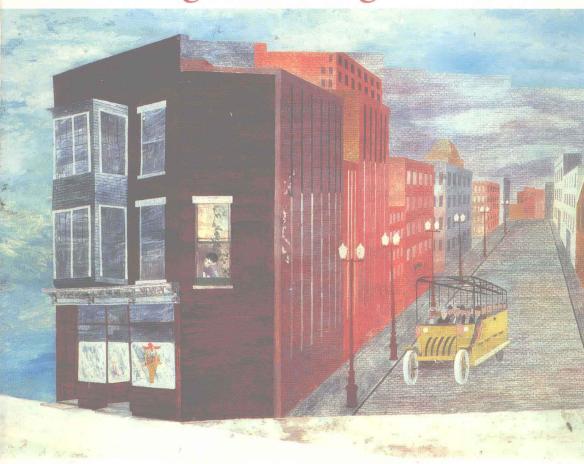
VOLUME 11: Since 1865

Thinking Through the Pas



A CRITICAL THINKING APPROACH TO U.S. HISTOR

John Hollitz

Thinking Through the Past

A Critical Thinking Approach to U.S. History

Volume II: Since 1865

John Hollitz

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN NEVADA

Sponsoring Editor: Patricia A. Coryell Senior Associate Editor: Jeffrey Greene Senior Project Editor: Carol Newman Production/Design Coordinator: Deborah Frydman Senior Manufacturing Coordinator: Marie Barnes

Cover design: Len Massiglia.

Cover image: *Ohio Magic*, 1945 by Ben Shahn, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, Mildred Anna Williams Collection, 1948.14.

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Printed in the U.S.A.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 96-79467

ISBN: 0-669-33488-x

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9-DH-00 99 98 97

Thinking Through the Past



This book was inspired by the idea that interpretation is at the heart of history. That is why learning about the past involves more than mastering facts and dates, and why historians often disagree. As teachers, we know the limitations of the deadly dates-and-facts approach to the past. We also know that encouraging students to think critically about historical sources and historians' arguments is a good way to create excitement about history and to impart understanding of what historians do. The purpose of *Thinking Through the Past*, therefore, is to introduce students to the examination and analysis of historical sources.

FORMAT

To encourage students to think critically about American history, *Thinking Through the Past* brings together primary and secondary sources. It gives students the opportunity to analyze primary sources *and* historians' arguments, and to use one to understand and evaluate the other. By evaluating and drawing conclusions from the sources, students will use the methods and develop some of the skills of critical thinking as they apply to history. Students will also learn about a variety of historical topics that parallel those in U.S. history courses. Unlike most anthologies or collections of primary sources, this book advances not only chronologically, but pedagogically through different skill levels. It provides students the opportunity to work with primary sources in the early chapters before they evaluate secondary sources in later chapters or compare historians' arguments in the final chapters. Students are also able to build on the skills acquired in previous chapters by considering such questions as motivation, causation, and the role of ideas and economic interests in history.

At the same time, this book introduces a variety of approaches to the past. Topics in *Thinking Through the Past* include social, political, cultural, intellectual, economic, diplomatic, and military history. The chapters look at history "from the top down" and "from the bottom up." Thus students have the opportunity to evaluate history drawn from slave quarters as well as from state houses. In the process, they are exposed to the enormous range of sources that historians use to construct arguments. The primary sources in these volumes include portraits, photographs, maps, letters, fiction, music lyrics, laws, oral histories, speeches, movie posters, magazine and newspaper articles, cartoons, and architectural plans.

xiv Preface

The chapters present the primary and secondary sources so students can pursue their own investigations of the material. Each chapter is divided into five parts: A brief introduction, which sets forth the problem in the chapter; the Setting, which provides background information pertaining to the topic; the Investigation, which asks students to answer a short set of questions revolving around the problem discussed in the introduction; the Sources, which in most chapters provides a secondary source and a set of primary sources related to the chapter's main problem, and, finally, a brief Conclusion, which offers a reminder of the chapter's main pedagogical goal and looks forward to the next chapter's problem.

INSTRUCTOR'S RESOURCE MANUAL

The format of *Thinking Through the Past* is designed to be effective in various classroom situations. Students in large classes can work through this book with minimal instructor assistance. Yet the format also provides students in seminars, small classes, and discussion sections the opportunity to share with one another the excitement of thinking about the past. The Instructor's Resource Manual is designed to enhance the effectiveness of *Thinking Through the Past* in all these classroom settings. The manual contains discussion of the sources in each chapter and explanations of how they relate to the chapter's main problem and pedagogical goals. It also contains questions to stimulate classroom discussion and suggestions for evaluating students' learning.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people contributed to this book. I want to thank my students, without whom it never would have been created. I owe thanks to many others as well. Richard Cooper and Brad Nystrom at California State University, Sacramento listened patiently to unformed ideas and offered helpful suggestions at the initial stages of this project. Alan Balboni, DeAnna Beachley, Gary Elliott, Michael Green, and Charles Okeke, colleagues at the Community College of Southern Nevada, offered sources, ideas, and encouragement. Marion Martin, Inter-Library Loan librarian at CCSN, provided unfailingly cheerful and efficient assistance. D. C. Heath editors James Miller and Pat Wakeley made many helpful suggestions. Susan Zorn of Houghton Mifflin copyedited the manuscript with extraordinary skill, while Jeffrey Greene and Carol Newman performed their editorial tasks with professionalism and good humor. Numerous colleagues around the country reviewed chapter drafts and offered insightful suggestions.

They were very generous with their time, and their ideas were invaluable. The reviewers were:

Karen Blair, Central Washington University Joan Chandler, University of Texas—Dallas Myles Clowers, San Diego City College Julian Del Gaudio, Long Beach City College Ronald Faircloth, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Gerald Ghelfi, Rancho Santiago College David Godschalk, Shippensburg University Robert Goldman, Virginia Union University Nancy Isenberg, University of Northern Iowa John Jameson, Kent State University Benjamin Newcomb, Texas Technological University Vince Nobile, Chaffey Community College Mario Perez, University of California—Riverside Edward Pluth, St. Cloud State University John Rector, Western Oregon State University David Schmitz, Whitman College Luther Spoehr, Lincoln School Emily Teipe, Fullerton College Stephen Weisner, Springfield Technical Community College Marianne Wokeck, Indiana University—Purdue University at Indianapolis Walter Weare, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Marli Weiner, University of Maine

My biggest debt, however, is to Patricia. For patience, support, and much more, this book is dedicated to her.

J.H.

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