

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Fall 2021 / Spring 2022 double issue of the *New England Journal of History*. Our mission is to publish historical inquiries that inform readers from novice to scholar. This goal will be met with articles that encompass the world's events, and analyses that share reflections on pedagogical strategies. Our timely book reviews examine works that expand our knowledge base. First published in 1944 as the *New England Social Studies Bulletin*, this well-rounded journal will continue to provide historical analyses for educators who seek to bring history to life for future generations through thought-provoking interpretations and the best offerings of pedagogy.

Robert Weiner's "East European Foreign Policy Since 1989" (vol. 61, no. 1, 2004) is our selection for "From the Archives" in this edition. Given the unwarranted, aggressive, and utterly destructive efforts of Vladimir Putin toward Ukraine, it seemed best to revisit Eastern European issues as understood in 2004. Providing a review of theoretical foreign policy approaches and regional structures to stabilize regional issues, Weiner's article aids in our reflection on the actions of Putin toward nations surrounding Russia. For example, events such as the Persian Gulf War, 9/11, the war in Iraq, and changes in former Soviet states, such as Yugoslavia, further altered the attitudes of eastern European peoples towards Russia. Further, the stance of Secretary of State Madeline Albright on NATO members and insights into relations of Poland with Ukraine and Belarus fifteen years ago suggest further reasons for Putin's current actions. Discussions over how the Russians interpreted NATO after 1991 instruct us to remember that Putin's concerns over the alliance are long seated in the Russian political psyche.

"The Pulse" in this issue encourages us to make our way toward studying and relaying local history. Alan R. Earls and Eamon McCarthy Earls share an article with us asking "Why Local History?" Focusing on small topics and extending them into a national context leads to deep appreciation of local history and shares the sentiments behind the concept of the "personal is political." Local historical research generally has little recompense or recognition for work well

done, but it brings a strong sense of community identity and accomplishment for those investigators methodically uncovering the hidden patterns discovered within the recesses of town halls or family farms. Raising local history from obscurity supports the overall growth of historical knowledge, and the Earls' article reminds us of the value of this gratifying gesture!

Our "Novice Corner" celebrates the work of future history teacher Abigail Bedard who is studying at the University of Massachusetts Amherst with the intent of participating in its Bridges to the Future master's degree program. While taking a course on the history of football, Bedard wrote "Matthew W. Bullock: A True Pioneer" about a man who she discovered was the first black college football coach at the Massachusetts Agricultural College, now known as the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Uncovering the life of Matthew Bullock, Bedard traces Bullock's family history and learns that they were part of the Great Migration, moving to Massachusetts to be sure their children had a piece of the American Dream. Football was part of Bullock's trajectory, and in 1900, he started his college life, utilizing his athletic ability beyond football. Seriously injured during a game, Bullock moved into the life of a football coach at various institutions while pursuing further academics and law school. Bedard shares with us the deeply engaged, long, and impactful life of Matthew W. Bullock that can be readily shared in our classrooms to validate what "faith, hard work, and perseverance" can do for all of us.

This edition's articles focus on the southern states of New England. James Muldoon explores the naming of Rhode Island in "Planting Colonists: Empire as Horticulture." Given the rising awareness of the racial naming patterns we have around us, Muldoon seeks to enlighten us about the history behind the official name of the state of Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations. While parts of Rhode Island were immersed in the slave trade, the "plantations" portion of the official name of Rhode Island has nothing to do with slavery. Muldoon connects the term "plantation" to land grants provided by the English to settlements in the Americas and Ireland. More recently, residents of Rhode Island have made a motion to remove the term "plantation" from its state name based upon a lack of historical understanding of the term, which Muldoon aptly clarifies for us in his article. Lucidly summing up swaths of early exploration history and

local indigenous history, Muldoon’s article will be of benefit to the debate surrounding the name of Rhode Island and to those interested in early colonial interactions among the intersections of diverse cultures.

Thomas Renna raises the shameful time of the eugenics movement as he discusses “*The Boston Globe: Immigration Restriction and Eugenics 1910–1939.*” Breaking the eugenics movement into phases, Renna begins his discussion with the influx of people into Boston during the mid-nineteenth century. Fear of the cultural diversity brought by immigrants to America has made this a frequently divisive topic throughout our history. Who is and is not desirable? How do views of various immigrant groups change over time? In addition to the traditional worries native-born Americans have over immigrants, the fear of genetically inferior immigrants joined the discussion after 1910. Given that immigration and eugenics were critical topics, Renna chose to explore how the *Boston Globe* reported on the combination of these issues. The *Globe* informed its readers on topics of eugenics, as it was considered part of serious news, but seemed to make choices as to the direction of the articles and which topics were covered to retain both the burgeoning immigrant population and the Brahmins of Boston. Renna’s work reports on a topic many would rather remain hidden and raises awareness of the challenges for the *Boston Globe* to retain its readers, share up-to-date science of the day, and address the distress over the expanding immigrant populations locally and nationwide.

Robert Liftig endorses nurturing our students as they discover the excitement of studying local history in his piece “Start with the Present to Engage Students with the Past: Using Local Landmarks and Family History.” Noting that backwards teaching about history—meaning that we teach history forward from a distant historical era rather than start with a recent event and discover the past through today’s affairs—can leave students cold on the study of history. Incorporating research on current landmarks generates a feeling of relevancy for high school students as they participate in learning history. Liftig’s anecdotal discussion of his use of I-95 in the classroom inspires our creative thoughts for our next unit in class. His use of family history research in the classroom reminds me of Darra Mulderry’s pedagogy piece, “Helping Students Discover Intersections Between U.S. History and Their Family History,” in our Spring 2021 journal which also engaged students in historical studies through the

present. Liftig shares how his research on his wife's family history brought early America unexpectedly to life and illustrates how many of our students can discover the joy of history through interviewing relatives, researching monuments, DNA testing, and exploring ancestral records now so often digitally available. Liftig's article establishes several avenues through which we can engage students in the study of history.

This issue contains a diverse selection of book reviews certain to intrigue. In a thoughtful review essay, Ayokunmi Ojebode examines *The Dragons, The Giant, The Woman—A Memoir* by Wayetu Moore. Moore's memoir explores magical realism and mythology as ways in which diverse African peoples may find meaning or make sense of events such as colonization, war, or other traumas. Seeking to make sense of her childhood, Moore's memoir uses imagination to expose the painful national realities witnessed during a civil war. Exploring a different way in which people engage with their communities, Erin Redihan reviewed *The Long Crisis: New York City and the Path to Neoliberalism* by Benjamin Holtzman. Holtzman's work provides a more detailed examination of New York, as he explores how city residents played a more active role in solving problems of the city at the grass-roots level during the 1960s and 1970s than previously believed. Moving to film in history, Christopher Tucker evaluates Ben Beard's *The South Never Plays Itself: A Film Buff's Journey Through the South on Screen* which addresses how the South is portrayed in various film genres while focusing on specific southern states that are featured in film. Exploring the juxtaposition of religion and Wall Street, I. Francis Kyle III reviews *God in Gotham: The Miracle of Religion in Modern Manhattan* by Jon Butler. Covering a specific time in Manhattan and the primary religious traditions in the community, Butler combines biography and history into a winning text. Reviewing Francis J. Bremer's book *One Small Candle: The Plymouth Puritans and the Beginning of English New England*, Stephanie Jannenga notes that the author examines the interwoven religious and material lives of the Plymouth puritans in a way that harkens back to the efforts of earlier historians, while incorporating today's economic, social, and political lenses. Beginning with the Puritan departure from England to Holland and culminating with their arrival in the New World, Bremer discusses the Puritans and other English plantings, as well as the Native Americans extant at the time, to create a nuanced representation of the region. In *Exposing*

Slavery: Photography, Human Bondage, and the Birth of Modern Visual Politics in America, Matthew Fox-Amato exposes the role that photography played in the attempt to create a more benevolent view of enslavement. Reviewed by Dinah Mayo-Bobee, *Exposing Slavery* reveals the contradictory nature of photographing the enslaved to present the desired image owners wished to portray which was one of a “chattel Madonna.” Instead, enslaved people turned photography to their benefit and used these pictures as a means of identification or ways to find family members. Finally, Kyra Dejjot reviews a book useful for our times, *Conspiracies of Conspiracies: How Delusions Have Overrun America* by Thomas Milan Konda. Providing in-depth research and endnotes, Konda demonstrates a rich understanding of the nature and influence of American conspiracies.

For details on submitting your articles and book reviews, please check out our manuscript submission policy found at www.nejh.org/general-guidelines. We welcome all historical topics, pedagogical articles on the teaching of history or social studies, and reviews of books and permanent museum exhibits. Also, please submit any comments you may have on our articles to editors@nejh.org.

As we continue to study the past, let us remember the importance of historians. Their research and analysis of events and persons inform the policy and decision making of presidents and leaders around the world. Historians form think-tanks that influence public opinion, and they encourage us to engage in discussions of ethics, morals, and truth. Their indispensable contributions provide context for understanding current events and allow us to observe our common flaws, our universal strengths, and our shared humanity. Historians have also been activists, shaping movements and writing books that changed society. We hope our publication will inspire readers to engage in their communities and to follow the timeless words of Abraham Lincoln and “strive on to finish the work we are in.”

Linda Morse
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