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From the Director

Dear friends of the CPH,
We near another anniversary. In a sense, we always do. Recent months brought the 30th anniversary of German Unification, and thus the formal end of World War II, though we now see the seeds of current geopolitical strife in Eastern Europe embedded in that once-hopeful moment. "Right here, right now, there is no other place that I'd want to be," the British rock band Jesus Jones sang. "Right here, right now, watching the world wake up from history."

No one will ever say that of the previous two years. Given the chance to live at any moment in time, no reasonable person would choose 2020 or 2021, but the two-year anniversary of the unofficial start of the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States makes us consider time's passing anew. It feels like forever since the pre-Covid world, yet it is now half of a typical undergraduate's education. By the same token it is only half as long as World War I, and depending on one's date of choice, only a third or less of World War II. Two years comprises most of the Spanish Flu pandemic, whose history we've all become far too familiar. *(continued on page 2)*

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CPH exists to research and advance understanding of the history of the American presidency. The Article II Society is a giving society for loyal supporters who contribute \$2,500 or more each academic year to CPH, helping ensure the work and this organization can continue.

From The Director (cont'd)

From The Program Director

As winter gives way to spring, CPH is delighted to offer new programming to whet your intellectual appetite.

Exclusive events include a visit to the Dallas Museum of Art and lunch with a bestselling author. A new podcast series is in the works. And, as always, we offer a slate of public lectures by distinguished speakers, eager to share research and writing that will surely kindle interest in a wide range of subjects connected to presidential history and beyond. With Ukraine in the news, we invite you to view our newly published oral history interviews on the topic of US-Russian relations. We mark Black History Month by offering recordings of past lectures on related topics. Visit our [Facebook page](#) for links. Dr. Hinnershitz's talk in April helps us reflect on 80 years since FDR signed an executive order to incarcerate Americans of Japanese descent. I look forward to seeing you at our many events!



LaiYee Leong
Fellow and Article II
Society Program Director

My takeaway is two-fold. First, I'll never think of a year as a mere blip in time again, or downplay the anxiety of past actors who lived through shorter or longer crises, realizing that for each of them, as for us, the uncertainty of each new day made the passage of time slow. I'm reworking my lectures and writings, in real time, to rethink time this way.

We here at CPH are more cognizant of time in a second critical way: we don't want to waste even a second of it. Two years is half an undergraduate's education; it is largely the time it takes a PhD student to study for their comprehensive exams; it is the total time our post-docs enjoy on campus, and how long we get to learn from them. It has been two years since we've taken students and friends to Europe, and we're thrilled to be going back. Indeed, thanks to your generosity, this year CPH is taking more students to view history with their own eyes than ever before. We know such experiences can change lives, making us (we hope) better prepared to understand the years just passed, but those yet to come. That, I think, is our prime purpose as educators, and as always, a primary reason we appreciate your ongoing support.



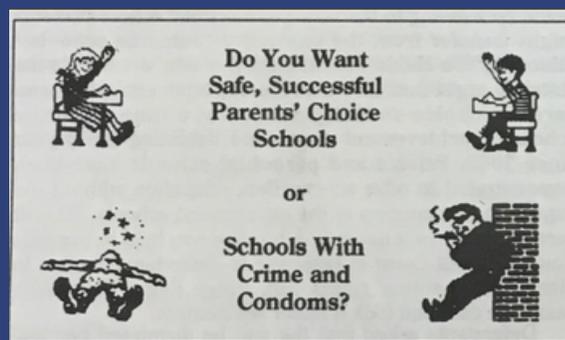
Jeffrey Engel, Director of the Center for Presidential History

High Table with Historians

Monica Blair, *Before Critical Race Theory: The Long History of School Choice and Culture Wars in the Classroom*



This event takes place at Herb's House Coffee + Company, 5622 Dyer St. Suite 100, Dallas, TX 75206. We will be on the outdoor patio. Coffee and snacks on us!



Political Cartoon from Choice in Education: The Citizens for Educational Freedom National Newsletter, Spring 1992, Bancroft Library, People for the American Way Collection, Box 24, Folder 18, BANC MSS 2010/152.

EXCLUSIVE EVENTS

Exclusive Article II Society Events

You are invited! Please look out for notifications about each special event.

Tour of the Dallas Museum of Art

March 3rd, 11:00 am (new date!)

*Evolving Visions and Meanings of the West
in American Art*

CPH's own Brian Franklin and Cecily Zander will lead a tour of select paintings at the Museum to explore what they say about American history and how the West has been portrayed over time.



One of the paintings on the tour:
Captain John Pratt by Ralph Earl (1792)

Luncheon with A.J. Baime

April 27, 12:00 noon

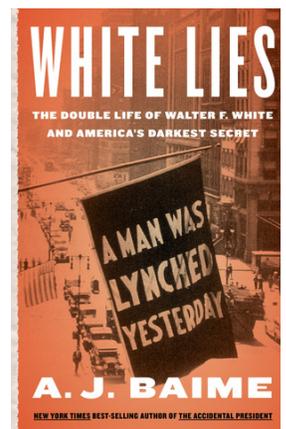
*White Lies: The Double Life of Walter F. White and
America's Darkest Secret*

"A riveting biography of Walter F. White, a little-known Black civil rights leader who passed for white in order to investigate racist murders, help put the NAACP on the map, and change the racial identity of America forever. "

–Mariner Books

Here's what Jeff Engel says about the book:
"Impossible to put down...thoughtful and gripping."

Baime is a longtime regular contributor to *The Wall Street Journal* and his books have made it to *The New York Times* bestseller lists.



Speaker Events



All events take place on the SMU campus (Dallas Hall, McCord Auditorium)

February 2022

The Walls Within: The Politics of Immigration in Modern America

February 7 @ 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Sarah Coleman, Texas State University

March 2022

A Politics For the Many: American Feminists and the Global Fight for Democratic Equality

March 7 @ 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Dorothy Sue Cobble, Rutgers University

On Juneteenth

March 24 @ 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Annette Gordon-Reed, Harvard University

April 2022

Japanese American Incarceration: The Camps and Coerced Labor during World War II

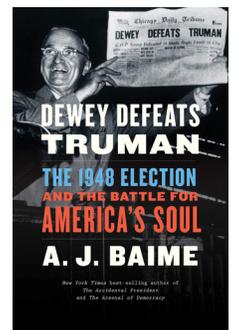
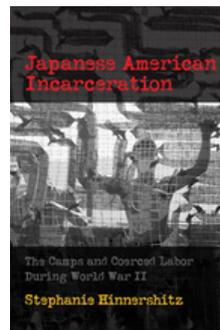
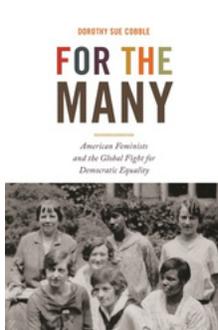
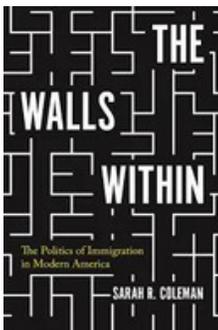
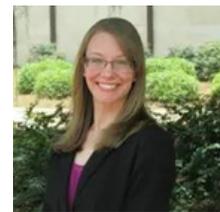
April 6 @ 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Stephanie Hinnerhitz

Dewey Defeats Truman: The 1948 Election and the Battle for America's Soul

April 27 @ 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

A. J. Baime



You can find video recordings and additional resources for each event at <https://blog.smu.edu/cph/upcoming-events/>

KUDOS

Thanks to the Pamela Laird Award, postdoctoral fellow **Sarah Nelson** is off to Geneva this summer! The travel grant is given by a special interest group within the Society for the History of Technology, the premiere organization for scholarship in the field. Sarah will get to dive into the archives of the League of Nations, the United Nations, and the International Telecommunication Union. We hope she'll also find time to see the sights!

Congratulations to **Amy Zanoni**! Amy earned an Honorable Mention for the Michael Katz Award for Best Dissertation (2020) from the Urban History Association for her treatise. "Poor Health: Retrenchment and Resistance in Chicago's Public Hospital, 1950s-1990s" uses the lens of the public hospital to chart sustained efforts to dismantle the health care safety net, the effects such actions had on marginalized urban residents, and ongoing resistance to retrenchment. Some of you may remember Amy led a robust conversation on the subject last Fall at one of our High Table with Historians events.

Make sure to wish **Paul Behringer** well when you next see him. Paul will soon be moving to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He has received a research fellowship that supports the work of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. Paul will conduct oral histories and archival research that assists DPAA's mission of identifying remains of U.S. missing personnel from America's conflicts, particularly World War II and Korea.

Presidential Fun Facts

1. Barack Obama has won TWO Grammy Awards for Best Spoken Word Album.
2. Bill Clinton was in a band called "Three Blind Mice" in high school, where he played the saxophone.
3. Abraham Lincoln liked to keep letters and documents stored in his stovepipe hat.
4. John F. Kennedy was the first president who was a Boy Scout.

History Trivia

Want to put your knowledge to the test? Think you're the top history buff in town? Play our CPH Presidential Trivia game! 20 questions about the most interesting and most challenging presidential history facts. The winner of the trivia and the answer key will be featured in our next edition in Fall 2022. Click the link [here](#) to play.

IN THE NEWS

Public Engagement

Jeffrey Engel joins other acclaimed historians on CBS's *Sunday Morning* to talk about a [new book](#), *The Presidency of Donald J. Trump: a First Historical Assessment* is available from March 29. If you cannot wait for the book, check out [the 12-minute video](#) for a taster. A [New York Times investigative report](#) about the former president's attempt to seize voting machines includes Jeff Engel's observation about its significance.

In a *Wall Street Journal* article, "Phil Collins Sets Off a New Battle Over the Alamo," **Brian Franklin** comments on public knowledge about the most visited historical site in Texas.

LaiYee Leong provides insight on the historical and contemporary causes of political divisions among ethnic groups in Myanmar in a [Dallas Morning News](#) report.

Those with a special interest in the nineteenth-century United States should check out the public history blog *Emerging Civil War*. **Cecily Zander** is a [regular contributor](#).

Interns

Starting in mid-2020, **Wardah Alvi** has been research assistant to Jeffrey Engel, providing research support for his ongoing work on the 1992 presidential election. She has since also assumed responsibility for the post-production of the new CPH podcast series "Firsthand History," which draws on oral history interviews that are part of the Collective Memory Project. Wardah graduated from SMU last December with a major in history and minors in creative computation, sociology, and digital humanities. We're fortunate that she can continue her internship with CPH until she finalizes plans for next steps.

Ben Feinstein is a third-year Honors student majoring in history and minoring in Russian and philosophy. He assists Paul Behringer with the CMP project on US-Russian relations, from research and scheduling to formatting transcripts and post-production work on the videos. He says the high point of his experience so far is helping to interview former Undersecretary of State Marc Grossman. Ben's contribution has been invaluable.

Catie Gerlitz is the latest addition to the CPH team. A senior from New Jersey double-majoring in history and economics, she is learning the ins and outs of podcasting under the guidance of Monica Blair. Welcome Catie!



Wardah Alvi



Ben Feinstein



Catie Gerlitz

BEHIND THE SCENES

with Dr. Evan McCormick

The former CPH postdoctoral fellow discusses why doing history is as much about the future as about the past.

What do you love most about your connection to the CPH?

It was at CPH that I first learned how exciting it is to interview historical actors, broadly defined as the people who are interesting because of something that they did. When I was at CPH, the project that was ongoing at the time was about George W. Bush's decision to surge the number of troops in Iraq. So while I was working on my own work, I was also helping out with the Center to bring that project to completion and got to participate in a number of interviews with people like Karl Rove, among others. Working with archival resources is really exciting, but nothing beats sitting down with somebody who is also committed to the idea of creating these kinds of records and having that conversation where you probe their memory, their reasons. All of my experience at the Center for Presidential History working on oral histories of the Bush years ended up becoming incredibly important to how I got my current job.



Dr. Evan McCormick

What is your favorite aspect of being a part of the Obama Presidency Oral History Project?

I love trying to anticipate the questions that scholars in the future will ask. When you sit down in an interview with the Secretary of State during the Obama administration, you're asking them about their memories and their experiences, but you're also thinking about 20 years from now, 30 years from now and asking, what is the way that I can get them to reflect on their time that will be most useful to somebody who wants to understand the Obama years? Not only do you want to get answers to those really interesting historical questions, but you want answers that will stand the test of time.

What is one piece of advice you'd like to share with our readers on how to stay connected with their love for presidential history?

This is a very functional answer, but to think creatively about what kinds of records relate to the presidency and what kinds of records can be accessed over the Internet, even for the average person without a university research account. I think we tend to think that in order for it to be related to presidential history, it has to be something that comes from a presidential library but I'm constantly amazed at how many resources are available on the Internet. These oral history interview projects, like the ones that CPH specializes in or the one that I'm involved with now, can turn anyone at home into a researcher of history.

What is the next book you can't wait to read?

The book I'm excited to read next is a presidential history book written by somebody I worked with in grad school. A friend of Jeff's named Will Hitchcock wrote a book called *The Age of Eisenhower*. It's a book about Dwight Eisenhower and the way his presidency essentially encapsulated America during the 1950s. There are a number of people I've talked to who have pointed out the similarities between Barack Obama and Dwight Eisenhower, obviously different political parties, very different life experiences, but in terms of their governing philosophy, which I find fascinating.

Press *Play*: CPH Podcasts

Season 3 of *The Past, The Promise, The Presidency*: THE BULLY PULPIT

We hope you've caught up with the last two seasons of our podcast. A third season is on its way!

"The president has a unique position in American society: a one-of-a-kind pulpit from which they speak to any issue. And presidents have consistently used their pulpit--for good and ill--to address a host of issues across American history, and to rally people to their cause. Each episode of this season will address how different presidents have used their bully pulpit to influence American culture and policy, and how the congregation of Americans responded."

–Executive producer Monica Blair

Presidents in the lineup include Washington, John Quincy Adams, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Ford, and Carter. The first episode will be released on March 24. Mark your calendar!

CPH is thrilled to share that Seasons 1 and 2 of [The Past, The Promise, The Presidency](#) are finding many listeners!



The Collective Memory Project

It's easy to forget that U.S.-Russian relations were not always as contentious as they have been for the past decade. What happened? **Paul Behringer** conducted 20+ oral history interviews with senior officials, diplomats, and political observers from both countries to trace the deterioration in bilateral ties. Published interviews include those with former National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley and former Defense Secretary Robert Gates. Check out the videos and transcripts [here](#). **Ben Feinstein** contributed to the project.

The Collective Memory Project is an ongoing oral history project dedicated to enhancing the historical and archival record of various presidential administrations, starting with the presidency of George W. Bush. The CMP now showcases ten unique sets of first-hand accounts by individuals who helped shape the events that are going into the history books. Topics range from *Faith and the Presidency* to *Post-9/11 Policy in East and Southeast Asia*, to name just a couple. You can view the original interviews and/or read the transcripts [here](#). We promise you a ringside visit with people whose actions and decisions made a difference.



Postdoctoral Updates

We're proud to keep up with the important and exciting work that our former postdoctoral fellows are doing.

Sharron Conrad

Sharron Conrad has been invited to act as consulting advisor to the Caruth Homeplace Initiative here in Dallas. The project strives to understand and share the story of enslaved people who worked and lived on the Caruth Farm, connect with their descendants, and make an impact on similar community engagement by other organizations. Sharron is associate professor of history at Tarrant County College. You can visit Sharron at the [Dallas Literary Festival](#) next month when she will moderate a conversation on stories about Black America.

Aaron Crawford

As assistant editor, Aaron Crawford just completed *The Papers of Andrew Jackson (Vol. 12)*, to be published later this year. The volume consists of documents from 1834, the sixth year of Jackson's presidency. Aaron is also leading a new digital initiative called *Native Voices* at the University of Tennessee—Knoxville. It will feature unpublished Native American sources from the Jackson presidency.

Kaete O'Connell

Kaete O'Connell has published an essay, "Keeping the Peace? A Closer Look at U.S. Foreign Relations in the Postwar Period," in *The Routledge History of U.S. Foreign Relations*. The volume provides a comprehensive view of U.S. diplomacy and foreign affairs from the founding to the present. Routledge is an international academic press whose reference books are indispensable for university collections. Katie is on her second postdoctoral fellowship, this time at Yale.

Paul Renfro

Former postdoctoral fellow Paul Renfro shares his research with new audiences. He has [an article in *Teen Vogue*](#) ("Ryan White, Teen Who Contracted AIDS, Shifted Narrative Around the Disease") that has been widely reproduced. Paul is also interviewed for a story on child kidnapping and QAnon in a feature to appear in the April issue of *ELLE*. Paul is now assistant professor at Florida State University.

Pearl Harbor 80th and Hawaii: December 2 - 8, 2021

Jeffrey Engel led a group of SMU students to Hawaii to mark the 80th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. The trip provided the opportunity to examine on-site the beginnings of America's involvement in World War II.

"The attack is an event I previously learned about solely through books or lectures. Being there in person really brought the tragedy of the war to life."

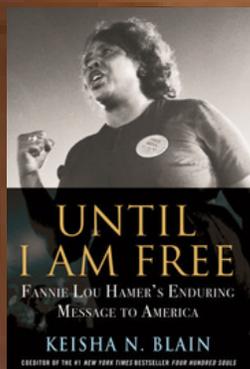
—Undergraduate Kate Morales



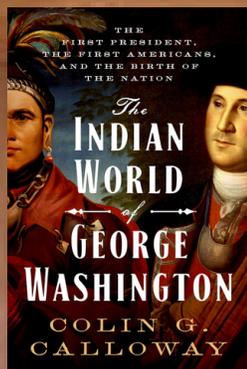
SMU Students on USS Bowfin
"Avenger of the Pacific" submarine

THE BOOK NOOK

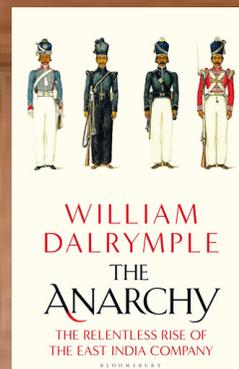
Looking for reading suggestions? CPH scholars share a few of their recent favorite reads.



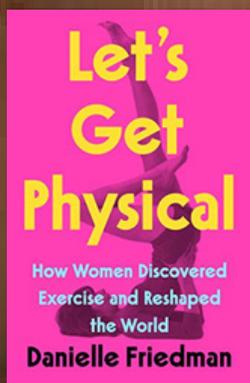
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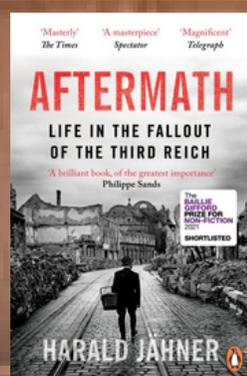
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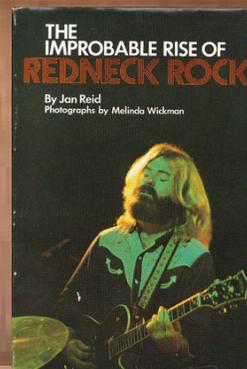
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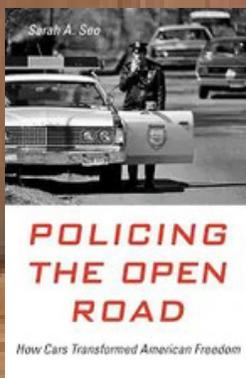
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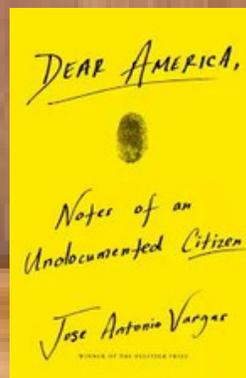
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