

## Reviews

*Congotay! Congotay! A Global History of Caribbean Food*, by Candice Goucher. New York, M. E. Sharpe, 2014. 264 pages. \$44.95, paper.

World History meets Food Studies in this impressive book by Candice Goucher. Focusing on the Caribbean, the author brings a wide variety of detail and introspection to the subject of food. Her influences are evident in the breadth of sources considered, including oral histories, archaeological findings, and rare written and visual evidence.

Foods and people pass through the pages of this book, which reaches back to the days of the Atlantic slave trade and forward into the present. The African cultural connections that persist, yet also change, are shown to be central to the development of Caribbean culture. Following the pattern of other recent works in Food Studies, this book follows the diaspora of specific foodstuffs across the Atlantic and around the Caribbean and Circum-Caribbean. Going further than many recent authors, Goucher demonstrates that the human agency of slaves, ordinary people, and women in different contexts were critical to the flowering of Caribbean cuisines.

Readers who are looking for a constantly iterated thesis may come away less than satisfied. This would be a shame, since it is in the details, and the stories, that the book comes alive. For example, the title itself comes from a children's game on the island of Tobago, which spreads further in the region. Congotay is also a mush made from cassava (manioc), which along with the child's song and game represents a strong historical memory of the West African homeland of the ancestors. The meanings of food are further explored with regard to relations with the ancestors or present-day love interests.

But it is the activity of cooks who carry the day in *Congotay! Congotay!* The production of pepper pot, which reaches urban areas of the eastern seaboard, is the work of African women. Women are shown as the central actors in decisions about cuisine in the enslaved family, as well as in the "big house," where they served white masters. European transfers such as salt cod, a mainstay of Anglo exploration and colonization in the Americas, are combined with indigenous fruits and other flavors. The allspice berry, native to the island of Jamaica, is combined

with cinnamon, nutmeg, and new meats such as chicken brought by Europeans from the trading centers of the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean world.

The importance of cooks as historical actors is further exhibited in this book by the preponderance of recipes that pepper each chapter. These are written with an eye to authenticity, or rather the imagination of culinary traditions in specific Caribbean locales. The crucible of Caribbean culture, through cooking, is the constant theme of the book as the reader savors recipes for basic starch concoctions such as Condkey (with cornmeal), Dunkanoo (with fresh corn), and Metagee (a mix of yam, cassava, and plantain) (pp. 76-77). Stewed Brown Chicken (p. 101) is one of several recipes that features prominent “Thanksgiving spice” such as cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves, along with the ubiquitous addition of white or brown sugar. The book is valuable on its own as a collection of distinct recipes, for those of us who like to experiment as the actors in her story do.

In sum, this book will teach well if students are encouraged to work with the details that are offered. There is surely an overall argument at work that relates to global and local interactions in the imagination of Caribbean culture through food. However, as a classroom book, the text will prove more useful in following up on some of the varied details. Students can cook and be fed through this process, which will make them all the more interested in savoring the book. *Congotay! Congotay!* stands as an important new offering in the growing field of Food Studies, especially as it relates to Atlantic and World History.

Wabash College

Rick Warner

*Democracy: A World History*, by Temma Kaplan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 155 pages. \$19.95, paper.

This slender, eight-chapter volume with a short introduction is part of the New Oxford World History series, which claims to be “an innovative series that offers readers an informed, lively, and up-to-date history of the world and its people that represents a significant change from the ‘old’ world history” (p. vi). This volume fits that description and is highly recommended to teachers in high school Social Studies and university survey courses in U.S. and World History. The volume provides wide-ranging and truly thought-provoking examples of historical processes in the human search for democratic means toward more equitable societies and individual freedoms.

The three-page introduction brilliantly lays out the author’s approach toward the study of democracy. She starts with the famous Churchill quote regarding democracy being the worst form of government except for “all the others that have been tried from time to time” (p. 1). Her definition of democracy is “a process through which people confer with each other to secure food, shelter, land, water, and peace for their mutual benefit” (p. 1). The study in the following eight chapters considers various societies in a wide-ranging exploration, both in time and space, providing examples of how people have organized themselves to

confront dissatisfactions they have with their lives. Throughout history, people have used processes at the local, regional, and state/national levels to confront issues of political and religious rights, access to resources, economic inequalities, and citizenship definition. Kaplan points out that democracy itself is of two sorts—representative and participatory—and this has led a wide range of movements to be labeled democratic. She elucidates two flaws of most democracies: lack of effective communication between elected officials and ordinary people, and a tendency to become expansive, leading to imperialism/colonization and repression of original inhabitants (p. 3). Kaplan claims that the “democratic ideal” has emerged throughout history, always deteriorates, but emerges again.

Chapter 1 (“Parting the Waters and Organizing the People”) considers control over resources and particularly water in early civilizations for the benefit of all (Mesopotamia, the Andes, the Yucatan, Egypt) and the development of democratic governmental institutions with written texts of people’s rights (Athens, Rome and the Gracchus brothers, Christianity, Islam, the Magna Carta). Chapter 2 (“Prophetic Movements and Cities of Promise”) considers the Sikh religion’s challenge of the Hindu caste system, Juan de Padilla’s *comunero* movement in sixteenth-century Spain, and the Lilburnes of seventeenth-century England. Chapter 3 (“Democracy against All Odds”) is a good stand-alone chapter for students in history survey classes dealing with the U.S. Revolution, the French Revolution and late eighteenth-century Minas Gerais in Brazil. This chapter brings out the conundrum of slavery in allegedly democratic states, the ever-present problem of balancing collective and individual rights, providing many points for comparison and consideration with challenges of democracy in contemporary society. Chapter 4 (“Which People Shall Rule?”) is packed with illustrative examples of democratic movements: Napoleon and his dictatorship’s paradoxical role in jumpstarting democratic movements in Mexico and Russia, the Chartists in England, the European revolutions of 1848, the woman’s suffrage movement in the United States, the Tai Pings in China, and nineteenth-century Cuba. The chapter also elucidates the power of the press in these movements. Chapter 5 (“Social Revolution and Participatory Democracy”) brings out the Zapatistas and the Mexican Revolution, a geographically wide-ranging discussion of women’s suffrage movements in various countries, the Soviet revolution, counter-revolution and decline of citizen representation, the Women’s War in southeastern Nigeria, and Sun Yat-sen and the Guomintang. Kaplan concludes this chapter, “Some of the distinctive characteristics of the democratic movements that emerge from social revolutions include a belief in participatory democracy that far exceeds the ideological commitments of other democratic governments or their proponents” (p. 76). Chapter 6 (“Civil Disobedience and Racial Justice”) is illustrated with examples of India, South Africa, and the U.S. South and the hopes and frequently dashed hopes for democracy following World War II—the war supposedly fought for democracy. Chapter 7 (“Optimism and Outrage in Struggles for Democracy”) considers the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, student movements of the 1960s, European student and worker strikes of 1968 and the Mexican massacre of Tlatelolco in that same year. Chapter 8 (“New World Dawning”) looks at participatory democratic issues of the contemporary world: women’s rights, peace,

environmental issues, workers' rights, and global human rights campaigns with examples from Poland, Chile, China, and Burma and brings out the role of social media allowing for greater mass participation.

Each chapter has salient endnotes and a bibliography for further reading. There is also a list of twelve important websites of primary sources relevant to the issues of the book as well as a short index. This reviewer recommends to the publisher to offer a companion volume with documents considered in the volume for use in classrooms.

*Mississippi Valley State University*

Kathryn Green

*Examining the Evidence: Seven Strategies for Teaching with Primary Sources*, by Hilary Mac Austin and Kathleen Thompson. Eau Claire, WI: Maupin House Publishing, 2015. 164 pages. \$24.95, paper.

*Examining the Evidence* presents seven strategies that elementary and middle school teachers can use with students to analyze primary sources. The seven strategies fall into the genre of various document analysis scaffolds like the commonly used SOAPSTONE or those produced by the National Archives or the DBQ Project. While the seven steps comprise seven chapters and are the substance of the book, Austin and Thompson make an important clarification in the introduction: "Of course, the process we are laying out here is not a strict linear progression. These strategies provide a framework to a process that is usually a flow rather than a ladder. Analyzing a primary source requires a back and forth between the strategies" (p. 16). Teaching and learning is messy work and acknowledging at the start that unpacking one source may require a different set of steps and questions than another source is an important foundation. Their statement also implicitly acknowledges that each student is unique and will approach sources differently. In essence, the strategies are less a step-by-step "recipe" approach to source analysis and more a list of various ingredients that might be added to a stew when the cook deems wise.

Austin and Thompson have worked together in the past and have largely centered their research on analyzing images. While the principles of source analysis for this book apply to visual and text-based sources, their greatest contributions seem to revolve around interpreting visual evidence. Most of the excellent illustrations of their strategies focus on photographs and visual sources—Chapter 2, for example, which introduces primary sources, mainly focuses on visual sources, and barely addresses textual sources. Meanwhile, Strategies 4 and 5 begin with analyzing visual sources and then apply those principles to textual sources. Other strategies (Strategies 1, 2, 3, 6) focus almost exclusively on visual sources. In this way, the authors play to their strengths and directly address the very real challenge of teaching with and analyzing visual images. In a time when our emphasis and attention has been focused on reading and close reading of text sources, this book reminds us of the importance of visual sources

as a base of evidence and provides tools to mine those sources for all they are worth in the early years of education.

Strategy 4, analyzing the source itself, is absolutely pivotal and might have been placed earlier in their process. Purpose, audience, and bias (Strategies 2 and 3) may be dependent on a careful analysis of the source. Pedagogical suggestions, such as using a grid system to examine a visual image, provide useful and practical teaching techniques. In working with students, I have found that this is critical, yet can be quickly glossed over. In a visual culture where students process images and information so quickly, slowing down the analysis process is a critical step. The authors recognize this importance, noting, “this is where the work is.”

Another gem that might be missed in a quick reading of this book can be found in the last two chapters: “apply the strategies” and “find primary sources.” These two chapters are not part of the seven strategies, yet provide helpful and valuable tools for any teacher. Chapter 10 offers an opportunity for teachers to “test drive” their strategies with good sources. Though there are not “answers” to the questions posed with these sources, teachers will find the questions helpful as a guide to the theoretical steps presented in the previous chapters. Austin and Thompson selected rich sources for this chapter and thoughtfully offer permission to use the images for the purposes of classroom instruction, a feature teachers should seize upon. The last chapter provides a helpful starting line for teachers hunting down sources. The herculean task of locating and selecting sources is a real and practical challenge teachers face every day. This chapter catalogues various collections and sites that can serve as a practical first step in hunting down sources. Their expertise emerges again in Appendix 1, when they present a variety of outstanding photograph collections. If one is too closely focused on the strategies, these very helpful resources could be missed.

While the book is targeted for K-8 teachers and students, all teachers may find this resource helpful, though teachers at every grade level will have to modify and adapt the steps for their classrooms.

*Webster Thomas High School (Webster, New York)*

Greg Ahlquist

*Massacre: The Life and Death of the Paris Commune*, by John Merriman.  
New York: Basic Books, 2014. 327 pages. \$29.99, cloth.

Nineteenth-century Paris was the City of Light and the capital of Western culture. It was also the capital of European radicalism and revolution. In 1870-1871, after Louis Napoleon's Second Empire collapsed during the Franco-Prussian War, Paris endured siege by Prussian troops while officials of the new republic tried to defend France. Prussian might forced the government of national defense to surrender, but Parisians were convinced they could have held out. In March 1871, an attempt to seize National Guard cannon stored in Montmartre led to an uprising in Paris and the creation of a new city government dedicated to republican

and social-democratic ideals in a country dominated by conservative elites. The national government, led by the conservative republican Adolphe Thiers, fled to Versailles and set about consolidating power so it could retake the capital. In his fine book, Merriman tells the tale of the retaking of Paris by the Versailles-based government from 18 March to 28 May 1871.

When one sees the word “massacre” in a book title, one expects blood in large quantities. Merriman does not disappoint. In a crescendo of violence, Merriman tells how the defenders of the Commune were slaughtered in combat by French army troops and how they were executed immediately when captured or after summary judgment by improvised courts-martial. A sense of rage hangs over descriptions of men and women gunned down in the streets, forced to dig their own graves before being executed, bludgeoned to death with rifle butts, stabbed with bayonets or blown apart by cannon after being assured their lives would be spared. Merriman argues that Thiers and his allies in Versailles wished to teach the workers of Paris a lesson and had no intention of sparing the lives of the rebels. Merriman shows that this slaughter was unnecessary and worthy of the international condemnation it received. It was, as Merriman repeats throughout the book, a “class war” against the vibrant working-class neighborhoods of eastern Paris. The slaughter was intentional, not accidental, meant to tame Revolutionary Paris once and for all.

Merriman has meticulously researched the fighting, using published and manuscript eyewitness accounts, archival documents, and the work of generations of historians. The Commune has long been seen as a major occasion in the history of left-wing politics in Europe. Marx lionized the spontaneous organization of workers, and Lenin the organization of a revolution by a vanguard elite. But according to Merriman, the Commune was anything but organized. In order to defend itself against Versailles, the Commune needed to take full advantage of the excellent military defenses Paris offered. But the *Communards* could not find a way to coordinate their National Guard units or control politicians at the local level. Their troops relied on barricades that were easily outflanked and taken by the professional soldiers sent against them. The truly insurmountable problem was numerical. Thiers did not try to retake Paris until he had 130,000 soldiers to send in. At the most, the Commune could muster 20,000, and did not deploy them effectively. Lenin took from the Commune the lesson that only a dictatorship could win out against the forces of reaction. Merriman makes it clear that, given the lopsided nature of the fight, not even a dictatorship could have saved Paris. What doomed the *Communards* was the decision by Thiers that Paris should be punished and that its defenders should be treated as enemies of the state, not as fellow citizens. Merriman accepts the higher estimates of the numbers killed during the retaking of Paris, deviating from recent downward revisions given by Robert Tombs.

This would be a fine book to use at the college level, or in an ambitious high school Advanced Placement class. Merriman tells the story using vignettes from the lives of female and male participants and witnesses, friendly to and hostile to the project. These vignettes make it particularly easy to relate to the shocking events and their tragic aftermath. Especially noteworthy is Merriman’s discussion

of the women who fought and died for the Commune. I would recommend the book for courses on nineteenth-century European or World History, as well as courses on modern France. For those lacking a background in French history, Merriman explains key concepts such as Jacobinism and Bonapartism concisely and provides pocket summaries of the Second Empire, the Franco-Prussian War, and the legacy of the Commune in France. This is a generally well-written and spectacularly well-researched book, well worth the time spent reading it.

*Hampden-Sydney College*

Robert H. Blackman

*The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*, by Marcus Rediker. New York: Viking, 2013. 288 pages. \$17.00, paper.

I am a school leader at a small high school in New Haven, Connecticut, called Amistad High School. On the front of our building, larger than our name, it reads "Education = Freedom." The story of the *Amistad* rebels' self-emancipation provides a narrative symbol of the mission of our school: to help students to become powerful and determine their own destinies. As a former teacher, and now a leader at Amistad, I have read many accounts of the *Amistad* rebellion and subsequent trial here in Connecticut. Marcus Rediker's work is unique in its focus on the rebels themselves. He acknowledges their agency in a way I have not seen in other accounts. Rediker calls it "a history of the *Amistad* rebellion from below" (p. 12). Indeed, the main narrative of the book begins on the ship and tells the rebels' story of "loss, quest, and recovery" from their own point of view. Ultimately, Rediker argues that the *Amistad* rebels "contributed to a shift in thinking about what might be possible in the war against slavery" (p. 237). Their actions, epically powerful in their own right, constituted self-emancipation on both micro and macro scales.

Before Rediker takes us onto the relatively small vessel of the *Amistad*, he sets the context of the rebellion by weaving together a "lesson in the political economy of global capitalism" in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in which "everything turns on commodities," with a rich narrative, illustrating competing interests in and perspectives on the trade (p. 17). Rediker agrees with the indictment of modern capitalism expressed by an anonymous abolitionist pamphlet in Great Britain in 1792. African slaves were a commodity in this system. Rediker writes, "The profits to be made in a far-reaching system of sugar production shaped the enslavement of Mende, Gbandi, Temne, Kono, and others inland from the Gallinas Coast of West Africa, their transportation across the Atlantic aboard the Portuguese or Brazilian slave ship *Teçora*, their landing in Havana, Cuba, and their reshipment aboard the *Amistad* for Puerto Principe and its hinterland booming with the production of sugar" (p. 19). In addition to this section, Rediker's description of the early nineteenth-century domestic slave trade in Africa later in the chapter would provide a strong source for teachers seeking a succinct description of the reaches of this global web. He notes that although

most *Amistad* Africans had never seen Europeans before, they had been trained to use firearms and smoked tobacco. The growing transatlantic trade changed the scope and nature of domestic slavery and prompted anti-slavery efforts in Africa (p. 39). In clear language and engaging narrative style, Rediker provides teachers with a text that illustrates in rich detail the global context in which the *Amistad* Africans acted.

Frequently throughout the book, Rediker compares the perspective and actions of the African rebels to those of other actors in the transatlantic slave trade. Using excerpts from the text, teachers might highlight the interaction of the slave trade as a global economic system with the experiences and actions of the people ensnared in it. For example, in his description of the sale of the *Teçora* Africans in Havana, Rediker starkly contrasts the emotionally painful experience of separation from shipmates that the Africans had with the business transaction that the buyer, José Ruiz, described in his testimony (p. 61). Later, Rediker interprets the legal proceedings through the lens of the Poro Society, a secret order that united the *Amistad* rebels and defined their understanding of the trials (p. 185). Central to Rediker's book is the historical concept that point of view informs one's experience and the story one tells. A teacher could utilize this text to teach the crucial historical thinking skills of contextualizing evidence, recognizing point of view, and synthesizing contradictory sources using these other skills. A teacher could also employ this text to teach the challenging concept of historiography. Rediker illustrates with his focus on the *Amistad* rebels' story that historical interpretation is shaped by a scholar's question, methodology, and ideological approach.

Rediker's enjoyable and useful book offers an analysis of the *Amistad* rebellion that complicates the broader narrative of global anti-slavery and highlights once again the role of perspective in identifying the origins of movements for freedom and justice. For our students, this lesson in historical thinking is invaluable.

*Achievement First Amistad High School*

Brenda Santos

*Understanding and Teaching U.S. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History*, edited by Leila J. Rupp and Susan K. Freeman. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014. 383 pages. \$29.95, paper.

*Understanding and Teaching U.S. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History* is a collection of essays by twenty-nine scholars and is a welcome resource for historians seeking to integrate LGBT histories and methods into U.S. history courses at the high school and college levels. In the past two decades, both students and teachers have articulated compelling demands for such integration; in some cases, public institutions and even statewide education acts have affirmed the necessity to understand and teach LGBT histories as an integral part of human life. In 2011, for example, California passed the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Responsible (FAIR) Education Act, requiring schools to teach the contributions

of populations marginalized by stigma and disenfranchisement on the basis of sexuality, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, and disability. Historians have long demonstrated the myriad ways that the gender and sexuality have taken on an array of meanings core to social organization, communities, and governance in the United States from the colonial era to the present; many have argued that the major social institutions of the U.S. cannot be understood apart from efforts to discern, define, and codify a range of gender expressions and sexualities as normative, suspect, or criminal. Meanwhile, students themselves want to know the queer past as a way of understanding a queer present in which politicians focus dramatic attention on promising and perilous issues such as gay marriage and whether or not transgender people have a right to use public restrooms or exist at all.

*Understanding and Teaching U.S. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History* is the first resource to address these pressing needs in a highly productive way. Editors Rupp and Freeman commissioned accessible and inviting essays by twenty-nine leading scholars and teachers in the fields of LGBTQ histories. These essays deftly address three common concerns of teachers seeking to teach LGBT histories in a variety of contexts that includes consistent attention to the complex politics of public education: (1) If I am not myself an expert in this field, how can I understand and teach these subjects in a responsible way? (2) How, pedagogically speaking, do I teach this kind of material in its own right, and as part and parcel of broader histories? (3) What are some examples of queer history that highlight its central (and not marginal) place in U.S. history? While the essays are written for the teacher, the majority could easily be assigned to advanced high school and college students.

Some of the essays are explicitly pedagogically focused. Genny Beemyn's article brings a transgender studies perspective to the interpretation of historical gender diversity and offers a range of questions that invite students into historically contextualized analyses. Emily Hobson and Felicia Perez suggest that "LGBT history operates not only as content but also as method" (p. 78) as they reflect on the ways that multiple investments in race, class, sexual, and gender identities shape the ways that people understand the queer past. Kevin Mumford advances an intersectional method involving "intercategorical and intracategorical analysis" (following feminist and queer of color articulations of intersectionality), and Mumford encourages us to question absence, revel in ambiguities, and, above all, envision a classroom in which teachers and students focus on the connections and differences between and among themselves and between texts and contexts. One of the gems of the book is Daniel Hurewitz's piece, "Putting Ideas into Practice: High School Teachers Talk about Incorporating the LGBT Past," which shares the perspectives of nine teachers focused on concerns germane not only to high school teachers, but to college teachers as well.

The essays combine topical with pedagogical perspectives, and will stimulate creative ideas among those who love to teach history. Topics include ways to approach and teach the history of Supreme Court rulings, AIDS in a U.S. history survey, and how the sexuality of "famous people" such as Eleanor Roosevelt and J. Edgar Hoover matters. There are essays on community organizing, media, and the

significance of archives. Together, they provide a generous collection of insights inspiring for anyone seeking to integrate more LGBT material into their classes.

Refreshingly, this book does not treat (trans)gender as more “advanced” than sexuality. And yet, it evidences the uneasy relationship between analyses that take assigned sex and sexuality as their starting point and those that take social gender as their starting point. Like most grapplings with the imbalanced acronym, LGBT, this book suffers from a tendency to subsume gender variation under sexuality; it treats transgender as a special (not integrated and barely addressed) topic and fails to historicize all genderings as constructed and generative. Teachers will still be pressed to teach in ways that comprehend gender diversity in the past and do not marginalize transgender in the present.

*University of Wisconsin, Madison*

Finn Enke

*Those Who Hold Bastogne: The True Story of the Soldiers and Civilians Who Fought in the Biggest Battle of the Bulge*, by Peter Schrijvers. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014. 310 pages. \$28.00, cloth.

In the winter of 1944, Germany launched its largest and last offensive in the western theater. Hoping to push the Allies all the way back to the English Channel and split the American and British forces, Operation *Wacht am Rhein*, known more famously as the Battle of the Bulge, was Hitler’s last-ditch attempt at regaining the initiative. The town of Bastogne played a key role in that offensive, serving as the hub of all major roads in the area. The Battle of the Bulge, and particularly the fighting in and around Bastogne, has received a great deal of attention ever since Stephen Ambrose’s *Band of Brothers*. However, the present volume argues that Bastogne has yet to receive a complete telling of its story.

Peter Schrijvers had two goals in writing his account of the battle. First, to give a full account of the battle, including the histories of the German soldiers and Belgian civilians that took part in the campaign, rather than the American-centric books that have been published previously. The second goal was to argue that Bastogne wasn’t just a significant part of the campaign, but *the* significant part of the campaign. Its location and function as a communication hub made it essential to the success of *Wacht am Rhein*, but the desperate defense of the Americans at Bastogne denied this crucial objective to the Germans. Failing to capture Bastogne hampered the advancement of the entire offensive as more troops were committed to take the town and gain access to its road network. Bastogne was both a race and a battle of attrition; Americans defending, Germans attacking, both looking to the arrival of Patton’s army. The failure to capture Bastogne led to the loss of momentum for the Germans, and as Patton arrived and the Allies counterattacked, Bastogne retained its significance, but in a reverse; now the Americans needed Bastogne as a springboard for operations in Germany while the Germans needed the town to prevent the same. In the beginning, middle, and end of the campaign, Bastogne was pivotal.

Schrijvers achieves both of his goals. By drawing on English, Belgian, and German sources, he not only shows the strategic value of Bastogne, but tells the tale in a more inclusive manner. Of course, he readily acknowledges that the spine of Bastogne's defense rested on the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne, but he also shows the essential contribution of other units such as the U.S. Air Force in supply and harassment, and the 969<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery in acting as tank killers and blunting repeated German assaults. Schrijvers also endeavors to show the battle from multiple rungs on the ladder, building the narrative around privates, generals, and all ranks in between. He also successfully includes the civilian population, noting that while their contribution to the outcome may not have been large, they suffered and endured the battle and thus deserve a voice. The only areas of shortcoming stem from the fact that while the book included all sides, it did not include them in equal measure. The Americans get much more attention than their German counterparts, especially in giving individual attention. While the book includes data from just about every rank in the U.S. military, German content is sparser and comes from privates or field marshals, but little in between. A glance at the bibliography reveals that while German sources were consulted, it was only those sources available at American archives. There are plenty of archival entries in the bibliography from Belgium, but none from Germany.

Schrijvers's book would be most at home in the graduate seminar or the history buff's bookshelf. In fact, the writing is very clear and the book, despite being an academic monograph, reads more like the popular histories that Schrijvers is trying to correct. Due its scope, however, it is too detailed a book to be used in undergraduate or secondary classrooms, and even teachers in those classrooms won't really need that level of detail in preparing lectures or lesson plans in which Bastogne will be only one single bullet point. The book includes several finely detailed maps, a cast of characters, a complete bibliography, and is fully indexed. Upper-division courses specifically on WWII might find a place for it, but the graduate student, scholar, or enthusiast are the ones who will benefit most.

*Reynolds Community College*

Christopher Thomas

*Teaching Big History*, edited by Richard B. Simon, Mojgan Behmand, and Thomas Burke. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015. 426 pages. \$34.95, cloth and e-book.

Big History has been much in the news lately! The International Big History Association was formed in 2011, and has staged two successful conferences in Michigan and California, with a third planned for Amsterdam in 2016. The first-ever textbook in the field—*Big History: Between Nothing and Everything*, by David Christian, Cynthia Brown, and Craig Benjamin—was published by McGraw-Hill in 2014. That same year, the Big History Project, a resource-rich, web-based high school Big History course sponsored by Bill Gates, was released to the world and is now being used at hundreds of schools globally to teach Big

History. And recent articles about Big History in major international newspapers including *The New York Times* have elicited an enormous number of comments and enquiries from readers.

So, it is incredibly timely to now have available this fascinating and useful addition to the Big History canon, edited and authored by a team of professors who are amongst the most experienced college-level Big History instructors on the planet. As Mojgan Behmand explains in the introduction to the book, the Dominican University of California has been teaching Big History as the required course for all first-year students since 2012. *Teaching Big History* includes a thoughtful account of how the Dominican faculty built their general education curriculum for first-year students around the field of Big History, and argues that this has been a particularly rich and transformative experience for faculty and students alike.

That decision means that professors at Dominican have accumulated a great deal of practical experience in how to actually teach this huge, all-encompassing narrative—experience enhanced by regular reflective faculty discussion sessions and by professional development workshops that have involved most of the leading proponents in the field. This wealth of experience has resulted in this particularly useful “manual” that contains an enormous amount of practical advice on how to teach all components of the course. Yet this is also a very thoughtful book that includes reflective essays on what the experience of teaching and learning Big History has meant to instructors and students.

Big History tells the story of the universe over 13.82 billion years, and does so by using the knowledge and perspectives of a widely diverse range of disciplines, including cosmology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, evolutionary biology, anthropology, archaeology, economics, sociology, futurology, and, of course, history. Once immersed in the story, students quickly realize that the Big History framework will help them make sense, not only of their own majors and careers, but also of the extraordinary connections that exist between these various disciplines, and of the necessity of equipping ourselves with this sort of multi-disciplinary knowledge if we are to have any hope of dealing with the many problems humanity and our planet are facing.

But the prospect of teaching such an enormous, cross-disciplinary course can be daunting to even the most experienced college instructor, which is why *Teaching Big History* is such a valuable resource. The editors and their authors have essentially created a comprehensive guide for designing, teaching, and assessing Big History in the undergraduate classroom. The book is full of helpful advice about the challenges of creating a course in Big History, and, even more ambitiously, an entire general education program constructed around Big History—a development that those of us deeply committed to the field believe will eventually be emulated at many other institutions and liberal education universities in the future.

As someone who has been teaching Big History for twenty years, and as an author of numerous Big History articles, chapters, and books, I know of very few other instructors who have thought more deeply about pedagogy and assessment in this field as systematically and rigorously as editors Simon, Behmand, and Burke and their accomplished team of teacher-authors. Perhaps Brian Thomas Swimme,

one of the leading proponents of Big History (or as he has often termed it in print and film, “The Universe Story”), puts it best when he notes that future scholars tracing the “rise” of Big History might well begin their story with the faculty at the Dominican University of California. There is quite simply no better teaching guide available than this well-written and quite inspiring book. Those of us deeply committed to the field are grateful to have this book available, because it may well help facilitate Brian Swimme’s prediction that by the twenty-second century of the Common Era, Big History will be “taught in every university around our planet.”

*Grand Valley State University*

Craig Benjamin

*The Reckoning: Financial Accountability and the Rise and Fall of Nations*, by Jacob Soll. New York: Basic Books, 2014. 276 pages. \$28.99, cloth.

There is a joke told by Certified Public Accountants that if asked the question, “How much is two plus two?” they are to answer, “Whatever the client wants it to be.” Jacob Soll, a History Professor at the University of Southern California, insists that the bright promise of double-entry bookkeeping invented in the Italian City States of the Renaissance pointed to modern forms of business and governance, which would preclude such chicanery. He describes a flourishing accountability culture in Florence in the fifteenth century and Holland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He traces the rise of a similar culture in Great Britain and the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are abortive attempts to use these bookkeeping methods to hold to account monarchs in Spain, France, and England along the way. In the modern era, he describes the undoing of auditing as economic and political institutions grew in complexity and power. Private corporations and public bureaucracies have become, seemingly, too big to audit—and, therefore, too big to be held accountable for their misdeeds. It is a pessimistic conclusion and it helps explain why, he suggests, in the face of the Great Recession of 2008, neither bankers nor auditors have gone to jail.

The idea of a reckoning connotes different things. It can mean simple a calculation or estimate, an opinion or a judgment, or an avenging or punishing for misdeeds. Soll uses the term in all three senses. He sometimes conflates accounting and accountability in ways that are a stretch. His book is a call to account for the failings of humanity to live by the ledger and to embed accounting in an ethical and moral culture. The question implicit in his study is this: can account books and ledgers control power? His examples, from King Louis XIV to Lehman Brothers, suggest it cannot. Rare indeed is there in this record a reckoning in the third sense of the meaning of the term.

Perhaps this suggests that the title of this book is itself problematic. What reckoning is he referring to? He shows that there are plenty of instances where double-entry bookkeeping has not been followed in business and in government. Even when such accounting practices were practiced, when financial crisis struck, businesses and governments found ways to muddle through. This is

especially the case in the most gripping chapter in the book dealing with Robert Walpole and the South Sea Company stock fraud scheme. Soll's account attests to the brilliant management of government and business debt in the service of escaping accountability, although many are the innocents that pay in one way or another. There is a rich irony in Soll's study. The Renaissance advocates of double-entry bookkeeping claimed they had found a technique that would serve as the foundation for a new moral order based on accurate record keeping. By this means, capitalist enterprises could avoid corruption and achieve legitimacy and the same was supposed to hold true for governments. But surely, this has proven to be a conceit of liberal economics and statecraft, whether monarchical or republican. Has the collapse of accounting as a vehicle of accountability been one reason for the rise of whistleblowers today?

Covering some 700 years of western European and United States accounting history, *The Reckoning* could fruitfully be assigned in a Western Civilization course and perhaps in World History courses with a strong business theme. Soll's focus is primary on famous and obscure finance bureaucrats and innovative businessmen, but he devotes a surprising amount of space to analysis of artistic expressions of accounting as represented in the visual arts and even western literature, thus deepening the analysis of accounting as a cultural phenomenon. It is, of course, suitable for classes on the history of business and accounting.

Soll has written a deeply disturbing book tracing not the rise and fall of nations so much as the rise and fall of accounting and an accountability culture. It is an exaggeration to attribute the rise and fall of nations to such specific cultural practices. It is a question whether the abuse of accounting tools has been at the bottom of poor fiscal management and business ventures that went sour. In this respect, the authors' claims are far bolder than convincing. Still, a cultural history of accounting is a welcome addition to an understanding of the origins of capitalism and the modern state and to the contemporary malaise of the corporate state.

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*Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America*, edited by Andrew Woolford, Jeff Benvenuto, and Alexander Laban Hinton. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014. 344 pages. \$26.95, paper.

*Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* is a welcome revision of the long history of colonialism in North America. Its contributors cover topics ranging from boarding schools, capitalism, nationalist myth, legislation, and buffalo in disparate time periods and regions across Canada and the United States. Though its topical, temporal, and spatial scope is wide, this anthology is unified by a goal of re-imagining various indigenous experiences of the colonial process as genocidal moments. This work is a call and a model for the reconceptualization of settler colonialism, and each contributing scholar demonstrates the genocidal foundations of colonialism.

Writing the history of colonialism in this way is more than the application of a new label—as the editors make clear in the work’s introduction, using the term “genocide” to label colonialism is a clear way to decolonize academic history. Histories of colonialism have been fraught with sanitized concepts such as “contact” or “encounter,” which obscure the violence, alienation, and dispossession at the heart of the colonial process. While some might condemn the use of *genocide* in these studies as stripping historical indigenous actors of their adaptability and creativity, the contributing scholars demonstrate the conceptual power of the term through various case studies.

The book is divided into four parts, each centered on a specific conceptual theme of genocide in North America. The first, “Intersections and Trajectories,” provides three conceptual and methodological models for the study of colonial genocide in North America. Each author here points to the nuances of colonialism, which varied across time and space, and links multiple processes and institutions that contributed to or resisted genocidal colonialism. In Part II, “Erasure and Legibility,” the contributing scholars analyze the ways in which genocide was justified by colonizers. Benjamin Madley’s chapter on seven military campaigns against the Modocs is particularly compelling; he argues that scholars tend to portray such genocidal actions as “sanitized” (p. 118) war narratives because of Modoc resistance and the oft-used definition of genocide as a one-sided process. Other scholars in this section examine the ways in which national myths, museums, and notions of private property have been used to justify genocidal dispossession and violence. Part III, “Transformations,” includes chapters on the transformative and, sometimes, regenerative power of genocide beyond death and violence. For example, Margaret Jacobs analyzes the way in which child removal was engrained in Australian institutions, fundamentally altering the relationship between indigenous peoples and the Australian state. On the other hand, Jeff Benvenuto displays how indigenous peoples themselves transform in the face of genocide through an analysis of the persistence of Choctaw agency and communal identity. The final section, “(Re)Imaginations,” operates on a meta-historical level and complicates our understanding of genocide as a concept. For example, Joseph Gone provides a dissenting voice in his argument that a broadened definition of genocide limits its moral impact and obscures the nuances of colonialism. Tasha Hubbard, however, argues for a broadened definition of genocide to include non-human actors in her study of the over-hunting of buffalo.

*Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* could be used in undergraduate history courses to great effect. The classroom would be a perfect space in which to begin the conversation encouraged by the anthology’s contributors. Understanding colonialism as genocide provides an opportunity to confront history and to reconcile the colonial process and the conditions of indigenous peoples today, which is a necessary first step in building a truly post-colonial world. The editors argue that, though “acknowledgment of wrongdoing is only the first step” (p. 3) toward decolonization, governmental apologies for colonialism have been superficial attempts to brush its legacy under the rug, stemming from a fear of reparations. If this continues to be the case, then a shift in popular discourse seems to be the best avenue toward recognizing the persistence of the colonial process

and decolonizing the institutions and perspectives that reinforce that process. While the content may be conceptually impenetrable for high school students, teachers at all levels would do well to read this volume—or at the very least, the chapters most relevant to their subjects—and incorporate the reconceptualization of the colonial experience as genocide into their curriculum and the language used in classrooms.

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