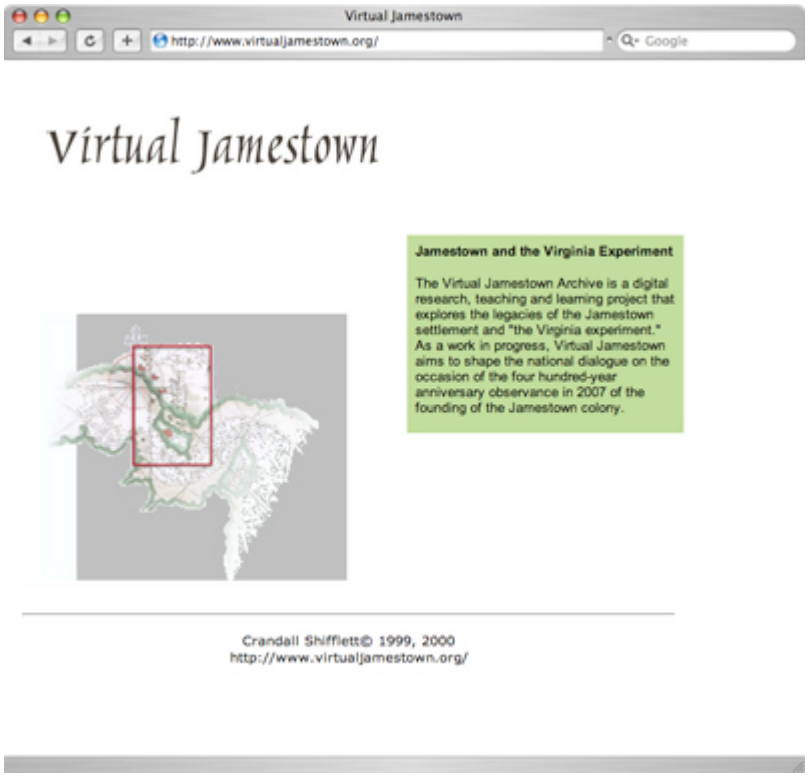
Virtual Jamestown



The Common-place Web Library reviews and lists online resources and Websites likely to be of interest to our viewers. Each quarterly issue will feature one or more brief site reviews. The library itself will be an ongoing enterprise with regular new additions and amendments. So we encourage you to check it frequently. At the moment, the library is small, but with your help we expect it to grow rapidly. If you have suggestions for the Web Library, or for site reviews, please forward them to the Administrative Editor.

http://www.virtualjamestown.org/

"Virtual Jamestown" offers visitors the opportunity to delve into the history of English exploration and colonizing efforts in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. With the spotlight on Jamestown as the four hundredth anniversary of its settlement nears, sites such as this one can serve a useful function as online archives and sources of curriculum materials for teachers. Although the site is far from exhaustive in its coverage, it contains images and documents that can be usefully mined.

The images on "Virtual Jamestown" are wide ranging and include a collection of twenty-two John White drawings. These watercolors—among seventy inspired by scenes and individuals White, an artist and cartographer, observed during his

1585 voyage to America and subsequent thirteen-month stay in Roanoke—are paired with engravings produced by Theodor De Bry. Based on White's original works, these engravings were created for inclusion in mathematician Thomas Hariot's 1590 account of the voyage he and White took to America.

A collection of artifacts from seventeenth-century Virginia provides additional visual and material texture. Provided by Jamestown Rediscovery, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the online archive of objects includes such unusual items as a silver ear picker, designed to resemble a "sea rhinoceros" or dolphin. Featuring an ear scooper at one end and a tool for tooth and nail cleaning at the other, this item, at once utilitarian and ornate, was likely displayed on a chain or girdle and worn decoratively by its owner. There is also a seventeenth-century chamber pot, a Spanish olive jar (named so for its shape rather than its likely contents), Indian projectile points, and the skeleton of a man shot through the knee, whose identity and race continue to be the subject of debate.

Original maps offer visitors insight into seventeenth-century representations of the area, and a zoom function enables an up-close examination of John Smith's 1608 map of Virginia. On the interactive Jamestown page are two maps that generate displays of Smith's explorations of the region and a virtual tour of the fort. The "Patterns of Settlement" map allows visitors to explore the shifting populations and sites of indigenous and colonial residents of the region in 1607, 1619, 1624, and 1634. More detail about who constituted that colonial population is available in the census records, such as the 1608 supply list—which provides names and occupations of new arrivals, like perfumer Robert Alberton—and the 1624-5 muster records, which can be searched to generate demographic data about households.

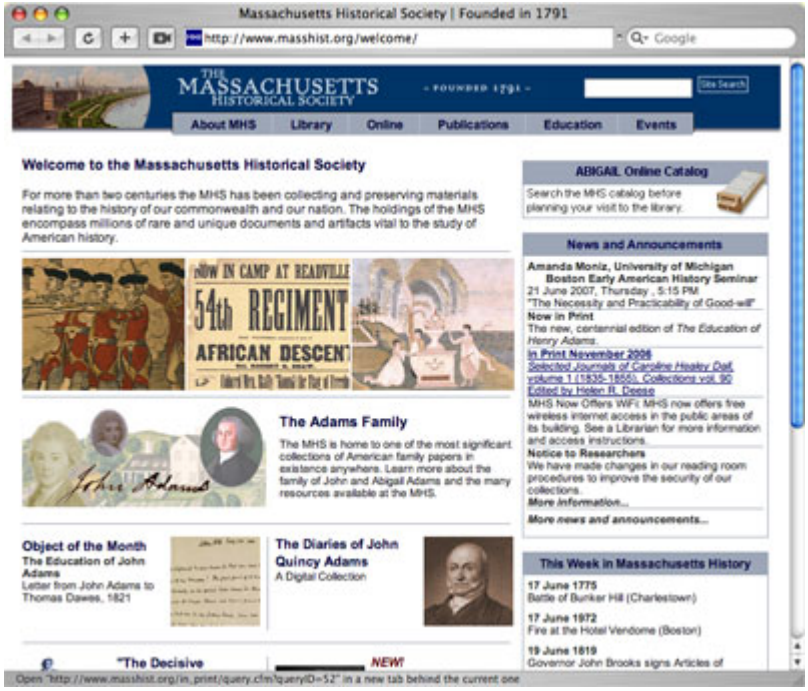
One valuable database on the site contains demographic information from the contracts of over fifteen thousand indentured servants from three different seventeenth-century registers and one eighteenth-century register. The contracts can be searched by name, hometown, destination, and occupation. For example, using *Sheffield* as the servant's place of origin generates one record, that of Benjamin Hoyland, a tallow chandler headed for four years of service in Jamaica. Using *female* and *Virginia* as qualifiers produces a list of over one thousand women's names, including Mary Giles, a spinster from Salwarpe, Worchestershire, whose agent, a surgeon named Richard Allen, arranged for her to serve for five years in Virginia in exchange for her passage in 1654. Only two contracts, both for men, are reproduced.

The "Virtual Jamestown" project received a 1999 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for its development, with additional support from several state entities. A collaborative project of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, the University of Virginia, and the Virginia Center for Digital History, "Virtual Jamestown" has apparently undergone limited development since 2000. There are numerous references on the site to items still under construction but no apparent recent updates to indicate when these will be up

and running. Nonetheless, the site offers engaging and interesting materials. For those who wish to identify additional databases and teaching resources relevant to Virginia's history, consult Virginia 400: Your Online Guide to 400 Years of Virginia History, 1607-2007, a clearinghouse site with a good annotated list of helpful Websites, produced by the Center for History and New Media (see *Common-place* Web Library review, vol.6, no.4, July 2006).

This article originally appeared in issue 7.2 (January, 2007).

The Massachusetts Historical Society



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The Massachusetts Historical Society
http://www.masshist.org/

Since its founding in 1791, the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS) has been devoted to the collection and preservation of documents pertaining to American history. With vast manuscript holdings, the MHS is an important research center, as well as home to the Adams Papers project and a variety of other editorial and publication ventures. Its Website is a model for other historical societies.

Attractive and straightforward design, clear navigation, and a substantial online archive make the MHS Website a useful starting point for members of the public, teachers, and scholars alike. Among the many "Online" offerings is the "Object of the Month," which draws inspiration from the goal of founder Jeremy Belknap to develop an American history cabinet of curiosities. The background information on this section notes that in response to his appeal for contributions, Belknap received ostrich eggs and a fish hook made from a bone of Captain Cook. He would undoubtedly be pleased to see his idea carried on with, for example, a glass bottle containing tea leaves collected on the shore of Dorchester Neck the morning after the Boston Tea Party.

Most impressive of the valuable "Online" exhibitions is "The Adams Family Papers: an Electronic Archive." These selections from the Adams Papers—the most important collection at the MHS, with over a quarter million documents—contain fully searchable correspondence between John and Abigail Adams, with over one thousand letters spanning the period 1762-1801. Viewers can also read the over fourteen thousand pages of John Quincy Adams's fifty-one-volume diary and the three-part autobiography his father wrote.

Another highlight of the "Online" section is "African Americans and the End of Slavery in Massachusetts," which presents 117 documents from the MHS holdings addressing slavery in Massachusetts from the late seventeenth century through its abolition under the state constitution in the 1780s. Included are facsimile images and transcripts of items such as the *Laws of the African Society, Instituted at Boston, Anno Domini 1796*, a pamphlet produced by African Americans in Boston who created a mutual aid organization; the 1728-1733 account book of Hugh Hall, a Boston merchant engaged in the slave trade; and, in a section on Phillis Wheatley, images of her writing desk, poems, and letters by and about her.

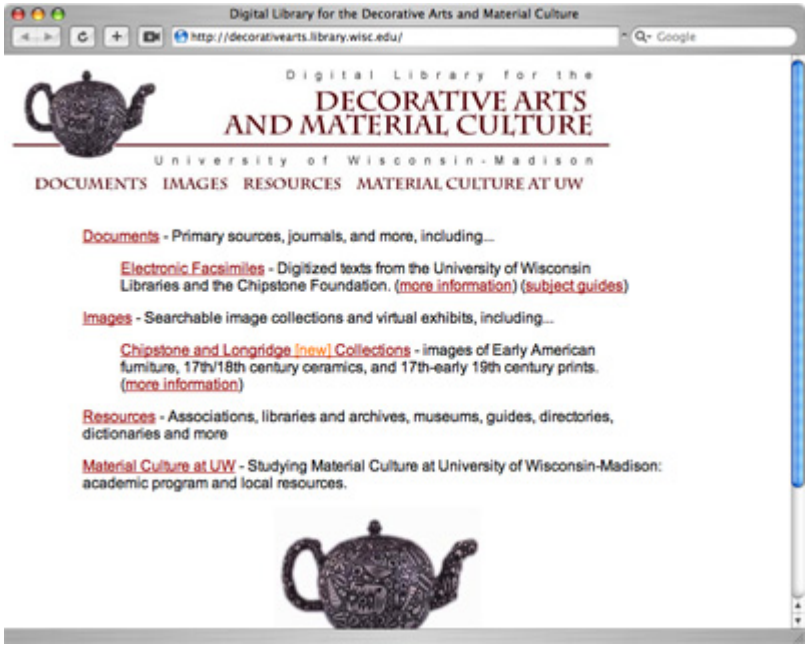
The "Education" section leads visitors to several items of interest, including resources for teachers and students, such as a fifth-grade lesson on the American Revolution through the eyes of Abigail Adams; a collection of accounts, maps, and images pertaining to the Battle of Bunker Hill; and a group of resources on John Quincy Adams, entitled "One President's Adolescence,"

which features documents, family biographies, and ideas for classroom use and independent study. Teachers can also use the site to find out about opportunities for professional development seminars and fellowships. As a preview of coming attractions, the “Education” section highlights “The Coming of the American Revolution (1764-1776): A Web-Based Timeline/Documentary History,” a work-in-progress digital history project, which promises to become a valuable addition to K-12 curriculum materials available on the Web.

Drawing on its rich holdings, the MHS has created one of the finest history Websites around. It is certainly one worth bookmarking for repeated visits.

This article originally appeared in issue 7.4 (July, 2007).

Digital Library for the Decorative Arts and Material Culture



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Digital Library for the Decorative Arts and Material Culture
http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/DLDecArts

For years, those wanting to examine historical artifacts closely had two options. They could travel to the appropriate museums and view the objects from a distance or study small pictures in exhibition catalogues. With its online visual database, the Digital Library for the Decorative Arts and Material Culture presents an efficient and powerful alternative for exhibiting artifacts. Part of the University of Wisconsin's series of digital collections, the library provides a digitized record of seventeenth- through nineteenth-century Anglo-American ceramics, furniture, and prints from the Chipstone Foundation and the Longridge Ceramics Collection. The result is an accessible and engaging model for the online presentation of historical objects.

The Website's design is sharp and plain, with a clear and uncluttered layout that scales easily to fit different desktop resolutions. The site's simplicity should make navigation easy for all visitors, and it helps images and text load quickly on a broadband connection. Along with the library's own exhibits, the site has links to other collections of historical documents and images.

The library site makes an impressive presentation of its nearly one thousand artifacts. The collections are searchable by keyword, and because of thorough annotation, searches based on city of origin, material, or subject matter produce accurate results, listed with helpful thumbnail images. For instance, a follow-up search on a teapot featuring an English lion returned a list of other items depicting the animal. Searching for date ranges is slightly more difficult, and there is little editorial guidance besides a brief list of subject headings, although plans are under way to add more scholarly documentation in future versions. In each collection, the photography is first-rate. Clear, focused, full-color images accompany entries and are viewable from four different resolutions. The objects were captured in bright, even light against a plain background, many from multiple views. The high quality allows visitors more access than they might have visiting the artifacts in person, showing such details as imperfections in pottery glaze or the interior cabinet compartments of a writing desk.

A wide variety of colorful and interesting artifacts are on display. Ceramics include an array of British tableware as well as candlesticks, flower vases, jugs, and small sculptures in different clays and glazes. Most are vibrantly decorated with geometric designs, floral tracery, and nationalist or religious symbols. The furniture is largely American and features tables, chests, desks,

trunks, mirrors, and clocks. The pieces are very well preserved, and many reveal a high degree of craftsmanship and complexity. The print collection is small and less remarkable, with landscapes, city views, portraits, and political cartoons, but it does contain some iconic images by Paul Revere and William Hogarth.

Digitized versions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century books on material culture round out the site's holdings. Subjects covered include architecture, fashion, antiquities, the arts, and natural history. Most are available in full, searchable text, with a linked table of contents and a brief statement of historical context. Reproductions of book leaves maintain the high image quality of the site's photographs, many in full color. Again the highest resolutions are revealing enough even to show brush strokes and paper textures. A helpful sidebar contains quick links for plain-text versions of each page and print-ready images.

This small collection contains a wealth of insights into the visual tastes of the past. Some are scholarly volumes, like eighteenth-century architect Robert Adam's sumptuously illustrated review of Roman ruins, many with an emphasis on the exotic foreign motifs. Others, with ample engravings, like *The American Builder's Companion* or *The English Lady's Costume*, are practical nineteenth-century guides. Many of the visual standouts come from works on natural history. George Edward's series *The Natural History of Birds* alone has over 350 full-color plates, and similar works on ornithology and botany carry equally lavish illustrations. The collection also has complete runs of the 1860s American art journal *The New Path* and the early twentieth-century folk art magazine *The Craftsman.*

The Digital Library provides an adept and accessible example for how other small institutions might make their material holdings available to a wider audience. The detailed photography and careful cataloguing allow both serious researchers and casual viewers to closely and quickly appreciate the colors, textures, and contours of historical artifacts. Those visitors who might before have pressed up tight against the museum glass now need only to click their mice for a better view.

This article originally appeared in issue 7.4 (July, 2007).

James Coltrain is a doctoral candidate at Northwestern University. His dissertation examines how the architecture of eighteenth-century North American forts shaped local views of European empires.

The Iroquois on the Web



The Common-place Web Library reviews and lists online resources and Websites likely to be of interest to our viewers. Each quarterly issue will feature one or more brief site reviews. The library itself will be an ongoing enterprise with regular new additions and amendments. So we encourage you to check it frequently. At the moment, the library is small, but with your help we expect it to grow rapidly. If you have suggestions for the Web Library, or for site reviews, please forward them to the Administrative Editor.

For the past decade I have taught at a college in the Genesee Valley of New York built on and near a number of locations that have factored largely in the history of the Senecas, the westernmost of the famed Six Nations of the Iroquois. The "Chenussio" or Geneseo Senecas figure prominently in the historical records documenting the history of French and English colonialism in New York, and French forces marched through what is now Rochester and its suburbs in 1687 in an effort to eradicate interference in France's fur trade (see the Website Ganondagan). The Sullivan-Clinton campaign of 1779 marched nearby through the Genesee Valley in an effort to destroy the offensive capacity of the British-allied Iroquois and force them to become a drain on the British treasury, and numerous marked historic sites stand near the college. Legend has it that two of Sullivan's scouts, Boyd and Parker, were tortured

while bound to a tree that grows not far from the campus (fig. 1). At the "Ambuscade," a site a few miles from the campus in the town of Groveland, Sullivan's men engaged a Seneca and Loyalist force intent on slowing the advance of the American Army. Nearly two decades after the Revolution, the Senecas sold all of their lands west of the Genesee (nearly the entire western third of New York State) to Robert Morris at the Big Tree Treaty of 1797. The treaty was negotiated at a site that is now a student parking lot on campus. And at both ends of Geneseo's historic Main Street, mansions bearing the Wadsworth family name stand. The Wadsworths were original investors in the Ogden Land Company, a syndicate of well-connected speculators determined to extinguish the Senecas' title to their remaining reserves in western New York.

Nearly all of my students are western New Yorkers, and most of them come from the counties immediately surrounding the college. Still, they arrive on campus knowing very little at all about the Iroquois. State social studies curricula make a passing nod towards educating elementary and secondary students about the Haudenosaunee (as the Iroquois, or People of the Longhouse, refer to themselves), but these efforts, generally, are limited to requiring fourth graders to build model Iroquois longhouses out of twigs, balsa wood, and Styrofoam and, in high school, to reciting the tired and discredited "Iroquois Influence Thesis," or the claim that the Founding Fathers modeled the United States government in part after that of the Iroquois Confederacy. (A Google search of *model* and *longhouse* returns 55,900 hits, while a smaller but by no means insignificant number of Websites provide students with information on how the Iroquois League provided the foundation for American democratic principles and the United States Constitution). The Six Nations: Oldest Living Democracy on Earth contains links to many Websites related to the Iroquois influence thesis. Though few historians find the thesis persuasive and its promoters have had little success in publishing their arguments in the peer-reviewed literature, the influence thesis maintains a following on the margins of American Indian studies and still has a good number of adherents. The site, which describes the Six Nations as the "oldest living **participatory** democracy on earth" (the bold face type apparently suggests that there were older nonparticipatory democracies), includes links to Bruce Johansen's book *Forgotten Founders* (1982) and the book he co-authored with Donald Grinde entitled *Exemplar of Liberty* (1991).

While sites like these may serve to obscure more than they enlighten, there are valuable Web resources providing more reliable information on Iroquois history and culture. Dedicated to preserving Haudenosaunee languages, song, and dance, the Website Ohwejagehka offers a wealth of information, including recordings of Iroquois songs in real audio format. The Onondaga Nation of New York, who still live on what remains of their aboriginal territory south of the present-day city of Syracuse, has on its Website a useful collection of information on Onondaga culture and history, as well as a valuable assortment of materials relevant to the Nation's land-rights action in the United States Federal Court. Anyone interested in understanding the legal and ethical arguments behind Iroquois land claims would benefit by visiting this site. Those Iroquois

nations involved in trying to recover lands that were taken from them in violation of federal law or to exercise their sovereignty in other ways are opposed by the anti-sovereignty group Upstate Citizens for Equality. Its cluttered Website, which includes mostly position statements, does include copies of the briefs filed by the defendant counties and by the State of New York in opposition to Iroquois land claims.

As for historical sources, some of the Six Nations' early diplomatic agreements and treaties, taken from the *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (1855) and *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736-1762* (1938) are available online (see, for example, Conference between Governor Burnet and the Indians and A Treaty Held at the Town of Lancaster at Early Recognized Treaties with American Indian Nations). Important sources like the reprint edition of Peter Wraxall's *An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs* (1915) are available at Google Books, and William Savery's *Journal of the Life, Travels, and Religious Labors of William Savery* (1844) is available from the University of Michigan's Making of Americaseries. The Papers of William Johnson, the Crown's superintendent for Indian affairs in the Northern Department and a man whose ties to the Six Nations extended across four decades in the middle of the eighteenth century, have been scanned by the University of Toronto. And Creighton University has digitized *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents,* the magisterial collection of French missionary reports and a vital source for understanding seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Iroquois history. The online edition has some errors and should be checked against the print version, but it is searchable and still a valuable resource. Alternative copies of specific volumes of the *Jesuit Relations*, as well as other texts from the early history of Canada that relate to Iroquois History, are housed at Early Canadiana Online.

There are other online resources that could be discussed here, and undoubtedly many readers of *Common-place* have favorites of their own of which I am not yet aware. Certainly many of these are impressive and valuable Websites housing an extraordinary amount of information. In terms of my own teaching, however, I find myself going back frequently to an outstanding Web resource for educators on the Sullivan-Clinton campaign against the western Iroquois, a major military invasion of the Iroquois homeland conducted by the Continental Army during 1779: Sullivan/Clinton Campaign, Then and Now.

Largely the work of Robert Spiegelman, who has done an enormous amount to bring public attention to the Sullivan campaign and its historical significance, the opening page of the site includes a montage of photographs demonstrating the site creator's familiarity with and affection for the region's history: the Boyd-Parker "torture tree" and the salt mine where Seneca remains were discovered in the 1990s and destroyed with the blessings of a vindictive state governor upset about Seneca land claims. Spiegelman and his colleagues point out in their mission statement that they hope to "feed and deepen" an "enduring hunger for history" by "exploring new ways to heighten awareness of the non-stop interplay of past and present as it shapes our everyday lives."


Fig. 1. Image from Sullivan/Clinton Campaign Website. Courtesy of Dr. Robert Spiegelman.

Fig. 1. Image from Sullivan/Clinton Campaign Website. Courtesy of Dr. Robert Spiegelman.

From the opening page, viewers can follow a large number of links: A who's who of the Sullivan-Clinton campaign, including brief capsule biographies of the notable figures; a brief glossary of places mentioned in the records; copies of Sullivan's marching orders from General Washington, dated May 31, 1770; and excerpts from other documents and brief quotes from a wide variety of individuals ranging from Cadwalladar Colden to the Onondaga Nation's present day counsel Joe Heath, to Nathaniel Hawthorne, Tacitus, and the producer of the recent HBO production of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*.

By clicking on "Texts," the viewer is led to a long list of quotes from historical figures giving reasons for learning about the past: Shakespeare, Faulkner, and Washington Irving. The site's creators range widely, perhaps needlessly so. Seneca women, for instance, pointedly told their audience that "you ought to hear and listen to what we women shall speak; for we are the owners of this land, AND IT IS OURS!" Enough said, perhaps.

The section includes more brief excerpts from the documents relevant to a reconstruction of the Sullivan campaign. There are excerpts from the recollections of individual soldiers, Goose Van Schaick's sterile account of his brutal assault on the Onondagas in the spring of 1779, and a link to the officer's journals. There are also essays by Spiegelman and others, reflecting on the meaning of the Sullivan-Clinton campaign.

The "Gallery" link leads the viewer to five galleries, each with a large number of high quality images. "Mother Earth" looks at environmental destruction in what was once Iroquoia. Some might find the content here polemical, but clearly the assault on Iroquois lands after the Sullivan campaign was fueled by the desire of wealthy speculators to transform what they considered a tractless wilderness into a bustling agricultural republic. If the text accompanying the images is, in places, needlessly pedantic, the images are sometimes jarring and can be used to great effect to provoke discussion of the environmental consequences of the "Invasion of America."

The "Americana" gallery serves a similar function. It includes imagery related to memory of the Sullivan-Clinton campaign—photos of historical reenactors, historical portraits of the principals, and photos of various historical markers that commemorate the expedition. Here again, the images can lead to a lively classroom discussion of how "we" remember historical events and decide what becomes part of the historical record. Another gallery features "Alternate Takes" on the region's history, including patriotic memorials from throughout the state and pictures of the angry signs posted by Upstate Citizens for Quality throughout the Cayuga land-claim area. Some, again, may object to the

interpretive bias in the captions accompanying some of the photos, but the images are powerful and should generate a response from all but the most jaded students. The fourth gallery offers a fascinating look at “A Tale of Three Cities”: the Onondaga capital south of Syracuse; Little Beard’s Town, a settlement near Geneseo along the Genesee River; and the Cayuga capital, Goi-o-Guen, near present-day Aurora, New York. Students will learn much by observing how the rise of the Empire State relied upon Iroquois dispossession. Finally, a gallery entitled “Iroquoia!” provides students with a range of Haudenosaunee images, including paintings of important Seneca leaders like Cornplanter and Red Jacket, photographs of sites important to Iroquois history, artwork by present-day Haudenosaunee artists, and historic photographs of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Iroquois at gatherings in western New York. The images, once again, are impressive.

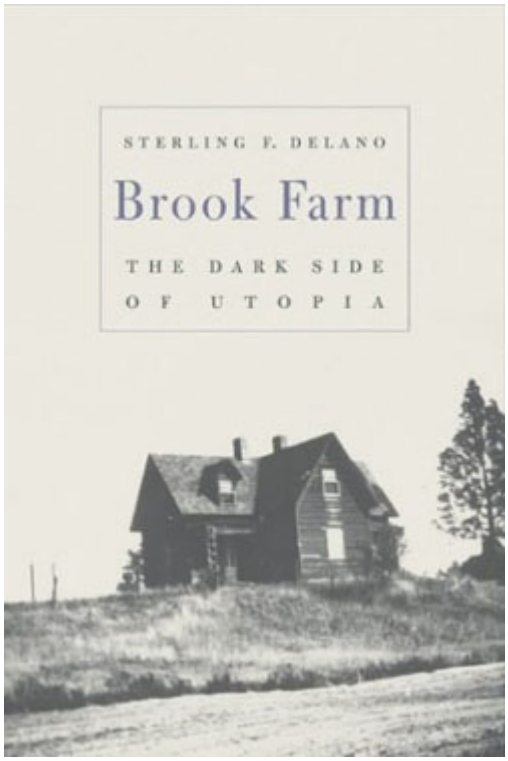
The centerpiece of the Sullivan-Clinton site, however, is the wonderful animated map showing the course of the Sullivan-Clinton campaign as it carried destruction into the heart of Iroquoia in 1779. I have used the map in my classrooms to good effect, and students have been impressed.

The Website is clearly a labor of love. Spiegelman is actively involved, according to the biography that accompanies the site, in increasing public awareness of the Sullivan-Clinton campaign and the importance of the Iroquois in the history of New York and the young United States. He obviously wants the viewers of his site to think about the consequences of the nation’s progress and how the birth of the United States was a disaster for the Six Nations.

This article originally appeared in issue 8.4 (July, 2008).

Michael Leroy Oberg is professor of history at the State University of New York, College at Geneseo. He is the author, most recently, of *The Head in Edward Nugent’s Hand: Roanoke’s Forgotten Indians (2007).*

The Simple Life?



The central theme in the study of Brook Farm, [Delano] emphasizes, should not be explanation for its collapse but appreciation of its achievements.

Publick Occurrences 2.0 January- April 2009



Modern Franklin Gets the Boot [UPDATED]

Outbreaks of popular resistance against expert medical advice are a long Anglo-American tradition, and preventative measures like inoculation and vaccination

have been recurring targets for us freemen. It will always be a little counter-intuitive to expose a healthy person to potentially harmful substances to keep them from getting a disease they don't seem to have. It seemed even worse in the case of early inoculation, which involved *giving* someone a disease like smallpox on purpose in hopes they would get it in a less virulent form and develop some immunity. Sometimes the patient just got sick and died of the "cure."

One of the most famous populist crusades against the modern medicine of its time was in 1721 when young Ben Franklin and his older brother James went after the smallpox inoculation policy favored by colonial Boston's ministerial elite. The Massachusetts Historical Society has an excellent online presentation about the controversy, including images of Ben's pseudonymous essays from the *New England Courant.* (Historians help me with some less well-known examples).

But historical context only goes so far, and just because some Founder did it, does not necessarily make it right in every case. So quite likely Dr. Andrew Wakefield really did need to be drummed out of the medical profession [original link to AP story no longer works]:

LONDON — The doctor whose research linking autism and the vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella influenced millions of parents to refuse the shot for their children was banned Monday from practicing medicine in his native Britain.

Dr. Andrew Wakefield's 1998 study was discredited — but vaccination rates have never fully recovered and he continues to enjoy a vocal following, helped in the U.S. by endorsements from celebrities like Jim Carrey and Jenny McCarthy

Wakefield was the first researcher to publish a peer-reviewed study suggesting a connection between autism and the vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella. Legions of parents abandoned the vaccine, leading to a resurgence of measles in Western countries where it had been mostly stamped out. There are outbreaks across Europe every year and sporadic outbreaks in the U.S.

"That is Andrew Wakefield's legacy," said Paul Offit, chief of infectious diseases at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. "The hospitalizations and deaths of children from measles who could have easily avoided the disease."

Wakefield's discredited theories had a tremendous impact in the U.S., Offit said, adding: "He gave heft to the notion that vaccines in general cause autism."

In Britain, Wakefield's research led to a huge decline in the number of children receiving the MMR vaccine: from 95 percent in 1995 — enough to prevent measles outbreaks — to 50 percent in parts of London in the early 2000s. Rates have begun to recover, though not enough to prevent outbreaks. In 2006, a 13-year-old boy became the first person to die from measles in Britain in 14 years.

“The false suggestion of a link between autism and the MMR vaccine has done untold damage to the UK vaccination program,” said Terence Stephenson, president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. “Overwhelming scientific evidence shows that it is safe.”

Unfortunately, even when the British totally discredit you, there is always Texas, as Brian Deer of the *London Times* explains.

March 19, 2009

Public-Private Partisanship: The Sources of Media Outrage over the AIG Bonuses

I find it extremely interesting to note what it took, after all of these years of corporate malfeasance and incompetence going back the 90s dot-com bubble, to get the mainstream media into full 24/7 scandal mode on a business story. To get the media spouting “populist” outrage against a corporation, what was needed was for the corporation to become more than 80% publicly-owned. Even now there seems to be a tendency for the media to defer to the pretend private business executives running AIG, and save the journalistic shouting for the president and his underlings. Is bowing to private wealth and autocratic power so ingrained that only the public takeover gave the media “permission” to go after a company? Are the media just capitalist stooges ideologically trying to slough off the private sector’s depredations on to the public servants charged with the impossible task of rectifying them? Or was the mainstream political media (especially the TV and the local press/AP) just too idiotic to do anything with a complex business story until it could be reduced to the rote terms of the post- (and sub-Watergate) D.C. political scandal: what-did-the-president-know-and-when-did-he-know-it? Or there is something deeper at work here, having to do with the demonization of governmental authority that the American Revolution (as read by some guy called Bailyn) built into our republic’s DNA?

Possibly the answer is some of all of the above. It is not an original thought with me to note that the final separation of American Christianity from government around 1820 (except for certain missionary groups) seemed to do wonders for Christianity’s popular appeal and cultural power. As Lyman Beecher finally realized, New England Congregationalism’s overt association with the region’s governing elite, and its tax structure, had only weighed it down. Their churches no longer supported by government revenues, Yankee Protestants created a “Benevolent Empire” of eleemosynary institutions and voluntary societies, like the newly private colleges and many social reform associations that popped up in the 19th century, that gained various special protections from government even as they became tremendous forces for shaping public policy.

It’s almost as if the more privatized and immune to public oversight an institution becomes in American culture the more sacrosanct it is, and, as in

the AIG case, vice versa. It's almost as if no one actually believes we have a system of self-government.

At Least You're Not Travelling by Steamboat

As I may have mentioned before, I am teaching our History of Missouri course for the first time this semester, not a thrill for most I suppose but something I wanted to do because this region's weird past was probably what first got me seriously interested in American history as a kid. Putting together my lectures I have been re-informing myself on many favorite topics and discovering some interesting items to share with the class.

For instance, I have been reminded that steamboats were possibly the most dangerous form of powered travel ever invented. Floating palaces of occasional scalding death, those things were, when they didn't sink, run aground, or out of fuel. At any rate, I thought this page from University of Northern Iowa, "Helpful Hints For Steamboat Passengers" was fairly informative and clever. It admits to being made-up in the first few sentences but when I first found the page I missed that and thought for a while that someone had posted an unusually honest piece of 19th-century travel advice literature.

I also had to remind myself about earthquakes. I was looking up the New Madrid Earthquake 1811-1812 specifically, when "the Mississippi River ran backward." More generally I re-ingested the fact we here in the Nation's Doughy Midsection live in a California-esque environment, seismically speaking, only without the beaches, the Hollywood glitz, or buildings designed to withstand earthquakes. Here is a somewhat dated but informative video I found (possibly from the U.S. Geological Survey) that lays out the information without the History Channel hype. Check out the discussion of "liquefaction." A good time will be had by all: Missouri highways already drive like they are paved over liquid.

If that is not worrisome enough, I also found a far too informative site includes a feature where you can see all the Central U.S. earthquakes detected in the last six months, week, or *two hours*.

January 25, 2009

They had me going there

"Algonkian Indian Influences on Yankee Foodways":

I saw this public lecture announcement come over one of the early American history email lists and assumed the worst, that someone was blaming New England's indigenous peoples for Moxie and canned bread, possibly by way of crediting them. But I guess not. Phew! That would be adding insult to injury if I ever saw it.

Actually that lecture sounds quite interesting, and if I lived in Connecticut, I would go to it. The phrase "Yankee foodways" just gave me flashbacks to some of our early experiments with the local, um, cuisine when we first moved out there.

January 23, 2009

A Commodious Space for Commodities

Common-place publishes the occasional "Object Lessons" column with good reason: knowing your material culture is important. For instance, when cataloging the office furniture purchases of ex-Merrill-Lynch CEO John Thain, *The Consumerist*'s Ben Popken makes a horrible mistake, and then corrects himself with the help of a little eighteenth-century know-how.

(hat tip, BPM)

January 21, 2009

Other Voices

I feel as though I am in the proper Obamanian mode of getting beyond the old politics, but the old politics side of me has to agree with David Sanger of the *NYT*, and even MoDo, that the part of the speech where Obama got in Bush's face right in front of his face must be appreciated.

A couple of civilian (non-historian) friends also chimed in with their thoughts on Obama's speech, through the magic of Facebook. My more positive friend *C*

says:

One of the lines that struck me was “The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works.” I thought that was a great way to say that he’s going to approach problems from a very different perspective than we’ve seen recently. I feel like we’ve been dealing with Reagan’s world view for 20+ years, and we finally have someone that can move us past that.

My snarkier friend *B* emphasizes a line I should have:

Hey Jeff – you know, I look forward to 8 years of being disappointed in a president I thought could be better versus 8 years of being outraged at a president I didn’t think could be any worse. Obama as the great orator is almost as much a myth manufactured by his political adversaries as the notion that he is a radical liberal or socialist – he’ll never live up to the McCain hype. Yet I shed more than one or two tears when Aretha was singing – something real was going on today. You know, with Bush and the president (Cheney) sitting there on the same stage, I was reminded of Colbert’s roast from a few years ago more than once today as Obama spoke. One of those moments for me was the section that started:

“As for our common defense, we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals.”

Hey Hey Goodbye

January 20, 2009

Grow Up, America: Choose Our Better History

I have long thought that now-President Obama’s reputation as an orator was little inflated, more by a media and public starved for a leader who could speak in complete sentences and cogent thoughts than by the man himself. That is an observation, not a criticism. My short speech-writing period left me with a very lively sense of how hard and ill-advised it is for a real modern human being to write or speak like a JFK film clip. Lots of Democratic politicians have hurt themselves rhetorically by trying to channel JFK. When they try MLK, it is generally even worse.

Today’s inaugural address was much like Obama’s convention acceptance speech in wisely avoiding Sorensenian flights of inspirational rhetoric and preacherly flourishes, but instead presenting liberal values and a post-imperial world view in forms that Americans raised on decades of Reaganism might be able to accept. Here is a passage that struck me:

We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.

In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of short-cuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted – for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things – some celebrated but more often men and women obscure in their labor, who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom.

Nothing special there rhetorically – even the nice "better history" line turns out to be recycled from Obama's late campaign stump speech. Yet what he was saying what rather noteworthy, coming from a U.S. president. Here and in other parts of the speech, the infantile exceptionalism that has become nearly our national creed was quietly but firmly rejected. Our freedom, wealth, and power relative to other nations do not exempt us from the exigencies of history or the rules of morality, Obama declared. Quite the contrary. We are not authorized to "do as we please" just because we are America; our activities have an impact on other peoples that must be taken into account, and that accounting must modify our behavior. Poverty, injustice, fear, evil, and incompetence all exist in modern America and as part of our tradition. We can and must choose our "better history," and also choose not to dwell on the worst, but the worst is still there, some it of sitting on the inaugural dais, in a wheelchair.

As in the convention speech, there was also a distinctly liberal economic message in Obama's inaugural address, but delivered in so mild and sensible a fashion as to be almost impossible for all but the most hardened ideologues to disagree with. The free market is a powerful tool for generating wealth, but it cannot work properly without the "watchful eye" of government. Otherwise the market will "spin out of control." The last line quoted above, about "the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things" was one that many listeners (including Fox's Brit Hume) probably heard as a shout-out to capitalist entrepreneurs. What it really was, or perhaps simultaneously acted as, was a little restatement of the labor theory of value that can be linked back to the producerism that has been the heart of so many past radical movements in American history. True wealth was not created by amassing "riches," Obama argued, but instead by making things through our labors.

I make no claim that there is anything radical about Obama, or even Populist, and I worry about the Wall Street/Ivy League establishmentarians he has guiding his economic policy here at the outset. Yet he does represent and express the better part of our historical political tradition. I am happy that we chose it

and look forward to the day when it does not take a national crisis to bring some of those better angels out.

The Times that Try Men's Souls

President Obama (wow.) just gave his inaugural address, with an unattributed quote:

So let us mark this day with remembrance, of who we are and how far we have traveled. In the year of America's birth, in the coldest of months, a small band of patriots huddled by dying campfires on the shores of an icy river. The capital was abandoned. The enemy was advancing. The snow was stained with blood. At a moment when the outcome of our revolution was most in doubt, the father of our nation ordered these words be read to the people:

"Let it be told to the future world…that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive…that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet [it]."

Obama seemed (at least to the tv talking heads) to imply that these were George Washington's words, but the quote is from the first of Thomas Paine's papers entitled *The American Crisis*. I also think some people may have jumped to the conclusion that this was the Valley Forge winter, but Obama is referring to December 1776, when Washington was about to lose much of his army to expiring enlistments, and the Battles of Trenton and Princeton had not yet taken place. The particular paragraph from which this quote is drawn is actually quite a belligerent passage.

Well, it's a new administration, and an exciting day. I'm looking forward to tomorrow, when the pomp will be over and the country can get to work.

January 18, 2009

Power and Responsibility: What Barack Obama Learned from Peter

Parker


This undated handout image provided Marvel Comics shows the cover of The Amazing Spider-Man featuring President-elect Barack Obama. (AP Photo/Marvel Comics)

We're all aware that this is a huge moment in the social history of the presidency – first African-American president, first president born after 1960, etc. – but it's also an interesting moment in the *cultural* history of the presidency. Doubtless most readers have seen the publicity about Barack Obama's appearance in the current issue of *Amazing Spider-Man*, which Marvel Comics editor-in-chief Joe Quesada described as a "shout-out back" to a president-elect who was outed as a former comic collector some time ago. [Read some of the key panels here.] What we didn't know was that the idiom of the comics our generation ("X " or Jones or whatever) grew up with had become part of his political language. Actually, I suspected as much, but today we have proof.

My wife noticed the following in what was billed as Obama's inauguration letter to his daughters, published in this morning's Sunday newspaper supplement, *Parade Magazine*.

"I want every child to understand that the blessings these brave Americans fight for are not free-that with the great privilege of being a citizen of this nation comes great responsibility."

This is a paraphrase of Spider-Man's motto – "With great power comes great responsbility" first presented in Spidey's origin story from *Amazing Fantasy #15* [see below] and repeated frequently thereafter. It was the guiding philosophy not only for Peter, who gave up his career to stay home and help, er, organize his community, but for the whole Marvel superhero line. Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, Captain America, the X-Men and the rest regularly fought right-wing demagogues, racists, neo-Nazis, war profiteers, and colonialists along with the Green Goblin and Doctor Doom, who come to think of it were good enemies for a liberal hero, too, an irresponsible businessman and an unreconstructed monarchist, respectively.



Sure that "responsibility" line was in the movie, too, but I feel quite certain that Obama first read it in the original. And he also may not be the only member of his generation to pick up some of his liberal ideas from the House of Ideas [one of Stan Lee's many nick-names for his company]. One idea in particular was that a decent person or nation had a duty to do something with whatever gifts it had been given – freedom, a sharp mind, spider-powers, a nuclear arsenal, or whatever – besides showing off. I do believe today was the

first time *Parade Magazine* ever choked me up.

Common-Place Politics Issue Heads to the Archives

"Beyond the Valley of the Founders," the *Common-Place* Politics Issue that tookup quite a bit of the last half of my 2008, has just been sent to the *C-P* archives by the first issue of 2009. Never fear, however, the politics is still available to read and comment on, and remains eternally relevant. We are not even done with the "Myths of the Lost Atlantis" series yet! Readers just discovering this blog should be particularly sure to go back and look the Politics Issue .

This is also a good moment to express our gratitude to outgoing *Common-Place* editor Ed Gray, whose efficiency, editorial skill and astounding patience and diplomacy in dealing with troublesome authors and guest editors has really kept this unique enterprise going the last 5 years. I am sure he is already enjoying his greatly-reduced email load.

Common-Place editor and blogger in Milan, celebrating completion of _Common-Place_ Politics Issue conferring on Thomas Paine.

January 17, 2009

So that's why they call it agribusiness!

"USDA employee accused of running prostitution ring" – a statistician no less. As Jefferson said, "Corruption of morals in the mass **counters** of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no **our** age nor **and** nation has furnished an example."

January 16, 2009

Early Republic Rockers on Tour

One of the Early Republic-themed (or -named) bands mentioned in an earlier post are on tour. That's right, The Henry Clay People are coming to a city near you. (They seem to have chosen the Des Moines rather than Columbia/St. Louis route across, often an either/or matter, so I may have to give them a miss.) I am not entirely sold on these guys musically, but maybe someone's Dad is a historian, so we should support them. Listen here, and below. The album the HCP is touring behind is here. Unfortunately they are not touring with the not previously-mentioned The Whigs, who are also on the road. (Listen to the Whiggery here.) This band does have amusing link that allows you to "Join the Whig Party," which seems to involve period-inaccurate costumes. Both these band seem to espouse fairly traditional rock values, which is somewhat Whig-like.

The Henry Clay People, "Working Part Time"

The Whigs, "Technology"

January 15, 2009

The friend of my enemy is not someone I want anything to do with

This not a real proverb, but a political principle that it does not take much of an historian to see applies to the attitudes of pretty much every colonial people or small nation whose territory has been invaded since the dawn of modern nationalism, at least. Nobody likes getting their homes bombed, their cities overrun by foreign troops, their friends, neighbors, and relatives traumatized, maimed, or killed. People remember that stuff, and they tend not to look kindly on the politicians and officials who get installed or helped into power by the invaders, perhaps especially if the officials of the new regime are natives of the invaded territory.

Shall we recall a U.S. example? Let's. In American schools, we used to learn a name for what the defeated Confederates called those who staffed the Reconstruction regimes: "scalawags," "carpetbaggers," and lots of worse things. We were not taught to admire those fellows. As we know from Eric Foner and other post-"revisionist" historians of Reconstruction, many of these

officials were not grafters and traitors, but honest reformers trying to help the people of the South and improve their society and economy. Nevertheless, despite these noble intentions, the new regimes required the federal government's protection to be stable and inspired a rather famous terrorist insurgency called the Ku Klux Klan. Once outside support was withdrawn, the South was immediately "redeemed" by the same people who started the CIvil War in the first place.

Of course, the more relevant example for the present-day issues of this type would be the politics of *every* post-colonial nation one can think of except Canada, Australia, and New Zealand: the sure path to political popularity and power in such countries was virulent opposition to the continuing influence of the old colonial power, *even if such opposition was likely to be counter-productive*. There was this early American politician called Jefferson who ended up president in no small degreee because he was the leading opponent of a non-anti-British foreign policy.

So, given this sort of historical experience, why would any policy-maker expect massively destructive invasions by overwhelmingly superior forces in isolated, beaten-down places like Gaza and Iraq to result in the people of those places warmly accepting regimes that the invaders helped to install? Yet the failure of the Iraqi people to do just this is Dick Cheney's only regret about the Iraq War – and not because he was wrong to expect it, but because of their supposedly damaged psyches.

Even more incredibly, the Israelis apparently thought that crushing Gaza was going to give their favored party, the secular Palestinian Authority, the chance to win power back from Hamas. From the *New York Times:*

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JERUSALEM – Israel hoped that the war in Gaza would not only cripple Hamas, but eventually strengthen its secular rival, the Palestinian Authority, and even allow it to claw its way back into Gaza.

But with each day, the authority, its leader, Mahmoud Abbas, and its leading party, Fatah, seem increasingly beleaguered and marginalized, even in the Palestinian cities of the West Bank, which they control. Protesters accuse Mr. Abbas of not doing enough to stop the carnage in Gaza – indeed, his own police officers have used clubs and tear gas against those same protesters.

The more bombs in Gaza, the more Hamas's support seems to be growing at the expense of the Palestinian Authority, already considered corrupt and distant from average Palestinians.

"The Palestinian Authority is one of the main losers in this war," said Ghassan Khatib, an independent Palestinian analyst in the West Bank city of Ramallah. "How can it make gains in a war in which it is one of the casualties?"

Israel is proposing, with the tacit agreement of Egypt and the United States, to place the Palestinian Authority at the heart of an ambitious program to rebuild Gaza, administering reconstruction aid and securing Gaza's borders. But

that plan is already drawing skepticism. Mr. Khatib, for example, called the idea of any Palestinian Authority role in postwar Gaza “silly” and “naïve.”

Perhaps more dispiriting to the ever fewer who believe that any overall settlement is possible now – with peace negotiations suspended and Palestinians divided between Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank – is that Israel itself does not really hold out high hopes for a larger postwar role for Fatah. Israel’s proposals seem dutiful, an acknowledgment of a stalemate that not even so ferocious an assault on Hamas can undo.

“There are not too many realistic ideas around,” conceded Yigal Palmor, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry. The reason: Most ideas, he said, largely rely “on the good will of Hamas.” That may be in short supply, because Hamas, deeply embedded in Gazan society both as a fighting force and a provider of social services, seems highly likely to survive in some form after this war.

Ever since Hamas began its one-party rule of Gaza, in the summer of 2007, Israel and the West have tried to turn Gazans against Hamas through an economic embargo and diplomatic isolation. While there is certainly anger at Hamas among Gazans, it pales beside the anger at Israel, the West and what some see as Fatah’s collusion with those enemies.

Mr. Abbas and his loyalists have not entered Gaza since 2007, when they were ousted by Hamas, which took over the area after a brief but ruthless factional war. They are now hoping that the Egyptian cease-fire initiative will serve as a vehicle to regain a foothold there.

Of course, not only has the Israeli attack on Gaza not destroyed Hamas or reinstalled Fatah, it has not even stopped the rocket fire into Israel that was the main justification for the invasion. And, really, what should we expect? What if it were U.S. southern or rural white men involved in a similar situation; what would we expect? I know there is some quotation I should be using here, but I imagine if their country had been invaded, we would expect that southern white men would consider it their duty to keep firing rockets as long as they still had the gasoline and fingers to do it with. Fight to the end, and beyond: it’s one of the master narratives of American male culture, embodied in *Birth of a Nation*,*The Patriot, Red Dawn*, most of the early World War II films, and thousands of other popular American stories.

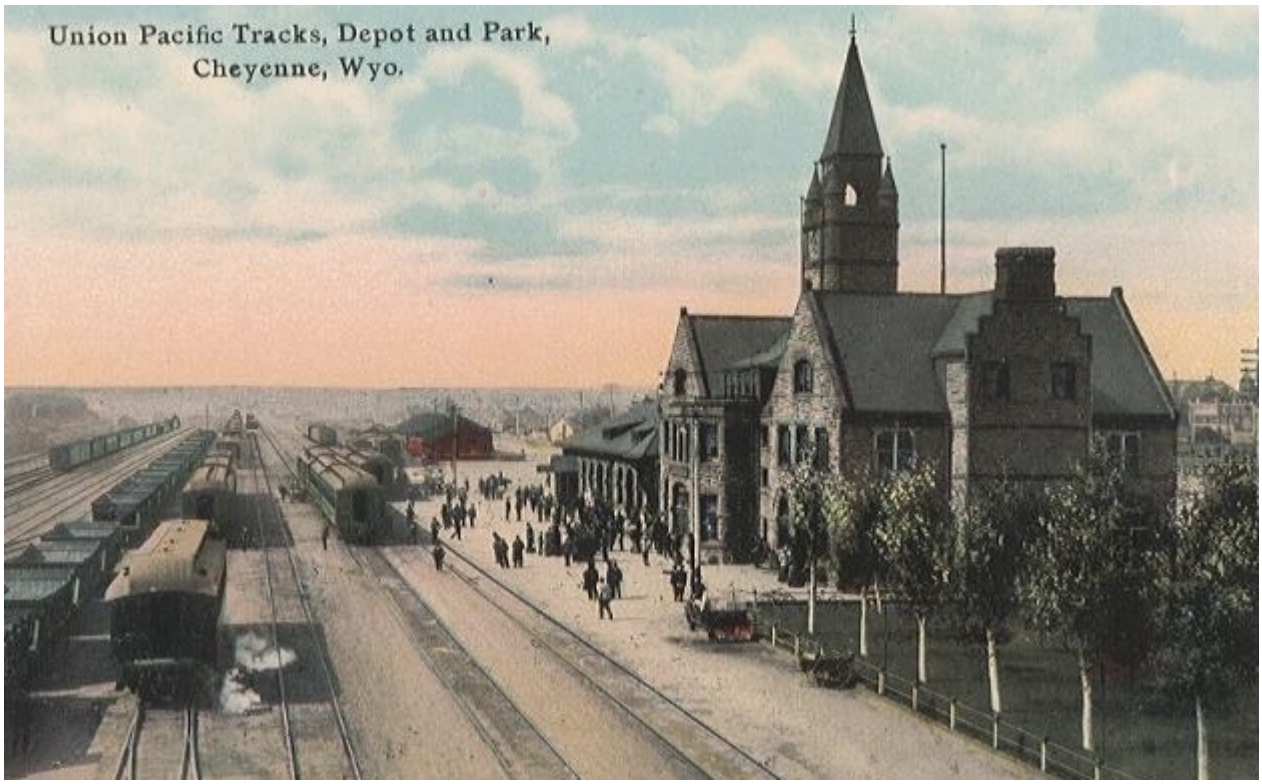
There’s a word for the assumption that another people will react differently (more submissively) than your own to violent coercion: racist. I am not in the habit of pointing that particular finger, but it really seems to fit in the case of the thinking that underlies U.S. and Israeli policy toward the Palestinians and the rest of the Muslim world.

These blog posts originally appeared in issues 9.2-9.3 (January, 2009-April,

2009).

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Wyoming Caucuses Primary Source Special: Gore '88



<<One of many glamorous moments of the 1988 Al Gore campaign that I did not see.

Scene of my big campaign moment. I was not there either. >>

In honor of Obama's Wyoming caucus win, I am going to reveal the prominent role of the Wyoming caucuses in my own personal history. 20 years ago, I was working as the junior speechwriter on current national treasure, then premature centrist Al Gore's presidential campaign. I was in way over my head on several counts, and not doing the sort of glamorous, power-behind-the-throne work that people seem to associate with speechwriting. For the most part, I stayed in D.C. cranking out talking points and local situation reports and terrible, terrible jokes for momentary appearances Gore was making at places like the Council of Jewish Organizations of Borough Park and the Dalton, Georgia Rotary Club, never knowing whether anything I was writing was actually issuing from the candidate's mouth. The likely answer was probably not, at least not more than a line or two that might have made it in his standard stump speech. Other, more important people were writing the formal addresses that actually got read. I was not producing anything that was really worth saying out loud anyway.

That is, except for Wyoming. Gore's whole 1988 race was predicated on sweeping the original Super Tuesday primaries, which were concentrated in the South and set up to infuse more southern, centrist influence into the Democratic nominating process. In other words, it was supposed to help some white southern hawk-ish type win the nomination, and Al hoped to be that type. Funny story, Jesse Jackson won a bunch of those Super Tuesday primaries, I needed a new job by April, and then the Soviet Empire collapsed, taking much of Gore's raison d'etre as a candidate with it. (The environmental thing was not much in evidence then, at least not in the campaign.) Long story short, Gore 1988 did not go down as one of the more world-historical presidential campaigns ever chronicled.

On to Wyoming. At some too-late date, the Gore braintrust realized that the whole Super Tuesday gamble might not work out exactly as they had planned and decided to contest some states outside of the South and Northeast. (They had already Guiliani-ed Iowa.) As it turned out, Wyoming was one of two states outside the South that he actually won. This did Gore about as much good as today's win is likely to do Obama, though I hope otherwise. Wyoming was a big deal to me, however, because for whatever reason they let me write the big speech there, the one that actually got read apparently more or less verbatim. It was at the historic Union Pacific Depot in downtown Cheyenne, and while I did not actually get to go there, I did know it got read (confirming hearsay) because some of my lines were quoted in a news story the next day.

That was a thrill, but it also helped make the decision I was ruminating over at the time about whether I was staying in D.C. politics and journalism after the campaign, or going on to grad school. Upon further review, it seemed sort of pathetic to be thrilled that I had written some words were said by someone

else, with almost no one actually knowing about it besides myself and 2 or 3 others directly involved. I was not feeling the insider jollies that DC lifers seem to thrive on, and it dawned that relative obscurity in my own name (academia!) appealed more than getting my words on front page or TV news in someone else's. What's more, the speech that won Wyoming – if Hillary brought peace to Northern Ireland, then this is the least I can claim – had been more interesting than most of what I done for Gore because I got what then seemed very deep into the historical background for it. I had checked out some Wyoming books from the DC public library and written all this jazz about Democrats going west with the railroads, the western progressive tradition, etc. As a speechwriter, it seemed, I was a better and more enthusiastic historian than I had ever been with the boilerplate political verbiage.

At any rate, I dug out Al Gore's historic Union Pacific Depot address out of my files and scanned it for the amazement of the reading public and those sadly obsessed with past political minutiae. You can see the actual antique printer edition here, with a bonus speech written for Casper, Wyoming that I will bet he did not read – prostitutes were mentioned. Or, read on:

Remarks of
Senator Albert Gore Jr.
Union Pacific Depot Speech
Cheyenne, Wyoming—January 28, 1988

draft

I can't think of a better place to talk about revitalizing the Democratic party than the Union Pacific Depot in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Democrats built the Union Pacific and the state of Wyoming along with it. I'm not talking about the Republican barons who made their money in the West so they could live fabulously back East. I mean the hard-working, rough-hewn men who came West to lay down the tracks and then stayed here to live.

This was not an easy land to tame. Before the white man arrived, probably no more than 10,000 Native Americans lived here. Even the buffalo found it difficult to survive. Many of the people who came with the railroad couldn't face the challenge of putting down roots. By the time the Union Pacific was finished in 1869, many of the workers vanished and Wyoming's population dropped to only half what it had been a year earlier. Even today, there is a square mile of land for every family in the state.

But hard winters and high winds make for strong and independent people, and maybe that accounts for Wyoming's great progressive tradition. Democrats settled the towns along the U.P. line in southern Wyoming. When Wyoming's first territorial legislature met in 1869, every member—all twenty-one—were Democrats. Now that's the way to get things done.

That remarkable assembly became the first government in the history of the world to give women the right to vote and hold public office. The Republican

governor tried to stall, but a certain Mrs. Morton E. Post and her friends camped in the governor's living room and refused to leave until he had signed the bill.

That same all-Democratic legislature granted married women control of their own property and earnings, and equal treatment under the inheritance laws. It mandated equal pay for equally qualified female school teachers. Luckily for them, Ed Meese had not yet taken office in 1869.

At a time when it was said in some Western states that no one knew whether the state was being run out of the Capitol or the Union Pacific Building, that first legislature stood up to the railroad. It passed laws to force U.P. to stand by its obligations to the citizens and smaller competitors. That's the kind of tradition you have here in Wyoming, that continues today in the persons of progressive state officials like my friend Ed Herschler, current Governor Mike Sullivan, Secretary of State Kathy Karpan, and Superintendent of Public Instruction Lynn Simons.

It's a tradition I like to think I share. I grew up in Carthage, Tennessee, a few miles from the home of Andrew Jackson, the very first Western Democrat. Tennessee was the Wild West in Jackson's day. Old Hickory was swept into the White House on a tide of votes from the West and South. He took power away from a narrow minority and, for the first time in the history of our country, gave it to ordinary people in all parts of the young nation. Andrew Jackson made the United States once and for all a democracy —of and by the people as well as for them.

Where I come from and where you come from, that is what the Democratic party means. As Democrats, we are proud to be the party of the people, not the powerful—the party of national interests, not narrow interests.

But recent years have brought hard times for Democrats in the West. When was the last time a Democratic nominee carried Wyoming? 1964. There are 23 states that the Republicans have carried in the last five elections—including Wyoming and all its neighbors. There isn't a single state that we Democrats have carried five times running. Democrats can't afford to write off those 23 states for another 24 years.

If we are going to win back the White House in 1988, we'll have to do things differently this time. We've got to reach out to ordinary voters, and bring back the young Americans and middle-class voters who were once the strength of the Democratic party.

I'm concerned about America's future. That's why I can't go along with my opponents in supporting ideas that are good politics in one place but bad policy for the country.

I'm not going to play that game. I don't think our party can afford to play that game. I'm running for President of the United States, not President of

Iowa.

But the process will be different this time. The battle for our party's nomination won't be won or lost in the first week of the election season; the issue won't be decided before the West and South get a chance to be heard.

My home state has banded with a number of other states in every region to hold all our primaries on Super Tuesday—March 8- three days after your Wyoming caucuses. This is our chance to make a difference again and return to our party's roots. More than that, it is our chance to make the candidates address the problems faced by the regions that have been shut out of the nomination process up til now.

**** We need to talk about economic development policies that make sense for the West and South.
**** We need a national energy policy that puts Americans back to work and insures that domestic oil and gas producers will never take a back seat to countries like Libya and Iran. We also need a long-range policy to develop new ways to use our other resources, especially our coal reserves.
**** We need to make sure that people in the less populated regions of the country have access to basic services at reasonable prices. In my home town and yours, the Reagan-Bush administration's rush to deregulation has crippled transportation systems, with devastating effects on economic development. We must establish and promote a system of incentives for the development of safe and reliable air, bus and rail freight transportation for smaller communities. I have fought to link regulatory concessions to major transportation companies to their willingness to serve rural America. It's a shame no passengers can travel through this beautiful depot anymore.

Most of all, we need to elect a Democratic President in the fall. America's workers and ranchers and teachers need a friend in the White House, not another Republican landslide. When we go to the polls next March, we should look for the candidate who can win next November. We can compete in every part of this country. We can be a party for all regions. We have done it before. Andrew Jackson carried every state in the South and the West. So did Franklin Roosevelt.

I am travelling the old Union Pacific route this week, through the Democratic heart of the west, starting here in Cheyenne today and going on to Laramie and Rock Springs tomorrow. I hope my course will lead your state and region back to my party. In October, I told you I would not forget Wyoming after the caucuses are over; I repeat that pledge now. I intend to retrace these steps to make sure that Wyoming sends a Democrat to the White House—and a Democrat to the Senate—in November.

—end-

This article originally appeared in issue 8.3 (April, 2008).

Jeffrey L. Pasley is associate professor of history at the University of Missouri and the author of *"The Tyranny of Printers": Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (2001), along with numerous articles and book chapters, most recently the entry on Philip Freneau in Greil Marcus's forthcoming New Literary History of America. He is currently completing a book on the presidential election of 1796 for the University Press of Kansas and also writes the blog Publick Occurrences 2.0 for some Website called *Common-place*.

Don't Mess with Us, Texas



I am driving off to the Society for Historians of the Early Republic (SHEAR) annual meeting in beautiful downtown Springfield, Illinois, this morning. Worthwhile national history conferences in easy ground transportation range of mid-Missouri are something of a rarity, so I would not miss it. Perhaps I will "live blog" some of the proceedings. Also, perhaps I won't.

Just one brief item before I go: Dan Mandell of Truman State called my attention to a *Wall Street Journal* article discussing the latest target for

Texas shootin' irons in the educational culture wars: our own field of U.S. history. This kind of history standards debate is not new, of course – we can say a little prayer of thanks that *Lynne* Cheney never got her own CIA hit squad, or whatever Dick's most recently revealed scheme turns out to have been. Yet back in the day, it was usually conservatives complaining about what was left out of the National History Standards; in present-day Texas, they are looking to put a tendentiously right-wing Christian view of American history *into* the public schools. The agenda seems to go considerably beyond LCheney-like complaints about the insufficient love given to George Washington. I will supply some key passages for myself or others to take up in the comments or later. The whole thing is worth reading, if you are feeling calm:

The fight over school curriculum in Texas, recently focused on biology, has entered a new arena, with a brewing debate over how much faith belongs in American history classrooms.

The Texas Board of Education, which recently approved new science standards that made room for creationist critiques of evolution, is revising the state's social studies curriculum. In early recommendations from outside experts appointed by the board, a divide has opened over how central religious theology should be to the teaching of history.

Three reviewers, appointed by social conservatives, have recommended revamping the K-12 curriculum to emphasize the roles of the Bible, the Christian faith, and the civic virtue of religion in the study of American history. Two of them want to remove or de-emphasize references to several historical figures who have become liberal icons, such as César Chávez and Thurgood Marshall.

"We're in an all-out moral and spiritual civil war for the soul of America, and the record of American history is right at the heart of it," said Rev. Peter Marshall, a Christian minister and one of the reviewers appointed by the conservative camp. . . .

The three reviewers appointed by the moderate and liberal board members are all professors of history or education at Texas universities, including Mr. de la Teja, a former state historian. The reviewers appointed by conservatives include two who run conservative Christian organizations: David Barton, founder of WallBuilders, a group that promotes America's Christian heritage; and Rev. Marshall, who preaches that Watergate, the Vietnam War, and Hurricane Katrina were God's judgments on the nation's sexual immorality. The third is Daniel Dreisbach, a professor of public affairs at American University.

The conservative reviewers say they believe that children must learn that America's founding principles are biblical. For instance, they say the separation of powers set forth in the Constitution stems from a scriptural understanding of man's fall and inherent sinfulness, or "radical depravity," which means he can be governed only by an intricate system of checks and balances.

Colonial historians, would you like to take a guess about what figure some of the Texas reviewers wanted removed from the curriculum, apparently as part of this biblical program? From the specific suggestions listed at the end of the story:



- Delete Anne Hutchinson from a list of colonial leaders

Students learn about colonial history in the fifth grade, and three reviewers suggested that the standards not include Anne Hutchinson, a 17th century figure, among a list of significant leaders. Ms. Hutchinson was exiled from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for teaching religious views at odds with the officially sanctioned faith.

So rebellious female Christians just don't count when it comes to America's biblical principles, and/or Puritan orthodoxy is alive and well deep in the heart of Texas. I don't think that's what Bob Wills intended, do you?

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Now playing: Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys – Cotton Eyed Joe

This article originally appeared in issue 9.4 (January, 2009).

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War



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