



American Institute  
FOR HISTORY EDUCATION

"Well done is better than well said"

# The AIHE Gazette

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August's Featured  
AIHE Historian:

**Dr. Patricia Brady**

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As a graduate of the Texas public school system, I am a strong proponent of public education. And as a historian, I am convinced that it is essential to teach American history in all our schools — public and private. Only teachers who know history can do the job properly.

This summer I had the pleasure of talking to teachers at American Institute for History Education (AIHE) programs in Corinth, MS, and Montgomery, AL, about first ladies, both as role models for and reflections of American women of their times. One of my presentations was called "The Most Important Unelected Position in America," and it underlined the political power and influence of the women who are married to our presidents. The other dealt with individual first ladies, their qualities and quirks, in the 19th or 20th centuries.

There are some lucky students in both of those school districts! Their teachers were completely engaged in the topic, already knowledgeable about American history, and they enriched our discussion with pointed comments and questions. It's rewarding for a speaker to have a roomful of attentive listeners who care about what you're talking about and share common interests. These women and men were visibly soaking up new viewpoints and ideas.

Teaching American History (TAH) grants are making a lot of difference in history education in this country, and AIHE effectively puts those grants into action. Public school teachers are overworked and underpaid. They don't have time to waste on disorganized or vapid programs. Instead, here they enjoy the opportunity for concentrated study that translates into better classroom teaching.

There's nothing more disappointing to presenter and participants alike than a program that flounders from disorganization and lack of planning. The programs in Corinth and Montgomery were carefully set up to match presenters' expertise

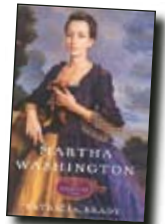
and teachers' needs, to cover a specific time period intensively, and keep to a schedule. Every discussion started and stopped on time. I greatly enjoyed listening to the other presenters and talking informally with everyone during breaks.

A little about myself and my qualifications: I graduated from Tulane University and taught history for eleven years at Dillard University. Then I changed course professionally, founding and heading the publications department at the Historic New Orleans Collection for twenty years. We published a string of books on Louisiana history, art, and culture. My special areas of concentration are Southern women, first ladies, and Louisiana's free people of color. Inspired by the bicentennial celebration at the White House, I retired to write full time, beginning with a biography, *Martha Washington: An American Life*. This summer *Louisiana Women*, a collection of essays came out; my chapter is on Eliza Jane Nicholson, the first female publisher of an American daily newspaper. I'm now writing about the love story of Rachel and Andrew Jackson.

One of the best pieces of advice I can give to teachers is to visit or revisit Mount Vernon with their students. George Washington's estate has always been a showplace, but in recent years there has been a revolution in their presentation of early American history. A grand new museum and education center, costumed interpreters, expanded farm and garden activities, and nuanced interpretations of slavery and women's roles make Mount Vernon a rich historical and cultural experience.

To learn more about early American first ladies, I would suggest (of course) my own biography of Martha Washington, Catherine Allgor's *Dolley Madison*, Edith Gelles' *Abigail Adams*, and Cokie Roberts' more general studies, *Founding Mothers* and *Ladies of Liberty*.

To order a copy of *Martha Washington: An American Life*, visit the AIHE Bookstore at [www.aihe-bookstore.com](http://www.aihe-bookstore.com) and click on the link for AIHE Professor Books.



Experience the newest interactive resource from AIHE that will help teachers infuse the African-American journey — filled with social, political and economic contributions -- into their U.S. History classes.



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# Teachers from the Legacy of Freedom TAH Grant Share Their Field-Study Trip Experiences

Teachers from the Legacy of Freedom Liberty Fellowship spent a week in June in Pennsylvania and New York, touring Gettysburg National Military Park, the Lackawanna Coal Mine, New York's Financial District, Ellis Island and Harlem.

## Bea Naylor, Fairview Elementary School — Klamath Falls, OR (5th-6th Grade History)

The field-study trip was incredibly moving. For a Westerner, the amount of history that has happened in that area is overwhelming. If we have something 100 years old, we think it is ancient. To stand and look out over the Gettysburg battlefield and have these famous places and names pointed out to us was one of the highlights. I had read all these accounts before the trip and suddenly they all fell into place. During our visit to the Shriver House, we begin to realize what terror the townspeople must have felt as the armies swept back and forth through town and the nearby farms. There was no safe place to hide.

The coal mine tour was also enlightening. The docent at the museum was great. If he was a retired coal miner, he missed his calling. He made teaching through storytelling come alive. While the guide in the mine made you shudder with his stories, the docent made you want to cry. The good old days certainly weren't good there.

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## Penny Schweiger, Talent Middle School — Talent, OR (8th Grade U.S. History and Language Arts)

I read *The Killer Angels* before traveling to Gettysburg. The vast size of the battlefield was overwhelming and the book grounded me as I looked out, as Colonel Chamberlain did, from Little Round Top upon Devil's Den, the Peach Orchard and Cemetery Hill. In Gettysburg, the Dobbin House Tavern added one more connection. Besides enjoying a wonderful dinner in a period setting, it also held a secret. A hidden eave off a stairwell offered a safe haven for runaway slaves; just one of many 'first stops' on the Underground Railroad between southern Virginia and northern Pennsylvania.

The Shriver House and Museum certainly gave insight to the

civilian and public response in creating the national cemetery. It also provided us a view into everyday life in the 1860s.

After leaving Gettysburg we moved on to Scranton, PA, and the home of the Lackawanna coal mine to experience the rise of the industrial revolution firsthand. Coal mining offered jobs for unskilled immigrants. As the need for more skilled labor rose, our shores welcomed the "huddled masses" of European immigrants. This was the perfect staging before our visit to Ellis Island and the Tenement Museum on Orchard Street. At Ellis Island many of us researched our own parents' and grandparents' entry to the United States. The Southside tour of the medical facilities was fascinating. Understanding the propaganda of the time and settling the fears of the American public on disease spread was both moving and educational. The summer shower during our walking tour of Wall Street did not dampen our spirits; and the summer's heat, two days later, did not slow our walking tour of Harlem.

The highlights of our field-study trip are too numerous. I look forward to returning to the classroom and sharing my story, my experience, and the excitement of the American story.

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## Renee Criss, Malin Elementary School — Klamath Falls, OR (3rd Grade)

The National Military Visitor Center and Museum in Gettysburg was fantastic. Some of the artifacts are well-preserved and helped to tell the history, including the wonderful artifacts at the Adams County Historical Society. The anthracite museum in Scranton, PA, was also very enlightening. The tour guide was also great and very knowledgeable about mining history. The visit to the other side of Ellis Island was terrific and gave a different perspective to my view of the island that I came with. Finally, the Tenement Museum in New York provided a brief look into a piece of history that is fascinating. The way families lived and survived during that period of history is often overlooked because it is not as sensationalistic as war, but it is just as important. Overall, it was a great taste of history through several periods and will definitely add to my teaching.

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See **FIELD-STUDY**, page 4

# New Jersey Microbrewery Fishes for Historical Information and Hooks AIHE



Flying Fish Brewing Company, located in Cherry Hill, N.J., claims to be the nation's first "virtual" microbrewery on the web. The web site for this forward-thinking small company allows beer lovers to help select and name beers, design T-shirts and labels, volunteer to be taste testers and even apply for positions as brewers.

Now Flying Fish has swallowed an invitation from the American Institute for History Education (AIHE) to supply historical background to the brewery's web site as it releases a series of beers that celebrates each exit on the New Jersey Turnpike. The Exit Series™ is a multi-year collection of limited edition beers saluting the diversity of the Garden State. Each beer

focuses on the unique aspect of an individual exit, whether it's an ingredient, attitude or weird event.

So far Flying Fish has released beverages for Exit 4 and Exit 11. There will be 18 special brews in all. By clicking on The Exit Series on the company's web site, visitors can select an exit beer and read historical facts, specific to that area, researched and supplied by AIHE. Details include the nationality of the area's settlers, battles that have taken place there, and famous people (present or past) who were born near that exit. Also listed are the beer's ingredients and flavor, which all ties in to the overall feel or theme.



If you like beer as much as history, visit [www.FlyingFish.com](http://www.FlyingFish.com), click on The Exit Idea Lab and weigh in with your own opinion.

## Sickles at Gettysburg Tells the Story of a Colorful and Unique American Icon

*Sickles at Gettysburg* is an entertaining biography of General Daniel E. Sickles, a controversial Civil War general who committed murder, disobeyed orders at Gettysburg, nearly lost the battle for the Union cause, and spent the remainder of his life declaring himself as the battle's hero. No individual at Gettysburg was more controversial than General Sickles. But when one combines his battlefield performance with his post-battle attempts to manipulate history and his early battlefield preservation efforts, no participant has been more influential.

By 1863, Sickles was already notorious as a disgraced ex-Congressman who committed murder on the streets of Washington and used America's first temporary insanity defense to escape justice. With his political career in ruins, he used his connections with Abraham Lincoln to be promoted to command of the Army of the Potomac's Third Corps, despite having never attended West Point.

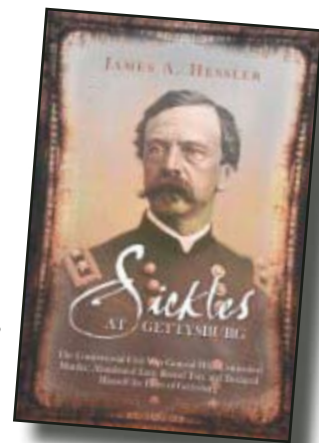
At Gettysburg, he disobeyed orders and moved his corps out of position, nearly jeopardizing the battle for the Union army. No single action dictated the battlefield strategies of both Generals George Meade and Robert E. Lee more than Sickles' unauthorized advance to the Peach Orchard, and the mythic defense of Little Round Top might have occurred quite differently were it not for General Sickles. Losing his leg on the battlefield, Sickles afterward participated in political attempts to remove General Meade from command of the Union Army of the Potomac, and he spent the remainder of his life declaring himself as the true

hero of Gettysburg.

Although he nearly lost the battle, he ironically became one of the earliest guardians of the battlefield. Returning to Congress, Sickles introduced the legislation that created Gettysburg National Military Park and helped preserve the battlefield for generations of future Americans. But Dan Sickles was never far from scandal. He was eventually removed from the New York Monument Commission and nearly went to jail for misappropriation of funds.

Gettysburg Battlefield Guide James Hessler has written a balanced and entertaining account of Sickles' colorful life. More than simply a biography of Sickles, this book takes readers through New York and Washington politics, onto battlefields at Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, and to the earliest veterans' reunions at Gettysburg National Military Park. *Sickles at Gettysburg* is a must-read for Civil War enthusiasts, military historians, those who want to learn about the development of one of our most popular national parks, and those who just want to enjoy a true story of a roguish character who once graced our American stage.

To order a copy of *Sickles at Gettysburg*, visit the AIHE Bookstore at [www.aihe-bookstore.com](http://www.aihe-bookstore.com) and click on the link for AIHE Professor Books.





**Bonnie Howe, McLoughlin Middle School — Medford, OR**  
(7th Grade World History and 8th Grade American History)

The field trip to Gettysburg was so fulfilling and filled a big gap I had in my education. The information I gathered will be used to further educate my students in the social, political and

economic forces in the Civil War, and I will share my hands-on experience with them in a way that no other teacher can. I also learned a great deal from the coal mine experience, the exceptional tenement housing tour, and the detailed tour of Harlem. These are not areas I am knowledgeable in or even touch on in my teaching, but now that I have experienced the rich history of each of these, it will be an honor to include as much information as I can about these great eras with my students.

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## Remodeled Ford's Theatre Celebrates Abraham Lincoln's Legacy

Since reopening its doors in 1968, more than a hundred years after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, Ford's Theatre has been one of the most visited national historic sites in the nation's capital. Ford's Theatre has captivated visitors because of its unique place in United States history and its mission to celebrate the legacy of Abraham Lincoln and explore the American experience through theatre and education. Coinciding with the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth in February, Ford's Theatre reopened to the public following an 18-month renovation.

The working playhouse underwent a \$22 million overhaul that included new seating, upgraded sound and lighting systems, improved heating and air conditioning systems, renovated restrooms, enhanced accessibility with elevators to the various levels, a spacious new lobby with concessions, and updated stage capabilities for casts and crews.

July marked the reopening of the redesigned Ford's Theatre Museum, just below the theatre footprint. New exhibits showcase Lincoln's arrival in Washington, D.C., by train, the assembly of Lincoln's presidential cabinet, life in the Lincoln White House, Civil War milestones and generals, video features demonstrating Lincoln's role as emancipator and orator, and three-dimensional figures of the assassination conspirators. The museum also is home to valuable artifacts, including political campaign paraphernalia, the Lincoln family's White House china, a Ford's Theatre playbill, the clothing and boots worn by Abraham Lincoln the night of his assassination, the derringer used by John Wilkes Booth and other weapons and personal items belonging to the assassination conspirators.

The Ford's Theatre Society Education Department offers dynamic programs that seek to integrate performance and museum education with learning about Lincoln, history and democracy. The Teacher Fellows program offers year-long teacher engagement initiatives that grow out of a five-day summer workshop that provides teachers with knowledge and

resources to teach about Lincoln, Frederick Douglass and Civil War Washington. The Teacher Fellows program is offered in partnership with the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, President Lincoln's Cottage and Tudor Place Historic House, all in Washington. One week is designed especially for D.C. public and charter school teachers, while the other aims to serve teachers from around the country. During the week, teachers visit the partner sites and learn to use field trips, primary sources, dramatic interpretation and oratory to teach

history and language arts. As "alumni," teachers have access to programs and events at the partner sites, as well as a network of resources and support as they implement what they learned. For more information on next year's programs, visit [education@fords.org](mailto:education@fords.org) or [www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org).

The Ford's Theatre Virtual Tour (available on [www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org) by clicking on "Tour Theatre") provides a 360 degree look at the story of President Lincoln's assassination. For teachers and students unable to travel to Washington, the virtual tour is a

field trip in your classroom, where you can explore all areas of the theatre and lobby. High-resolution images of Ford's Theatre artifacts give you a close-up look at objects such as the derringer that Booth used that fateful night.

Ford's Theatre is open to visitors daily for timed-entry beginning at 9 a.m. (closed December 25). Patrons may begin their visit by exploring the redesigned museum. Following a visit to the museum, guests enter the theatre for either a walk-through of the space or a 30-minute presentation, given by either the National Park Service or Ford's Theatre Society. After the presentation, visitors exit the building through the main theatre doors and cross the street to the Petersen House — the house where Lincoln died. Admission to Ford's Theatre is free but does require a ticket. Advance tickets may be reserved through TicketMaster at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or by calling (202) 397-SEAT.



*View from the stage of the President's Box at Ford's Theatre, following an 18-month renovation. Photo by Maxwell MacKenzie.*