played by Nicolas Cage), assigned as a bodyguard to Navajo code talker Ben Yahzee (played by Adam Beach), yet expected to kill Yahzee if the Navajo is in danger of being captured and the code compromised. Begay and others deny the presence of bodyguards, concluding that the “film revolves around a white Marine’s haunting demons; the code talkers are simply a background presence” (p. 91). The code talkers, however, were enthusiastic regarding *True Whispers: The Story of the Navajo Code Talkers* (2002), a documentary in which they actively participated.

The final participant chapter concentrates upon women who sought factory employment during the war. Marge Mehlberg and Lucille Broderick examined *Tender Comrades* (1943) and *Since You Went Away* (1944), concluding that they captured the sense of sacrifice expected by wartime women. Additionally, the more recent *Swing Shift* (1984) got the look of the 1940s right, but the working females in the film had far more free time than the actual women experienced.

Broderick’s approach of investigating how veterans perceived Hollywood’s portrayal of the war is valuable. Her sample, nevertheless, is very limited, and would benefit from the inclusion of military women, black Americans, Hispanics, Jews, and Japanese Americans. Many veterans testify to the authenticity of Steven Spielberg’s *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), but one also ponders how veterans might respond to Clint Eastwood’s *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006), telling the battle from the Japanese perspective. Although Broderick’s book is somewhat narrow and might ask some tougher questions of film texts and her participants, it is a solid contribution to film scholarship. Broderick avoids jargon that might confuse more general readers, and the direct style of her prose makes *Real War vs. Reel War* a text that historians might employ in the undergraduate classroom.

Sandia Preparatory School

Ron Briley

Children and Youth during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, edited by James Marten. New York: New York University Press, 2014. 297 pages. \$79.00, cloth. \$27.00, paper.

In *Children and Youth during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, editor James Marten has assembled a diverse collection of essays, most of which deal with

some aspect of social reform related to American young people, as well as a small selection of related historical documents. While most of the essays focus on the urban Northeast or Midwest, the South and West are not entirely neglected. Among the reforms addressed in the essays are those pertaining to education and Americanization, recreation, child marriage and adolescent sexuality, and child labor. Notably absent is any significant attention to the juvenile court movement, although Marten does briefly address that subject in his introduction.

The essays, of which some focus primarily on young people as objects of reform and some on ways in which they exerted agency in their lives, include five dealing with educational reforms and related Americanization and recreational programs. Two essays evaluate the roles specific institutions played in Americanization through education. Claire Gallagher's essay on the education of immigrant children at Ellis Island notes the significance of religious organizations' efforts to Americanize the children of new immigrants in the early twentieth century. Similarly, Fawn-Amber Montoya's essay examines the Americanizing role played by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company's "Sociological Department," which designed an educational curriculum for the children of its workers. Two additional essays focus on the agency of immigrant youth in educational settings, with James Schmidt emphasizing student and parental resistance to corporal punishment in the schools, using legal challenges in the nation's courts, and Erika Jackson analyzing the leading role played by a group of Scandinavian youth in establishing a gymnasium in their Chicago-area college. Recreation reform is also the subject of Deborah Valentine's analysis of the origins and evolution of the playground movement in Philadelphia; in the only essay to deal significantly with African American young people, she argues that after a period of significant interracial cooperation in the nineteenth century, black children were later deliberately excluded by Progressive-era settlement leaders.

Two essays focus primarily on reforms pertaining to gender, with Mary Linehan examining the choices young women in Gilded Age Chicago made about their sexual behavior, and Nicholas Syrett focusing on the turn-of-the-century debate in the courts over states' age-of-consent laws and child marriages. Both authors emphasize the extent to which young people sought control over decisions affecting their own futures, often bringing them into conflict with reformers. Gwendolyn Alphonso's essay on child labor regulation also focuses on a national policy debate, examining the sectional divide in Congress concerning whether child laborers, particularly those in the South, were vulnerable individuals requiring government intervention on their behalf or were instead integral elements of a family economy. Anya Jabour's biographical essay on the impact of family background on reformer Sophonisba Breckinridge also grapples with sectional influences. Breckinridge, born and raised in Kentucky, later attended Wellesley College in Massachusetts and became an academic and noted social reformer at the University of Chicago, where she embraced many of the reforms addressed in this volume.

The two remaining essays focus on Progressive-era fiction. Sarah Clere's essay on the *Little Colonel* children's book series argues that the books provided young white women with evolving models for female reform activity, although the books' stereotyped black characters demonstrate no corresponding evolution. The essay by John James and Tom Ue on George Willard, the protagonist in Sherwood

Anderson's Progressive-era novel *Winesburg, Ohio*, fits less comfortably into this volume, as its focus on small-town Midwestern life does not grapple with the debates and reforms of those decades.

These scholarly essays are followed by a diverse collection of documents related to the essays' subjects, including articles from Milwaukee high school students' newspapers, court testimony related to child labor in southern textile mills, a study of juvenile recreation habits from Cleveland, and a survey of Dallas newsboys' recreational preferences. The inclusion of these primary sources enhances the value of this volume for the classroom, as do the "Questions for Consideration" included in the volume.

This book will be of interest to those teaching graduate or advanced undergraduate seminars on the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, on the history of social reform in America, or on the history of childhood and adolescence. Individual essays, namely those by Linehan, Jabour, Syrett, and Clere, could be incorporated into courses focusing on gender or women's history. While not all the essays in this volume are as thoroughly grounded in existing historiography as they could be, taken together, they offer an insightful window into the history of American reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Western Illinois University

Virginia R. Boynton

Bending Toward Justice: The Voting Rights Act and the Transformation of American Democracy, by Gary May. New York: Basic Books, 2015. 336 pages. \$28.99, cloth. \$23.95, paper.

The 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA) is as American as baseball and apple pie. Transformative and popular, the legislation has also received renewed attention as part of the Great Society's silver anniversary. These scholarly treatments have arrived none too soon. Barack Obama's landmark presidency should remind even the most casual of observers that LBJ's legislation ushered in a civil rights revolution.

In a field crowded with big, fat books and taut narratives, the VRA has earned scant notice in relation to its importance. Its sexier, yet much less monumental Great Society cousins have earned scads more scholarly treatments. Gary May aims to redress that issue. A Professor at the University of Delaware, the award-winning specialist in modern United States political history is suited for the task.

Versed in both the high politics and grassroots activism of the era, May offers a history that combines the "struggles of ordinary people" with those of the elite. The product is a comprehensive narrative. This focus is proper for a history of the VRA. Indeed, bottom-up activism, congressional intrigue, and presidential leadership comprised the unique calculus that led to the legislation's passage.

For those well versed in civil rights history, the early portions of May's work break little new interpretive ground. The prologue establishes the work's general tenor. The author succinctly explains the Voting Rights Act's significance and briskly moves into a narrative that places equal weight upon lesser-known civil

rights luminaries, such as Bernard Lafayette, alongside the likes of MLK and LBJ. Through this, the reader understands that locals had established the infrastructure for the movement that King mobilized in August 1965.

By turning his narrative (partially) away from King and toward local activists, the author is able to paint a fuller picture of the Selma movement and obstacles encountered. Indeed, May paints compelling episodes that bring the reader into the thicket and high drama of the moment. The author's narrative verve is the work's central strength. May brings the rich cast of characters to life, sets the scene, and builds the tension.

Thankfully, May goes beyond the traditional civil rights narrative: King marches, Johnson legislates, and Americans change. More than one-quarter of the work is devoted to the legislation's implementation and evolution. Hogsheads of ink have been spilled on the bill's roots and passage. Strangely, few scholars have explored the bill's enactment and development. More than any other piece of Great Society legislation, the VRA bears LBJ's personal stamp. Audacious in scope and monumental in impact, it transformed American politics because Johnson enacted a powerful, top-down law that reached from the Oval Office to every tiny, impoverished polling place across the South.

May's work details the lesser-known 1970, 1975, and 1982 renewal fights and resulting changes in the legislation. The author shows that congressional fights to renew the legislation in the 1970s were hard fought, but that a pro-voting rights consensus slowly emerged. Indeed, by 1982, it was Republicans who forced a reluctant Ronald Reagan to sign an enhanced VRA extension. The 1982 VRA extension is quite probably the most underappreciated juncture in the legislation's history. The author details the political fight that produced an augmented voting rights measure. It is at this juncture that May missed a crucial opportunity to explain how the legislation wrought unintended consequences. By the 1980s, Southern Democrats actively courted the black vote. From John Stennis and Strom Thurmond to—yes—George Wallace, former segregationists relied upon the black vote for victory. Possessing political power, Southern African Americans did not, however, gain office beyond the local level. Thus, Congress tinkered with the 1982 VRA to allow for the creation of majority-minority districts that would elevate blacks into the upper echelons of power. Thanks to these revisions, African Americans today hold congressional and state legislative seats throughout the South. This happy outcome came with a cost: a racially polarized two-party system.

That the VRA spawned a civil rights revolution is beyond question. The original act's morality and democratic *bona fides* remain. The legislation is not, however, beyond reproach. May fails to explore the unintended consequences and the very real debate surrounding the legislation's necessity in the twenty-first century. Because the book is well written, and as comprehensive as any relatively brief tome could be, the work is ideal for undergraduates. Unfortunately, the author never explores the nooks and crannies to complicate what is a compelling story. This is unfortunate. The VRA has a wonderfully moral, intricate, and ironic history. It deserves a book that is both laudatory and complicated.

Reading, Thinking, and Writing about History: Teaching Argument Writing to Diverse Learners in the Common Core Classroom, Grades 6-12, by Chauncey Monte-Sano, Susan De La Paz, and Mark Felton. New York: Teachers College Press, 2014. 228 pages. \$31.95, paper.

As history teachers scramble to gather materials to teach Common Core State Standards (CCSS), publishers race to meet this need. Sifting through the myriad of new resources to find what actually enhances the teaching and learning process can be quite a challenge. Upon discovering *Reading, Thinking, and Writing about History*, history teachers might be inclined to repeat the words of miners who discovered gold near Sutter's Mill by exclaiming, "Eureka! I have found it." The promise inherent in the book's title, of being able to teach argumentative writing to diverse learners while aligning their curriculum with Common Core State Standards, is an ambitious one for sure; however, it is one that the authors are able to achieve within the course of their 228-page tome.

The appeal of *Reading, Thinking, and Writing about History* for classroom teachers resides in the scaffolding of skills throughout the book. Specifically, six different historical events are introduced, each guided by an essential question. The student in each case must then analyze the historical evidence in order to arrive at their own conclusions through writing. This may appear daunting when teaching students of various academic abilities; however, if the teacher follows the format in the book, they will find the logical design always begins with students writing an introduction and a conclusion. Additional skills, such as contextualizing and evaluating the author's evidence, are then demonstrated by planning rebuttal paragraphs and composing a full essay.

The incorporation of actual writing samples is also extremely helpful in guiding students through the writing process. Of particular utility is the feature in each of the six historical events/investigations, entitled "How Might Students Respond? Student Writing and Teacher Feedback." Often, teachers read about innovative pedagogical approaches, and then they internalize how this might work in their particular classroom. While the internalizing may still occur, some of the guesswork is eliminated as a result of the discussion provided in this section of the book.

Perhaps the only feature of the book that falls short of the authors' intent is the section entitled "Lesson Plans and Materials." While there is nothing technically wrong, from a curriculum design perspective, with the lesson plans, the traditional or basic design is not in keeping with the focus of the book—i.e., on the methodology of presenting argumentative writing by analyzing sources to answer/explore essential questions such as "Did the Alien and Sedition Acts Violate the U.S. Constitution?"

The foreword by Sam Wineburg, however, provides a compelling rationale for the approach used in *Reading, Thinking, and Writing about History*, and a discussion of the need to "demystify" the writing process in history education through the scaffolding of the tools or skills necessary to achieve this end. Once more, Wineburg emphasizes the importance of historical thinking—specifically, historical argumentation—which, when taught well in the classroom, yields improved student writers, as well as more thoughtful and discerning citizens.

Students who have engaged in the type of activities found in *Reading, Thinking, and Writing about History* are likely to be more comfortable with the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test. For example, the practice tests that PARCC has released in English/Language Arts requires that students examine two different texts, answer questions, complete short essays, and—by the third unit test—compose an essay based on their analysis of evidence. The skill set required in the PARCC is the same as that which the authors' of this book emphasize in their six historical investigations, which call on students to engage in historical thinking and argumentative writing.

Reading, Thinking, and Writing about History is listed as suitable for students in grades six through twelve. While the content and activities may be adapted for use at all of secondary grade levels (6-12), it is perhaps best aligned with curricular expectations—i.e., CCSS and national standards of grades 8-11. Regardless of the grade level in which this text is being utilized, history teachers will find it to be of tremendous utility in teaching students how to become independent readers, thinkers, and writers, by conducting investigations into historical events that still affect their lives today.

Bradley University

D. Antonio Cantù

Laboratory of Learning: HBCU Laboratory Schools and Alabama State College Lab High in the Era of Jim Crow, by Sharon Gay Pierson. New York: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2014. 308 pages. \$159.95, cloth. \$42.95, paper.

Laboratory of Learning, by Sharon Gay Pierson is a significant resource for historians of education in that it adds valuable new information about a topic that is not generally well known—the existence and impact of laboratory high schools created for the training of teachers and for college preparation of students at historically black colleges and universities in the South during the time of Jim Crow. Although traditional histories of the education of African Americans detail the dismal quality of educational opportunities for African Americans in the South during this time frame, Pierson's research makes known a missing part of the story, one that provides readers "a richer, more complete, historical narrative" (p. 2).

Part I, Chapter One sets the historical background for the development of laboratory high schools in that it employs a broad lens to trace the development of secondary education for African Americans in the South from Reconstruction through the first half of the twentieth century. The author provides extensive details in reviewing the diverse ways in which Southern whites exerted control over the educational system for African Americans, exploring issues such as the lack of schools in many areas of the South, federal and state legislation mandating separate schools when schools were built, and the inequities in funding for black education which affected facilities, materials, and teacher salaries. The beliefs of many Southern whites about the role of the Negro in society even influenced

the curriculum in many schools with the dominant view that African American education should be about manual labor and practical skills, not college preparation.

Also included is an interesting analysis of historiographical note as the author examines the differing perspectives of historians of the time and the impact of their work on modern scholars. Weaving in the voices of key authors and historians of the time, such as Thomas Jesse Jones, W. E. B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Carter G. Woodson, and William Beverly, Pierson notes the influence of particular reports about black education while also addressing issues of bias and accuracy. As a result, the reader begins to take note of the complexity of multiple voices attempting to address the issue of what would be the appropriate education for African Americans, and how the writings of one man in particular—Jesse Jones—would influence both “the direction of African American education for years” (p. 30) and accounts written by recent historians as well.

The author continues in Chapter Two by examining the development of the laboratory high schools created by historically black colleges and universities spanning the period from 1920 until 1960 and their connection to the Progressive movement. Educational historians have long demonstrated that Progressive educational theories, particularly the ideas of John Dewey and the concept of his laboratory for learning and teaching at the University of Chicago, had significant impact on schools throughout the country. It is within this context, Pierson contends, that black educators throughout the South adapted Progressive ideas to the particular needs of African Americans, including the creation of laboratory high schools modeled after Dewey’s lab school and connected to universities, providing both “teacher training for black schools and college preparatory education for African American students” (Foreword).

In Part II, Pierson provides an in-depth analysis of the Alabama State College Lab High School in Montgomery, Alabama, as a microcosm for the laboratory school movement in the South. First, she places the story of the Lab School in the context of the history of the Alabama State College, tracing its development from 1867 and examining all aspects of the college leadership, faculty, curriculum, etc. Then, using a case study methodology, she gives voice to those who have been influenced by the “laboratory of learning.” Interviews with over fifty former Alabama State College Lab students and teachers provide engaging personal stories of the power of this particular educational experience and how it influenced generations of African American leaders and professionals in all walks of life.

Laboratory of Learning would be a valuable addition to a History of Education classroom, either at the undergraduate or graduate levels. Although it includes a survey of African American secondary education in the South from Reconstruction through the 1950s, this well-researched and detailed volume provides clear evidence for transforming traditional concepts of black education during the era of Jim Crow. It makes known the role of African Americans in creating and sustaining quality educational experiences and provides readers with an example of agency and voice where traditional accounts do not. In many ways, this volume sets the stage for the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and could be used in just such an exploration by students at any level.

Stephen F. Austin State University

Linda Jones Black

Americans in Dissent: Thirteen Influential Social Critics of the Nineteenth Century, by Steven L. Piott. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014. 243 pages. \$85.00, cloth.

In *Americans in Dissent: Thirteen Influential Social Critics of the Nineteenth Century*, Steven L. Piott profiles reformers from temperance, women's rights, the labor movement, and civil rights. His reformers range from activist journalists like Jacob Riis and T. Thomas Fortune to scholarly diplomats like George Perkins Marsh, who linked environmental degradation to the decline of civilizations. Piott examines the changes that transformed the nation and the worker: industrialization and the shift from artisan to wage labor. Piott's reformers struggled over the role of government and whether or not laissez-faire was compatible with a modern economy in which the small producer competes with major corporations. Piott's dissenting Americans worked to make the ideal of the "self-made man" a reality for all, including women, African Americans, and Native Americans.

Piott argues that the traditional dichotomy between antebellum and progressive era reformers is simplistic. Early nineteenth-century reformers, shaped by the Second Great Awakening, were guided by a perfectionist mentality that the individual can transform himself. Antebellum reformers believed moral suasion would guide the individual to the truth. Generally, these early reformers' efforts are contrasted with the progressive "realists," or "structuralists," of the late nineteenth century, who critiqued social institutions rather than push individuals to change their ways. Piott maintains that the reformers he has selected for this volume cannot be simply characterized as romantics or realists: "They were individuals who were ahead of their time in their grasp of the larger problems impacting American society such as industrialization, urbanization, population growth, immigration, and resource depletion" (p. 2). Idealists, like Sarah Bagely, worked to create a sense of solidarity among the women textile workers of Lowell, Massachusetts, while at the same time championing practical reforms like the ten-hour day. Frances Willard took advantage of traditional gender stereotypes that emphasized a domestic role for women to push for temperance reform, an issue that seemed particularly important for maintaining a happy home environment. Oliver Hudson Kelley's commitment to laissez-faire evolved to a belief in the efficacy of farmer cooperatives and government regulation to level the playing field between individual farmers and the banks and railroads. Piott's reformers defy easy characterization. They analyzed a variety of problems facing the American worker and proposed creative solutions to promote economic, social, and racial justice.

Piott uses his study of the reform movement to analyze the economic and social transformation taking place in American society: the proletarianization of the American worker, the rise of big business, and the mechanization of agriculture. These changes brought into question older ideas about self-reliance, laissez-faire, and the ability of the common man to succeed. Piott's reformers struggled over whether or not ordinary men and women could succeed on their own initiatives and hard work, or if the structure of the economy changed too much in favor of the large institution. Nineteenth-century reformers believed that cooperative efforts between labor and management, regulation of big business and finance,

an active labor movement, and new opportunities for women, African Americans, and Native Americans would keep the American dream alive.

William H. Sylvis, a Philadelphia iron molder and union organizer, is one of the reformers profiled by Piott. Sylvis is described as a “labor protagonist,” fighting to insure that industrialization benefited the workers as well as the bosses. Sylvis struggled with the question that dogged many nineteenth-century reformers: “how can progress and poverty coexist in a country rich in abundance?” (p. 53). Sylvis became a tireless union organizer, an innovator who introduced annual dues and a “compulsory per capita tax on members” to support a strike fund. He pushed for the eight-hour day and worked to replace the wage system with a more cooperative form of workplace organization. “Producer cooperatives” would, according to Sylvis, allow the workers—who created the wealth—to share the profits rather than be exploited by the wage system. Sylvis advocated for the inclusion of women in his organization, the National Labor Union. He was reluctant to enroll black workers in his union, but did recommend that local chapters have the option to allow black membership. His work suffered due to slowdowns in manufacturing in the years immediately after the Civil War and the difficulty for cooperative producers to raise capital. Sylvis’ approach to labor organization connected the spirit of antebellum reform with the practical reform efforts of the progressive era.

Many of the activists included in this volume will be new to United States history teachers. Piott includes well-known figures like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Helen Hunt Jackson, but he does teachers a service by introducing them to people like Thomas Skidmore, George Perkins Marsh, T. Thomas Fortune, Edward Bellamy, and others. Piott profiles their lives and their work. He places them in a larger context of reform in a changing America. His reformers span the nineteenth century and bridge the divide between the antebellum and progressive eras.

Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy

John Henderson

To Make Men Free: A History of the Republican Party, Heather Cox Richardson. New York: Basic Books, 2014. 393 pages. \$29.99, cloth.

In her new book on the history of the Republican Party, Heather Cox Richardson uses the GOP to trace the rise and decline of the United States. She argues that the party and the nation have wrestled with the same “central unresolved problem: the profound tension between America’s two fundamental beliefs, equality of opportunity and protection of property” (p. xi). In her view, Republicans have vacillated between progressive periods—under Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and Dwight D. Eisenhower—and regressive eras following those presidents. At their most progressive, Republicans “expanded the vote, regulated business, and raised taxes,” which led to wealth redistribution and a healthy economy (p. x). At their most regressive, they increased wealth disparity by helping the 1% increase their control of the nation, cut programs benefiting the less fortunate, and precipitated economic downturns.

The first phase of the Republican Party, under Lincoln's leadership, saw the GOP embrace the social elevation of African Americans and the permanency of the Union. The Reconstruction years, however, saw the party move away from its origins, as a group of Liberal Republicans sought to reinvigorate "the individualism that they argued was its original principle" (p. 96). In essence, Richardson argues, this faction of Republicans "legitimized" the rhetoric used by antebellum Democrats and exploited the racial and class fissures of American society by abandoning racial equality and tying themselves to industrialists who exploited workers (p. 106).

The second phase of the Republican Party's development, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, witnessed members such as Theodore Roosevelt rejecting its connections to big business and the corruption that accompanied those ties. From the perspective of these up-and-coming Republicans, "individual success in the industrial world depended on an active, rather than a passive government," one that could provide the safety net "that would enable individuals to succeed" (pp. 140-141). They embraced many of the Populist Party's tenets to build a socialist-democratic-republic. This vision eventually crumbled, as Democrats used similar ideas to seize control of the government in the 1910s. Republicans reacted by transforming from progressive activists to conservative obstructionists who stood in the way of the New Deal.

The third phase that Richardson describes is that of the mid-twentieth century. Dwight D. Eisenhower conceived of "an active American government [that] would promote a strong middle class" and "promote prosperity across the globe" (p. 221). According to Richardson, Eisenhower believed that humanity was at a crossroads and that the United States, via the Republican Party, could provide the blueprint for global salvation. This plan entailed "promot[ing] democracy...by showing its great ability to increase economic productivity and standards of living" (p. 225). Some Republicans, however, saw little difference between Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eisenhower's activism and "became convinced that both political parties had been hopelessly corrupted by communism" (p. 239). These "Movement Conservatives," as Richardson labels them, produced the modern-day Republican party in its paradoxical calls to use the federal government to promote their ideals: "big business, religion, and the military" (p. 307).

History educators will enjoy Richardson's book. She writes well and clearly, and she hews closely to her thesis. The requisite in-depth knowledge of American political, social, and economic history required to understand the nuances of the past 160 years limits the book's usefulness to K-12 educators, however. Only the most exceptional high school students would be able to use this book as a resource, as it requires a familiarity with United States history beyond the scope of most pre-collegiate students. What teachers will find helpful, though, is the way in which Richardson provides a broad framework within which to place the Republican Party and the nation's development. They should be able to use this book to help students understand change over time and political fluidity. This lesson seems especially pertinent given the ways in which the modern iterations of the Republicans and the Democrats co-opt one another's heritage—for example, both parties lay claim to being the intellectual progeny of Abraham Lincoln.

Using Richardson's thesis to outline the ways in which the Republican Party's name has remained static while its ideology and policies have changed provides an important lesson to the next generation of voters: partisan loyalty requires one to define the party's present-day principles, not those of the past.

Richardson has provided a one-volume overview of the Republicans that provokes thought. The Democratic Party lacks a comparable study, but whenever a historian decides to tackle the party of Andrew Jackson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Lyndon B. Johnson, s/he should use Richardson's work as a model.

Cumberland University

Mark R. Cheathem

Fighting over the Founders: How We Remember the American Revolution, by Andrew M. Schocket. New York: New York University Press, 2015. 253 pages. \$30.00, cloth.

Addressing more than 100 intensely engaged Sons of the American Revolution and Colonial Mayflower descendants on "The Many Faces of George Washington" last February convinced me of Andrew Schocket's central contention in *Fighting over the Founders*: we care passionately about the Founders—their ideas and values, actions, and even their appearance. At times, "we seem to be the only country whose citizens want to be in conversation with our founders, as though men dead for two centuries would still have much to tell us" (p. 6). Yet, Schocket argues, we see them only through the "haze" of our "own preconceptions and view of the world" (p. 3); try as we might, we can never find the Founders and end up only talking to ourselves.

Fighting over the Founders joins a rich historiographical tradition stretching from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* through recent studies of the construction of national identity and historical memory. Like his predecessors, Schocket interprets "the ability to claim an authoritative version of crucial national memories" as "powerful ammunition in fundamental debates. Defining memory defines the nation, and defining the nation means the privileging of some values and policies over others" (p. 7). *Fighting over the Founders* contributes to this historiography through a close examination of "Founders chic" in twenty-first-century American popular culture. Five successive chapters explore presidential campaign rhetoric, nonfiction bestsellers, museums and historical sites, television and film, constitutional originalists and re-enactors, to support the claim that "our recent rise in interest with the American Revolution coincides with anxieties concerning nationalism" following 9/11 (p. 7).

Schocket is a keen observer of popular culture and insights pop from his pages. Among the most notable are trenchant critiques of traditional gender norms and the "urge to submerge the unpleasant" (p. 73) in blockbuster biographies, public history sites' celebration of individuals and "the inevitability of the march of freedom" (p. 118), and screen portrayals of liberty without "structural racial, cultural, or economic constraints" (p. 151). Sympathetic portraits of rank-and-file

Tea Partiers (although not their leaders) and Revolutionary War re-enactors are unexpected and thought-provoking.

Less illuminating is the overarching analytical framework. Schocket argues that our “battles over the contemporary memory of the American Revolution serve as proxies for America’s contemporary political divide” (p. 4). From the moment he categorizes that political division as “essentialism” vs. “organicism,” he polarizes it. Essentialism “relies on the assumption that there was one American Revolution led by demigods, resulting in an inspired governmental structure and leaving a legacy from which straying would be treason and result in the nation’s ruin. The essentialist view suggests a concept of history as a single text with one discernible meaning and so is inherently conservative in its outlook and in its prescriptions for the Revolution’s contemporary lessons, which often emphasize private property, capitalism, traditional gender roles, and protestant Christianity” (p. 4). In the opposite corner, “organicists believe that Americans are ever in the process of trying to complete a Revolution that the founders left unfinished. They see themselves furthering the never-ending task of perfecting the union through an inclusive multiculturalism that looks to celebrate historical agency in the Revolutionary era and embodies, not eighteenth-century actualities, but the lofty words associated with the Declaration of Independence” (p. 5). On one side, conservatives worship demigods and fear treason and ruin; on the other, inclusive multiculturalists celebrate agency and seek to realize lofty goals. Such binary oppositions rarely lead to profound analytical insights; this one masks the complexities of individuals’ and groups’ multiple, contradictory uses of the Founders. Particularly problematic is the flattening/polarizing of presidential candidates’ rhetoric in chapter one, which tellingly omits third-party candidates. Without this dichotomous “scaffolding” (p. 12), a subtler overarching interpretation might have been created to accompany Schocket’s insightful close readings of popular culture.

Fighting over the Founders provides a provocative introduction to American popular culture’s fascination with the Founders at the beginning of the twenty-first century. I would not recommend it to students (the absence of citations, even for quotations, sets a poor example), but teachers tempted to assign a McCullough or Ellis biography should read Schocket first. While it will not help us to see the Founders more clearly or engage them in more meaningful conversation, it does uncover aspects of the “haze” of popular culture’s misconceptions and mystifications with which we—and our twenty-first-century students—must live.

San Diego State University

Eve Kornfeld

The Baron’s Cloak: A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution, by Willard Sunderland. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014. 344 pages. \$35.00, cloth.

“There he was, on stage for the whole world to see, pathetic shoulder boards and all: the wretched, eccentric representative of an outmoded world, about to get

the revolutionary comeuppance he so richly deserved” (p. 11). This compelling description of the way in which Baron Roman Feodorovich von Ungern-Sternberg (1886-1921) must have looked at the moment of his execution in Novonikolaevsk (present-day Novosibirsk) helps us imagine the life and times of this adventurous Baltic German aristocrat of the Russian Imperial Army in his infamous Mongolian cloak. Willard Sunderland’s book proves to be as multifarious as the Baron’s *deel* (Mongolian cloak). Both for a scholar and a teacher of Eurasia, this book will be an invaluable resource. Scholars of microhistory will find rich material in this multiethnic, multinational story of a man who crisscrossed the frontiers of the Russian, Habsburg, Ottoman, and Qing imperial territories in search of long-lost imperial glory only to perish in the hand of a Red Army executioner in September of 1921. Teachers of Eurasia, on the other hand, will take delight in the story of these eccentric albeit often objectionable deeds—his exoticization of his subjects, and his anti-Semitism—to demonstrate the complexities of the late imperial world through the eyes of an Orientalist.

The story of the Baron Ungern and his cloak represent well the multicultural human landscape of the late Russian Empire. The Mongolian *deel* is adorned with Russian epaulettes that reveal the baron’s crisscrossing of several imperial boundaries numerous times in his life, demanding the reader to consider locations that are not often juxtaposed. The *deel* is more than an ethnic garb; in the Baron’s case, awkwardly decorated with incongruous Western epaulettes, it represents not only an aspiration to belong, but also to dominate. One of the most exciting features of this story relates to the significance of the time period, which spans the complicated era when the unraveling of the Russian Empire took place. Sunderland helps the reader understand how important it is to study individual stories to learn about the bigger picture, in this case, the end of the Russian Empire.

Beginning in the Habsburg city of Graz in 1886, Ungern’s story unfolds for thirty-five years in Georgia, Estland (present-day Estonia), St. Petersburg, Manchuria, Trans-Baikal, the Amur, and Outer Mongolia. The baron trained as a Russian officer, served as a volunteer in the Russo-Japanese War in 1906, and later as an officer in the Cossack regiments until he fought the Bolsheviks under the warlord Ataman Semenov. This polyglot man of the imperial lands who lived and moved easily among the diverse peoples of Russia learned to be a loyal subject of the tsar while developing affinity toward all things “Asiatic.” His anti-Semitism demonstrates the absurdities and cruelties of emerging late imperial politics. Sunderland calls him a “transimperial” individual and successfully conveys the transimperial story of Central Eurasia through Ungern’s story (p. 8).

This fascinating book is not a biography, however. Sunderland contributes to the field of microhistory by focusing on a specific individual—in this case Ungern—without losing sight of the larger context, much like the studies on Arnaud du Tihl, a.k.a. Martin Guerre, a sixteenth-century French imposter; Domenico Scandella, a sixteenth-century Italian miller; and the several girls who took on the headscarf in twentieth-century France. Although Sunderland’s protagonist is ranked higher in his society than these individuals, his story is as extraordinary as theirs. Sunderland’s task was not easy because Ungern did not leave behind many documents. Therefore, the author uses the story of the empire

to convey Ungern's adventures and fate. Readers gain previously unavailable knowledge on seemingly peripheral yet essential places such as Trans-Baikal and Outer Mongolia and populations such as the Cossacks. Sunderland's intriguing account of Ungern's life offers a novel view of the late tsarist world as a place that struggled with drastic change toward imperialism, nationalism, modernity, reform, revolution, and demise of the old regime.

This is a book that benefits and pleases teachers like me, who are trying to break into the World History field without abandoning one's own training in a specific historical era or region. It offers a unique opportunity to invite students to examine the transimperial landscape between the European, Ottoman, and Qing neighbors. *Baron's Cloak* provides a cape that not only covered Ungern's shoulders, but also spread over Eurasia and its vigorous late imperial history. I highly recommend this book, as it is as dynamic as Baron's cloak.

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Ali İğmen

Dance Floor Democracy: The Social Geography of Memory at the Hollywood Canteen, by Sherrie Tucker. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014. 408 pages. \$94.95, cloth. \$26.95, paper.

Historian Sherrie Tucker's *Dance Floor Democracy* makes an important contribution to the social history of the United States during World War II by examining the role that the movie industry played in constructing a nostalgic narrative of a united citizenry, not only fighting for lofty ideals of democracy and freedom abroad, but also practicing them on the home front as well through the entertainment of American troops, specifically at the Hollywood Canteen nightclub from 1942-1945. She points out that "Stories of uncomplicated American goodness during World War II have played, and continue to play, a powerful role in constructing national memory and recruiting national identity, even for those too young to remember that war" (p. xx). Wartime movies reinforced this narrative. In *Hollywood Canteen* (1944), soldiers from working-class America get to dance with, be entertained by, and be waited on by Hollywood royalty before shipping off to their next battlefield. Tucker recounts a scene in which the character Sgt. Brooklyn Nolan (Dane Clark) exclaims: "You know, I don't want to get sloppy about this, but it kind of got me, all them famous people being friendly and democratic...Democracy!...That's what it all means, Slim! Everybody equal, like tonight! All them big shots, listening to little shots like me, and being friendly." Tucker continues, "Suddenly, his thoughts turn to his body, injured in battle. It turns out that democracy-as-friendliness not only feels great, it has tremendous healing properties for the individual, the military, and the nation" (p. xvi).

But as Tucker illustrates, how accurate was such a narrative? Much of the book focuses on the differing memories of people who were at the Hollywood Canteen, either as entertaining hosts and hostesses or as troops being entertained. While some (mostly white) remembered an absolutely democratic place where

race-mixing took place and was “no big deal,” African Americans and Mexican Americans remembered a wartime Los Angeles that was tainted by segregation and racism. African American Marine and actor Mel Bryant recalled: “The Hollywood Canteen is something to be remembered, and something to be regretted. It was a different thing, a wonderful thing to have a place where soldiers could go, but it wasn’t integrated in an equal way” (p. 157). Although Jim Crow era signs displaying “white only” or “colored only” were not part of the Hollywood Canteen experience, informal rules of segregation (not dancing or mixing across racial lines) were observed by most people who went or worked there. In addition to the racial boundaries that often had to be dealt with, gender stereotypes and expectations also proved problematic. Women who danced and entertained were often required to conform to the virtuous image of the “sweetheart back home” or risk being seen as “loose” and excluded from the Canteen altogether. Likewise, women in uniform were sometimes seen as unfeminine or lesbian and were often pushed into the balcony and away from the dance floor. Taken together, the numerous interviews paint a portrait of wartime Los Angeles that, although not as rigidly segregated as other parts of the country, was nevertheless a place where racial and gender boundaries were continually being challenged and negotiated. As if these numerous examples don’t illustrate the contradictions of a wartime United States supposedly fighting for democracy, the chapter titled “(Un)American Patrol” is an interesting read about the FBI’s wartime surveillance of the Hollywood Canteen to protect the nation from supposedly subversive activities.

Although *Dance Floor Democracy* is an important addition to the historiography of the United States during World War II, it is not intended for introductory undergraduate audiences. Parts of the book, especially the introduction, tend to be weighed down with discussions of dance and music theory that are difficult to understand for anyone who is not a specialist or graduate student in either of these fields. Despite these problems, *Dance Floor Democracy* is a valuable resource because it is a reminder of the difficulties associated with oral history. Over sixty years after the end of World War II, it should be no surprise that memories have faded, and it becomes clear that any number of people with the same experiences will see them differently over time. But as Tucker points out, “The significance of the Hollywood Canteen interviews is not in what they can reveal about ‘what really happened,’ but in the ways people remember and narrate themselves in relation to such a narrow and persistent available framework. Often, narrators and interviewees identified with the familiar version yet in some way or another also identified limitations in the democratic fairy tale” (p. xxiii).

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Peter Haro



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**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation
(All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)**

1. Publication Title The History Teacher	2. Publication Number 0 0 1 8 - 2 7 4 5	3. Filing Date 1 Oct 2015
4. Issue Frequency Quarterly	5. Number of Issues Published Annually 4	6. Annual Subscription Price US: \$38 indv; \$65 inst For: \$55 indv; \$85 inst
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (<i>Not printer</i>) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®) Society for History Education, Inc., CSULB, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach, L.A. Co., CA 90840-1601		Contact Person Elisa Herrera Telephone (<i>Include area code</i>) 562-985-2573
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (<i>Not printer</i>) Society for History Education, Inc., CSULB, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90840-1601		
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (<i>Do not leave blank</i>)		
Publisher (<i>Name and complete mailing address</i>) Tim Keirn, President Society for History Education, Inc., CSULB, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90840-1601		
Editor (<i>Name and complete mailing address</i>) Jane Dabel Society for History Education, Inc., CSULB, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90840-1601		
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16. Electronic Copy Circulation

13. Publication Title The History Teacher	14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below August 2015		
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation			
a. Total Number of Copies (<i>Net press run</i>)	Average No Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months 1 995	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date 1 785	
b. Paid Circulation <i>(By Mail and Outside the Mail)</i>	Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies) (1) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies) (2) Paid Distribution Outside the Mail Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS (3) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail) (4) Total Paid Distribution (<i>Sum of 1b(1), (2), (3), and (4)</i>)	1 585 0 0 1 53	1 317 0 0 1 66
c. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution <i>(Sum of 1c(1), (2), (3), and (4))</i>	Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541 (1) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541 (2) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail) (3) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (<i>Carriers or other means</i>) (4) Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (<i>Sum of 1c(1), (2), (3), and (4)</i>)	61 0 157 0	1 738 0 216 0
d. Total Distribution <i>(Sum of 1b and 1c)</i>	Total Distribution (Sum of 1b and 1c) Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))	1 956 39	1 758 27
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Date

1 Oct 2015

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