

VOLUME I: TO 1877

THESE UNITED STATES

The Questions of Our Past

SIXTH EDITION



Irwin Unger

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The Questions of Our Past

Volume I

Irwin Unger

New York University

Historical Portraits and Documents by Debi Unger



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*To Rita and Mickey, Libby and Arnie,
Phyllis and Jerry, and Norma and David—once more*



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PREFACE

Each new edition of a text such as this represents a vote of confidence by readers and users of the previous one. It is also an opportunity for the author to improve his work.

These United States, Sixth Edition, reflects that opportunity. The book's basic plan remains the same. First, unlike most introductory texts, it still has a single author and speaks in a single voice. I hope readers will agree that there is an advantage to reading a book by a real, single person, rather than a committee. Second, the text is still organized around significant questions, one per chapter, each designed to challenge students to consider the complexity of the past. The plan, I believe, makes the learning of history a quest, an exploration, rather than the passive absorption of a fixed body of facts. Yet at the same time, as in the past, the facts are all there. *These United States* covers all the bases and provides all the "coverage" of the standard text.

The word "standard" here does not mean old-fashioned, however. Though *These United States* discusses political, diplomatic, and military events, it also covers—and extensively—social, cultural, and economic events and currents. It deals not only with events, moreover, but also with people. Each chapter has a "Historical Portrait" and a "Historical Document" in the words of some representative figure of the period discussed in the chapter. And these people are not only "great men." I recognize and applaud the expansion of the "canon" to include all the wonderful diversity of the American people. In these readings, as well as in the text itself, the reader will find women as well as men, people of color as well as whites, youths as well as adults, writers, artists, and musicians as well as politicians and diplomats. These people and these topics are not "tacked on"; they are integrated with the entire text.

The Sixth Edition therefore retains and expands on many of the features of its predecessors. But it contains significant changes as well. I have reviewed the entire manuscript line by line, correcting errors and smoothing stylistic

bumps. I have added much new material. The last chapter of Volume II moves the story forward to include the early months of the Clinton administration. A new feature of several chapters focuses on "everyday life" in America. It describes how ordinary people got through their day, their week, their year. I have been strongly impressed with the environmental perspective on the past and have written, or rewritten, several sections to take into account the natural environment Americans encountered and their responses to it, good and bad. I have also expanded sections describing the environmental movement itself. The Sixth Edition, finally, has several new Historical Portraits by Debi Unger.

Here, then, is the Sixth Edition of *These United States*. I hope that, like its precursors, it meets with favor among faculty and students, serving both as a successful teaching instrument and an interesting and absorbing introduction to the American past.

Irwin Unger

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* ACKNOWLEDGMENTS *

Every author incurs debts in writing or revising a book. I have been the recipient of particularly generous help and advice and I should like to acknowledge it here.

First, I wish to thank a group of scholars and teachers who read and evaluated the fifth edition to help me correct mistakes in, and improve the quality of, the sixth. These include: James F. Hilgenburg, Jr., of Glenville State College; Johanna Hume of Alvin Community College; Robert G.

Fricke of West Valley College; Steve Schuster of Brookhaven College; Kenny Brown of the University of Central Oklahoma; Paul Lucas of Indiana University; and last, but assuredly not least, Irving Katz, also of Indiana University. I did not always accept their thoughtful advice, but I always took it seriously.

At Prentice Hall I would like to thank Steve Dalphin for his continued faith in *These United States* and his efforts on its behalf. Virginia Livsey, of the College Book

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Finally, I would like to thank Theresa McGrath of Howell, New Jersey, for expediting the taxing job of remounting text for revision and correction. Her help saved me much time and energy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pulitzer Prize winning historian Irwin Unger has been teaching American history for over twenty-five years on both coasts. Born and largely educated in New York, he has lived in California, Virginia, and Washington State. He is married to Debi Unger and they have five children, now all safely past their college years. Professor Unger formerly taught at California State University at Long Beach and the University of California at Davis. He now teaches at New York University, where he has been since 1966.

Professor Unger's professional interests have ranged widely within American history. He has written on Reconstruction, the Progressive Era, and on the 1960s. His first book, *The Greenback Era*, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1965. Since then he has written *The Movement* and (with Debi

Unger) *The Vulnerable Years and Turning Point: 1968*. He is now completing a book on the Kennedy-Johnson Great Society. He also teaches a wide range of courses, including the introductory U.S. history survey, the Civil War and Reconstruction Era, the Gilded Age, U.S. economic history, and the United States during the 1960s.

Debi Unger is a former English teacher who is now a freelance writer. She often collaborates with her husband. Educated in New York, she has also lived in Indiana, Washington, Chicago, and California. She describes her professional relationship with her husband in classic business partnership terms: "He's the inside man; I'm the outside man."

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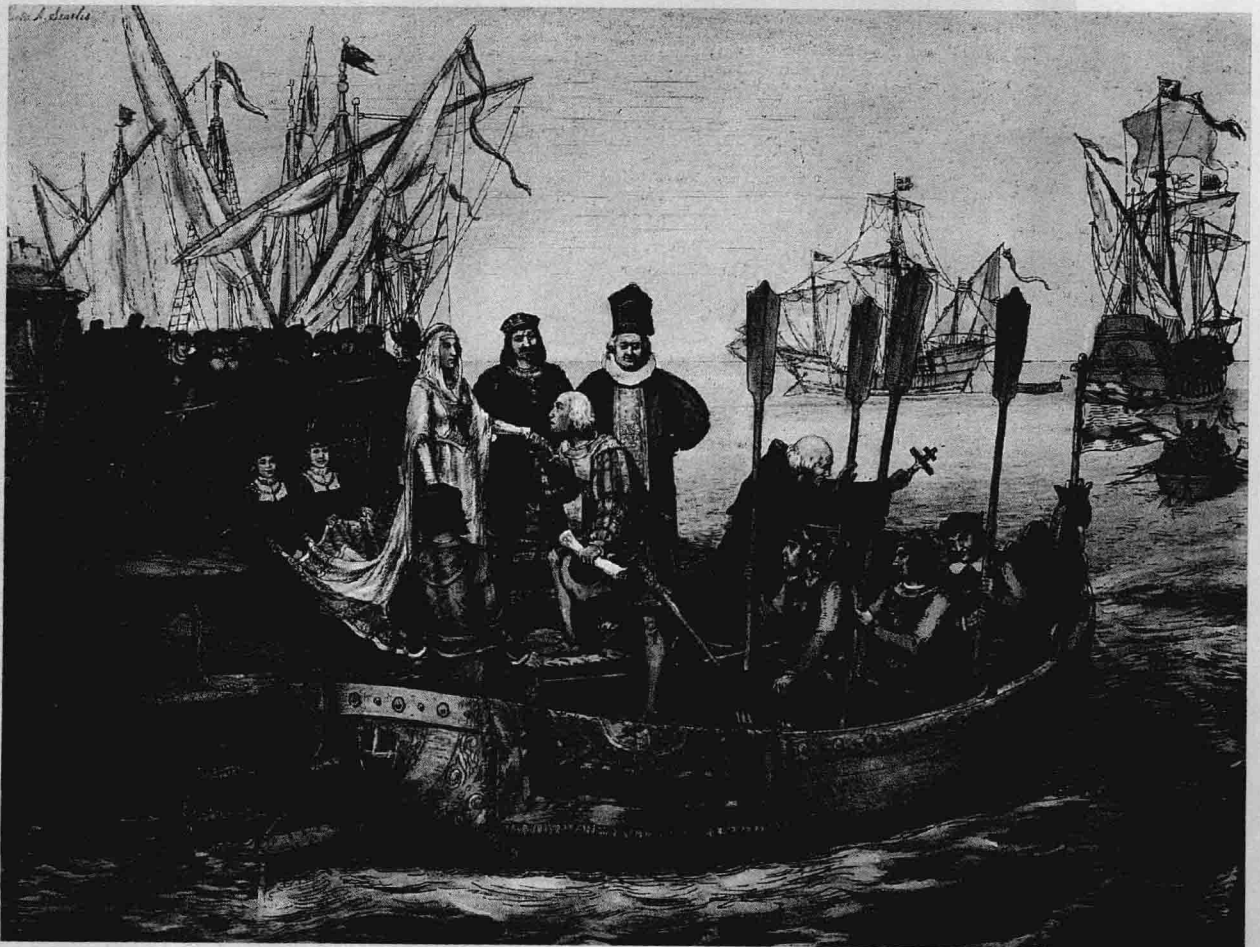


THESE UNITED STATES

1★

THE NEW WORLD ENCOUNTERS THE OLD

Why 1492?



c. 38,000 B.C.	America's first settlers begin to cross a land bridge connecting Siberia and Alaska
986	Norwegian merchant Bjarni Herjulfsson becomes the first European to sight the mainland of North America
c. 1000	Leif Ericsson lands on "Vinland"
c. 1010–13	Thorfinn Karlsefni and others attempt to colonize Vinland
c. 1300	Venetian and Genoese merchants establish overland trade routes to the East
c. 1400	The invention of printing, advances in navigation and naval architecture, and the introduction of gunpowder increase possibilities for worldwide exploration by Europeans
1488	Bartolomeu Dias rounds Africa's Cape of Good Hope for the Portuguese crown
1492	Christopher Columbus lands on San Salvador in the Bahamas
1497	Henry VII of England sends John Cabot to find a short route to the Indies: Cabot reaches Newfoundland
1498	Vasco da Gama, Portuguese navigator, becomes the first European to reach India by sea around Africa
1519–22	Ferdinand Magellan's circumnavigation of the world proves that the Americas are new lands, not the Indies
1521	Hernando Cortés conquers the Aztec empire in Mexico for Spain
1523–28	France sends Giovanni da Verrazano to find a short route to the Indies; he explores the east coast of North America
1532	Francisco Pizarro conquers the Inca empire in Peru for Spain
1534	Jacques Cartier attempts to find a "northwest passage" to the Indies for France
1609	Henry Hudson establishes Dutch claim to the Hudson River region in his search for a northwest passage
