

# THE SOURCE



## ***History and Memory***

A Publication of the California History-Social Science Project - Summer 2012

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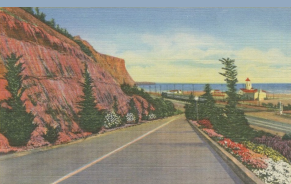
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## 2012 Summer Calendar



### JULY

July 9-13, "Cultural History of Judaism," UC Berkeley  
July 9-13, Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Level I/II with San Diego COE, CSU Long Beach  
July 9 -13, "Place and Time: L.A. History and Geography," Auto Club of Southern California, UCLA  
July 9-11, "Meeting Common Core Standards with History Instruction: A Train the Trainers Institute," Level 1, UC Davis  
July 16-20, "Building Academic Literacy through History," UC Berkeley  
July 17-20, Teaching with Primary Sources, Level II, American River College, UC Davis  
July 17-19, "Cities in World History," UCLA  
July 23-27, Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Level I/II, UCLA  
July 23-27, "Medieval Japan in the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Curriculum," UC Berkeley  
July 30-August 3, "Teach India" workshop, CSU Long Beach  
July 30-August 3, "America on the World Stage," UC Davis

### AUGUST

Aug. 2-3, TAH Field Study in San Francisco, UC Davis  
Aug. 6-10, Teacher Workshop on the Holocaust, CSU Long Beach  
Aug. 6-10, Alameda COE Teaching American History Grant summer institute, UC Berkeley  
Aug. 13-17, "Building Literacy through History," UC Davis  
Aug. 20-24, Mt. Diablo Teaching American History Grant summer institute, UC Berkeley

### SEPTEMBER

Sept. 15, "Making Sense of the American Civil War," Berkeley Public Library  
Sept. 19, "Colonial California," UC Davis Online Seminar for Shasta County  
Sept. 22, Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Level I with Calaveras County Office of Education, UC Davis  
Sept. 22, "Making Sense of the American Civil War," Long Beach Public Library  
Sept. 26, Teacher Action Research, San Juan and Sac City, UC Davis  
Sept. 27, "America on the World Stage," Scholar Seminar on Lincoln and Emancipation, Solano County, UC Davis

**For information about any of these programs and events, please contact:  
The California History-Social Science Project 530.752.0572 or  
[chssp@ucdavis.edu](mailto:chssp@ucdavis.edu)**

Cover image from Library of Congress: "Memories," from *Puck* magazine, 1913. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011649634/>

Back image from Marchand Collection: "Classic Landscape" [http://historyproject.ucdavis.edu/ic/image\\_details.php?id=9848](http://historyproject.ucdavis.edu/ic/image_details.php?id=9848)



## Enough with Mission Projects Already

by Nancy McTygue, Executive Director

I hate Mission Projects. I know I'm going to offend someone with that statement, but at this point in my life and career, I just don't care. No child in California should be asked to use sugar cubes, toothpicks, or the always hard to find popsicle sticks to build a replica of one or more mission as part of their study of California history. I know this project has been popular with teachers for years (I had to do it when I was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and I bet some of you did too), and perhaps this brings up nostalgic memories of your childhood, a time when everyone was kind, there was no crime or poverty, and to quote Garrison Keillor, "...all the children were above average." Enough is enough, however. This activity is just wrong on so many levels - it's offensive to the Native peoples whose lives were largely shattered by the mission system, it's a waste of time and money, it doesn't build reading or writing skills, and it doesn't teach anything of substance about our past. Thoughtful teachers abandoned this practice years ago, but I'm still amazed when I hear it got assigned yet again.

The Mission Project lives on for a variety of reasons, but I'm convinced that one of them is a nostalgic connection to a past that never really existed. You're familiar with the narrative, I'm sure - happy natives working in partnership with the Church in a bucolic setting. I'm sure you're also familiar with a more complex view of the period: many native peoples had their lives upended - suffering and dying in devastating numbers in the California missions. Given the neophytes' forced labor, the introduction of disease, and the damage done to Native families and culture even beyond the missions, it is surprising that Mission Projects have lasted as long as they unfortunately have.

But that's the danger of conflating memory and history - history often loses and our children are left not with lessons from the past, but fairy tales that offer little truth or even morality. On the other hand, memory can be a powerful motivator, deepen student understanding, and promote new interpretations of the traditional narrative. Democratic movements in the Middle East, for example, have inspired countless teachers to reinvigorate their study of our own revolution, while at the same time encouraging their students to follow events in these new young democracies abroad.

This issue of *The Source* is dedicated to the sometimes dangerous and yet powerful partnership of history and memory. My colleagues have endeavored to share the lessons they've gleaned in their research, reading, and professional development programs. From the Spanish Missions to the Civil War to the Holocaust, they detail activities and resources we hope will be of help in your classroom. As you read through them, I'd like to encourage us all to think critically about the tension between history and memory. How can we take advantage of the emotional power of memory in order to deepen our children's understanding of even difficult periods in our history, without whitewashing it to fit a narrative we think will be most appealing? Let us know what you think, by writing to us at [chssp@ucdavis.edu](mailto:chssp@ucdavis.edu) or posting on our Facebook wall. Just don't do another Mission Project.



## History and Memory in Germany after the Second World War

Robert G. Moeller, Professor of History, Faculty Advisor, UCI History Project

For the last twenty years or so, I have thought a lot about history and memory. My research has focused on how Germans—on both sides of the Cold War divide—remembered and commemorated the Second World War in the first decade or so after the war ended. When we teach the history of the Second World War to our students, we emphasize German aggression, the Nazis' expansionist goals, a foreign policy informed by biological theories of Germans' need to find "living space" (*Lebensraum*) in Eastern Europe, crimes of war that resulted in the murder of millions of civilians, and in particular, the systematic

Europe and the eastern parts of the Reich survived the flight ahead of the Red Army at the war's end or forced expulsion from their former homes after May 1945. Estimates of rapes of German women committed by Red Army soldiers are inexact but range to as high as a million and a half. As many as 110,000 took place in Berlin alone. More than five million more Germans in uniform lost their lives before the shooting stopped, well over half of them on the eastern front. When deaths of German POWs in Soviet captivity are added to this total, the war on the eastern front accounts for almost 75 percent of all

German military casualties. At the end of the war, more than a million German women were widows, and the first post war census recorded that for every 1,000 adult men who might seek a spouse, there were 2,242 available women.

In the first postwar decade, what Germans most remembered—what defined what I and others have called their "memory landscapes"—was not those they had victimized but the victim next door—the father, son, uncle, or brother who had died or whose whereabouts remained unknown, the refugee who had been separated from home and livelihood, the victim of the bombing war who was without a roof over her or his head, the woman left a widow and the fatherless child. Memories were mediated by politics. In West Germany, the perpetrator was the Soviet aggressor who

remained the most dangerous potential aggressor of the Cold War that followed. In the East, heading the victim role call was the anti-fascist hero who had died in a Nazi concentration camp, and leading the list of perpetrators were the "imperialist" air pirates who had moved effortlessly from bombing Berlin to bombing the Korean peninsula. In each Germany, memories of German victimization registered in memoirs, novels, government documentation projects, at the movies, and in annual commemorative



*Bombed German town along the Rhine. Image from The National Archives, #292583.*

attempt by the Nazi state to murder all European Jews. But in the first postwar decade, what Germans most remembered was not the suffering they had caused others but rather the suffering that they had endured. It is worth remembering how extensive that suffering was. The Allied bombing war left as many as 600,000 civilians dead and wounded over 800,000. Some 7.5 million Germans who survived were left homeless at the war's end, the vast majority of the ten million or so evacuated from cities to avoid the bombs. About twelve million Germans from Eastern

events. For some memories, there was plenty of space. For others, there was not.

Fastforward to Berlin in May 2005. Fifty years after the end of the war, Germany's political leaders gathered to dedicate the "Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe," 2711 concrete pillars lodged in an undulating stone landscape in the center of the capital—a stone's throw from the iconic Brandenburg Gate, the U.S. embassy, the seat of the German parliament, and the offices of the federal Chancellor. What had happened? How had this memory, the memory of German crimes, buried beneath memories of German victimization in the 1950s, become central to the definition of a democratic polity two generations later?



*Peter Eisenman's "Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe."*

*Photo by Bob Moeller.*

My work emphasizes how changing political contexts made it possible for different sets of competing memories to emerge and ultimately for some to displace others. Key milestones along the way included events *outside* Germany, most notably the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961 where the prosecution presented an army of witnesses whose memories left no doubt about the horrific nature of Hitler's war against the Jews. But within Germany, particularly West Germany, much changed as well. By the late 1960s a majority in the parliament was ready to elect as Chancellor the Social Democrat Willy Brandt who had spent the war fighting Germans in the Norwegian resistance. A generation come of age after 1945 showed a willingness to confront the Nazi past far more directly than their parents. In May 1970, as the West German parliament commemorated the end of World War II for the first time, Brandt called officially for a sober confrontation with the Nazi past, not only for those who had experienced National Socialism, but also for those born since the end of the war because Germans shared a history for which they were accountable. Brandt's public acknowledgment of the crimes of Germans against Poles and Jews during his December 1970 trip to Warsaw pushed into the shadows the 1950s preoccupation with the crimes of Communists against Germans. And when the Social Democratic

Chancellor Willy Brandt visited Warsaw in 1970, the memories he honored were those of the Jews who had resisted the Nazi liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto. In the context of détente and better East-West relations, the anti-Communism that fuelled German resentment of Soviet excesses in the Second World War gave way to gradually improved relations between West Germany and its eastern European neighbors and a willingness on the part of the more and more Germans to acknowledge the crimes that Germans had committed in the war in the East in general and crimes against Jews in particular.

This shifting memory landscape found no ready parallel in East Germany, which continued to associate the Federal Republic with the legacy of fascism and where increasingly empty commemorative rituals recalled "victims of fascism," obscuring the centrality of anti-Semitism for Nazi policy. But by 1989/90, when the Berlin Wall fell, Communism collapsed, and East and West Germans were reunited, the politics of memory in the Federal Republic created space for a "mosaic of victims"—homosexual men, those deemed mentally disabled who had been involuntarily sterilized, slave workers from eastern Europe brought against their will to work in Germany during the war, and first and foremost, Jews. The shelves of bookshops creaked

*History and Memory in Germany after the Second World War*, continued from page 5.

with newly published memoirs of victims, memories for which there was now a ready audience. The view of the past that dominated in West Germany became the view of the past embraced by the majority of Germans in the reunified nation. Other memories were not erased. In 2005, there were moments of silence and commemorative events for Germans who died in the bombing war and Germans who were permanently driven out of eastern Germany and Eastern Europe by the Red Army at the war's end. But no one questioned that central to a post-Holocaust German identity was the acknowledgment of the horrendous crimes against humanity that many Germans had committed during the Third Reich. Germans could embrace and accept their history as perpetrators, even as they also took a moment to remember their past as victims.

If postwar Germany is a particularly rich case study in how history, memory, and politics intertwine, and how memory too has its own history, there is no shortage of other examples that we can bring into the classroom—the controversies over how to remember and commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima and

Nagasaki, the history Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans War Memorial, a black wall on the Mall inscribed with the more than 50,000 names of those who died in that conflict, and the decision to juxtapose it with a realistic bronze sculpture of "The Three Soldiers," or the history of the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., another fascinating example of how what memories are permanently enshrined can be determined by a political process and a lively debate in the public sphere. History and memory—the pairing is by now a commonplace for historians, the subject of books and articles, conferences, and the title of a major journal. Let's consider ways to bring what we know into the classroom, helping students understand what differentiates these categories, how they influence each other, and how our changing understandings of history—what we lump together under the category of historiography—finds a parallel in shifting memory landscapes and the history of memory.



*This article draws on Robert G. Moeller, "Germans as Victims? Thoughts on a Post-Cold War History of the Second World War's Legacies," History and Memory 17:1/2 (2005): 147-94.*

## Where History and Heritage Intersect

by Dave Neumann, Site Director, The History Project at CSU Long Beach

Historians and history educators sometimes draw a sharp line between "heritage" and "history," the former a patriotic celebration of common identity as a nation and the latter a more objective, critical investigation of the past. While there are important differences between the two, placing them in mutually opposed camps can prove problematic for K-12 teachers whose instruction has always served a civic purpose. Simply critiquing heritage approaches to the past can often encourage cynicism in students, rather than engaging critical thinking. A more fruitful approach involves exploring the intersection between

the two, using heritage's ideas about a common past as the framework for inquiry.

Much of the discussion about history education reform revolves around having students "do history," that is, being more like historians. This model implicitly assumes rejecting inferior ways of understanding the past. It thus poses a dichotomy between "heritage," the public's celebration of a common past, and "history," scholars' detached, critical investigation of what actually happened. History educator Bruce VanSledright explicitly places most traditional classroom instruction firmly in the



heritage camp. Criticizing the use of heritage “to spark faith, enhance identity, and create a sense of pleasure and joy in being who we are,” VanSledright argues that standards and testing promote an “official” version of the past designed to promote patriotism and a common identity.<sup>1</sup>

A complete rejection of heritage and patriotic understandings of the past may simply promote student cynicism, however, as I discovered when I taught US History. At the end of the year, I screened a few films that depicted key moments in the American past. One film I showed was *The Patriot*, starring Mel Gibson. Initially, the questions I posed for students encouraged them to criticize the historical inaccuracies of the film. My questions assumed the following: a stark division existed between heritage celebration and critical investigation, the film fell into the first category, and that it should be critiqued accordingly. I eventually realized that rather than teaching the historical thinking skills I intended, I simply encouraged my students to heap scorn on the film—not a very useful activity.

I concluded that rather than thinking about heritage and history as starkly opposed categories, it was more fruitful to think about the engagement between identity-based patriotic celebrations and critical, evidence-based investigations of the past. In my revised activity, I took for granted that filmmakers use a different standard of historical accuracy than historians. *The Patriot* makes an interesting argument about the way the American Revolution shaped what it means to be American. Asking students to explore this message proved more useful than having them dismiss the film for failing to live up to some notion of historical objectivity.

Rather than viewing heritage and history as inherently different, it's more productive to explore the connections between the two. The concerns of heritage—origins, identity, and common purpose—can be wedded to the process of historical investigation—posing questions, exploring evidence, and making historical accounts. Teachers can focus inquiry on questions of nationhood and identity. What values have shaped who we are? How have

Americans defined freedom? What is the story of America? What does it mean to be American? This exploration can indeed cause students to appreciate, at times, our common heritage and identity. And inquiry can also point out ways in which our past has been deeply at odds with our stated values, and has



Charles Lee, Esq'r. - major general of the Continental Army in America

Image from Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a52615/>

excluded people from the common heritage of American identity.

An uncritical celebration of the past is not helpful, but the solution is not a clinical, detached study of the past—in fact, such a thing may not exist. We can recognize our own interest in the past and connection to it, while still critically evaluating it. And we can help our students to do the same.

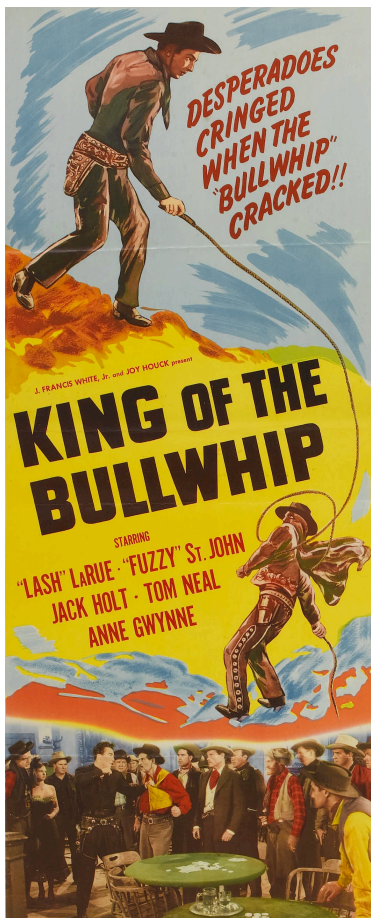
#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Bruce VanSledright, *In Search of America's Past: Learning to Read History in Elementary School* (New York, 2002), 11.

## Stories, Memory, and the West

Mary Miller, Co-Director, UCLA History-Geography Project

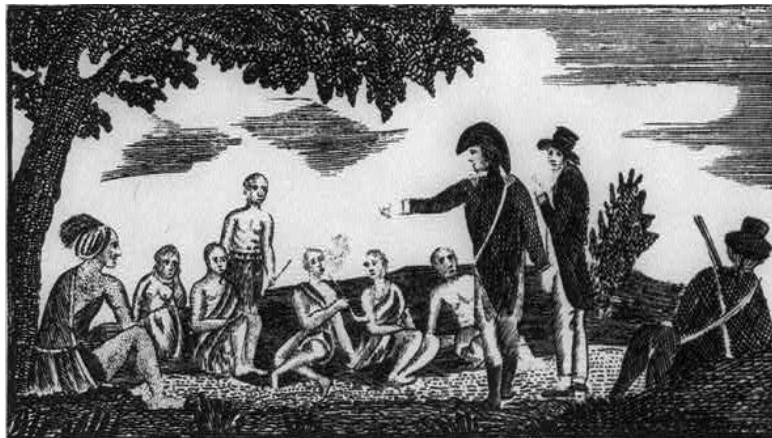
In the flood of events in our own lives and the innumerable details of the past, how can we begin to form a workable memory of history? For most people, that is through stories, perhaps enhanced by visits to museums, even dusty ones, on childhood field trips. We didn't realize then that the stories were of necessity incomplete. Sometimes the problem was a lack of information about voiceless workers in ancient times; at other times, it was a desire for an exciting story at the expense of the ordinary lives of the majority; and it was not uncommon for the story to be the narrative of "the victor" whose records and descendants revealed only their part of the past. One of the most nostalgic stories in United States history has been that of the West, skewed by years of movies and television programs filled with thundering horses. I well remember my brother spending every Saturday afternoon "riding" the arm of my father's big chair as Lash LaRue's whip cracked in the background.



Lash LaRue-King of the Bullwhip 1950 poster. Image courtesy of The Old Corral collection.

The West was also left out of stories of global trade and mass migration, but those stories are increasingly being told. Dr. Natale Zappia of Whittier College recently asked a Teaching American History group about their images of the West, eliciting such words as *adventure, frontier, cattle, horses, and extension*. But "extension" from the East inevitably meant contraction for the people already in the West, and no one mentioned early Pacific trade networks. Dr.

Zappia noted that silver and furs, both from the Western Hemisphere, were among the first truly global trade products and that Native Americans actively participated in the horse and hide trade. For an overview of the imagined West, Dr. Zappia recommended Peter Kastor's book *William Clark's World*.



1810 etching: Captain Lewis and Clark holding a council with Indians. Image from Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001699652/>

Meriwether Lewis's journal entry for August 17, 1805, (available at <http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu>) offers a description of an interesting encounter between Lewis and a Shoshone chief that makes clear each side's trade expectations and suggests the typical consequence of interactions between unequal powers. Lewis's party sought horses for which they would trade the firearms that the Shoshone wanted for hunting and defense. Lewis wrote that the Shoshone "appeared well pleased with what had been said. the chief thanked us for friendship towards himself and nation & declared his wish to serve us in every respect", but Lewis also reported that "we made them sensible of their dependance on the will of our government for every species of merchandize as well for their defence & comfort; and apprized them of the strength of our government..." This is an interesting basis for friendship.

The story of Angel Island in San Francisco Bay haunted the memories of the Asian immigrants who



found themselves within sight of the destination some were never to reach, but it is a story that was almost lost because many of the structures on the island, known as the Ellis Island of the West, were just barely saved from a destruction that would have made it even harder to tell this painful story. In 1970, a newly assigned ranger noticed that as paint wore off the walls, lovely Chinese calligraphy was being revealed. It turned out that detainees had written poems all over their detention buildings; many spoke to the loss of their dreams of the West. Included are excerpts from three poems found in Angel Island.

to ensure preservation of this lesser known western immigration story, and Angel Island is now both a state park and a National Historic Landmark. There are many online sources of information, including <http://aiisf.org/>, about the detention site and the poetry found there, and *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* by Erika Lee and Judy Yung is a comprehensive retelling of the story, including the poems below.

We as teachers have an obligation both to entrance our students with history's intriguing narratives and

*I clasped my hands in parting with my brothers and classmates.  
Because of the mouth, I hastened to cross the American Ocean.  
How was I to know that the western barbarians had lost their hearts and reason?  
With a hundred kinds of oppressive laws, they mistreat us Chinese.*

*From now on, I am departing far from this building  
All of my fellow villagers are rejoicing with me.  
Don't say that everything within is Western styled.  
Even if it is built of jade, it has turned into a cage.*

*Crossing the faraway ocean to arrive in America,  
Leaving behind my hometown, family and friends—  
Who would have expected to be stranded in a wooden building,  
Not knowing when I can hold up my head with pride?*

Background image: Chinese Carving at Angel Island Internment Camp,  
from Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/highsm.04301/>

The authorities had deemed this writing graffiti and painted over it so the detainees again wrote the poems, then carved into the brushwork. The authorities responded by filling the carvings with putty and repainting. When these historic inscriptions were noticed, several Northern California groups, many including descendants of detainees, struggled

to give them as full a story of the past as is available. Fortunately, we have ever more resources to do both. Please e-mail me at [mmiller@gseis.ucla.edu](mailto:mmiller@gseis.ucla.edu) to share links you have found do this well or to request a lesson using Meriwether Lewis's journal entry.

## “History and Memory of the Holocaust” at UC Davis

Stacey Greer, Program Coordinator, The History Project at UC Davis



*Holocaust survivor Louis de Groot, shares his experiences with teachers at UC Davis' "History and Memory of the Holocaust" Seminar in July 2011.*

The History Project at UC Davis is partnering with the UC Davis Jewish Studies Program to offer the “History and Memory of the Holocaust” professional development program for teachers for our second year. As its name implies, the program focuses not only on helping teachers understand the complicated history of the events, but also how the Holocaust has been remembered both in Europe and the United States. We follow the suggestion of literary scholar James E. Young that adding a “study of commemorative forms to the study of history mak[es] historical inquiry the combined study of both what happened and how it is passed down to us.”<sup>1</sup> In addition to considering survivors’ testimony, teachers explore the question of how people born after the Holocaust, with no personal memory of the events, can appropriately remember and honor the victims and survivors of such events.

The program’s faculty speakers frame the discussion of Holocaust memory by examining the concept of postmemory expressed by memory scholars, Marianne Hirsch and James E. Young. Teachers read and then discuss excerpts from Hirsch’s *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* and her article “The Generation of Postmemory,” in which Hirsch describes postmemory as the deep connection

that the children born after the Holocaust have to the traumatic experiences and memories of their survivor-parents. Although the children did not experience the events themselves, their connection is so visceral that they often refer to it as memory. Hirsch argues that using the lens of postmemory to examine artistic expressions of this second generation can help those more distant consider the significance of the events. Hirsch goes on to examine how photographs of the Holocaust helped transmit its memory, contending that these photographs represent “a uniquely powerful medium for the transmission of events that remain unimaginable” even to those who did not directly experience the event itself.<sup>2</sup> Hirsch models an investigation of these photographs which the program’s teachers can bring back to the classroom.

We also read Young’s *At Memory’s Edge: After Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (2000) where he uses postmemory as a means to analyze the work of several post-Holocaust artists. Young argues that their work shares three characteristics: the rejection of the traditional redemptory purpose of art: it must not be beautiful, apologetic, or inspire hope; the exploration of memory as part of the work; and the focus on the void left by the complete destruction of Jewish life in



Europe.<sup>3</sup> The program's scholars then lead the teachers through Young's examination of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1986), a graphic novel depicting Spiegelman's interactions with his father as his father recounts his experience during the Holocaust, a prime example of postmemory. The work effectively demonstrates postmemory as Speigelman presents what he understood of his father's survivor's tale, how he heard it, and how his father's experiences and tale affected their relationship. Young asserts that in telling the story through the medium of the graphic novel, Speigelman has "cultivated the unique capacity in the 'comixture' of image and narrative for telling the double-stranded tale of his

father's story and his own recording of it."<sup>4</sup> As a graphic novel, *Maus* provides a

wonderful means to demonstrate these concepts to students in both a visual and textual manner.

The program finally considers Young's analysis of memorials

built in Germany to honor the Holocaust victims. Young finds that many of these artists believed that constructing new monuments or memorials in the traditional sense would ultimately devalue the memory of the Holocaust both due to a memorial's inability to effectively compensate for the incomprehensible suffering or by telling the public what to think. Instead these artists prioritized installations that focused on the void, the negative spaces left by the victims, and on engaging the public's own memory and critical thinking in their installations - what Young calls countermonuments. The teachers examine Young's analysis and photographs of countermonuments created by Horst Hoheisel, Renata Stih and Fieder Schnock, and Jochen

Gerz, all of which can be used as illustrative examples in the classroom.

Teachers participating in the "History and Memory of the Holocaust" reported enthusiasm for using memory as a new approach to studying the Holocaust. Said one teacher of scholar Diane Wolf's presentation: "Professor Wolf really opened my eyes to what happened after the war...She also gave me a lot to think about in terms of Holocaust memory work, the ways Germans and Americans have remembered and memorialized the Holocaust, and why America has taken on this task of remembering."

Teachers felt that using the lens of memory helped them relate to students the difficulty

of remembering a n d effectively honoring victims of such a catastrophic historical event.

The teachers also described their s t u d e n t s ' improved ability to describe the manner in which society can remember and honor

the Holocaust as well as similar events of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and human rights violations. We look forward to working with our second cohort of teachers in the "History and Memory of the Holocaust" program this fall.



#### Notes

1 James Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven, 2000), 11.

2 Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (March 20, 2008), 107-108, 111.

3 Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 9.

4 *ibid.*, 16.

## Through the Looking Glass: Understanding Memory and History

Haley Michaels Pollack, Content Specialist & Teacher Coach, The History-Social Science Project at UC Berkeley

Driving along El Camino Real – the stretch of California interstate 101 between San Francisco and San Diego – it is difficult to ignore the Spanish missions that dot the landscape. Today, the missions are an important part of California's history, heritage, and landscape but it has not always been this way. At the end of the nineteenth century, many of



*Mission San Francisco Solano de Sonoma, circa 1930. Image from Library of Congress*

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/hhh.ca1118.photos.010722p/>

California's Spanish missions were all but crumbling to the ground and to many, the missions seemed to be nothing more than a confusing relic of a time long past.<sup>1</sup> How did missions go from deteriorated to celebrated? The answer lies in memory.

The commemoration of the missions, and the creation of El Camino Real, emerged from boosters' desire to promote the region's Spanish past. In 1946, chronicler of California history and culture, Carey McWilliams coined the phrase "Spanish fantasy heritage" to describe the romanticized Spanish past invented by

Southern California Anglo American boosters. This past celebrated an invented Spanish heritage at the expense of the region's Mexican and indigenous histories. Turn-of-the-century boosters called upon and cultivated the romance of this bygone era to appeal to tourists, but they also promoted a romantic Southern Californian heritage to attract new residents to the region, all the while making it feel safe for these largely Midwest migrants. Attractive missions and re-created Spanish fiestas were integral to this cultivated heritage. By the 1910's, as Southern California's population and popularity boomed, El Camino Real had become a well-traveled highway, offering a chance for drivers to feel as though they



*Ramona Bowl Pageant Actors, 1955.*

Image from Calisphere, [http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/themed\\_collections/subtopic0a.html](http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/themed_collections/subtopic0a.html)

were traveling back in time while enjoying the modern pleasures of the open road. The popularity of the highway stimulated the conversion of the once crumbling missions into landmarks of local pride, particularly for those Southern Californian Anglos who promoted the idea.<sup>2</sup> Driving down El Camino Real, now a landmark in its own right, one can see where memory and history hit the proverbial road.



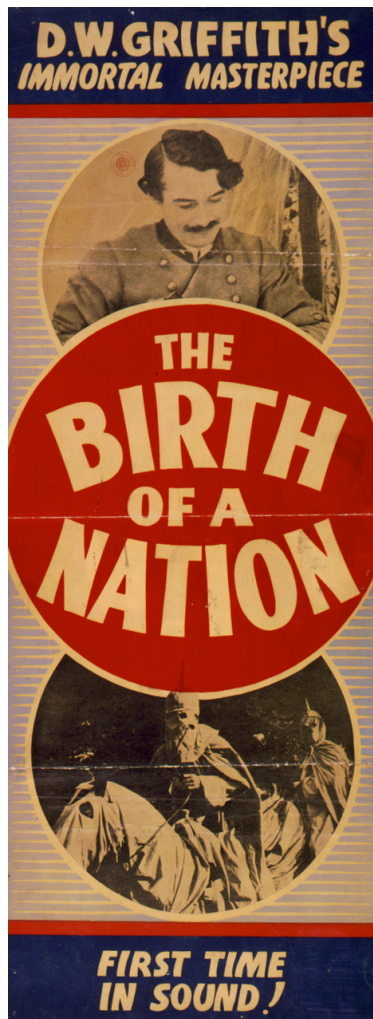
Questions of history almost always involve questions of memory. The ways in which individuals, communities, and the nation come to remember and memorialize specific moments or events are always infused with politics and meaning. These stories and mythologies help to create our understandings of places, the past, and even our present moments. Understanding the tides of historical memory help us, as historians and teachers, to paint more detailed pictures of past moments or events. How have historical actors chosen to remember, commemorate, or memorialize the past? Answering this important question opens up a world of inquiry and provides a jumping off point for probing historical analysis.

In Southern California memories have been built into the landscape through El Camino Real, but the intersection of memory and history can take many forms. In the late nineteenth century, decades after the signing of the treaty at Appomattox Court House that ended the Civil War, battles over the meanings and remembrances of the war continued to rage. Former Confederate states clung to the rhetoric of the “Lost Cause,” justifying slavery and secession by placing both in the best possible light. For many who fought for the Union victory, the war became remembered as one of emancipation and they framed its legacy through ideas of freedom – a nation moving from the old order of slavery to a new order of equality.<sup>3</sup>

In the decades after the war, these competing narratives emerged in a myriad of ways including D.W. Griffith’s famous 1915 film *Birth of the Nation*. The film chronicled southern Reconstruction, depicting a chaotic South, overrun by power hungry African Americans. In the end, the film presented the Ku Klux Klan as heroes of the day, reinstating order –

racial and otherwise – to the South. While thousands enjoyed the *Birth of the Nation*, it was also met with protest in cities across the country. Many NAACP chapters urged that at least parts of the film be banned.<sup>4</sup> Examining how individuals and groups interpreted the war’s genesis or conclusion helps to explain their ideas about the meaning of the war, and in turn, their ideas about the nation. Reflecting on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war’s end, David Blight, historian of Civil War memory, remarked that the period was a time when “Civil War memory was both settled and unsettled.”<sup>5</sup> The many fights over Civil War memory were (and continue to be), battles over history and heritage, race and rights, democracy and freedom.

The legacy of the Civil War remains “both settled and unsettled.” Take, for instance, the disputes of the 1980’s and 1990’s regarding whether it was appropriate for the Confederate battle flag to fly over the state house in South Carolina. What for many is a symbol of racism, some claimed as a benign symbol of Southern heritage. Though the confederate flag has long been removed from outside the South Carolina statehouse, questions of memory continue to be contested.<sup>6</sup> Whether about symbols of the Civil War or regional mythologies, our stories about the past continue to occupy our imagination and reflect our present moment.



1936 Poster, from Library of Congress <http://myloc.gov/Exhibitions/naacp/earlyyears/ExhibitObjects/BirthOfANationPoster.asp>

#### Notes:

1 Pheobe S. Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley, 2006), pp. 47-102.

2 Ibid.

3 David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 395-397.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 397.

<sup>6</sup> *The Memory of the Civil War in American Popular Culture*, Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds. (Chapel Hill, 2004), p. 4.



## Teaching Democracy Webinar Series

Please join us for the two final webinars in the Teaching Democracy Webinar Series, presented in partnership with Cal Humanities. Each live online webinar includes a scholar lecture followed by a moderated discussion with the online audience. Afterwards, CHSSP teacher leaders will present a lesson demonstration using primary sources from the scholar's lecture, followed by Q&A. Webinars held on Wednesdays, from 4-6 p.m. Visit <http://chssp.ucdavis.edu/programs/programs/teaching-democracy> to learn more and register.

**July 18, 2012**

*Who is a Citizen?*

**Clarence Walker, Professor of History, UC Davis**

Professor Walker is a scholar of nineteenth-century America. He specializes in African American, social, and political history. Professor Walker is the author of *Mongrel Nation: The America Begotten by Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings* and *We Can't Go Home Again: An Argument about Afrocentrism*. Professor Walker enthusiastically provides thought-provoking lectures for the CHSSP's professional development events throughout Northern California.



**August 15, 2012**

*No Taxation Without Representation?*

**Alan Taylor, Professor of History, UC Davis**



Professor Taylor is the author of six books: *The Civil War of 1812; Liberty Men and Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Maine Frontier, 1760-1820; William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early Republic; American Colonies; Writing Early American History*, and *The Divided Ground*. *William Cooper's Town* won the 1996 Pulitzer, Beveridge, and Bancroft Prizes. Professor Taylor teaches courses in early American history, the American West, and the history of Canada.

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### Funding Available for School-Based Humanities Projects from Cal Humanities

Are you looking for funding to support a community-based research project? Applications for the next round of Cal Humanities' Community Stories grant program (previously the California Story Fund), will be accepted through August 1, 2012.

Since 2003, over \$3 million has been awarded to projects that collect, preserve, interpret, and share the stories of California communities—past and present—through this competitive grants program. Awards range up to \$10,000 and require a cash or in-kind match. Application eligibility is limited to California-based nonprofit organizations or local/state public agencies or institutions – including K-12 schools, both public and private. Projects should involve at least one humanities advisor, employ humanities research methods such as oral history or archival research, and produce web-friendly work products, such as videos or audio recordings, as well as traditional public programming activities, e.g. forums or exhibits.

Cal Humanities is a nonprofit organization, affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities, which conducts and supports public humanities programs aimed to foster greater knowledge, understanding, and empathy among Californians.

For guidelines, descriptions of all funded projects, or information on upcoming information sessions and webinars, visit: <http://www.calhum.org/grants/community-stories-grant>



# Making Sense of the

# American Civil War



## A reading and discussion series in America's libraries

*The Civil War takes us back to a time in American history when civility ruptured and the nation split in two. The sesquicentennial of the Civil War and emancipation is an occasion for America to reflect together about the causes and ramifications of our greatest internal conflict, and a most appropriate way for 'us the living' to renew the American spirit in these still-troubled times.*

-Jim Leach, Chairman, The National Endowment for the Humanities

The California History-Social Science Project, in partnership with Cal Humanities, The National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Library Association, is hosting four Civil War lectures and book discussions throughout the state, all meant to encourage participants to consider the legacy of the Civil War and emancipation. Readings include:

- *March*, by Geraldine Brooks, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction (Penguin, 2006)
- *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam* by leading Civil War historian James McPherson (Oxford UP, 2002)
- *America's War: Talking About the Civil War and Emancipation on Their 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries*, an anthology of historical fiction, speeches, diaries, memoirs, biography, and short stories, edited by national project scholar Edward L. Ayers (co-published by NEH and ALA, 2012).

### Upcoming events:

September 15, 1:00-3:30, Berkeley Public Library, with Dr. Ari Kelman of UC Davis

September 22, 11:00-1:30, Long Beach Public Library, with Dr. Jane Dabel of CSU Long Beach  
contact [chssp@ucdavis.edu](mailto:chssp@ucdavis.edu) for more information

Images: Camp of 31st Pennsylvania Infantry near Washington, D.C. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/98507952/>  
Unidentified African American soldier and family <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010647216/>

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-Shelley Brooks,  
Editor

