

FIFTH EDITION

FIRSTHAND AMERICA

A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

BURNER / BERNHARD / KUTLER

POINTS OF VIEW

by Leading Historians

VOLUME II



A History of the United States

FIFTH EDITION ☆ VOLUME 2

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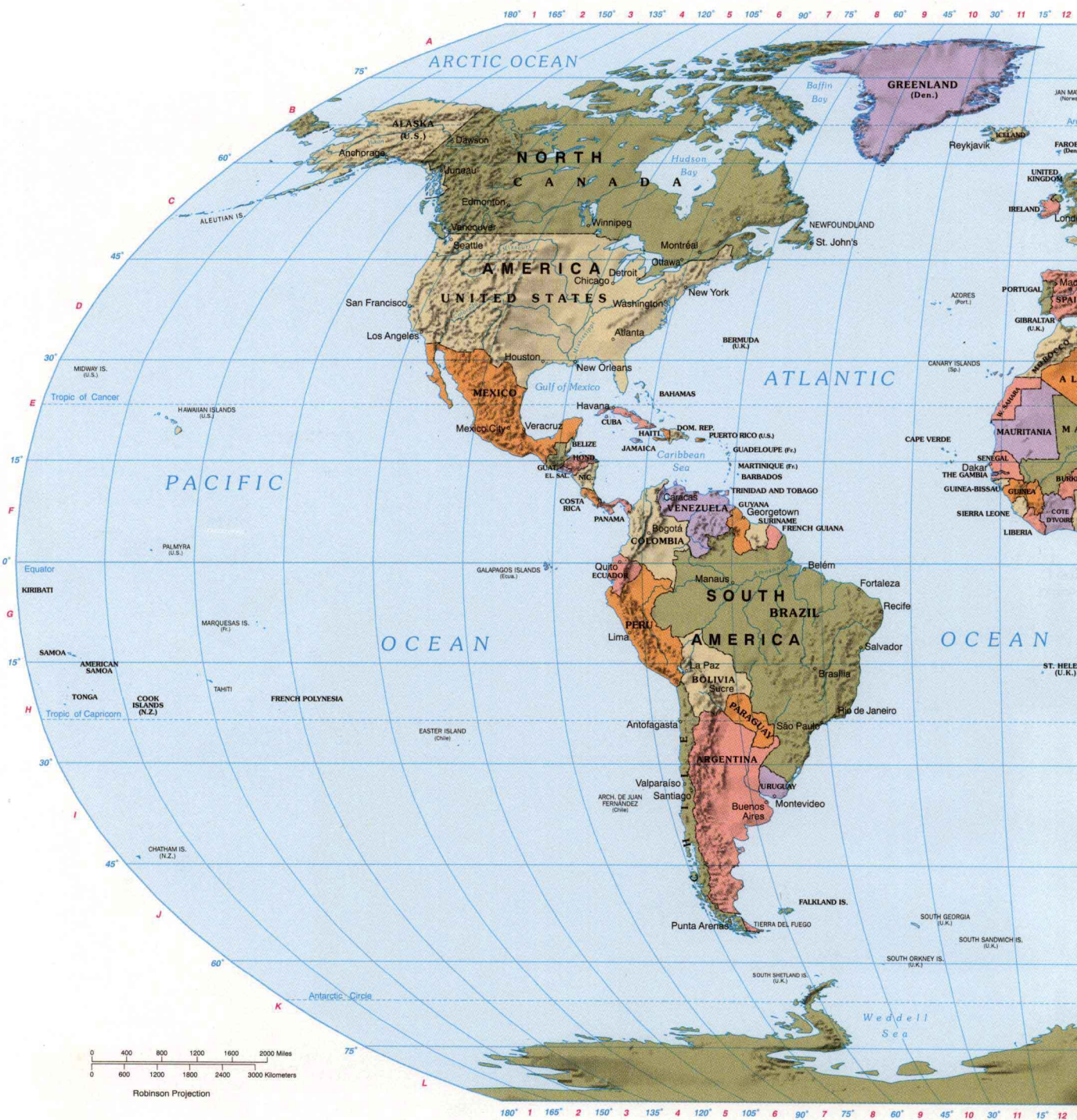
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FIRSTHAND AMERICA

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About the Fifth Edition . . .

All comprehensive United States survey textbooks, including this one, give full coverage to standard political, economic, diplomatic, and legal events. But these elements of history are largely the story of elites. This textbook also provides social history captured in the recognizable lives of ordinary people. Presidents, congressmen, and corporate executives are quoted throughout the book. So are soldiers, slaves, indentured servants, cowboys, working girls and women, and civil rights activists. *Firsthand America*, using more than 2,000 quotations, therefore gives due place both to the traditional leaders and to the myriad Americans never named in formal histories.

In this fifth edition of *Firsthand America*, many of the firsthand quotations are placed in the margins in a contrasting color. This strategy is undertaken in cases where the materials might interrupt the main text narrative. The two-color format also improves the maps and graphs, and there are more of both. New dramatic incidents, including a Klan lynching in South Carolina and the Oklahoma City bombing, improve the text along with innumerable smaller changes.

This fifth edition of *Firsthand America* contains a dialogue between two historians at the conclusion of each chapter. Contributors include Joyce Appleby, Bernard Bailyn, Michael Barnhart, Michael Les Benedict, Ira Berlin, Paul Boyer, Gene M. Brack, David Burner, Hosoya Chihiro, Catherine Clinton, Peter Collier, Paul Conkin, John S. D. Eisenhower, Peter G. Filene, David Hackett Fischer, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Paul Fussell, Eugene Genovese, Lawrence Goodwyn, Patricia Guerrin, Oscar Handlin, Louis R. Harlan, Joan Hoff, David Horowitz, Carol P. Karlsen, Maury Klein, Thomas J. Knock, Alan M. Kraut, Walter LaFeber, Suzanne Leacock, William Leuchtenburg, Manning Marable, Drew McCoy, Forrest McDonald, James M. McPherson, James Mooney, Gary B. Nash, Stephen Nissenbaum, Shari Osborn, Nell Irvin Painter, Edward Pessen, Thomas Reeves, Robert V. Remini, Martin Ridge, Daniel T. Rodgers, Michael Paul Rogin, Kirkpatrick Sale, Richard H. Sewell, Martin J. Sherwin, Kenneth M. Stampp, Richard B. Stott, Stephan Thernstrom, Hans L. Trefousse, Irwin Unger, Thomas R. West, Sean Wilentz, Gordon S. Wood, and Donald Worster.

American Letter for Gerald Murphy

It is a strange thing—to be an American
Neither an old house it is with the air
Tasting of hung herbs and the sun returning
Year after year to the same door and the churn
Making the same sound in the cool of the kitchen
Mother to son's wife, and the place to sit
Marked in the dusk by the worn stone at the wellhead—
That—nor the eyes like each other's eyes and the skull
Shaped to the same fault and the hands' sameness.
Neither a place it is nor a blood name.
America is West and the wind blowing.
America is a great word and the snow,
A way, a white bird, the rain falling,
A shining thing in the mind and the gulls' call.
America is neither a land nor a people,
A word's shape it is, a wind's sweep—
America is alone: many together,
Many of one mouth, of one breath,
Dressed as one—and none brothers among them:
Only the taught speech and the aped tongue.
America is alone and the gulls calling.

It is a strange thing to be an American.
It is strange to live on the high world in the stare
Of the naked sun and the stars as our bones live.
Men in the old lands housed by their rivers.
They built their towns in the vales in the earth's shelter.
We first inhabit the world. We dwell
On the half earth, on the open curve of a continent.
Sea is divided from sea by the day-fall. The dawn
Rides the low east with us many hours;
First are the capes, then are the shorelands, now
The blue Appalachians faint at the day rise;
The willows shudder with light on the long Ohio:
The lakes scatter the low sun: the prairies
Slide out of dark: in the eddy of clean air
The smoke goes up from the high plains of Wyoming:
The steep Sierras arise: the struck foam
Flames at the wind's heel on the far Pacific.
Already the noon leans to the eastern cliff:
The elms darken the door and the dust-heavy lilacs. . . .

This, this is our land, this is our people,
This that is neither a land nor a race. We must reap
The wind here in the grass for our soul's harvest:
Here we must eat our salt or our bones starve.
Here we must live or live only as shadows.
This is our race, we that have none, that have had
Neither the old walls nor the voices around us,
This is our land, this is our ancient ground—
The raw earth, the mixed bloods and the strangers,
The different eyes, the wind, and the heart's change,
These we will not leave though the old call us.
This is our country-earth, our blood, our kind.
Here we will live our years till the earth blind us—

—ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

About the Points of View . . .

This country, as the poem by Archibald MacLeish reprinted opposite this page of your textbook has it, was born on a naked continent, and it has neither a single race nor a single family nor a single ancient tradition to make it a unity. The ancestors of some of us were here before Columbus, and their descendants have been driven from home after home by European immigrants or their offspring. Other Americans came in the wretched holds of slave ships. Countless others, from Europe, had a somewhat better and yet a miserable journey, packed in the poorer recesses of ships that also provided luxurious quarters for wealthy travelers. Asians among us have Chinese ancestors who worked on the railroads that bound the country in the nineteenth century, or Japanese who labored on California farms amidst vicious discrimination against them. More recently we have added to our numbers Southeast Asians, refugees from a war that we did not begin but enormously escalated, and along with them Koreans whose shops are becoming a visible feature of our cities. And we are also the migrants from south of our borders and from the Caribbean, children of various racial and national strains that have mixed over the centuries since Columbus. What we have to make us a nation besides the physical fact of dwelling here is an idea of what it means to be an American. And that in itself is a ceaseless question for debate.

This country was born of ideas, and innumerable Americans beginning with the Pilgrim and Puritan migrants to New England have thought that the very point of being here was to live one or another of them. A good way of summarizing them is to see in American history a continuing quarrel or partnership between the claims of individualism and the claims of community.

The American economy, for example, has championed the virtues of the self-contained individual: industry, foresight, ambition. It has at the same time been an immensely cooperative venture, stretching across the continent a tight web of roads, factories, electronic communication, and more recently computer networks. It is in contributing skills and effort to this web that personal industry and ambition have found much of their expression. Americans have craved private property. Yet twentieth-century American political conflicts have been over how to extend, limit, tax, or reconstruct institutions of private property for the general good. As popular phenomena, too, these polarities in American culture have varied in specific content. A labor organization is a community of sorts, but so is a lynch mob. A union-breaking financial buccaneer is an individualist of one kind; another sort is a southern small-town newspaper editor, denouncing the bigotry of his subscribers.

As opponents or as partners, individualism and community have in differing ways furnished much of our national political questioning. As an illustration of the breadth of the argument, this text provides a running debate among several dozen prominent American historians. The ability to read controversial argument and gain from the reading is at the heart of a college education. Hence the points of view in *Firsthand America*.

No number of interpretations, of course, could cover all the issues over which American historians have quarreled. This is particularly true today, as the tools of history become increasingly multilayered, while popular argument over the future of the nation grows both angrier and more confused than it has been for some time. It is the hope of the contributors to *Firsthand America* that readers will enjoy following the arguments of scholars as they struggle to give some clarifying order to the endlessly diverse and restless facts of history.

Dedication

For Thomas R. West

About the Authors . . .

DAVID BURNER has published several books on twentieth-century America including *Making Peace with the 60s* (1996), *John F. Kennedy and a New Generation* (1988), *Herbert Hoover: A Public Life* (1979), and *The Politics of Provincialism: The Democratic Party, 1918–1932* (1968). He is currently writing a history of the American environmental movement for Princeton University Press.

VIRGINIA BERNHARD has published a historical novel, *A Durable Fire*, set in seventeenth-century Virginia and Bermuda, as well as a biography of a Texas governor's daughter. Her scholarly articles have appeared in *New England Quarterly*, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, and *Journal of Southern History*. She has coedited the 1992 University of Missouri Press *Southern Women: Histories and Identities* and teaches at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. Professor Bernhard has served on the Advanced Placement test development committee for United States history.

STANLEY I. KUTLER is E. Gordon Fox professor of American Institutions at the University of Wisconsin and editor since its inception of the influential *Reviews in American History*. Kutler brings to the book his familiarity with the most recent interpretations of American history from colonial times to the present. A constitutional historian, his published books include *Privilege and Creative Destruction: The Charles River Bridge Case, Judicial Power and Reconstruction Politics*, and *The Wars of Watergate*. Kutler's most recent book is *Abuse of Power: The New Nixon Tapes* (1997).

Acknowledgments

We are eager to receive comments on the fifth edition of this textbook from both teachers and students. We welcome corrections, suggestions, news of omissions, and general criticisms, which may be addressed to any of the authors. Or call the toll-free number of Brandywine Press at 1-800-345-1776.

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The Authors



Ku Klux Klansmen in the South, ca. 1870. (*Courtesy, Hugh Cleland*)





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