

## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Fall 2022 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.

James Baldwin wrote in “Unnamable Objects, Unspeakable Crimes” in 1966 that “the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do. It could scarce be otherwise, since it is to history that we owe our frames of reference, our identities, and our aspirations.”<sup>1</sup>

Given the arguments over the teaching of history, critical race theory in the public schools, “woke” politically charged divisiveness, the evolving diversity of voices from the past, and the noise of misinformation and vitriolic “facts,” it is time for all historians to take a stand for historical truth-seekers. I recall learning a decade or so ago that scientists realized that they must take a stand on evolution and natural selection to repulse the prominent misinformation in the media. We are in that same situation now. Historians must pursue an increasingly active role to clarify, expand, and enlighten the public about the causes, events, effects, and nature of the historical narrative. To permit “alternative facts” and/or lies to assume center stage without resistance from historians implies that historians accept blatant inaccuracies and insults their profession. We are each responsible for helping our citizens understand how history guides our thinking, creates false or real narratives, shapes how we view the world, and guides our *future actions* without our knowledge. Let us live into James Baldwin’s words and shape a better America that embraces its history as it is, not as we wish it would be.

Given the rise of a conservative movement that is barely recognizable to me, “From the Archives” looks back to Spring 2012 when the conservative leadership of Calvin Coolidge as told by Coolidge’s grand-nephew Cal Thomas was discussed. What strikes me about Coolidge’s understanding of “the accumulation of wealth means the multiplication of schools, the increase of knowledge, the dissemination of intelligence, the encouragement of science, the broadening of outlook, the expansion of liberty, the widening of culture” is that these concepts seem to be the antithesis of much of American culture in general today, let alone the conservative party. His concepts that “[I]ndustry, thrift and self-control are not sought because they create wealth, but because they create character” would be a refreshing distillation for Americans, regardless of political franchise, to reenergize any base. This reading of Coolidge’s words will refresh the conservative threads in us all.

The recent Supreme Court decision on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* led to a discussion on “The History and Future of Abortion in the United States” by Anna M. Peterson in this edition’s “Pulse.” Commenting on the history of abortion in America and the submission of this historical information to the Supreme Court by leading historical associations, Peterson lives into clarifying the history of this weighty topic. Historians must not accept or tolerate negligence in accurate historical usage in our government or in our Supreme Court. Regardless of how one feels about abortion, correctly considering and reviewing the history of abortion in America to make a decision that will impact the entire American population is a responsibility.

Jonathan Hanna reveals the political evolution of John Adams in his article “A General Union of the Continent”: John Adams, Niccolò Machiavelli, and the Origins of Adams’s Political Imagination.” After discussing the “two distinct strains of thought” that occurred in the evolution of the Western Enlightenment, Hanna explores how Adams was influenced by Machiavelli enabling Adams to envision an updated version of Machiavelli’s theories in relation to Puritan Protestantism. Exploring the historiography of John Adams’s political thought, Hanna adds a new dimension to our understanding of how one of our key founding fathers, later a president justified and lived into his revolutionary times.

“From Garrison Houses to Breeds Hill Redoubt” explores the militaristic and traumatic experiences of those who lived in Groton,

Massachusetts as well as other neighboring towns. After retelling the story of the Battle of Bunker Hill, Barry Levy ascertained why soldiers acted as they did. Focusing on the legal implications of creating these towns as well as the actual garrisons in which families were living for decades before 1775 provides evidence as to why some men fought and others retreated at Breeds Hill. The conflicts between the local indigenous populations involved horrific and traumatizing scenarios which repeated themselves for generations. Levy suggests that Groton's residents had specific responsibilities of essentially perpetual defense well-beyond the norm in addition to their agricultural tasks necessary for survival as significant reasons for their actions during times of war.

To round out a delightful summer here in New England, Lyle Nyberg tells the history behind "Sunnycroft: A Scituate Summer Estate." The fascination of Sunnycroft, besides its architectural beauty, is that it was created by a woman, Lucy (Peirce) Nichols and that she did not start from scratch with a new structure but shaped an existing home to her vision. Of interest also was that Peirce family members were executives at the Rockland Trust Bank and that the house remained in the family for four generations. Other fascinating pieces of Scituate history and the Peirce family round out this deeply researched piece.

Our pedagogy piece is a research work exploring how American history teachers employed in charter schools contemplate how to teach in a culturally responsive way while devoting themselves to anti-racist teaching. Since I teach at a charter school, I answered a call for research participants for Rebecca Corso's study which resulted in the article "Anti-Racism in High School Social Studies Classrooms: Cultivating a More Inclusive Narrative of U.S. History." Teaching U.S. history today can lead to conflict between school boards and parents, tensions between parents and teachers, political fervor in numerous states, and outright foisting of misinformation on the public. So, how do teachers educate students in an anti-racist manner? What steps do educators select if they reflect on how to teach in an anti-racist way? How is curriculum examined? How do we explore our beliefs, values, and knowledge about histories we may not have been exposed to during our college experience? History teachers have heavy responsibilities since our knowledge of history shapes how we view others and the future. How can we create classrooms in which the search for often silent voices leads to a fuller understanding of the past and a richer, less stereotypical view of the future?

Picking up our interest in John Adams in this edition, Jacqueline Reynoso reviews *A View from Abroad: The Story of John and Abigail Adams in Europe* by Jeanne E. Abrams. Highlighting the formation of the Adams's opinions from their time in Europe, Abrams explores their political challenges and achievements as well as their participation in European culture in a complicated time for a new America. Using a multi-faceted angle to examine Mexican American POWs during the Vietnam War, Matthew Vajda reviews, *"I'm Not Gonna Die in This Damn Place": Manliness, Identity, and Survival of the Mexican American Vietnam Prisoners of War*, by Juan David Coronado. Intending to expand the limited knowledge about Mexican American men during the Vietnam War, Coronado analyzes the beliefs and actions of these men during the war and how their views on masculinity, honor and machismo determined their lives in POW camps and their lives upon returning home. Associate Editor Erin Redihan reviews Robert Edelman's and Christopher Young's *The Whole World Was Watching: Sport in the Cold War* noting that the text is part of the Cold War International History Project Series. Focusing on non-Olympic Cold War sport, Edelman and Young traverse China, the Caribbean, the Soviet Union and other nations while discussing the political and racial machinations impacting sports, fans and the athletes.

Welcoming an ironic choice given our experiences of supply chain failures during the pandemic, Christopher Blakley reviews *Out of Stock: The Warehouse in the History of Capitalism* by Dara Orenstein which investigates the history of the growth and development of the foreign-trade-zone around the world. The intersection of race, capitalism, foreign claims on others' ports, efficiency of laborers, and capital flight are elucidated in an effective way for a variety of historians and cultural experts. Examining a different angle of capitalism, *A Shopper's Paradise: How the Ladies of Chicago Claimed Power and Pleasure in the New Downtown* is reviewed by Kathleen Daly. Author Emily Remus explores affluence, race, gender and a woman's role in Chicago in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and reveals how women tested consumer rights, female public behavior, eluded moral judgment, and otherwise enjoyed life in the central business district of Chicago. A sports book review spotlights *The Whalers: The Rise, Fall, and Enduring Mystique of New England's (Second) Greatest NHL Franchise* by Pat Pickens. A fan of the iterations of the Whalers team, I. Francis Kyle III reviews this deeply researched examination of the abiding legacy of this hockey team, how it became The Hurricanes and how America's

demographic shift led many hockey teams to move south. *To Risk It All: General Forbes, the Capture of Fort Duquesne, and the Course of Empire in the Ohio Country* by Michael N. McConnell delves into the innumerable challenges General Forbes and his men experienced during the march to Fort Duquesne during the Seven Years' War. One cannot imagine moving hundreds of people through the wilderness, cutting roads, interacting with Native Americans and preparing for battle simultaneously which makes this a rousing book.

For details on submitting your articles and book reviews, please check out our manuscript submission policy found at [www.nejh.org/general-guidelines](http://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](mailto: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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#### Notes

1 James Baldwin, “Unnamable Objects, Unspeakable Crimes,” in *The White Problem in America*, edited by *Ebony Magazine* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1966, 174.