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The Historians and I

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THE HISTORIANS AND I

By DR. BUNYAN HADLEY ANDREW

My position at the moment is much like that of the man in the story (one of Mark Twain's stories, or was it Lincoln's?) where the man was being ridden out of town on a rail; and from the precarious position in which he found himself, is said to have remarked: "If it were not for the honor of the thing, I'd rather walk."

Certainly if it were not for the honor of this occasion, I would much prefer an evening of relaxed listening (to a quality paper, such as all previous honorees have presented) to an evening of tense delivery (of a paper which is hardly in keeping with the high standards set by the eight of my colleagues who have thus far performed as honorees).

In recent months there has been "Much Ado" about a certain "Lost Speech" that was delivered in Bloomington back in 1856. Inasmuch as this was a *famous* speech delivered by a *great* man, I can only hope that my speech tonight will have just *one* thing in common with Abraham Lincoln's speech of May 29, 1856—namely, that it, also, will get lost, and remain lost. "Lincoln's Lost Speech is still lost," but, of course, the discovery of a copy would

constitute a real scoop for some Lincoln buff. Needless to say, there will never be any Andrew buffs.

Now please do not take these self-evaluation remarks to mean that I do not appreciate having been chosen Century Club Honoree. I most certainly do; and I offer my sincere thanks to my colleagues who cast a vote for me, to the committee who passed my name on to President Bertholf, to Dr. Bertholf for having pulled my name from the hat, and to all my colleagues who acquiesced (reluctantly perhaps) in the decision. Special thanks I offer to all members of the Century Club, who make this program possible.

In all fairness to both you and me, though, I think that a remark made by Dr. Bertholf at last year's meeting should be recalled. He commented on the *small* size of the faculty vote cast (even after a second vote had been called for) with the implication that I became the 1967-68 Honoree virtually by default. And while this is hardly complimentary, the situation is, in one sense, a relief. Not as much is expected of me.

Too often in the past I have excused the quality of a given talk or a paper of mine on the grounds that I had not the time to do better—frequently quite true. Then I was given my assignment for tonight a whole year hence! At first I was “all shook up.” But then I thought of a classmate of mine at Guilford College many years ago. He had worked half the night on a math problem that he could not solve. The next day in class when Professor Pancost queried, “What’s the trouble Cox; have you worked on this?” Cox answered, “No Sir, I have not looked at it.” Those of us who knew the actual situation asked Cox why he gave such an answer. His reply was, “I’d rather Pancost think that I’m lazy than that I’m so stupid.” Perhaps you will grant me the dubious favor of believing that I did not start working on this paper until mid-April.

Seriously, the process of selecting a subject kept my brain grinding for all too long. At the close of our meeting last year, Dr. Bertholf, who had given me the shock treatment with his surprise announcement, and then discovered that I was not regaining my composure (or even my life-like color) rapidly enough, attempted to restore my blood pressure to normal and pull me out of my daze, by telling me that he had heard me give a paper (not too long ago)

that he believed to be appropriate for *this* occasion. The medicine worked (that night a year ago, and I came out of the shock). Subsequently, failing to find the additional source material needed to justify a reworking of the topic, I decided against giving this paper; but the general idea is, I believe, worth sharing with you Illinoisans (native or adopted) at this time. Furthermore, it will serve to illustrate a point I wish to make later.

My topic was "YANKEE-SOUTHERN MUTATIVE MINGLINGS IN THE PRAIRIE STATE". At no place can the coming together, during the second quarter of the nineteenth century in the Old Northwest, of the two main streams of settlers—the Upland Southern stream, on the one hand, and the New England-Puritan-Yankee-Yorker stream, on the other hand—better be observed than right here in the middle of Illinois. And the thesis presented (neither my own nor new) was that the result was the emergence of a "Corn Belt Culture", neither Yankee nor Southern *per se*, but having characteristics for which the "shrewd, selfish, enterprising cow-milking" Yankees and the "corn-growing, hog-feeding, corn-bread and bacon-eating Southerners" could claim about an equal amount of credit. I neither contended that therein was proof of the Turner frontier thesis, nor claimed that the Puritan-Yankee contribution to resourcefulness at this point could be seen as an authentication of the Max Weber view of Calvinistic economics. I simply said that Yankees and Southerners met, mingled, and maneuvered for position, but gradually adjusted to one another, and to their new common environment—and thus shared in the creation of the Prairie State portion of Corn Belt culture. And inasmuch as this mid-Illinoisan culture is now our common heritage, I offer no apology for having said this much tonight. The *one* other point I wish to make about this Corn Belt culture is attempted in order to illustrate a characteristic of historical thinking—namely, the historian's sensitivity to time-bound uniqueness.

In mid-twentieth century, Richard D. Leonard, a rank New Englander (a New Englander of some rank, if you prefer) migrated into central Illinois. A short time before this, a certain Bunyan Andrew, an Upland Southerner, had made his way to the Illinois Wesleyan campus. The fact that Tarheel Andrew preceded Vermonter Leonard in adopting Illinois as his home reminds one of the more

significant fact that in the early settlement of the Illinois region the Southerners came ahead of the Yankee-Yorkers. On a *mini* (or *micro*) scale, it appeared as though the pattern of a century ago was repeating itself. Not so! In a different era and under altered conditions, the Leonard-Andrew confrontation set into motion no process which might be characterized as a cataclysm, a transmogrification, or even a slightly perceptible alteration of old habits. Neither did this confrontation produce any altercation of sufficient heat to be newsworthy. So any historian dealing at all realistically with the limited aspect of the "New Immigration" would have to reckon with the fact that Andrew arrived too advanced in years to be very susceptible to change, and had lost much of his fight; and that Leonard, while still showing plenty of fight, was an utterly *unmodifiable* Yankee-Yorker.

As I dreamed of a subject that might be more appropriate, it became increasingly difficult for me to dismiss the idea that I should deal in some way with the role of the historians as regards my own position as teacher of history at Illinois Wesleyan.

The first obstacle confronting me in attempting such an approach was the uncertainty of the extent to which I, myself, can legitimately be identified with *the* historians. After long and painful deliberations I settled on a topic which I trust will not be considered overly presumptuous on my part, namely:

Use of the personal pronoun "I", on the extreme right end of my subject, has not been placed there as a counterpoise to "historians", on the far left end, but rather as a means of reducing my remarks about historians to manageable proportions—that is, whittled down to *my* contacts and observations, if not to my size. My topic, "The Historians and I", places historians *neither* in the ludicrous position of the egg in Betty McDonald's book, *The Egg and I*, nor in the sacrosanct position of the Ahnighy as in the religious anthem, "My God and I."

The most elementary of my relations to the historians is the simple paradoxical fact that while historians constitute the bane of my existence they also provide the foundation for my earnings. No matter how great a nuisance historians may be, the product of their efforts is an absolute essential for the teacher of history. And far be it from me to condemn historians for the fact that history *really*

happened, and that there is too much of it to be wrapped up in a few neatly bound and universally acceptable volumes. But if there was truth in the statement of "The Preacher" of Old Testament times that "Of making books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh", that truth as applied to current historical literature, must have been raised to something beyond the Nth degree.

The distinction between "historians" and "teachers of history" is not so clear cut, of course, as I have implied. But I wish to make it perfectly clear that the term "historians" is being used here to mean primarily those people who are publishing in the field of history. Furthermore, the distinction needs to be made in order to point out a rapidly spreading tendency of the past dozen years—that is, the closing of the mutuality gap between publisher historians and teacher historians. To be sure, almost any teacher of history is apt to publish a little; and nearly all publishers of history do some teaching. No more than fifteen years ago, however, the gap between those engaged primarily in research and writing, and those engaged primarily in teaching came close to being one of enmity. In the minds of the former, a failure to publish was the equivalent of death in the history profession. And people who got their doctorate in history but failed to publish in subsequent years were contemptuously dubbed "still-born" Ph. D.'S. I never liked the gruesome term; mainly, I suppose, because the limited number of articles that I have published, most certainly did not lift me out of the dead-at-birth class. True, no "still-born" Ph.D. deserves, or wishes (I would hope) to be respected as being something *he is not*. And I fully agree that the historian who adds significantly to the written record, is rightly perched on a higher rung of the historian's ladder than is one of us ordinary work-a-day classroom historians. I was long ago sufficiently influenced by the Edmund Burke-Russell Kirk conservative-mindedness on the structure of society to accept this. But I reject (perhaps without sufficient evidence) the idea that I have been dead for the past quarter of a century.

Last fall the controversial Bishop James A. Pike made headlines by strutting around at the Episcopal General Convention in Seattle wearing a big button that read, "I Believe In Life After Birth." No big button have I displayed; but I do believe in life after the

Ph.D. birth, even for people who are primarily teachers.

Fortunately, a host of voices have been raised in defense of the *teacher* of history. And, as one might expect, the most forceful expressions of the belief that teaching *per se* does have central significance is coming from men who hold enviable positions in their respective fields of scholarly research and publication.

Professor W. Stull Holt, Chairman of the History Department, University of Washington, made a study early in the 1950's, which in effect dragged from the closet one of the producer-historians' most carefully hidden skeletons. His study concerned "Who Reads The Best Histories?" Holt selected at random twenty books from a list of sixty "best", as determined by more than a hundred leading scholars who had responded to a poll conducted by Professor John W. Caughy (UCLA) and published in 1952 under the title, "Historians' Choice: Results of a Poll on Recently Published American History and Biography". A thorough investigation, with the aid of the several publishing companies, was then made of the number of copies of these books sold. To make a long story short, Dr. Holt's conclusion was, "Most of our scholarly history, including the best, is not by specialists for specialists but by specialists for a small fraction of the specialists."

John Hicks' *The Populist Revolt* (1931) was one of the books included in Holt's study. Even though this monograph was given a very high rating by the hundred, plus, scholars consulted, it had taken "seventeen years to sell 1,500 copies." Hicks, on his part, while he believed that a few more copies than Holt indicated were actually sold, and, in addition, scores of copies were given to "prospective reviewers and other predatory gentry", instead of resenting the findings of Holt, drew from this able study in his presidential address before the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association in December, 1955, to emphasize the point (among others) that if the mark of the historian (used in the generic sense) is to reach many minds and to be very deep, that mark must be made *via* the classroom teacher.

A year later (December, 1956) at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in St. Louis, the presidential address delivered by Dexter Perkins was entitled, "We Shall Gladly Teach." This was the *first* presidential address of the association

ever to deal with the teaching of history, a service which Perkins characterized as "the central function of our institution." Certainly no one decries the writing of history—and least of all such men as John Hicks and Dexter Perkins—and I know of *no one* who takes pride in resembling the Master Teacher *only* in that the Christ never published anything either. But not even Buick's 1968 claim that, "Now We're Talking Your Language", is half so true for the thousands of history teachers, as was the language of John Hicks when he asserted on behalf of the history profession that "there is no reason why we should look down upon the people who choose primarily to be teachers."

Evidences of the greater emphasis being given to the teaching of history are too numerous even to list. Three types of change will suffice to illustrate the trend. In 1957 the American Historical Associations Service Center for Teachers of History published the first of a series of pamphlets dedicated to the improvement of the teaching of history and in the hope that herein was being inaugurated "A continuing survey of new concepts being established or old ones being discarded or revised." Approximately seventy pamphlets have thus far been published, each dealing with a limited area of history and prepared (in most cases) by a specialist in historical research. This series of pamphlets is an invaluable aid to teachers of history in the public schools and in college, also, in their efforts to keep up (somewhat) on what the experts are doing.

A second type of encouragement provided by the AHA Service Center for Teachers of History has been the sponsorship of many Conferences for Teachers of History—college and public school teachers. Co-sponsors have increasingly taken advantage of The Service Center's leadership, and the Conferences are thought to be useful—fifteen such conferences were sponsored by the Center during the autumn and winter of 1967-1968. A sampling of Conference themes may be of some interest. That of the Conference on January 20 at Bucks County Community College, Newton, Pennsylvania, was "The Teaching of Asian History in World Civilization Courses", and that of the St. Louis University Conference, February 24, was "The Rewriting of History in the Emerging Nations." Worthwhile topics, certainly.

A third kind of evidence that a narrowing of the gap between

publisher-historians and teacher-historians is taking place can be seen in the increasing number of sessions devoted to the teaching of history that are given a place on the program at the annual meetings of the major professional history organizations. Not only are they given a place, but are scheduled at such times as to make possible a respectable number in attendance. I need not labor the point; one has only to glance through the official programs. The Organization of American Historians, for example, at its annual meeting in 1967, scheduled a series of *three* such meetings. Contrast that with a few years earlier when either *no* teachers session was scheduled, or, at best, was a single session scheduled within the three-day period of Thursday-Friday-Saturday, at 4:00 P.M. Saturday, right in the middle of a major league baseball game being played in the same city.

Those of us who must, for whatever reason, make our mark almost entirely as teachers rather than authors, have been acquiring some degree of respect—on the part of others, and more important, for ourselves. We are not, of course, relieved in any sense of the responsibility of exercising what Professor Carl Gustavson has identified as “historical-mindedness.” A definition of historical-mindedness is not easy to formulate. Perhaps a remark which Mrs. Bertholf made just after she and Dr. Bertholf had gone on a tour of George Washington’s home at Mount Vernon will be of some help. “Lloyd,” she remarked, “did you notice everything’s furnished in Early American?”

As a supplement to Mrs. Bertholf’s remark, I shall throw in a few catch phrases from Gustavson’s analysis of historical-mindedness:

a natural curiosity as to what underlies the surface appearances of any historical event . . . seeking origins, relationships, and comparisons . . . (a need to) discern the shapes and contours of forces which are dynamic in society . . . (a stressing of) the continuity of society in all its forms . . . (a recognition that) society is perpetually undergoing a process of change . . . (the necessity of approaching a subject) in a spirit of humility prepared to recognize tenacious reality rather than what (one) wishes to find . . . (a knowledge of the fact) that each situation and event is unique.

Obviously, Gustavson is talking about a form of reasoning, a way of thinking, by no means limited to the field of history proper. Actually his little book from which I draw, *A Preface to History*, was written in an effort to stimulate the development of historical-mindedness on the part of undergraduate students. We teachers need it, also. And I wonder if most people who have tried making an application of the so-called historical method in the *dual role* of teacher and writer, have not found the use of the scholarly trappings requisite to publication to be a far less formidable undertaking than that of teaching effectively.

What, and how much we actually do, or might, learn from history that is useful, is a question on which historians themselves disagree. As Professor Holborn of Yale stated in his American Historical Association presidential address at Toronto last December:

The *practical* value of a clear conception of universal history for a generation witnessing the meeting of all cultures in a global interaction is obvious.

That such a "clear conception" does *not* exist is equally obvious. The distinguished British historian Arnold J. Toynbee, who has devoted his life to the preparation of his multi-volumed publication entitled, *A Study of History*, became thereby at least as controversial as he is distinguished. One extreme view is that Toynbee's contribution would have been greater had he merely "written a poem . . . in Greek."

I know of no historian, though, who does not see value in the study of history—values even for today. Perhaps Sir Winston Churchill put it in about as general and acceptable terms as could be when he said, "The further and deeper you look back, the more you can see forward." And is there anyone here, or elsewhere, who would argue that the decisions made by Churchill as Prime Minister were less valid because Churchill was, also, a historian who had long been examining the course of events in the pre-World War II period?

Anyway, for whatever lessons history holds for today, historians are bringing the discipline of history to bear upon the recent past. As late as the early years of the present century this was not true—at least it was not true on the American scene. "Respectable" his-

torians simply did not risk sticking out their necks on matters of current events, meaning by "current events" anything within one's own lifetime. The recent past has traditionally been the most neglected, by historians, of any historical age—the "dark ages" of just yesterday. Yet, somehow, due to the continuity of history, the endless procession of accumulative wisdom of man was supposed to march right onto the current scene—the *absence* of any bridge notwithstanding. But now, as Professor Hicks has well put it:

One of the things that's right about the history profession is its present determination to keep this bridge in order.

As Dr. David Thompson of the University of Cambridge sees it:

The present vogue for contemporary history . . . has come into being largely because of the events of recent times . . . The sense of individual and national helplessness in face of the world economic depression or the relentless coming of a second world war fostered an urge to see more clearly where we were going.

The idea that human prejudices and a lack of sufficient evidence render recent history *verboden* for the professional historian has largely been dispelled. In the first place, if one is inclined to display his prejudices he can, in 1968, portray a Caesar, Cromwell, or Napoleon, for example, as a super-human hero, *or* as the anti-Christ (or worse) with as great facility as he might do so with as contemporary a figure as Lyndon B. Johnson. In the second place, to quote Perez Zagorin:

the nature of historical inquiry is quite unaffected by whether our subject is one we have ourselves been well situated to observe or one remote from us in time. The process of the historian's thought is the same when he writes a history of naval actions in the Second World War or in the war of the Greeks against Persia, though in the first instance the evidence is, of course, *far more* abundant.

The "far more abundant" evidence is, in part, both cause and result, as regards the concerted effort of historians to keep our historical pants up—to date, that is. A sampling of the trend will be enough here. For at least four people *here* besides me (I know) the Hoover administration is not ancient history ("Recent Past" fits better). Beginning with the Hoover administration, *it* and

each presidential period since, has readily become an inviting field for historical researchers *via* the abundance of source materials placed in the several presidential libraries: the Hoover Library at Stanford, Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, Truman Library at Independence, Eisenhower Library at Abilene, and the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Memorial Library in Boston.

On the other side of the Atlantic one might note the replacement of the British Government's "fifty-year rule against access to official documents . . . by a thirty-year rule", making available to historians "many more miles of shelves of documents in the Public Record Office." Now back to the United States for one more sample. How many historical experts did Uncle Sam employ during World War II to keep tab on events as they happened, and help to get the record documented for use by historical research teams in the immediate post-war period? I have no figures but the numbers were large, and the calibre of the men ranged all the way from big-shot historians such as William L. Langer and Raymond J. Sontag down to the little "bores" flitting hither and yon, knowing not what to do except to carry a briefcase instead of a gun. But undoubtedly we are catching up with the recent past more rapidly than would have been possible otherwise.

The task of historians has been greatly increased in recent years as historians themselves have come to accept a much broader definition of "history". The theory that "history is past politics" must have been dead a long time and the statement so often used in the preface of textbooks that "this book gives due attention to the economic, social, and intellectual aspects of history" is no longer on the periphery of an expanding historiography. The present trend is not a mere denial of a political definition of history as being inadequate, or even the assertion that economic and social factors are rightly included. The emerging definition of history is much broader than this and the techniques used in examining the full scope of history are complex and controversial—the "new look" at even the *old* history (narrow definition of) being more traumatic for the routine-minded person than is the full-scope definition of history itself.

Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, editors of the new annual publication, *Perspectives in American History*, state:

We include in our definition of American history the history of literature, philosophy, natural science, the arts, economics, demography, and the social sciences as well as the usual political and social subjects.

And the Board of Editors of the new *Journal of Historical Studies* declare that "the word *history* applies also to the description of the impact of literature and science on cities and nations." Another new historical quarterly launched last year by the University of California Press and bearing the title, *The Journal of Social History*, is, according to its Editorial Board, "the first English-language publication to concentrate specifically on social history", and is a journal with "an international base" carrying work by "historians, sociologists, economists, anthropologists, and other scholars from around the globe."

With the birth of the big, new history, the historians and I have both been having troubles—the historians suffering labor pains, and I the pains of their labor.

You may recall that when Paul Bunyan came upon some trees (out in what is now the Dakotas) that were so tall that he could not see to the top of them by himself, he called in some of his men to help him look. Similarly, the new history that is not only taller, but is assuming greater dimensions in every conceivable direction, has caused traditional historians to admit (albeit reluctantly in some cases) the necessity of having many additional eyes focused upon this mammoth human drama of yesterday if we are to view anywhere near the whole show. The help in recent years has been in at least two main forms: the writing of much history by "non-historians", and the use by historians of techniques heretofore considered not to have been useful in their discipline.

As examples of social scientists dealing historically with the recent past, with a view to throwing some light on two of the most disturbing areas in the world today, South Vietnam and South Chicago, we can note the book *The Two Viet Nams* by the late Bernard B. Fall, a political scientist, and the article, "The President and the Negro: The Moment Lost", by Daniel P. Moynihan, a sociologist.

The BIG contribution of the social scientists to an improvement in the quality of history writing has not been their actual

writing of much history, however, rather it has come from their fostering of statistical methods and social-science concepts useful to historians. These aids are not useful for all areas of history. Fortunately, present day historians, for the most part, do have sense enough to take whatever the social scientists have to offer that is useful, and, equally important, to reject that which is not.

Certainly not all qualitative gains in historical output have been due to the inspiration and techniques provided by the social-science disciplines; historians have made some progress in their own right. But back to the topic at hand. Take, for example, the field of intellectual history. A competent scholar in this field states:

In this area quantification has had only a slight impact, and the impact of the most immediately germane branch of a social science, the sociology of knowledge, has perhaps been baneful rather than helpful.

On the other hand, it must be noted that insofar as we still get a portion of our historical writing (unfortunately too big a slice of the total) the most characteristic features of which are its dreariness and triviality, probably more of it "has been written without benefit of statistics or the social sciences than has been written with it."

Now a mere sampling on the positive side. Even if one agrees with Professor J. L. Talmon's contention that,

the recent tendency to turn history into statistical survey and sociological analysis . . . has gone far enough . . .

it is time for a corrective in the direction of human drama, we must admit that a classic study such as George Rude's *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959) gives us a more complete picture of *The Revolution* not despite, but because of, the author's involvement in "retrospective sociology" and "social psychology", used always, of course, "with the caution of a professional historian". To take another sample, does not Robert W. Doherty's development of concepts and techniques from sociological theory in his study, *The Hick-site Separations A Sociological Analysis of Religious Schism in Early Nineteenth Century America* further illuminate the bases for the behavior of religiously oriented groups? It might be noted,

too, that historians are now probing some new areas long forfeited to the sociologists. No better example of this can be seen than in Negro historiography, especially the historiography of American Negroes in the post-Reconstruction period.

With the rapid development of increasingly adequate statistical methods, quantification in history has become an acceptable *extra* tool in historian's kit. A landmark in this direction for American historians was Lee Benson's publication, 1957, of a long article, "Research Problems in American Historiography", which grew out of Benson's work in the Columbia University Bureau of Applied Research. It "provided concrete illustrations of the way in which simple time series of election results might be used to explode generalizations long cherished by historians."

Quantification in history in its simplest form is a matter of elementary arithmetic—some counting, if you please. And why any historian could have been satisfied with general guesses on the question of "how many?" of anything, if exact numbers *could* be determined, is more than I can understand. Modern historians *ARE* counting, that is, where it is possible to count, and *if* the historical problem at hand hinges on a quantitative factor.

Almost ten years after Benson's trail-blazing article on "Research Problems . . .", Professor William O. Aydelotte of the University of Iowa, made a very careful analysis of the quantitative method, its use, and the arguments of its critics, after which he came to the cautious conclusion that "it helps" and that "in some cases, it provides a means of dealing with questions that could not be attacked in any other way." Only a couple of months after Aydelotte's study was published, Lee Benson was making far bolder claims for quantification—bolder even than Benson himself had made in 1957.

And this summer (1968) a seminar in quantitative methods of historical data Analysis will be held at the University of Michigan as part of a training program of the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, in which historians are encouraged, even by financial aid from International Business Machines Corporation, to participate. Furthermore, an American Historical Association Committee to Collect the Quantitative Data of History is active in helping to stock the data archives allied with the Con-

sortium.

A reliance upon statistics does not, of course, assure a generally acceptable interpretation of any segment of history. A striking example to the contrary is Thomas C. Cochran's study of the relation of the Civil War to the growth of American industrialism, a study in which he advanced the bizarre thesis that industrialism was actually retarded by the Civil War. A storm of criticism arose condemning Cochran's excessive reliance on statistics, questioning the kind of statistics used, challenging his assumptions, and purporting to point out defects inherent in a statistical analysis.

Each new look at the past that produces a revisionist interpretation adds to the impermanency of history as written record. The total output rapidly grows bigger and bigger, and increasingly comes to resemble what might be called "unfinished business".

This situation is by no means due entirely to help from the social sciences. Roy F. Nichols, speaking for the historians recently declared:

We have a discipline and a series of functions of our own. These instruments of analysis, these forms of thought are our own, and we owe them to no one but ourselves. Other schools have neither devised them nor used them with any common degree of frequency.

And historians were busily engaged in revisionism for various reasons (legitimate and otherwise) long before the computer age.

It is inconceivable that a variety of historians, dealing with a given segment of history, when writing from a variety of times and perspectives should not produce a *variety* of histories. The interpretation placed upon the European Revolutions of 1848 by Karl Marx two years after the outbreak of that great upheaval could hardly be identical to that given by the German nationalist historian Friedrich Meinecke a century later. It would (to give one further illustration) be equally in vain to look for any less than *three* significantly different views on the causes and nature of the American Revolution if one turned to the historians George Bancroft (1800-1891), Carl Becker (1873-1945) and Daniel Boorstin (1914-) for enlightenment. Bancroft's works reflect the strong American nationalism of the years in which he matured and became a publishing scholar (1830's-1840's); Becker's position

reveals the bent of the early twentieth century Progressive historians; and Boorstin's approach reflects the post-World War II neo-conservative trend in historiography.

Such general differences have, I would say, characterized the whole time span of historiography. But there is a relatively *new* development of a more serious nature. The big difficulty grows out of the fact that after historians in general "kicked the habit" so to speak of historical positivism, too many of them subsequently tended to allow prejudices to triumph over scholarship. The destruction, during the first half of the twentieth century, of the positivist rules of historical method, and, therefore, the elimination of the stifling and stultifying effects of such rules, was rather complete:

Nowadays . . . all but the most naive historians venture hypotheses, explain the data they assemble, and offer generalizations aimed at rendering the interrelation among those data more intelligible. One no longer hears about historians merely gathering facts with thereupon obligingly 'speak for themselves'.

We know now, from modern physics, that "the attempts made by 19th-century historical positivists to create a scientific history were based on obsolete conceptions of science" in the first place.

To say that history is not a science does not, of course, alter the fact that many aspects of history can be studied scientifically, and that historians in general do approach their studies with as great a desire to pursue the truth as do the scientists. The real problem occurs when, after having recognized the legitimate limits of objectivity, a given historian becomes unduly subjective in rendering judgments. It is not for me to say what historians (among those of whom I have any knowledge) are guilty of such. I shall, as an example, name just one who has been accused, and identify his accuser.

The late Charles A. Beard who at one time came under the spell of the Leopold von Ranke (1799-1886) "scientific" school of history, later turned to another German for guidance in a very different direction. In Germany, where a tradition of romantic idealism still lived (Ranke *et al* notwithstanding) historians never had come to be so completely dominated by a false scientism as

in America. The new direction in which Beard turned was pointed out by the German Karl Heussi. In his book, *Die Krisis des Historismus* (1932), Heussi held that the historian:

must always choose elements out of the immensity of past happenings . . . and to do this he had to be in possession of some principle whereby he could distinguish the historically significant from the historically insignificant; and he had to follow some *a priori* principle of historical perspective before he could see anything historical at all.

Beard agreed, and was soon calling upon his colleagues to face up to what Beard called "the most profound contemporary thought about history," and admit the subjective element in historical investigation.

So far so good. The road to truth has not been blocked if one remains willing to allow cherished ideas to be upset by unwelcomed evidence. But in the process of interpreting the evidence, any historian with method in his madness can subtly do great violence to history. Professor Samuel Eliot Morison has accused Charles A. Beard of having stooped to such a level. Morison says of Beard's last book, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War* (1948):

I wish that every young historian might read Beard's final work . . . as an example of what happens when a historian consciously writes to shape the future instead of to illuminate the past, of a man becoming the victim or prisoner of his 'frame of reference'. Without misstating many facts or garbling quotations, as the vulgar distorters of history do, Beard by ingenious arrangement and selection, ruthless rejection of attendant circumstances, and a liberal use of innuendo, compiled a powerful brief for the thesis that Franklin D. Roosevelt was the aggressor against Germany and Japan; that he wanted America into the war for his own purposes, planned and plotted it and maneuvered Japan into striking Pearl Harbor in order to gain these sordid ends.

If we must have "frame-of-reference" history (or *a priorism* history), we can at least be thankful that in some parts of the world, still, each historian is free to construct a frame in accord-

ance with his own abilities, or prejudices. Thus, we can have, for example, in America, Herbert Feis's *The Road to Pearl Harbor* (1950) as a counterbalance to Beard's account. To be sure, for anyone trying to be a teacher of history the job is thus made more complex and difficult. But God forbid that a Brezhnev-Kosygin, a Mao Tse-tung, a John Birch Society, a politically dominated (Democratic or Republican) public university system, or even a full-service *United* Methodist Church, may ever be in a position to dictate the *only* "frame-of-reference" history that historians are allowed to write.

Naturally, historians who examine an established set of facts, and then, from these same facts reach conclusions of a contradictory nature, do battle in book reviews and in letters to the editors of professional historical journals—such communications frequently being published in these journals. Despite the bitterness of these verbal battles, though, historians stand solidly together (at least in the free world they do) in protecting the right of the individual historian to interpret the facts as he sees them. This togetherness extends even to financial aid for fighting legal battles in defense of the rights of historians under the First Amendment. *Frick v. Stevens*, concluded in September of last year after well over two years in the courts, is a case in point. The historians won a victory that "vindicated the freedom of scholars to judge their subjects on the basis of reasonable research," "to recount history as they see it."

The concluding remarks of Professor Holborn's presidential address at the 1967 annual meeting of the American Historical Association in Toronto, presupposes the type of rights being protected in the *Frick* case. Dr. Holborn declared:

It is the task of history to recognize man in time. Only through history are we able to transcend the limitations of our own station in time and space and become aware of our full potentialities. But this requires placing man in the midst of his total social environment from which we shall learn about his civilizing strength and weakness. Aiming at the highest historical truth we shall fortify our courage to be free.

Now note how the victory in the *Frick* case underpins the hopes expressed in the Holborn statement. Judge Clinton R. Weidner concluded that "the subject of the alleged defamatory statements (Henry Clay Frick and his actions) was of concern to the public, and stated further that

to enable people to understand and meet the conditions with which they are confronted today, particularly industry, labor, and management, the public is entitled to know the history of the development of those subjects.

This freedom of the historian to make judgements on the basis of reasonable research is *one* of the things that is *right* with the history profession. I would like to see it kept that way. My faith that the historians and I can keep it that way is not very strong; my faith that the historians *without* me can do so is unlimited.