This bibliographic essay supports a K-16 history curriculum called "Crossroads," which is chronologically organized into 12 historical periods. The bibliographic essay presents authoritative and accessible thematic treatments of U.S. history and scholarship for each period. Paperback books are indicated by an asterisk. Following a preface and a section on general or thematic studies, the bibliography is divided into 12 essays:

1. "A World of Their Own: The Americas to 1500"
2. "Contact: Europe and America Meet, 1492-1620"
3. "The Founding of New Societies, 1607-1763"
4. "What Was the American Revolution? 1760-1836"
5. "The Ambiguous Democracy, 1800-1848"
6. "What, Then, Is This American? 1865-1900"
7. "Waves of Reform, 1880-1921"
8. "Boom and Bust, 1921-1933"
9. "The Age of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933-1945"
10. "Leader of the Free World, 1945-1975"
11. "A Nation in Quandary, 1975-"
CROSSROADS
A K-16 American History Curriculum

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

by Richard B. Bernstein

A joint project of the Niskayuna School District and The Sage Colleges

Made possible with the assistance of the
Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching (FIRST) of the
United States Department of Education

Council for Citizenship Education, Russell Sage College
Troy, New York
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In 1992, The Sage Colleges (Troy, NY) and the Niskayuna School District (Niskayuna, NY) received a three-year grant from the Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching (FIRST) of the U.S. Department of Education to develop a seamless K-16 curriculum in American history. The curriculum, called Crossroads, is composed of thirty-six units equally distributed among elementary, middle, and high school grade levels, as well as course syllabi for preservice social studies educators on the subjects of American history and history education. The curriculum is chronologically organized into twelve historical periods—each covered by a unit at each of the three grade levels.

Each unit begins with an essay on the history and historiography of the period written by the project historian, Richard B. Bernstein, an Associate of the Council for Citizenship Education at The Sage Colleges and an adjunct faculty member at New York Law School and distinguished historian. The unit plans were then written by teams of Niskayuna and Sage teachers after a year-long seminar in American history and historiography with Professor Bernstein. Following their preparation, elementary and middle school units were field tested within the Niskayuna District and in the Albany City School District. The middle school curriculum was also field tested in two Ohio districts. All units were reviewed by an advisory panel. The project is directed by Stephen L. Schechter, a Professor of Political Science and Director of the Council for Citizenship Education at The Sage Colleges, and by Henry E. Mueller, Niskayuna Middle School Social Studies Coordinator. The project is administered by the Council for Citizenship Education.

Developed by the Niskayuna-Sage partnership, the "crossroads" model of curriculum development begins with three strategic junctures of history education: (1) at grades seven and eight, where a natural "crossroads" already exists between elementary and secondary education, between childhood and adolescence, and between an interest in the concrete and a capacity to grapple with the abstract; (2) in the first year of postsecondary education, where students are taking surveys of American history, government, and education which can provide a critical juncture between secondary and postsecondary education; and (3) in capstone experiences of postsecondary education, notably social studies methods and student teaching, in which students experience another transition, this time between their undergraduate experience in postsecondary education and the prospect of a teaching career rich in lifelong learning experiences.
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American history has spawned a vast literature; books and scholarly and popular journals cover geographic, ecological, ethnic, racial, demographic, political, constitutional, legal, social, economic, religious, cultural, intellectual, scientific, technological, and even sexual history. This Bibliographic Essay presents the most authoritative and accessible thematic treatments of American history and scholarship for each period. Paperbacks are indicated by an asterisk throughout.

GENERAL OR THEMATIC STUDIES

The following valuable general or thematic studies span the whole of American history:


I. The Colonial Experience (1958)
II. The National Experience (1963)
III. The Democratic Experience (1974)


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ESSAY I. A WORLD OF THEIR OWN: THE AMERICAS TO 1500


The controversy about the Indians as “forgotten founders” reached the mainstream public in *Bruce E. Johansen, Forgotten Founders (Boston: Gambit, 1973); Johansen’s study is strong on eloquence but weak on conventional historical proof. The two most serious, responsible, and convincing presentations of the view that Indians were among the intellectual forbears of American constitutionalism are *Donald A. Grinde, Jr., and Bruce E. Johansen, Exemplar of Liberty (Los Angeles: University of California -- American Indian Studies Center, 1991); Oren Lyons, John Mohawk, Vine Deloria, Jr., Laurence Hauptman, Howard Berman, Donald Grinde, Jr., Curtis Berkey, and Robert Venables, Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations, and the U.S. Constitution (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 1992).

* * * *

**ESSAY II. CONTACT: EUROPE AND AMERICA MEET, 1492-1620**


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ESSAY III. THE FOUNDING OF NEW SOCIETIES, 1607-1763


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CROSSROADS Bibliographic Essay - Page 8
ESSAY IV. WHAT WAS THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION? 1760-1836

The era of the Revolutionary generation has spawned an extraordinarily rich and impressive scholarly literature — both editions of primary sources and monographs:


The debate over the Constitution generated an extraordinarily rich political literature, and in turn historians have produced a remarkable range of editions and anthologies for one another and for classroom use: Bernard Bailyn, ed., The Debate on the Constitution, 2 vols. (New York: Library of America, 1993), is based on the superlative Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution, planned by Merrill Jensen and edited by John P. Kaminski,


---

1Editions of *The Federalist* vary in text. The edition most often used by scholars -- that by Jacob E. Cooke (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1961) is based on the original newspaper versions of the essays; an inexpensive reprint of that version is the edition by *Garry Wills* (New York: Bantam Classics, 1982). Editions based on the first book publication (1788) include the widely-used version edited by *Clinton Rossiter* (New York: Mentor/NAL, 1961), which supplements the modernized 1788 text with excellent indexes of subjects and constitutional provisions; that by Benjamin F. Wright (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961), which reprints the 1788 text with a superb introduction, is unfortunately out of print. Ralph Ketcham's Mentor/NAL edition of *The Antifederalist Papers and the Constitutional Convention Debates* is a companion volume to the Rossiter Federalist Papers.


ESSAY V. THE AMBIGUOUS DEMOCRACY, 1800-1848


*Alexis de Tocqueville’s Democracy in America exists in two excellent modern unabridged editions, both in paperback, one in two volumes by Phillips Bradley, revising the classic translation (New York: Knopf, 1945; Vintage paperback) and one in one volume by George Lawrence (New York: Harper & Row, 1969). On Tocqueville, see *Henry Steele Commager, Commager on Tocqueville (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993);
*Larry Siedentop, *Tocqueville* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); and

***

**ESSAY VI. “NOW WE ARE ENGAGED IN A GREAT CIVIL WAR,” 1848-1880**

There are literally thousands of books on the Civil War and Reconstruction, including a flood of reprints stimulated by the success of Ken Burns’s documentary and Geoffrey Ward’s companion volume. The guidelines for the following sampling are accessibility and availability.


Abraham Lincoln is the central political, governmental, and symbolic figure of this period. *Russell Freedman, *Lincoln: A Photobiography* (New York: Ticknor & Fields,

The edition by Harold Holzer (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), purports to present the "complete, unexpurgated text" of the debates. The "originals" of the debates are newspaper transcripts; Democratic newspapers tended to skew their coverage in favor of Douglas and Republican newspapers tended to slant their coverage in favor of Lincoln. When Lincoln prepared his scrapbook, the basis for most modern editions of the debates, he used Democratic texts of Douglas's speeches and Republican texts of Lincoln's speeches. To correct for these biases, Holzer used Democratic texts of Lincoln's speeches and Republican texts of Douglas' speeches. The difficulty with his choice is that partisan editors not only "cleaned up" the remarks of their chosen candidate -- they also exaggerated the flaws and lapses of the opposing candidate. Thus, Holzer's edition does both Lincoln and Douglas an unwitting disservice under the guise of presenting a "complete, unexpurgated" text.


*Michael Shaara, The Killer Angels: A Novel of Gettysburg (New York: David McKay, 1974, and later reprints) is one of the greatest American historical novels (though some readers still prefer *Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage [1900 and many later editions], which emphasizes the anonymous experience of war rather than the experience of the Civil War). Shaara's only rival is *Shelby Foote, Shiloh (1952: New York: Vintage/Rand McNally, 1993), a brilliant, deeply moving account of the battle through the imagined testimonies of several witnesses at key points in the Shiloh campaign. Paxton Davis, Four Days (New York: Atheneum, 1981), is an excellent novel on Gettysburg for middle-school students.

* * * *

**ESSAY VII. "WHAT, THEN, IS THIS AMERICAN?" 1865-1900**


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ESSAY VIII. WAVES OF REFORM, 1880-1921


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ESSAY IX. BOOM AND BUST, 1921-1933


***

ESSAY X. THE AGE OF FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, 1933-1945


***

ESSAY XI. LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD, 1945-1975

*Godfrey Hodgson, America in Our Time (New York: Doubleday, 1976; Vintage paperback) is an excellent narrative history of the period from the end of the Second World War to the resignation of Richard Nixon; because Hodgson is a veteran British journalist, he offers a refreshing perspective on American history. Michael S. Sherry's forthcoming study of the same period -- to be published in October 1995 by Yale University Press -- has already received extensive and respectful attention. See also *William H. Chafe, The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991);


At least two biographies of Truman -- by Robert Ferrell and Alonzo Hamby, both specialists in the period -- are in press; and Dallek is working to complete the second volume of his life of Johnson.


* * * *

ESSAY XII. A NATION IN QUANDARY, 1975--


On the Reagan years, *Lou Cannon, President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), the best biography, focuses on the Presidency; *Garry Wills,


The Clinton years have not generated any books that approach the solidity or reliability of history -- only journalistic accounts such as Bob Woodward, The Agenda (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), and Elizabeth Drew, On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1994). Woodward is already at work on another book on the Clinton presidency and the Republicans' struggle to supplant him, to appear in the summer of 1996.
**I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:**

| Title: CROSSROADS: A K-16 American History Curriculum  
| Part One: (I)Essays in American History, by R.B. Bernstein  
| Part Two: The Elementary Curriculum  
| Part Three: The Middle School Curriculum  
| Part Four: The High School Curriculum  
| Part Five: The Postsecondary Curriculum  
| Author(s): Niskayuna-Sage Partnership (unless otherwise noted)  
| Corporate Source: Council for Citizenship Education (nonprofit)  
| Publication Date: 1995  

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