

History and Enterprise: Past, Profit, and Future in the United States

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American presidential campaigns – although they are historical in themselves – habitually use, or should I say, misuse history. This can be somewhat unnerving to an historian. But major civic events such as these do provide some evidence about the manner in which Americans choose to see history and whether they value the past at all. Take the 1996 election when Bill Clinton defeated Bob Dole. That election was very much about looking either forward or backward. Dole, a wounded World War II veteran, built much of his campaign upon the virtues and values of the past that he had experienced and which he represented. Clinton talked about the future. Clinton won and Dole went on to a somewhat inexplicable post-elective career as a part-time poster boy for Viagra. In 2000 the historical fault lines were less clear. Neither candidate, George W. Bush nor Al Gore, focused distinctly on any specific past event. But both resorted to strategic uses of history to promote their candidacy. Bush linked compassionate conservatism to values he claimed were inherent in the American character. Gore looked to the values inherent in his party, though he played this card carefully, avoiding both the New Deal history of the party and his own affiliation, as vice president, with the Clinton administration. Selective memory is wonderful.

The past seemed integral to the campaign of 2004, whether the topic was the Vietnam War service record of John Kerry or the memory of September 11. Yet did that past really matter? Or did economic concerns or matters of moral honesty determine the election outcome: should the government increase health insurance and wages? Should same-sex marriage be legal? Were the Bush administration's allegations of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq merely propaganda?

All of this leads to the perennial question of whether Americans are a people who value history or simply a society that looks toward tomorrow. To even ask that question is troubling, since the American past, as short as it is in relative terms, is of tremendous consequence in modern history. One would hope that Americans recognize this and value it.

They do, albeit in a very American way. History in America has value, though it is neither academic nor abstract value. It is a value that is closely linked to the expansive, growth-oriented, pragmatic nature of American society. History in America has also, in large part, been a private enterprise, a commodity preserved and marketed by non-governmental agencies and a commodity that sells best when it is niche marketed – gaining its best reception on the “local” level.

As was and is the case in almost every nation, history in America had an initial value that might be characterized as validation and support. Though there is some argument as to when Americans began to develop an historical consciousness, the process of national validation through the use of history seems to have begun shortly after the American Revolution.¹ David Van Tassel’s work *Recording America’s Past* shows that in the years following the Revolution a spate of histories and, especially, biographies appeared.² None of these derived from the state itself, though in at least one instance, President Thomas Jefferson went to great efforts to prod authors to create new works that would serve as correctives to several views of the past antagonistic to Jefferson’s political party’s platform. That many national histories were the result of private effort is rather remarkable given the stakes that were at hand. The United States was, at that time, young and fragile, and good accounts of its establishment and purpose served to build support for it internally and externally. Those who established the new nation were very well aware of its special place in the annals of governmental systems and philosophies. It was the city on the hill writ large and to many, “God’s new Israel.”³

Preserving or celebrating the past, however, was not the government’s business. Those individuals who took up the task did so because they were patriots in search of profit. Biographers such as Jeremy Belknap and Jared Sparks felt deeply about the importance of the nation, but they also looked to create products that would sell. They, along with other biographers such as John Eliot, saw national biography as instructive. By emphasizing and often embellishing the moral strengths of the founders in their biographies they served two purposes: they sought to highlight the moral qualities of the nation’s early prime movers, and also presented a broader lesson for youth. All bent the facts to their ends, but perhaps none did so quite as well as Parson Mason Locke Weems. It was Weems who, by creating the myth of George Washington confessing to his father that he had cut down his father’s favorite cherry tree, emphasized honesty as a founding American virtue. Weems was a preacher who had written several moral tracts on drunkenness. When he decided to turn his attention to national biography

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he did so with imagination and an eye for profit. Writing to his publisher regarding his proposed book on Washington Weems noted:

I have nearly ready for press a piece to be christened 'The Beauties of Washington,' tis artfully drawn up [and] enlivened with anecdotes....

What say you to printing it for me and ordering a copper plate Frontispiece of that Heroe, something in this way. George Washington Esqr. The Guardian Angel of his Country. Go thy way old George. Die when though wilt we shall never look upon thy like again.

A half-year after Weems wrote this letter, Washington died. Weems sensed opportunity and wrote to his publisher again, "Washington, you know is gone! Millions are gaping to read something about him. I am nearly primed and cocked for 'em." ⁴

While Weems may have been the early nineteenth century analog to Walt Disney in terms of turning shaky history into profit, it is important to realize that his vision of earning a livelihood from history was also characteristic of his contemporaries. John Marshall also wrote a biography of Washington. He undertook the task at the end of his judicial career because he had debts to deal with and felt the project would have a substantial pay off.

While the early writers focused on profit, those who undertook the task of collecting and preserving the evidence of the American experience initially were not really motivated by the possibility of fiscal gain. They pursued their goal as private individuals or groups. Throughout most of the late nineteenth century private historical societies and private collectors vied with one another to collect both private papers and public documents relating to American history. Government took little interest in this activity. It was not until 1934 that the United States created its own National Archives.⁵ Massachusetts established the first historical society, however, in 1791, and New York followed in 1804. By the 1870s nearly one hundred such institutions were spread across the United States.⁶

All had been created by cadres of individuals with an interest in the past and, in many instances, a desire to prove the importance of the role that their state, city, or region had played in the Revolution and subsequent American history. While most funding came from private donations, some societies, such as New York's were able to garner special allocations from state government but not the promise of on-going support. Individual collectors were well represented among the founders of these historical societies. The motivations for collecting, both corporate and individual, are

interesting. Some individuals collected documents signed by the central figures of the Revolution, items that have been characterized as “word shadows of the great.”⁷ They did so, not for profit or investment (as is often the case today) but as an act of veneration, in which the documents were seen as sacred relics of the Revolution. Others had a more academic interest. Jared Sparks purchased the papers of George Washington from Washington’s nephew Bushrod. Sparks’ intent was to edit and publish the papers.⁸ These private collectors were central figures in the early historical societies and the line dividing their own collections from those of the society was hazy. Eventually many private collectors such as Lyman Draper and Wallace Hugh Cathcart left their materials to the agencies with which they had been affiliated. Draper’s collection is one of the core pieces of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin’s collections, while Cathcart’s collection of Shaker manuscripts, the largest in existence, is a centerpiece of the Western Reserve Historical Society.⁹

The holdings of the historical societies were available for use by their members. They were very “clubby” affairs then and, to some extent, even now. But many also opened their libraries and museums to the public, usually at no charge. Until the late nineteenth century, historical societies and museums, as noted by Steven Conn in *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926*, were the principal research centers for scholars. As was the case in Europe the historical societies and their museums were also seen as places for civic education and improvement. But while the state usually ran the great European museums of the nineteenth century, these American enterprises remained largely private, though until the 1960s showed very little interest in profiting from their holdings.¹⁰

That is not to say that profit could not be made from similar enterprises. Indeed, the number of visitors to historical societies was miniscule in comparison to that of America’s most popular museum, Barnum’s American Museum in New York City. P. T. Barnum’s enterprise, which began in 1841 and lasted until 1865 when it was destroyed by fire, was not purely historical. Its main attractions were dwarfs, giants, and other biological oddities. It was very much the sideshow that would later characterize traveling carnivals and circuses, including the major circus that Barnum would go on to found. But Barnum did include history. His collection held much of what had been in the Peale Museum of Philadelphia, an enterprise that lasted nearly three decades but died of lack of profit. Charles Wilson Peale’s museum had a plethora of natural history collections (including the ever popular skeleton of a Mastodon), but its holdings also included the portraits that Peale had painted of the founding

fathers and revolutionary heroes. Those came to Barnum, but burned in the 1865 fire. Barnum knew that history could attract visitors if it was presented in an interesting or controversial manner. People flocked to the museum to see an aged African-American woman whom Barnum claimed to be the wet nurse of George Washington. Barnum's mid-nineteenth century venture into what is now called "edu-tainment" was totally successful. He became a wealthy man and the museum became a "must see" site in antebellum New York – all of this while the clubby New York Historical Society remained largely unvisited and aloof.¹¹

By the time Barnum's museum burned, the manner in which Americans approached their history was bifurcating. A new group of historians such as George Bancroft, Francis Parkman, and William H. Prescott focused on the creation of grand narratives that examined what could then be called the unique genius of America. Their work would eventually coalesce with and then be subsumed by the new scientific method of history then being taught in European seminars. The "professionalization" of the past, so to speak, would culminate with the establishment of a graduate program at Johns Hopkins University in 1876 and the creation of the American Historical Association in 1884.

While professional, scientific history slowly rooted itself in American academia in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the bulk of historical inquiry and activity continued to come from other quarters and enjoyed a larger audience, and profit. Two popular genres of history during this period deserve notice both because of their popularity and because they were representative of what can be considered core American interests and values.

The first is the Civil War regimental history. Shortly after the War's end, veterans began the process of remembering and memorializing. That involved joining veterans associations: the Grand Army of the Republic for Union soldiers and the Confederate Veterans Association for the "other side." Soon, members of individual regiments began to gather data about their unit's history. Usually one or two interested veterans undertook the task of researching and then writing the history of the unit. Such histories continued to be published into the twentieth century. Localizing and, if you will, particularizing history or memory, has always loomed large in the United States.¹²

Profit was not a real factor in the production of regimental histories, although the projects were usually undertaken with the understanding that one's fellow veterans would purchase a copy of the completed history and thus offset the cost of printing. However, profit was key to another genre of

local, late-nineteenth century history – the “subscription” histories of counties and, in some instances cities. These truly are models of free enterprise and pride in local history.

The manner in which the local histories were compiled is the quintessential example of salesmanship. Generally a publisher would hire an author and assign him or her (there were some women writers) the task of writing the history of a county, or in some instances, a town or city. The author would begin his/her research in local records, but more importantly would canvass the more important citizens of the area for their memories and family stories. To be interviewed and thus considered to be one of the historically elect of a particular region was powerful stuff. But getting the nod from Clio came at a price. Potential oral biographers were asked to subscribe to the enterprise. Whether or not agreeing to buy a copy of the yet-to-be-published book was a quid pro quo for immortality is an open question. But the system worked well and profitably. Thousands of such local histories emerged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Their compilation provided employment for itinerant authors and profits for publishing houses. Today, many of the better-crafted volumes are credible sources for professional historians and almost all are a joy to the genealogist. The trend continues today as a number of publishers now specialize in producing city histories, the cost of each being underwritten by corporations and businesses that pay to have the illustrated story of their companies placed in the volume.¹³

The similarity between the creative motivation of the nineteenth century county histories and the slick corporately sponsored city histories of today prompts the examination of the place of history in contemporary American life.¹⁴ Are profit, private enterprise, and a parochial focus still operative? Is there still a concern about the role of history in buttressing the state, even after the state has moved far beyond its fragile beginnings?

At first glance there seems to be one very significant difference between early American history and now. In the twentieth century, especially from the 1930s to the 1960s, government support of history and the arts grew. For example, the WPA Guides created during the New Deal are enduring, federally funded, contributions to state and local history. The creation of the National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH) and the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) in the 1960s provided substantial funding for both history museums and academic historical research.

Today, moreover, a journey to Washington, D.C., tempts one to conclude that the government has now assumed a huge role in the preservation of the national past. Museum row surrounding the National

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Mall, a sprawling area administered by the federal government running from the Potomac River to the Capitol, is astounding – it includes the new museum of the American Indian; the National Archives; a museum devoted to the devastation of European Jewry; and, of course, the Smithsonian, which, with its fifteen museums and art galleries, is truly “America’s attic.” Add to this all of the statues and monuments overseen by the National Park Service and one cannot fail to get the impression that Uncle Sam has gone into the history business big time.

However, as they say, looks can be deceiving. Today the NEH and the NEA endure, but since the 1980s their funding has been under constant threat and their administrative staffs have shrunk. Museum historians such as Mike Wallace conclude that the Reagan revolution of the 1980s was the beginning of a movement to re-privatize art and history in America.¹⁵

Similarly, one needs to remember that the “national” museum, The Smithsonian, grew out of a bequest that was only grudgingly accepted in the nineteenth century. Its funding today is a combination of federal government and private funds as it has been for some time. It is, like many state historical societies today, quasi-public, quasi private. As such, it and the state historical societies have the best and worst of both worlds. Two stories indicate the nature of the dilemma. In 1995, for the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, the Smithsonian’s Air and Space Museum endeavored to construct a highly interpretive exhibit around one of its most famous/ notorious artifacts, the *Enola Gay*, the airplane that dropped the first atomic bomb. The professional historians who planned the exhibit constructed a narrative that offended veterans groups and, particularly, a powerful Air Force lobby group. The ensuing controversy is now “history” and it has become a standard lecture topic in any museum studies program. But the bottom line in the controversy was the bottom line – the museum backed away from the interpretation because the issue threatened that portion of its funds that came from Congress – at that time over 80 percent.¹⁶ Since then the Smithsonian has looked increasingly to private support. For example the restoration of the famous Star Spangled Banner, the flag that inspired the national anthem of the United States, will cost \$18.2 million dollars. Of this only \$3 million came from Congress. The remainder has been collected from private sources, including \$10 million from the Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation.¹⁷

Private funding, however, also has its drawbacks. Recently Catherine B. Reynolds, along with Kmart, Fuji Film and other corporations, offered support to create a Hall of Achievers at the Smithsonian. Reynolds, as the principal donor, wished to name the people to be included in the hall of

achievement. Professionally trained curators bristled, another controversy ensued, and Reynolds withdrew the offer.¹⁸

Look carefully when you visit the National Mall and you will see gift shops, membership offers, and a variety of corporate logos (albeit usually tastefully displayed) in America's national museums. Private enterprise is still very much a part of the preservation and presentation of America's past. Indeed, the Spy Museum, one of the newest and most popular in Washington, is both totally private and profit focused. It isn't Barnum, but it is predicated on the concept that the "right" kind of history can sell.¹⁹

Perhaps the best example of this shift in philosophy back toward *laissez faire* history is the story of the rehabilitation of the Statue of Liberty and the reconstruction and "museumification" of the Ellis Island immigrant depot in the 1980s. Both properties were and are administered by the Federal National Park Service. However, the work at both -- \$87 million to restore the statue, \$161 million to rebuild Ellis Island -- was covered in large part by private contributions. Lee Iacocca, former president of Ford Motor Company and chairman of the Chrysler Corporation, was the corporate leader of the Ellis Island project.²⁰

Today the movement away from government funding for non-profit cultural museums such as historical societies continues, although a good portion of the budget cutting is driven by a series of state government deficits. This trend has forced many historical agencies, usually faced with ever increasing operating costs, to become more innovative in their means of accruing earned income. Ticket sales and gift shop revenues and licensing are key components of earned income. Meeting the needs and desire of the visitor is therefore the key to fiscal survival. That, of course, opens the question of just what does the American public want in terms of history? Indeed, are Americans even interested enough in history to support the survival of what has become a private sector enterprise?

The answer is yes, but it must be emphasized that what the public community and the professional academic community see as "good history" differ. This dichotomy of histories -- popular and academic -- goes back to the end of the nineteenth century. When the American Historical Association was created in 1884 its membership included newly trained professional historians as well as numbers of amateurs. Increasingly as the ranks of the professionals increased and as the profession defined itself, those without training felt less welcome as members. By the early 1900s there were two groups of historians in the United States -- professionals and those whom the professionals increasingly considered as antiquarians. In 1904, the AHA established a separate Conference of State and Local

Historical Societies. By 1940 the connection became untenable and the group separated from the AHA to become the American Association for State and Local History.²¹ Since then, another group, the historical entertainment industry, has become more prominent. Today these three segments often contend with one another about the quality of the product and audience share, though also, at times, have worked together to ensure a product both popular and historically accurate. In the area of what is now called public history, both museums and the historical entertainment industry are particularly focused on building or attracting audience and thus insuring profit and survival.

If one focuses solely on visitorship and profit, the Disney media empire comes immediately to mind, with a particular focus on Disney World in Orlando, Florida, the most visited tourist attraction in the country. Disney World is an agglomeration of golf courses, hotels, amusement park rides, corporate boosterism, and history. The version of history presented in Orlando is the most recent refinement of a style that the Disney enterprises have been creating since the 1950s – sanitized, enjoyable, and very, very profitable. Disney’s version of history, whether within its theme parks’ Main Street, Hall of Presidents, and Frontierland, or in movies such as *Pocahontas*, is celebratory, selective, and anathema to almost every professional historian. Indeed, when the Walt Disney Company announced its intention to build an American history theme park in Prince William County, Virginia, in 1993, the professional historical community strongly opposed the plan. The project was eventually abandoned, partly because of historians’ concern that the project would damage Civil War era battlegrounds. Nevertheless, Disney’s success in its various entertainment endeavors is envied by many museums that need to increase earned income in order to survive. Many private historical agencies have studied Disney’s approach to visitor amenities, exhibit design, and multi-media presentation in an effort to improve their own product. Americans like their historical experience well packaged. Disney is not the only entertainment company that sees profit in the past. The Discovery Channel and History Channel have proven to be popular cable television choices for many Americans.

Disney’s version of living history on Main Street is paralleled by other, more serious living history programs at sites such as Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, and Old Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts, which thrive on what has been termed “historical tourism.” Similarly, certain museums have become prime stops on the historical tourism itinerary. These include the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, the California State Railroad Museum in Stockton and the Smithsonian’s Air

and Space Museum. Historically motivated tourism has also benefited areas and regions closely linked to the American past, even though these areas have not been curated. The restored ghost towns of the west such as Virginia City, Nevada, are good examples of this last category.

Interestingly and not unexpectedly, each one of these historical venues has been conscious about the need to present a product that the public wants. In extreme cases, such as Virginia City, this has resulted in a radical restructuring of the past. The tourist trade in Virginia City blossomed during the 1950s with the airing of the television show *Bonanza*, in which the protagonists, the members of the Cartwright Family, lived on a large ranch just outside Virginia City. The fictionalized Virginia City depicted in the television series had no real relationship to its namesake. Once the visitors began to arrive at the real Virginia City they expected to see the types of buildings they had seen on television. The owners of the buildings in the real town obligingly altered the buildings so they more closely fit the public's image. Only now, with the series becoming memory itself, is the town moving toward an accurate restoration program.²²

Colonial Williamsburg, funded by the Rockefellers during the turbulent 1920s and 1930s as homage to America's colonial past, is yet another story reflecting shades of reality and expectation. Its initial reconstruction and popularization arguably created the American public's view of what colonial America was like. Williamsburg helped spark a craze for colonial design in the 1930s. Later, reproductions of Williamsburg furniture set the standard for remaking one's home in the proper colonial style in the post World War II period. That it lacked any treatment of southern slavery until the 1970s is an indication of just one way in which Williamsburg was off the accurate historical mark. Today slavery is a part of the interpretation, but it is handled in a manner that is not offensive to visitors (for example, no re-enactors portraying slaves get whipped). More recently historians have convinced the managers of Williamsburg that all was not as neat and tidy as once presented. So, Williamsburg has gotten a bit scruffier around the edges, to the disappointment of long time visitors whose original colonial vision - created in large part by Williamsburg - has been destroyed by the "revisionists."²³

The Air and Space Museum, the California Railroad Museum, and one might add the relatively new Petersen Automobile Museum in California, provide additional insights into the multiple ways Americans interact with the past and how selective parts of the past are put on display to satisfy what might be called buffs or interest groups. All of these museums, in one way or another, pay homage to technology. Studies show that

transportation museums are the most popular museums in the United States. There is even a hierarchy defining levels of interest by transportation type: aircraft and spacecraft are most popular; automobiles are next; then trains, and lastly boats and ships. The Air and Space Museum is the most visited museum in the United States. It is, in many ways, a monument to technology and progress. From time to time curators have created exhibits that interpret the objects in other ways. Some have been successful, others such as the *Enola Gay* exhibit, have been disasters. Today, the museum's new Udvar Hazy Center near Washington's Dulles Airport holds some of the largest aircraft in the museum's collections, including a Concorde and the embattled but fully restored *Enola Gay*. None are really interpreted deeply. They sit impressively as monuments to the technology of flight. The automotive and railroad museums also deal with technology, but they tie more closely to what one could call nostalgia. Many of those who visit auto museums are people who want to see the car they once drove or wished they could have owned. One can sense an almost paradoxical set of reasons why these museums thrive: they evidence the American interest in progress and at the same time evoke nostalgia for former times and styles.

The fact that people with sufficient funds can buy and restore the car they once drove (in essence making it their personal museum piece) or could not afford as a youth is an indicator that the personal past is becoming more important in the States. The on-line marketplace company eBay, for instance, prospers mightily from personal nostalgia. Many people use the on-line service to recreate the toy boxes of their youth or to find examples of the clothing they once wore. Of course, eBay, along with one of American public television's most popular shows, *Antiques Roadshow*, provides evidence of a more enduring American trait – pursuit of the past for profit. The world of collecting and what are called “collectibles” (items ranging from baseball trading cards to Depression-era glass) has expanded enormously in the past twenty years. There is a very obvious pecuniary aspect to collecting. This is best evidenced by the fact that some financial brokers provide advice on collecting for investment and profit. Ah, populi Americani!

It is perhaps too facile, indeed too cynical, to see the American connection with history as a simple function of the nation's enchantment with the pragmatic and profitable venture and individual fulfillment. There is, perhaps, something deeper at work. For example, the fact that women, people of color, working class background, and a variety of ethnicities are now acknowledged in academic texts, in exhibits, and even at Disney World, is a product of their own efforts to be included in the American

story. Of course, this borders on a parochial approach to the past. This movement toward what some call an honest multicultural history of America and what others consider a fragmented, negative view of the nation, has been at the center of the so called cultural wars waged over social studies curricula, and the “political leanings” of academic historians. However, one should take heart when arguments occur in regard to who or what is included in a secondary school textbook – at least it shows an interest in history.²⁴

On the other hand, there are some clear and very troubling problems with profit and pragmatism as a basis for understanding a nation’s past. In many museums and other popular historical attractions, “history light” is increasingly triumphant. When institutional survival depends on earned income the opinions of curators and the knowledge of historians are often trumped by the business savvy development and marketing departments of the museum. Then too, the designer of an exhibit, who has to sell it on its “look,” often prevails in what can be viewed as a contest of image over substance. This is dangerous because history museums occupy an important place in the public’s perception of the past. Roy Rozenzweig and David Thelen in *The Presence of the Past*, showed that most Americans trusted museums for the most accurate view of the past.²⁵ Are they still to be trusted? Giving the public what it wants makes eminent sense in many ways, but is it the best way to teach history? The business pragmatism that has changed the nature of many museum exhibits, and in many ways modified the presentation of public history, has also had an impact in the academic world. Some have predicted that academic history departments may go the way of geography departments. Will academic training in history wither because administrations see the discipline through the lens of cost-centered accounting or through result-oriented performance? Class size matters, as does the number of majors that can be claimed by a department. That’s not a terribly attractive position within any university that also trains scientists, engineers, lawyers, and corporate managers.

Most people who value history and see it as fundamental to civic virtue, know that its importance is not linked to the theory or interpretation de jour, but to the rigor it requires in examining evidence and coming to conclusions. The need for rigor transcends the classroom and the museum. The veracity of campaign statements is important, the historical precedents for policy decisions are critical, and a good understanding of one’s personal historical links to the society in which one lives is fundamental to one’s sense of citizenship. The United States is not a nation with no use for a past and with a population focused only on the future. There is a deep and very

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American way of seeing and using the past. The manner in which Americans approach and “consume” their history may not satisfy many of its professional practitioners. But we all need to understand that an interest is there, has always been there, and has produced a certain set of rules. The trick now, the bottom line if you will, is for those who value history to work with and within what one might call an historical consumption system and to use it in a manner that will make ordinary citizens more critical consumers of the historical product.

Notes:

¹ Michael Kammen in *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York, 1993) sees the beginnings of an awareness of national traditions developing during the middle of the nineteenth century. Kammen’s focus is not on the writing of history, per se, but rather on the development of American memory. He sees the firm formation of memory taking place after 1870, particularly in the wake of the Civil War.

² David D. Van Tassel, *Recording America’s Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America, 1607-1884* (Chicago, 1960), 31-134. Unlike Kammen, Van Tassel is concerned with the writing of history, rather than the development of memory. However, Van Tassel’s work can be taken to show a widespread interest in American history, albeit largely through local or parochial viewpoints, in the period up the Civil War.

³ Conrad Cherry, ed., *God’s New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny* (Chapel Hill, 1998). This volume contains a number of essays that trace the concept of the United States as a divinely blessed enterprise.

⁴ Van Tassel, 70-71.

⁵ See Herman J. Viola, *The National Archives of the United States* (New York, 1984), for an excellent review of the history of the struggle to establish an archive for the records of the federal government.

⁶ Van Tassel, Appendix, 181-190.

⁷ Thomas F. Madigan, *Word Shadows of the Great: The Lure of Autograph Collecting* (New York, 1930) provides one of the best reviews of the origins of and motivations for autograph collecting.

⁸ Kenneth F. Duckett, *Modern Manuscripts: A Practical Manual for their Management, Care, and Use* (Nashville, 1975), 11-12.

⁹ *Ibid*, 9; Kermit J. Pike, *A Guide to Shaker Manuscripts in the Library of the Western Reserve Historical Society with an Inventory of its Shaker Photographs* (Cleveland, 1974).

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- ¹⁰ Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1976* (Chicago, 1998). For an overview of the development, structure and purpose of historical societies see Van Tassel, 95-102.
- ¹¹ See Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, (Urbana, Ill, 1989), 1-7, for a short discussion of the relationship between the Peale collection and Barnum.
- ¹² Some sense of the extent of this enterprise can be gathered from the fact that the University Publications of America's microfiche publication, *Civil War Unit Histories: Regimental Histories and Personal Narratives*, encompasses some 1937 individual microfiche.
- ¹³ David J. Russo, *Keepers of our Past: Local Historical Writing in the United States, 1820s-1930s* (Westport, Conn., 1988) provides the single best overview of this genre.
- ¹⁴ Continental Heritage Press of Tulsa, Oklahoma; Heritage Media of Carlsbad, California; Towery Publication Company of Memphis, Tennessee; and Winsor Publications Inc., of Chatsworth, California, were among the major publishers of the corporate sponsored, heavily illustrated city histories that came into vogue in the late 1970s. The trend for publications of this type continues to be strong in 2005.
- ¹⁵ Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia, 1996).
- ¹⁶ Edward J. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York, 1996), provides an outstanding overview of the *Enola Gay* controversy.
- ¹⁷ See *Smithsonian Magazine*, February 1999.
- ¹⁸ Stephanie Cash, "Smithsonian Donor Yanks \$35M Gift," *Art in America*, April 2002.
- ¹⁹ Michael O'Sullivan, "Spy Museum Sheds Its Cover," *Washington Post*, July 19, 2002.
- ²⁰ Wallace, 55-74, provides an excellent overview and a positive review of this project.
- ²¹ David D. Van Tassel, "From Learned Society to Professional Organization: The American Historical Association, 1884-1900," *American Historical Review* 89 (October 1984), 929-956. This article provides an excellent overview of the manner in which professionalism assumed control of the organization that initially was comprised of gentlemen historians and new, seminar-trained Ph.D.s. See also Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*, (Cambridge, 1999), 47-85.
- ²² Ronald M. James, *The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode*, (Reno, 1998), 258-273.
- ²³ Wallace, 13-24. See also Henry Wiencek, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves and the Creation of America*, (New York, 2003), 170-178, 184-188.

²⁴ Gary B. Nash, Charlotte Crabtree, Ross E. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York, 2000) provides an excellent overview of the “battles” being fought over the history curriculum of America’s schools.

²⁵ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, (New York: 1998), 21-22.