



American Institute
FOR HISTORY EDUCATION

"Well done is better than well said"

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November's Featured AIHE Historian:

Dr. Greg O'Brien

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One of this country's greatest chroniclers of the American experience once wrote: "Many public school children seem to know only two dates — 1492 and 4th of July; and as a rule they don't know what happened on either occasion." Mark Twain offered this critique of history education in 1891 while promoting

a new board game he had invented to encourage students to remember important dates in world history. Though we hope that the situation he described is less accurate today, television shows like "Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?" and Jay Leno's "Jay Walking" segments suggest that many Americans know little about their nation's history.

Those of us employed in teaching history at public institutions are on the front lines of a battle that is essential to our future as a nation. Founders such as Thomas Jefferson and John Adams explicitly promoted public education to enable citizens to govern themselves. Today, as public school teachers grapple with the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* apparatus, a continuing de-emphasis of history as a required field, and budgetary challenges, the deck can seem stacked against the possibility of imparting quality historical knowledge and critical thinking skills to our students. All of which makes the Teaching American History (TAH) grants funded by the U.S. Department of Education an essential weapon in our effort to impart historical understanding.

I count myself privileged to have presented on a wide range of American history topics for the American Institute for History Education (AIHE) to teachers throughout the nation over the past few years. Whether discussing American Indian history, Colonial Virginia, the Columbian Exchange, the American Revolution, the Constitution, the Washington and Adams administrations, or a variety of other 19th and 20th century topics, I have always learned as much from the teachers I am interacting with as I think they have learned from me. The collaborative nature of AIHE's approach to administering the grants pays all sorts of dividends for all of the participants. I have incorporated several teaching techniques in my own courses that I learned from the pedagogical specialists and master teachers who form the team of presenters. Learning additional objective information about historical topics is valuable, but the additional focus on new methods to share that knowledge in ways that students will (hopefully) find interesting is priceless.

In my presentations, I try to share the latest scholarly understandings and new information about key events in

American history. My primary areas of research and teaching at the college level are in American Indian history, environmental history, the American Revolution, and early America from the colonial era through the early Republic. Nevertheless, I have also presented for AIHE and other TAH grants on Indian Removal, the Wounded Knee Massacre, the New Deal, the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, the Anti-War and Student Protest Movement, and other topics. At the end of each presentation I provide a list of important books and online resources to aid teachers in finding additional information.

As I have written elsewhere for AIHE, my interest in history began at an early age growing up in Charlottesville, Virginia. School trips to the homes of Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, James Madison, and George Washington and to the Smithsonian museums in Washington, D.C., helped to instill an appreciation for American history. Historical sites and high-quality historical interpretation are absolutely vital to getting students and citizens interested in the nation's past. Another continuous source of historical interest for me is family history. Americans typically love the pursuit of genealogy, and my family is no exception. My interest in family history is one that encompasses the larger historical trends that I teach about and making the connections between those macro-level events and my own family's past. There are no royalty or presidents in my family's history, but my ancestors and all American ancestors participated in occurrences here and across the world that we teachers lecture about on a daily basis. As teachers, we frequently have difficulty bringing those events to a level that our students can care about; family history is one way of doing that.

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CICERO: History Beyond the Textbook™ is an interactive professional development tool for teaching American History that can best be described as the ultimate resource for elementary, middle and high school teachers.

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www.TryCicero.com!**

Teachers from the Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley Liberty Fellowship Share Their Experiences



Aaron Eyler,
Piscataway Township High School — Piscataway, NJ

Participating in the Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley Liberty Fellowship has been an amazing experience. By engaging in conversation with historians from around the country, we have uncovered innovative ways to stimulate student learning and increase their content knowledge. As someone with a passion for teaching as well as American history, I believe it is imperative for educators, historians, and administrators to engage in a continuous exchange of ideas to increase the quality of citizen that our country develops and eventually the graduates from our school system. Participation in a Teaching American History grant strives to accomplish that objective.

In just over a year, the members of our colloquium have forged relationships with professionals from our partner districts. It is a much-needed opportunity for history teachers to share stories, strategies, and experiences that continually prompt social, as well as academic, growth in a setting that is dedicated to social studies content and best practices. This emphasis on history-specific professional development surrounds our sessions with an aura of excitement and curiosity as we continue our journey through our nation's past.

It has been a memorable, insightful, engaging first year with the guest speakers we have heard and the facilitators who represent the American Institute for History Education.

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Benedict Tegano,
Samuel E. Shull School — Perth Amboy, NJ

I am participating in the Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley Liberty Fellowship, and I am 100 percent satisfied with all that is offered. I strongly encourage my colleagues from other districts to participate in this grant. It has resurrected books from college I have not touched in years. Meeting at historic sites is always an added bonus, and the teaching ideas are endless.

Dr. Dennis Denenberg (Dr. D) was the first speaker I encountered and the one who stands out the most. His bringing history to life approach has helped me get my students more involved with history. Acting out historical figures and using real-life props has made my classroom a better educational experience. My students have benefited tremendously from my workshop with Dr. D.

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Susan Fenning,
Roosevelt Elementary School — Plainfield, NJ

When I first was asked if I would be interested in participating in the Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley Liberty Fellowship, I thought, "What a great way to earn my 100 hours for professional development." I could not imagine how wonderful and informative a program like this really could be. Every time I attend a colloquium conducted by the American Institute for History Education (AIHE), I learn something new. Each of the guest speakers has brought an enlightening way to teach it to us.

Dr. Dennis Denenberg has inspired me by demonstrating ways to bring historical heroes into our daily lessons and to use them throughout the year.

Mr. Bob Shamy's in-depth history of Native Americans has enabled me to bring new information to my class. This allows my students to see examples of artifacts from the time period we study in the classroom. Students have learned that many artifacts can be found in their own backyards.

Although there have been speakers whose topics are not covered in my classroom, I have found their information very interesting and have learned a great deal about our country's history. Dr. Bill Ross discussed how just by putting up a timeline and listing important dates that we use in our classroom, students will begin to see where other important dates fall into place in history.

All the information on CICERO: History Beyond the Textbook™ has opened up many doors for me to reach my students. I look forward to the next two years of this fellowship and all I'll be able to take back to use in my classroom. I am so glad I joined this fellowship.

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Larry Bello,
Perth Amboy High School — Perth Amboy, NJ

The Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley Liberty Fellowship has been both a teaching and a learning experience. What I bring back to the classroom is access to a web site with a wealth of historical information, and new methods of teaching that bring a new passion for learning history. CICERO: History Beyond the Textbook™ is truly a web site designed for teachers who are looking to differentiate instruction. Just to mention a few examples, United States classroom activities, assessments, audio and visual tools that engages students learning and

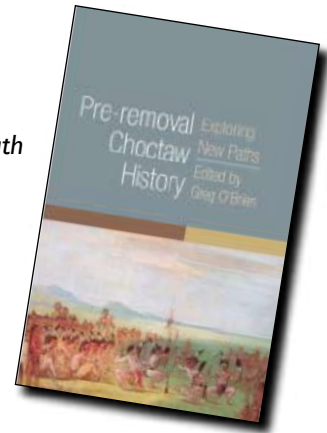
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Since 2008 I have been an associate professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), after spending a decade teaching at the University of Southern Mississippi. I am also the director of graduate studies for the history department at UNCG, overseeing a highly lauded masters program in Public History, European History, and American History. Our relatively new doctorate program specializes in American history.

My book publications include *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830* (University of Nebraska Press, 2002 & 2005), *Pre-removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), *The Timeline of Native Americans*

(Thunder Bay Press, 2008), and *New Orleans Flood of 1849* (University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming). I also co-edited *George Washington's South* published by the University of Florida Press in 2004.

To order a copy of *Pre-removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths*, visit the AIHE Bookstore at www.aihe-bookstore.com and click on the link for AIHE Professor Books.



Tenement Museum Offers Glimpse of Struggles, Survival of Immigrant Families

On a quiet stretch of Orchard Street in New York City stands number 97, a five-story brick tenement building. A humble home to generations of working-class immigrants, this mid-19th century structure was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994. Today 97 Orchard Street is home of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, which is dedicated to promoting tolerance and historical perspective of immigrants past and present.

Visitors hear the stories of real families who once called this building home: the Baldizzis, who struggled to survive the Great Depression; the Gumpertzes, who also faced economic hardship during the Panic of 1873; the Levines, who ran a garment shop in their apartment; the Rogarshevskys, who faced tubercular infections; the Moores, who lost their child while living at 97 Orchard Street; and the Confinos, a Sephardic family in a neighborhood of Ashkenazi Jews. Their stories are a window into a former life but also inspire new insights into our world today.

Connecting the past to the present is part of what makes the Tenement Museum experience so powerful. Visitors come away with a renewed understanding of what newcomers to America face. Visitors also benefit from standing in the place where the stories they are hearing actually took place, where people really lived, worked, and died.

Teachers love to bring students who are studying immi-

gration and American history. Standing in 97 Orchard Street connects them more viscerally to concepts and dates from their textbooks. The museum offers a number of different programs geared toward different age groups, from first grade to college.

Young children are introduced to concepts that might be familiar to them from school: different kinds of homes, where their families came from, and how people used to live. Older students explore larger issues relating to housing reform, labor, health care, and immigration. More than 25,000 K-12 students visit the museum every year.

Those classes that don't reside near New York City can also participate in off-site programs. Educators travel up to an hour outside of Manhattan to visit public schools, colleges, community centers, or assisted living facilities. Those even farther away – another state or even another country – can sign up for a virtual distance learning program. With the help of several high-tech web cams, Virtual Visit with Victoria invites visitors to “step into” the restored home of the Confino family, circa 1916, and talk with a costumed interpreter portraying 14-year-old Victoria Confino. Viewers can talk back to Victoria, asking questions about her life and exploring her recreated apartment.

The Tenement Museum also offers teacher training programs that help teachers examine their own communities, as well as general history, through the lens of immigration. Full and half-day workshops demonstrate ways to integrate the use of artifacts, primary source documents, architecture, and personal narrative into social studies curriculum.

Workshops give participants the



photo of Baldizzi kitchen
courtesy of Batman Studios



photo of Tenement Museum
courtesy of Keiko Niwa

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Liberated Territory Examines Expansion, Development of Black Panther Party

With their collection *In Search of the Black Panther Party*, Dr. Yohuru Williams, Vice President for History Education at the American Institute for History Education, and Dr. Jama Lazerow provided a broad analysis of the Black Panther Party and its legacy. In *Liberated Territory* they turn their attention to local manifestations of the organization far away from the party's Oakland headquarters. This collection's contributors, all historians, examine how specific party chapters or offshoots emerged, developed, and waned, as well as how the local branches related to their communities and to the national party.

The histories and character of the party branches vary as widely as their locations. The Cape Verdeans of New Bedford, Massachusetts, were initially viewed as a particular challenge for the Boston Panthers but later became the mainstay of the Boston-area party. In the early 1970s, the Winston-Salem, North Carolina, chapter excelled at implementing the national Black Panther Party's strategic shift from revolutionary confrontation to mainstream electoral politics. In Detroit the Panthers were defined by a complex relationship between their above-ground activities and an underground wing dedicated to armed struggle. While the Milwaukee chapter was born out

of a rising tide of black militancy, it ultimately proved more committed to promoting literacy and health care and redressing hunger than to violence. The Alabama Black Liberation Front did not have the official imprimatur of the national party, but it drew heavily on the Panthers' ideas and organizing strategies, and its activism demonstrates the broad resonance of many of the concerns articulated by the national party: the need for jobs, for decent food and housing, for black self-determination, and for sustained opposition to police brutality against black people. *Liberated Territory* reveals how Black Panther Party ideologies, goals, and strategies were taken up and adapted throughout the United States.



Contributors: Devin Fergus, Jama Lazerow, Ahmad A. Rahman, Robert W. Widell Jr., Yohuru Williams

To order a copy of *Liberated Territory* or *In Search of the Black Panther Party*, visit the AIHE Bookstore at www.aihe-bookstore.com and click on the link for AIHE Professor Books.

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sample lessons. Teachers have a wealth of information for their disposal on this web site.

I have also learned two new ways of teaching history, S.P.E.E.C.H. (social, political, economic, environmental, cultural and history) and the CSI (content source investigation) methods, where students become the detectives in a historical site investigation. These types of strategies trigger the students' interest in finding out the truth about any event in history. It encourages them to investigate the different points of view and come out with their own conclusions. One of the challenges that we have as teachers is keeping our students engaged and the S.P.E.E.C.H. and the CSI approach helps accomplish this. Teaching and learning history in my personal life has become a new norm thanks to the Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley Liberty Fellowship and AIHE.

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opportunity to observe and test the museum's innovative methods of using history to prompt students to explore contemporary issues. Workshops also provide educators with resources to enrich classroom learning.

Programs include *Housing the Masses: Immigration and the Progressive Era*; *The Irish Americans: Teaching the Famine and Beyond*; *Telling My Story: Teaching with Personal Narrative*; *Following the Trail: Using Primary Sources to Teach Immigration*; and several others.

These programs are offered several times per year and for private groups of 30 or more; interested teachers are encouraged to e-mail groups@tenement.org.

To book a tour or an off-site program, contact the Group Services Hotline at **212-431-0233, x241** or e-mail groups@tenement.org. More information can be found at www.tenement.org/kl2.php for high school groups and www.tenement.org/groups.php for college groups. Groups require at least three weeks advance notice, and during busy fall and spring seasons, the museum can book up months in advance.

You can also check out other resources at www.tenement.org, including lesson plans, primary sources, and online games at www.tenement.org/education_lessonplans.html.



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.

www.sojournerhistory.com