

Reviews

Archive Wars: The Politics of History in Saudi Arabia, by Rosie Bsheer. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020. 416 pages. \$90.00, cloth. \$30.00, paper. \$30.00, electronic.

With bold arguments and unconventional approaches, Rosie Bsheer's *Archive Wars* is a thought-provoking contribution to the growing body of original scholarly literature on the history of modern Saudi Arabia. The production and destruction of Arabian and Islamic heritage is the central focus of Bsheer's work, which draws previously un contemplated linkages between the kingdom's archival and architectural politics. The kingdom's heritage-generating initiatives, the author argues, share the objective of desacralizing Arabian history and remapping it as a secular story whose culminating force is the royal family, the Al Saud.

Chapter 1 maps omissions and elisions in official Saudi history, from the conquest of the Hijaz (the region of Mecca and Medina) by the Saudi-Wahhabi alliance, to the occulted history of the deposed mid-twentieth-century King Saud. Both of these episodes have been subjected to historiographical debate. While the author adds texture to the latter debate through her retrieval of unknown or obscure sources, she overstates the role of the British in enabling the Saudi conquest of western Arabia, since British subsidies to the Hijazi ruler (the famous Sharif Husayn) were far greater (at times, twenty-fold greater) than those granted to 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Saud.

Chapter 2 examines the spotty record of archival formation in the modern kingdom, including the curious history and symbolic implications of the National Center for Documents and Archives, an ostensible national archive that no historian working in Saudi Arabia has heard of, let alone accessed. It also looks at the creation of two more successful, quasi-official national archives in the kingdom, the Institute for Public Administration Archive and the King Fahd National Library. Through these contrasting accounts, the author underscores the perpetually fitful gestation of the concept of nationhood and the fractious nature of official knowledge production in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 3 details the creation and expansion of an archive (known as "The Darah") devoted to the kingdom's founder 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Saud under the

patronage of King Salman, who was formerly the longtime governor of Riyadh province. The Darah's intention to become the primary repository for Saudi historical documents generated resentment among archivists at rival bodies who worked to subtly subvert its efforts, further underscoring the fraught nature of history-making in the modern kingdom.

Chapter 4 shifts the frame to consider the politics of archaeological preservation and restoration in Riyadh and their links to urban planning, property development, and elite economic competition. This chapter marks the transition to the second significant theme of the book, the politics of physical heritage preservation and destruction in the kingdom. The discussion of the restoration of the old Saudi capital of Diriya is particularly interesting, since it musters diverse sources to draw links between material and cultural concerns, property values, and ancestral ruins. The exploration of the economics and spatial implications of urban planning in the capital of Riyadh treads on ground first developed by Pascal Menoret, yet omits reflection on the implications of Menoret's research for the author's own.

Chapter 5 examines the regime's redevelopment of the Muslim holy city of Mecca. Transforming Mecca into a comfortable destination for the greatest possible number of Muslim pilgrims, the author explains, had a range of implications, including the wholesale destruction of the city's architectural heritage, the hypercharging of property values, the enriching of well-positioned beneficiaries, and the implementing of dubious design concepts by newly empowered central planners. The author's sustained reflections on the government's contrasting objectives for Riyadh and Mecca's pre-state heritage are rich and significant, and constitute the book's most interesting argument.

Despite its original thrust, the book exposes some of the methodological challenges and interdisciplinary pitfalls of contemporary history. For instance, the temporal focus is the period commencing after the 1991 Gulf War, when, according to the author, the Saudi government began to jettison its religious ideology for a secularized notion of Saudi history built around royal family heritage and monument planning. Whatever the merits of the argument, a significant portion of the evidence mustered for it derives not from detailed archival records, but from (notoriously sparse) Saudi newspaper articles, as well as interviews. Granting strong and often exclusive evidentiary weight to interviews with the inhabitants of a highly repressive state is harrowing terrain to tread, particularly for a study that remains grounded in empirical traditions and methods (however meta-critical its approach to the question of archives and history). The book's unacknowledged drift into anthropology and political science methods is one less favorable outcome of its ambitions, which nonetheless are realized to a sizeable degree, given the challenging time and place in focus.

The Catholic University of America

Nadav Samin

Ideology and Libraries: California, Diplomacy, and Occupied Japan, 1945-1952, by Michael K. Buckland with Masaya Takayama. Lanham,

MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022. 184 pages. \$100.00, cloth. \$36.00, paper. \$34.00, electronic.

What happens when occupying forces build a public library in a formerly totalitarian and war-torn society? What were the assumptions, precedents, and milestones in such a project during the Allied occupation of Japan (1945-1952)? And how did the leaders of this project ensure the long-term sustainability of their American-style library service? These questions and more are at the heart of Michael K. Buckland's fascinating book, *Ideology and Libraries: California, Diplomacy, and Occupied Japan, 1945-1952*.

The first major study to probe the library as a critical tool of foreign diplomacy, Buckland's work shares fresh and exciting insights for researchers of "soft power" during and leading up to the cultural Cold War. Connecting the history of the library in California to the Allied occupation of Japan, this book will be of interest to students and scholars of contemporary Japan, peace and conflict, and globalization and the mobility of ideas, among others.

Significantly, Buckland paints this post-war project as a great success. In the Introduction, he hooks his reader with the unlikely achievements of Robert Gitler (1909-2004), a U.S. recruit who fundamentally influenced the Japanese library system. Despite great obstacles (e.g., limited time, short-term funding, and no training in Japanese culture or language), Gitler became the founding director of the Japan Library School, in operation today as the Department of Library and Information Science, at the prestigious Keio University. Gitler's life recollections were the basis for an autobiographical publication in 1999 and, subsequently, Buckland's research some twenty years later.

One of this book's most useful interventions is its insertion of "the library" into the relatively new historical inquiry into cultural diplomacy in contemporary foreign relations. Considering the profound social and intellectual influence of libraries, this contribution is astute and highly welcome. As Buckland explains, libraries operate as service organizations funded by larger organizations, including local and national governments, to advance the purposes of the latter (Ch. 3). With the onset of World War I, U.S. policy makers began deploying libraries as tools to induce desired behavior overseas through government reading rooms and information centers (Ch. 5). With World War II, the U.S. Office of War Information (OWI), an antecedent of the CIA, began building outpost libraries in Latin America, Africa, and beyond (Ch. 6).

Connecting these developments to regional mileposts in the U.S., Buckland introduces a brief history of the California County Library system in Chapter 4. One of the first libraries to offer free public access to shared, county-wide collections, the California system eventually served as an aspirational template for U.S. recruits in the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). A highly progressive and professionalized service, this model was rooted ideologically in the conviction that libraries should operate as social and political bastions of Western liberal democracy. Shortly before Buckland describes the "purposive dissemination of information" of U.S. libraries abroad (p. 38), he ironically notes that library leaders in California denounced the librarian in totalitarian states as "merely an agency for propaganda" (p. 33).

Reflecting on occupied Japan, the latter half of Buckland's book reads much like a "Who's Who" of the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) of SCAP (Chs. 6-14). The author's "success narratives" of various stages in the development of American-style libraries are somewhat evocative of an (often self-) congratulatory category of essay and auto/biography written from the perspective of the American Allied occupiers. As Ray Moore, historian of modern Japan and the American occupation, has noted, the authors in this category rarely use Japanese archives and often overlook the conditions of Japanese people. Similarly, *Ideology and Libraries* emphasizes a "focus on Americans acting on Japan" rather than the noteworthy activities of Japanese libraries in the early modern and modern eras.

Despite these limitations, this book contributes a provocative foundation for future inquiries on the social and cultural influence of U.S.-controlled information centers. Averaging five to seven pages each, the book's chapters provide brief overviews of otherwise disparate topics that Buckland deftly interweaves. Given their diversity and brevity, these segments would be best used individually, as hand-selected summaries to facilitate deeper readings or guided conversations on comparable subjects in advanced high school or college seminars. Given its strengths and challenges, this book might also serve as an illuminating case study in university courses on historical methods, sources, and the historiography of occupied Japan.

The Ohio State University Libraries

Ann Marie L. Davis

From Memory to History: Television Versions of the Twentieth Century, by Jim Cullen. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2021. 226 pages. \$68.95, cloth. \$28.95, paper. \$24.95, electronic.

Film and television have become a principal means through which many Americans encounter and thus remember their past. Audio-visual narratives are vivid, visceral, and, in current parlance, "relatable," making them often far more appealing than the textbook narratives that confront students in school classrooms. But historical storytelling by means of period television is deceptive: deliberately redolent of the past, such programs are nonetheless products of the time in which they are made, and they speak to contemporary assumptions, values, and issues. Jim Cullen's *From Memory to History* purports to demonstrate how period television "artifacts," from popular series like *The Waltons* through *Mad Men* to the critically acclaimed but less well-known *Halt and Catch Fire*, have mediated the two poles of past and present to shape the ways American audiences understand the past in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. For Cullen, these shows are significant for their engagement with and vindication of an "American Dream" ideology.

Cullen discusses four historical dramas and three sitcoms in pursuit of this argument. Chapters are structured as case studies of individual series, organized in chronological order of the period depicted. In each chapter, Cullen introduces major themes, gives some historical background on the period the series depicts, and

explores setting and plot points. *The Waltons*, per Cullen, has been misunderstood by recent audiences as “conservative,” despite its “culturally progressive vision” and “distinctly leftist sensibility [of] the thirties” (pp. 27-28). The improbable *Hogan’s Heroes*, set in a World War II-era German POW camp, demonstrated American ingenuity in the face of farcical incompetence, “serving a larger political project of consensus, foreign and domestic, at the zenith of the American century” (p. 59). The irreverence of *Hogan’s Heroes* paved the way for *M*A*S*H*, a prestige production set during the Korean War that capitalized on early 1970s cultural and television industry shifts and offered “an indirect commentary on U.S. civilian life [that] affirmed one of the key features of its era: skepticism, even hostility towards institutions” (p. 71). *Mad Men*, by contrast, advertised an aspirational American Dream of the 1960s in which desire was “legitimate, achievable, and a source of social cohesion all at once” (p. 96). *That ’70s Show* was a “cheeky” and “racist” exercise in nostalgia in which the “sex jokes are crude [and] the gender politics aren’t much better” (pp. 124-127), but was nonetheless “essentially benign” in its portrayal of its characters’ aspirations to upward mobility (p. 129). *The Americans* was a “patriotic love song: the Cold War as a good war in which the right values and necessary actions prevailed” (p. 151). *Halt and Catch Fire* explored the “highly educated upwardly mobile white elite” of the Silicon Prairie (Texas’ answer to Silicon Valley) to make “a statement about how the blend of technology, capitalism and personality fuels the engine of history” (pp. 172-183).

The strength of the book, and of particular value to teachers, is its conviction that historical television is an important artifact of a collective cultural past and constituent of historical memory. It also practices the methodological principle that in order to understand the “text,” one must also be aware of the historical, cultural, and industrial contexts in which it was produced. However, the close reading of the texts can miss the mark, particularly in the second half of the book. In part, the author amplifies the significance of the historical setting over the production context: with the exception of *Mad Men*, these shows aren’t really telling us new things about the past, but rather are using the past to explore the issues of our time. Significantly, as Cullen documents, these settings could be—and were—easily displaced: the creators of *Hogan’s Heroes* initially set the show in a minimum-security prison, but decided to capitalize on the “military invasion of television” (p. 50). Similarly, *The Americans* was inspired by mole hunts of the 1990s, but displaced onto the 1980s because the writers thought the Russian-American rivalry was no longer relevant to audiences outside of the context of the Cold War (p. 152). Teachers might use Cullen’s example as a point of departure to ask students to reflect on how current television embeds (or ignores!) contemporary issues, values, and mores, shaping what future student-historians might “know” about the past. Thereafter, class exercises no longer need episodes or clips of television to be documents of the period under examination in class, which they are not. Rather, they can serve as points of entry into discussions of differing interpretations of a period, which is the heart of historical knowledge.

Cullen’s argument vindicating the American Dream does not consider the question of “whose” American Dream. For the shows under discussion, the answer is the white middle class and its confrontation with its own declining fortunes

over the course of the twentieth century. What we actually learn, then, from these “television versions of the twentieth century” is that “prosperity [became] its own form of ideology” (p. 164), ably projected into American homes by television.

Virginia Tech

Heather L. Gumbert

The Viking Great Army and the Making of England, by Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards. London, United Kingdom: Thames & Hudson, 2022. 321 pages. \$34.95, cloth. \$34.95, paper. \$29.95, electronic.

This is an important, useful, and enjoyable book. Its title signals vaulting ambition: to sketch a new narrative for the origins of England, centering the Viking Great Army that savaged the island from 865 to ca. 880 and decapitated three of its four ancient kingdoms. The authors, both eminent archaeologists, state upfront that “[t]he story this book tells could not have been written ten years ago” (p. 8). They aren’t kidding. Much of the data they synthesize are excitingly, even stunningly, novel. Equally exciting are the questions they raise, including some that inevitably remain open.

The book will work well in any early English, general medieval, or Norse curriculum. Beautifully produced and copiously illustrated—with twenty-seven color plates and around 100 black-and-white line-drawings—this volume deserves special praise for clear, effective maps, drawn by Drazen Tomic.

Ten short chapters cluster in three parts: “The Vikings and Their World” (Chs. 1-2); “The Viking Great Army” (Chs. 3-8); and “The Making of a Nation” (Chs. 9-10). Chapters 1, 2, and 9 offer conventional fare; on its own, Part I makes a serviceable module on Viking Age history. Chapter 3 summarizes the written evidence for the so-called Great Army and surveys the meager material discoveries hitherto linked to it, including various hoards (mostly nineteenth-century finds, pp. 74-81), but also St. Wystan’s shrine at Repton, which the Vikings in 873-874 captured and repurposed. Repton was thoroughly excavated (1974-1988) by Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle and Martin Biddle; their findings, only partially published, have nonetheless set the recent gold standard for arguments about the Great Army’s size, characteristics, and activities.

Hadley and Richards challenge the Biddles’ interpretations head on, substituting a radically different narrative (Chapter 6). Key to their story is Torksey (Chapter 4), on the banks of the Trent in Lincolnshire. They assemble decades’ worth of metal detectorist findings and supplement them with their own surveys, digs, and forensics, convincingly arguing that Torksey, virtually an island in the ninth century, housed the Great Army in the winter of 872-873. They deduce the Army was an order of magnitude larger than the Biddles had estimated; its organization was complex, revealing subsidiary units, civilian hangers-on, and professional specialization; and its massive, articulated body functioned not only as a marauding force, but also, like Grant’s Army of the Tennessee a millennium later, as a mobile city.

Torksey's truly revolutionary implications emerge when the authors distill a "Great Army [archaeological] 'signature'" comprising six diagnostic markers (pp. 123-126). Using this signature, they detect the Army's (often violent) passage throughout England (Chapter 5) and even on the Continent (pp. 140-145); reinterpret Repton and its environs (pp. 147-173); and identify another of the Army's major winter camps, at Aldwark near York (Chapter 8). They wade into hoary debates about the nature of Scandinavian settlement in England, teasing out clues for widespread rural occupation by Army veterans (Chapter 7). Finally, they suggest that the tenth- and eleventh-century resurgence of urbanism in eastern England sprang from the Army's unprecedented industrial activity, chiefly a wheel-thrown pottery imported from Francia, where the Vikings had previously harried (Chapter 10).

If Hadley and Richards are correct, this argument will crucially inflect the entire field of viking studies for years to come. A host of tantalizing research questions follow. Hardly any human remains were discovered at Torksey (p. 109), fewer still at Aldwark (p. 208): where are all the viking dead? If vikings sold English slaves on Torksey (p. 104), who were the buyers? How did a gift-giving society employ staggering quantities of bullion and coins? And, if wheel-thrown ware so revolutionized the late Anglo-Saxon economy and demographics, why wasn't it similarly transformative in northern Francia? Indeed, why would this transplanted craft have so thrived in the Danelaw, when Scandinavians (who hardly had any use for pottery, p. 257) imported additional skill-sets—ship-building, long-distance navigation, deep-sea fishing, to name a few?

Just as valuable as the book's contribution to viking and English histories is the light it sheds on the interdisciplinary sophistication of present-day archaeology (e.g., pp. 88-112). Many older digs were amateurish, haphazardly documented, and prone to loss; in one particularly juicy incident, a skull was forgotten on the London Tube and never recovered (p. 173). Newer digs are often no less awkward, however: "night-hawk" metal detectorists are often indistinguishable from straight-up grave robbers (pp. 231-232), but even reasonably well-intentioned detectorists may butt heads with establishment archaeologists (pp. 208-213). The ideal researcher of the Viking Age emerges as not only immensely well read, adept at innovative technologies and methodologies, and (of course) keenly imaginative, but also a successful grant writer, team organizer, and—above all—silken-tongued diplomat. Hadley and Richards evidently tick most of these boxes, and write well to boot: a remarkable achievement.

Cornell University

Oren Falk

Hoarding Memory: Covering the Wounds of the Algerian War, by Amy L. Hubbell. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. 186 pages. \$50.00, cloth. \$50.00, electronic.

What do we do when there is too much to remember? If the "memory boom" of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century can be characterized by an obsession with traumatized denial and the inevitable return of repressed pasts,

Amy L. Hubbell's *Hoarding Memory* examines the challenges posed by "too much memory" (p. 3). Hubbell relates the excess of memory to the "psychological disorder" of "compulsive hoarding" (p. 4), in which the collection of artifacts and objects paradoxically obscures the past that they represent. For Hubbell, the anxiously hoarded archive is a form of forgetting. Evoking spatial metaphors of sedimentation, Hubbell argues that the task of memory work, therefore, is to "sift" through the "layers" of the past that have "coalesced over time" (p. 4).

Like Anne Donadey's "Algeria Syndrome" and Benjamin Stora's notion of gangrenous memory, Hubbell's "hoarding memory" pathologizes the traumatic memory of the Algerian War of Independence, or the Algerian Revolution (as it is known in Algeria). Using the July 5, 1962 massacre in Oran as jumping-off point, Hubbell's stated aim is to examine the memory of "Europeans" in Algeria who left for France amongst the violent end of the war (otherwise known as *Pieds-Noirs*). Historians such as Claire Eldridge have noted how Pied-Noir communities in France, in the absence of any official narrative, were left to produce their own collective narratives about French Algeria and their place within it. Hubbell, who has widely published about Pied-Noir memory, contributes a renewed focus on the cultural memory of this phenomenon. Four chapters are dedicated to writers and artists whose biographies straddle the French-Algerian conflict: the well-known Pied-Noir writer Marie Cardinal, the French-Algerian author Leïla Sebbar, the historian Benjamin Stora, two Pied-Noir visual artists Nicole Guiraud and Patrick Altes, and the French-born British-Algerian Zineb Sedira. Each chapter evokes a different form of "hoarded memory" from the War to examine how these artists and writers manage to sift through the excess of memory.

Aspects of Hubbell's book would be a useful addition to a teacher's resource list for a few reasons. Firstly, the introductory chapter would assist teachers in history, French studies, and memory studies for introductory discussions regarding the difference between history and memory, memory and forgetting. While Hubbell's focus is clearly French memory studies, the introduction does helpfully summarize some of the broader debates surrounding memory studies since the end of the twentieth century. Secondly, the focus on "hoarding memory" offers students a helpful way for understanding the role of cultural production the psychological task of memory work, in ways that "perform aesthetically if not historically" (p. 24). Thirdly, while autobiographical memory is a central theme of the book, the chapter on Benjamin Stora's writing would be particularly useful for students to question the porous borders between personal memory and history. An added benefit is that much of Stora's work is available in English. Finally, the book is interesting for teachers of the colonial memory, given its stated aim to consider the "European perspective" in the memory of the Algerian War. However, the chapters themselves introduce a broader range of memory works by individuals with Pied-Noir, French Algerian, and Jewish Algerian backgrounds. As such, this is a useful text to spark a discussion on the difficulties of naming different groups entangled in the histories of European colonial projects.

Within the specific context of France's colonization of Algeria and the Algerian War of Independence, it is crucial that this text be taught alongside other recent studies concerning the memory of the Algerian War. The structure of Hubbell's

opening argument and much of the final chapter focuses on the traumatic memories of the July 5, 1962 massacre of Europeans in Oran. Students should also be encouraged to consider the book alongside other projects focused on victims of the Algerian War. For example, 1000autres.org, led by Malika Rahal and Fabrice Riceputi, aims to document the names of those forcibly disappeared during the Algerian War by appealing to surviving family members or witnesses (the website is in French and Arabic). Indeed, as more archival material gradually becomes available to historians regarding the Algerian War, the question of how to remember in the face of such excess is relevant to all those entangled in its legacies.

University of York

Beatrice Ivey

Falsehood and Fallacy: How to Think, Read, and Write in the Twenty-First Century, by Bethany Kilcrease. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2021. 200 pages. \$50.00, cloth. \$24.95, paper. \$20.95, electronic.

Twenty-first-century students may have been raised with digital technology, but many of these “digital natives” lack the skills to critically parse and evaluate information conveyed through that technology. As digital news outlets, search engines, and social media inundate students with unmediated arguments, it becomes ever more important to help them learn to gauge the legitimacy of the information they find online and to articulate their own points of view. It is these challenges that Bethany Kilcrease tackles in *Falsehood and Fallacy*, an incredibly useful book written for undergraduates and those who endeavor to teach them digital literacy skills.

Falsehood and Fallacy is a short, but meaty book. Its organization lends itself nicely to assigning as a whole or in parts to address learning objectives related to critical thinking and/or argumentative writing. Kilcrease divides the book into three sections. The first, containing four chapters, addresses “falsehoods” through exercises designed to help students practice assessing the credibility and reliability of sources, facts, opinions, interpretations, and arguments. The second section contains three chapters that address common “fallacies” and bad argumentation in an effort to help students recognize that even “legitimate sources can still contain false or misleading claims” (p. 7). The third and final section contains one chapter and focuses on suggestions on how to write clearly and convincingly, particularly in assignments that ask students to make an argument and support it with evidence.

Kilcrease’s explanations of the problems with sources and the various types of common logical fallacies are useful, but the real strength of the book is in the guided, topical practice exercises provided throughout the first two sections. These could function as stand-alone, small-stakes assignments, but they also offer instructors a jumping-off point to scaffold up to larger written assignments. Kilcrease is a historian and approaches the evaluation of sources and evidence as such, but the examples and exercises could be easily adapted to any field or content area.

The challenge with publishing a book on digital literacy using real-world examples is that they can often be as ephemeral as the Internet itself; blink and they're out of date. Indeed, Kilcrease largely relies on recent, timely examples, some of which might be considered emotionally or politically charged. For example, in an exercise on recognizing opinion versus interpretation, students are asked to evaluate statements about issues such as climate change, Confederate memorials, anti-vaccination, and chemical weapons. Similarly, in a fact-checking exercise, students are asked to check statements related to the coronavirus pandemic declared in 2020. This may be off-putting to some. However, Kilcrease argues that our polarized political atmosphere has combined with the scale and speed of technology to create an environment in which falsehoods and fallacies can flourish unchecked. In this context, using potentially politically charged examples might actually help students learn to identify the ways their personal biases may shape how they think, read, and write. After all, the point of the book is in learning to recognize such challenges and work past them. Still, even these examples are generalizable enough that instructors could update them to fit whatever content area they desire.

The first two sections, those that tackle sourcing and argumentation, are the most robust. Compared to these, the single chapter in the final section on writing argument-driven essays feels underdeveloped. Stemming from a now-defunct blog, the last section contains an overview of the writing process, including: what information should be in the introduction, how to use evidence to support an argument, and considerations about style. These are substantial topics, many of which have articles and books dedicated to explaining them in detail. This chapter is also missing specific writing exercises. Those instructors teaching more writing-based methods courses may wish to supplement this chapter with additional materials.

Ultimately, *Falsehood and Fallacy* is a substantial and adaptable book that approaches its subject matter in a positive tone and with a growth mindset. Kilcrease embraces the idea that every student, despite their current skill level, is a writer and has the aptitude for further growth. As such, students at any phase in higher education may find it helpful. The focus on sources, research, and writing make it an obvious fit for methods or writing-intensive courses, but it is also adaptable enough to use in content courses with learning objectives related to historical thinking or information literacy.

University of North Georgia

Erin N. Bush

West Side Rising: How San Antonio's 1921 Flood Devastated a City and Sparked a Latino Environmental Justice Movement, by Char Miller. San Antonio, TX: Maverick Books (Trinity University Press), 2022. 256 pages. \$29.95, cloth. \$19.95, paper. \$15.99, electronic.

Char Miller makes a bold claim regarding San Antonio's 1921 flood. He argues that, like the historic case of community response to the dumping of hazardous chemicals in Warren County, North Carolina, San Antonio also represented an

origin point in the environmental justice movement. While his argument may be correct, Miller's book focuses more on the environmental causes of the injustice and less on the community's response. The book's examination, however, on the 1921 flood does provide a case study in Progressive-Era politics, relationships with expertise, and urban development using an environmental disaster as the lens by which to examine these phenomena.

One strength of the book lies with its focus on people and its resulting readability. Miller begins with an examination of the flood, recounting who died and where. Mapping these deaths reveals those at highest risk. He then recounts the governmental relief efforts, undertaken by the Red Cross and U.S. Army. As in John Barry's history, *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America* (1997), the Red Cross shows itself to have mixed motivations and outcomes. The local San Antonio chapter was lauded for its successful relief efforts even though local elites' racism limited the amount of aid given. San Antonio hosted a significant number of army troops who helped rescue people from the flood, clean up ravaged streets and homes, and hand out supplies, despite the tensions between city commissioners and army leadership. The Army Corps of Engineers also assessed the regional watershed and what needed to be done to resolve the problem. While city leaders responded, politics dictated their response rather than expertise. Various hydrological projects were proposed and some undertaken, primarily the construction of the Olmos Dam. Meanwhile, West Side creeks and the flooding they caused were still left out of flood remediation plans. The dam represented the continued reluctance of San Antonio elites to equitably redress the city's hydrological vulnerability. The book closes with the community-based organizing that successfully gained support, funding, and results in remedying the longstanding drainage and safety needs of the area. Miller includes a list of those who died in an appendix.

Progressive-Era scholarship has extensively examined the sanitary and environmental infrastructure building taken in response to the explosive growth of cities during the nineteenth century. Martin Melosi's *Pollution and Reform in America's Cities, 1870-1930* (1980), the first of many works, studied urban spaces and infrastructure. John Duffy's *The Sanitarians: A History of American Public Health* (1990) looked at the connection between municipal infrastructure building and public health at the turn of the century. In *West Side Rising*, San Antonio political officials showed a gendered understanding of the city, as one dedicated to profit (versus what Maureen Flanagan has argued was the female vision of the city as one "livable" for all its residents). Miller's emphasis is on the region's watershed and the significant problems it represented to city leaders in the loss of life from repeated floods, destruction of property, and lost profits. San Antonio politicians differed from other urban leaders in their refusal to accede decision making to scientific engineers. Robyn Muncy has argued that male leaders entrusted scientists and engineers, almost exclusively men, to make decision based upon their expertise. Women respected such expertise, but maintained the right to make decisions based upon the recommendations made. In the case of San Antonio, city officials ignored repeated warnings and pleas from their own experts, unwilling to pay out the money needed to fix a centuries-long problem. The city's

Anglo elites simply moved to higher ground. The 1921 flood proved to be the impetus to finally address the periodic water disasters. The chapters detailing the political fights and contestations over expert recommendations illustrate common Progressive-Era issues, problems, and responses.

Miller recovers an overlooked chapter in environmental history. The story of the 1921 flood and its influence on later generations offers an example of environmental racism and how the community eventually succeeded holding city leaders accountable, making their community safer in the process. But the unruly geography of the region's watershed and the long history of municipal flooding pose challenges in organizing the narrative. Out of the seven chapters, only two discuss the community organizing and successful political engagement that led to a renewed and more environmentally just city, and it is not completely clear that the 1921 flood was key to the community's organizing. But the book demonstrates the ways that environmental history can illuminate broader issues within American history, making it valuable for courses in a variety of subjects.

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Amy M. Hay

Tempting All the Gods: Joseph P. Kennedy, Ambassador to Great Britain, 1938-1940, by Jane Karoline Vieth. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2021. 588 pages. \$59.95, cloth. \$59.95, electronic.

Drawing on the secondary work available (including, I should add, my own biography of Joseph P. Kennedy, *The Patriarch*), with some additional material taken directly from archival sources, Jane Karoline Vieth has provided us with a comprehensive, balanced, fluidly written, and exhaustive account of Joseph P. Kennedy's tenure as Ambassador to the Court of St. James.

Kennedy arrived in London on March 8, 1938 and was immediately catapulted into the maelstrom. Four days after his arrival, Germany invaded and incorporated Austria into the Third Reich and unleashed a frightening and, until that moment, unprecedented reign of terror on Austria's Jewish population. Soon after was the Munich crisis, followed by Germany's takeover of the remainder of Czechoslovakia; the invasion of Poland and Great Britain and France's declaration of war; the so-called "phony war," followed by the German invasion of the Scandinavian nations, then, in quick succession, those of western Europe; and the Blitz. Kennedy was a firsthand witness to all of this and, as American ambassador, a participant in the diplomatic discussions and maneuvers that preceded and followed each event.

Joseph Patrick Kennedy had been appointed to this exalted position after jumping early on the FDR bandwagon, helping get the president nominated, elected, and re-elected, and serving, with distinction, as the first chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission and chairman of the Maritime Commission. Kennedy's official title was Ambassador, but Roosevelt unofficially extended his mandate to serve as his eyes and ears in Europe. Roosevelt hoped

Kennedy, as a businessman of fabled acuity, would report back to him not simply on the political turmoil in Great Britain and on the continent, but also on the economic prospects facing Europe and America, should Germany continue its aggressive behaviors.

On arriving in London, Vieth tells us, Kennedy “quickly concluded that the most urgent problem facing Europeans was not the political crisis but the economic crisis” (p. 61). Just days after the Anschluss, the German invasion and incorporation of Austria, Kennedy told Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, “They can talk to me all they want about the political aspects of everything that’s happening, Henry, but that isn’t what the trouble is...The trend is definitely down unless they get together on some economic basis—to hell with the political” (quoted on p. 61). This was Kennedy’s position for his remaining time in London; it proved to be rather disastrously wrong. While Kennedy believed that he could, as a businessman and diplomat, negotiate with the Germans to provide them economic security in return for their acceptance of a long-term peace agreement, he misunderstood, from day one, Hitler’s intentions. Hitler had no need to make a deal with the west because he believed he didn’t need one. His goal was to extend Germany’s boundaries and economic empire eastward, not improve economic ties with Great Britain and the United States.

Ambassador Kennedy was greeted enthusiastically by the British government, royalty, and public on his arrival in London, especially after he introduced his handsome and charming wife and children to them. But his welcome didn’t last long. He supported “appeasement” alongside Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and then, long after Chamberlain and the British government concluded it was impossible to deal with Hitler, continued to argue against American involvement of any sort and for a negotiated settlement with the Germans. The German people and elites, he believed, were united behind Hitler and the German ground and air forces; in particular, he was assured by Charles Lindbergh they were too well equipped, trained, and massive for the British, even with American help, to resist. Kennedy’s decision to pursue a negotiated peace, even though his overtures to German representatives and speeches urging negotiation were counter to state department policy, angered Washington and frightened the president, who feared Kennedy’s wrath and opposition should he return home voluntarily or be fired for insubordination.

Vieth’s prose is fluid and readable. Her book is fair-minded, judicious in the extreme. Regrettably, there is no new analysis or interpretation that overturns or questions or amplifies the existing literature on Kennedy and his tenure as Ambassador. Vieth began her research on this subject in 1970 and completed her dissertation, “Joseph P. Kennedy: Ambassador to the Court of St. James’s, 1938-1940” in 1975. Despite not breaking new ground, for teachers and students with a direct interest in Anglo-American relations between the Anschluss and the Blitz, this book provides a thorough and readable account of Ambassador Kennedy’s reign of error in Great Britain. As a teaching tool, it is too detailed for undergraduates and too narrowly focused for most graduate students.



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In 1940, the **Teachers' History Club** at the University of Notre Dame created the "Quarterly Bulletin of the Teachers' History Club" to improve the learning experience in the history classroom.

By 1967, the expanding collaboration of educators reorganized as the **History Teachers' Association** and decided to transform the bulletin into an academic journal—*The History Teacher*.

In 1972, the association transferred guardianship of *The History Teacher* to coordinating faculty members at the Department of History at California State University, Long Beach. In the interest of independence and self-determination, the associated teachers incorporated as a non-profit organization.

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