CURRENTS IN AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP SERIES

# AMERICAN STUDIES BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bernard Mergen
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

*"Every American, like every human being, is both an individual and a type. Moreover, both the individual and the groups with which s/he identifies or is identified may change significantly over time. The challenge of all American studies scholarship is to reveal what changes and what remains the same and to explain why we should care."*

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**Wagon Wheel**
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# Introduction

The Currents in American Scholarship series offers Americanists abroad updates on the status of theory and practice in disciplines relevant to the study of the society, culture and institutions of the United States of America. Prominent scholars from across the U.S. graciously accepted the invitation of the Study of the U.S. Branch to author annotated bibliographies. We hope the series proves to be valuable in introducing or refreshing courses on the United States, or in expanding library collections.

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# The Author

Bernard Mergen, Ph.D., is a professor of American Studies at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He received his doctorate in American Civilization from the University of Pennsylvania in 1968. A strong advocate for the internationalization of American Studies, Dr. Mergen is Senior Editor and founder of the journal *American Studies International.* In addition to Fulbright Professorships in Mongolia, Germany, and Sweden, Dr. Mergen has lectured on American Studies for the U.S. Information Agency in Pakistan, Switzerland, Costa Rica, Nigeria, South Africa, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Estonia. Dr. Mergen was awarded a Smithsonian Institution Postdoctoral Fellowship in 1974, and served as Assistant Editor of *American Quarterly* from 1988 to 1991. Recent publications include two chapters on "Celebrations & Holidays" and "Childhood" in the *Encyclopedia of American Studies* (2001), and an article entitled "Can American Studies Be Globalized?" in the Summer/Fall 2000 edition of *American Studies*. He is currently working on a book about American attitudes toward weather and climate in the 20th century.

# AMERICAN STUDIES BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is highly selective, with an emphasis on topics other than social history, political science, foreign policy, philosophy, religion, and literature that will be covered in other bibliographies. There will undoubtedly be some overlap, since many books address more than one topic. The books I have selected reflect my understanding of American studies based on more than 40 years involvement in it. They are books that approach American life, from a cultural perspective, that is, their authors are explicitly or implicitly contributing to our

understanding of the ways in which beliefs, values, and learned behaviors create and reflect patterns identifiable with larger groups of people who share biological, linguistic, religious, geographical, occupational, avocational, or purely imaginary connections. Every American, like every human being, is both an individual and a type. Moreover, both the individual and the groups with which s/he identifies or is identified may change significantly over time. The challenge of all American studies scholarship is to reveal what changes and what remains the same and to explain why we should care. Most of the books in this essay were published after 1982 and should supplement, not replace, the bibliographies published in *Handbook for the Study of the United States,* edited by William Bate and Perry Frank for the United States Information Agency in 1989.

## Introduction

American studies emerged as a separate curriculum in a few east coast universities in the 1930s in an attempt to provide holistic interpretations of American culture and civilization through the integration of the humanities and social sciences. There were, of course, many comprehensive studies of American history, culture, politics, and society before the 1930s. Attempts at national self-definition begin in the colonial era and the study of American political values and institutions began with *The Federalist Papers* (1788) and other commentaries, published and unpublished, by the founders of the republic on state and federal constitutions.

The landmark study of social equality, individualism, and materialism in the United States, *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840), by the French political philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville certainly qualifies as the first extended analysis of American values. It remains one of the most often cited texts in American studies, the required starting point for any attempt to describe American beliefs or to measure changes in them. At the same time, Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, "The American Scholar," (1837) set out a concise program for the study of American life. His disciple Walt Whitman not only fulfilled Tocqueville's predictions about the importance of autobiography in American poetry, but also offered his own synthesis of American culture and its future in *Democratic Vistas* (1871).

Tocqueville and Whitman were fully aware that American culture was riven by slavery and racism. Tocqueville saw the removal of the Cherokees from their homeland and predicted that slavery would end only with a civil war. Whitman witnessed that conflict, the failure of Reconstruction, and lived through the final years of the genocidal wars against Indians in the west. Neither, however, fully appreciated the injustices suffered by American women. Few of the oppressed could publish their interpretations of America, but those who did, ex-slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass in his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), and women's suffragist and feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton in her *Eighty Years and More: Reminiscences, 1815–1897,* offered powerful correctives to the optimism, patriotism, and paternalism of most commentators on America in the 19th century.

At the end of the century the young historian Frederick Jackson Turner reinvigorated the Emersonian tradition of sweeping poetic visions of the distinctive nature of American life in his essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893), but he compli-

cated earlier views by suggesting that the era of democracy based on the settlement of free land was over. In a little more than a century, therefore, these and other commentators had established the general outlines for the study of the American people and their institutions. There was general agreement that the political system both shaped and reflected American values, that those core values could best be seen in the daily lives and work of individuals, that the land itself influenced the character of the people, and that the promise of American life was still unfulfilled. Democratic faith, individualism, protest, reform, and frontier are key words that continue to energize American studies.

This bibliography offers an introduction to American studies by listing and commenting briefly on more than 400 books, journals, and electronic materials that are generally agreed to be the most important contributions to the broad field of American studies, however defined. Since some topics such as race have in recent years dominated academic American studies, the examples discussed will be more illustrative than comprehensive. Emphasis is placed on the years 1982 to 2002, a period in which three significant developments in American studies have occurred: (1) Cultural Studies, with its reliance on post-Structuralist, post-Marxist, and post-Freudian theories to critique the social constructions of race and gender; (2) Public History, with its emphasis on the conflict between heritage and history in museums, historic sites, and the popular media; and (3) Internationalization, which offers new venues for the presentation of research by Americans as well as by scholars from outside the U.S.

## Emergence of American Studies, 1900–1980

The damage to European civilization inflicted by World War I and the growing economic power of the United States provided stimuli for self-confident expressions of American cultural distinctiveness in the early 20th century. Works such as H. L. Mencken's *The American Language* (1919–1948), Lewis Mumford's *Sticks and Stones:* (1924), V. L. Parrington's *Main Currents of American Thought* (1927–1929), Robert and Helen Merrell Lynd's *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture* (1929), and Constance Rourke's *American Humor: A Study of the National Character* (1931) laid the foundation for the academic study of American culture that began in the 1930s and which in turn produced the first self-consciously interdisciplinary studies of American literature and history: Perry Miller's *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (1939), Caroline F. Ware's *The Cultural Approach to American*

*History* (1940), Ralph Gabriel's *The Course of American Democratic Thought* (1940), F. O. Matthiessen's *The American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941), John Kouwenhoven's *Made in America* (1948), and Henry Nash Smith's *The Virgin Land: The American West in Symbol and Myth* (1950).

Smith's book was based on his Harvard Ph.D. dissertation, the first in American Studies, and inspired many subsequent analyses of American myths such as John William Ward's *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (1955), Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* (1960), and Alan Trachtenberg's *The Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (1965).

These books, and the *American Quarterly,* a journal founded in 1949 to give direction to the emerging academic movement, formed the required reading list for the second generation of American Studies graduate students in the years 1950–1980. Little attention was given in these years to the definition of American studies. The new field was a big tent, welcoming all approaches to the study of the U.S. that promised to break the grip of traditional interpretations of America that gave primacy to political and intellectual elites. Paradoxically, by 1969, when the Popular Culture Association seceded from the American Studies Association, American Studies was perceived by many as too conservative politically and methodologically.

## The (Un) Discipline, 1980–2002

### *Definitions*

In the 1960s and 70s, scholarship in English departments began to shift away from the established canon of American novelists and poets and towards forgotten and emerging writers from minority groups. Similarly, more historians embraced social history, with emphasis on slaves, immigrants, and women. Previously, political and intellectual historians had derided social history as "pots and pans history," but the new social history, "history from the bottom up," based its legitimacy on quantification, theories borrowed from British neo-Marxists and French historians of everyday life, and claims of social relevance. American studies, largely focused on myths and symbols, pots and pans, New England villages and midwestern towns, began to seem old-fashioned.

At the 1969 meeting of the American Studies Association, a group dissatisfied with what they perceived to be the political conservatism and academic traditionalism of ASA announced the organization of the Popular Culture Association to encourage the study of subjects that had remained undeveloped by American studies scholars and to be more

engaged in the social protests of the times. Symbolically, the president of the ASA at that meeting, Daniel Boorstin, was the author of a three-volume history, *The Americans* (1958, 1965, 1973), who had broken new ground in arguing the importance of advertising, the media, and consumerism in explaining American life. One of the leaders of the popular culture revolt was Russel Nye, whose *The Cultural Life of the New Nation, 1776–1830* (1960) and *Society and Culture in America, 1830–1860* (1974) were equal to Boorstin's volumes in inclusiveness, but less doctrinaire in its conclusions. Boorstin and Nye's books remain essential for understanding American culture, but American studies followed literary and historical scholarship in the 1970s away from synthesis and generalization about American character and civilization and toward sharply focused and vigorously argued studies of topics limited in time and place.

American studies scholars also became more self-conscious about methods and some began to attempt a definition of the field in an effort to distinguish American studies from other academic domains. The publication of Gene Wise's essay, "'Paradigm Dramas' in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History," in *American Quarterly* in 1979, clearly marks the end of the first era of American studies and the beginning of the second. Wise brilliantly summarized the intellectual origins of the field and offered a glimpse of its future. The single most important book of the new American studies had already appeared, Lawrence Levine's *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (1977), and the next twenty-two years brought hundreds more.

### *Race & Ethnicity*

*African Americans, Native Americans, Immigrants*

A good starting point for understanding the new approaches to race in American studies is Werner Sollors' *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (1986), an imaginative reading of American popular fiction, theater, and social commentary from the 18th to the 20th century. Sollors argues that Americans rejected the idea that hereditary descent was more important than voluntary consent in determining national identity. He examines a wide range of 19th century novels, plays, and non-fiction dealing with immigrant assimilation to illustrate his point. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., helped create African American studies and his book, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (1989), offers a stimulating new approach to the tradition of "signifying," i.e., parodying, punning, playing with lan-

guage, in African folktales and in the literary work of Zora Neale Hurston, Ishmael Reed, and Alice Walker. Gayle F. Wald explores biracial identity and the history of posing as white in American literature in *Crossing the Line: Racial Passing in Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture (2000)*.

Historians soon joined in reorienting studies of race, class, and ethnicity. Alexander Saxton's *The Rise of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (1990) and David Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (1991) made convincing arguments for seeing race in virtually every aspect of public life. In *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (1993), Eric Lott carried Saxton's insights still further in a detailed analysis of working-class entertainment in the 19th century. Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) brought attention to the transatlantic nature of the racial question. James O. and Lois E. Horton provided a synthesis of much of the new research on slavery and civil rights in *Hard Road to Freedom: The Story of African America* (2001).

By the late 1990s, whiteness studies, which focus on the way in which race is defined in American society, tended to be autobiographical, with authors referring to their own lives to explain American racism. Matthew Frye Jacobson's *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigration and the Alchemy of Race* (1998) moved away from that approach and focused on images of race in popular writing. Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (2001), synthesizes much of the new scholarship. Two recent studies show how crucial the American Civil War was in determining the course of race relations. David W. Blight's *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (2001) is a scholarly study, while journalist Tony Horwitz's *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (1998) is a lively account of Civil War reenactors, controversies over flying the Confederate flag, and other racially charged celebrations in the contemporary South.

Others followed scholars of African American history into new areas: George Sanchez, in *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900–1945* (1993) and José David Saldívar, in *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (1997) showed that immigration from Mexico is not a single, simple phenomenon, but a complex interaction of perceptions, misperceptions, and changing realities. Neil Foley combines labor, agricultural, social

class, and racial history in *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (1997). Ronald Takaki in *A Different Mirror: A History of Multiculturalism* (1993), Lisa Lowe, in *Immigrant Act: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (1996), and David Palumbo-Liu, in *Asian/Americans: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (1999) expand the discussion of immigration, assimilation, and the ways in which racial identities have emerged in Asian American communities. Robert Lee, in *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (1999), reviews a vast amount of popular literature, movies, and television in tracing the history of the Asian image in American culture. From "heathen Chinese" to "model minority," the image of the Asian immigrant, and to some extent Asians in general, has been shaped by domestic economic and political issues. Gary Okihiro's *Common Ground: Reimagining American History* (2001) is a brief attempt to synthesize new material on race, gender, and sexuality, and place them in an original, and coherent interpretation of multi-cultural America.

European immigration has been restudied by Norwegian scholar Orm Øverland in *Immigrant Minds, American Identities: Making the United States Home* (2000), while Werner Sollors, working with scholars from many countries on the LOWINUS (languages of what is now the United States) project, has demonstrated that the United States has a rich literary history in many languages. His *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature* (1998) contains essays by two dozen scholars on writers who lived in the U.S. and wrote in a language other than English. Sollors points out the irony of American studies embracing "multiculturalism," but rejecting "multilingualism." Another important study of race in American literature is Eric Sundquist's *To Wake the Nation: Race in the Making of American Literature* (1992). Philip Gleason's *Speaking of Diversity: Language and Ethnicity in Twentieth-Century America* (1992) explores ethnic relations, Catholics and ethnicity, and the changing meaning of "ethnic" and "minority" in American culture. Judith N. Shklat addresses the important question of who is an American in her book, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion* (1991).

Scholarship on Native Americans has benefited from developments in ethnohistory, which employs a combination of anthropological and historical methods. James Axtell led the way with his *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial America* (1981), which contains an excellent definition of the field. The publication in 1988 of volume 4, *History of Indian-White Relations,* of the Smithsonian

Institution's encyclopedic *Handbook of North American Indians* provides a starting place for anyone interested in Native American history. Richard White has produced two excellent studies of American Indians: *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change Among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (1983) and *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes* (1991). The latter focuses on the Algonquians. Ramón A. Gutiérrez's *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1846* (1991) is as packed with detail as its title and subtitle suggest. Anthropologist Anthony F. C. Wallace's brief reevaluation of the removal of the Cherokee from their homeland in the 1830s, *The Long Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians* (1993), explains the failure of the Constitution to protect native rights. The long dismal history of Native Americans and the law is chronicled in David E. Wilkins' *American Indian Sovereignty and the U.S. Supreme Court: The Masking of Justice* (1997). Peter Iverson provides a solid history of the largest Native American group in the U.S. in *Diné: A History of the Navajos* (2002).

Philip J. Deloria's *Playing Indian* (1998) is an amusing look at the ways in which non-Indians have sought to identify with Native Americans by adopting their costumes and trying to imitate their customs. Shari M. Huhndorf, on the other hand, looks at several instances in the late 19th and 20th centuries in which Euro-Americans "go native," in her study, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* (2001). Shepard Krech III, examines the assumption that Native Americans were better environmentalists than the European colonists in his *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (1999). His research indicates that while native technology had less impact on nature, the various Indian groups had considerable impact on flora and fauna and were never especially concerned about conservation.

Five relatively recent histories of Indian-white relations provide important details on the diversity of native life before the conquest and a better understanding of the way in which Europeans and Indians perceived one another. James H. Merrell's *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (1989) is a clearly written study of a small group of southern Indians who were uprooted frequently as settlement increased, but who managed to cling to small parts of their original territory. Daniel K. Richter's *The Ordeal of the Long House: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (1992) provides a detailed account of cultural change among one of the largest and most powerful of the Indian

nations of the northeast. Gordon M. Sayre's *Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (1997) is especially valuable for its comparisons of French and British attitudes. Karen Ordahl Kupperman's *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America* (2000) focuses on the ways in which the two groups constructed and manipulated images of themselves and each other. In *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816* (1999), Claudio Saunt provides a detailed account of the impact of contact on one tribe. Richter's *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (2001) is the first attempt to fully examine the conquest from the Indians' perspective.

Robert S. Tilton's *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative* (1994) is an entertaining account of how the story of the young Indian woman's encounter with Captain John Smith and other Virginia colonists has been retold with different emphases over 300 years. A good introduction to contemporary Native American literature is Louis Owens' *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel* (1992). Arnold Krupat's *Red Matters: Native American Studies* (2002) examines native literature, problems of translation, and questions of identity. Keith Basso's *Wisdom Sits In Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (1996) is a sensitive ethnography that uses oral literature to reveal the complex connection between the people and the land they inhabit.

### *Class*

*Work, Consumption*

Class has always been a problematic term in American studies. Clearly related to economic conditions, it also overlaps with ethnicity, race, religion, education and other matters of culture. The origins of social class distinctions are traced in one upstate New York community in Alan Taylor's *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (1995). Perhaps the most eloquent study of contemporary class divisions is Jacqueline Jones's *The Dispossessed: America's Underclass from the Civil War to the Present* (1992). Lizabeth Cohen's *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939* (1990) is a sophisticated synthesis of labor and urban history and discussion of class and culture. Poverty in America has been studied in other ways by Benedict Giamo in *On the Bowery: Confronting Homelessness in American Society* (1989). *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (2001) by Alice O'Connor provides an up-to-date history of poverty and the

ways in which it has been defined. George Lipsitz's *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (1994, originally published in 1981 as *Class and Culture in Cold War America*) argues that blue-collar workers shifted their class-consciousness in the post-war period from labor organization to the consumption of popular culture. Alice Kessler-Harris brings her vast understanding of American labor history to a study of the interplay of government policy, business ideology, and worker consciousness in *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in the 20th Century* (2001).

A major trend in American studies research in the past 20 years has been on consumption, advertising, and the rise of a middle-class lifestyle defined by material possessions. Roland Marchand's *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920–1940* (1985) was a major influence on later studies and established the thesis that advertisers replaced older sources of social authority such as the family and churches. Susan Strasser's *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (1989) is more descriptive and focuses on the objects themselves. Neil Harris, who had been studying department stores and consumerism for a number of years, brought his essays together in *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America in 1990.* In 1993, William Leach combined a thorough study of the rise of the department store in America with theories of consumption in *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture.* Advertising has received further attention from Jackson Lears in *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (1994) and William L. Bird, Jr., in *Better Living: Advertising, Media, and the New Vocabulary of Business Leadership* (1999), which is distinguished by its use of the collections in the Smithsonian Institution. One of the major items of consumption is time and nothing separates American classes more than their ability to enjoy leisure. As the title of Cindy Aron's study suggests, Americans work hard at having fun. Her *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (1999) is not explicitly about social class distinctions, but the struggle to get paid vacation time is implicit.

Historians who have taken a cultural approach to business history include Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890–1940* (1986); Angel Kwolek-Follen, *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870–1930* (1994); Timothy Spears, *100 Years on the Road: The Traveling Salesman in American Culture* (1995); and Regina Lee Blasz-

cyk, *Imagining Consumers: Design and Innovation from Wedgwood to Corning* (2000). Blaszcyk's detailed study of the glass and ceramics industry reveals the many ways in which consumers influenced manufacturers and retailers, partially refuting the Marchand and Lears thesis that advertisers alone shaped taste.

Kenneth Cmiel offers an interesting insight into the ways in which middle-class educators tried to control spoken English and condemn regional dialect in his study *Democratic Eloquence: The Fight Over Popular Speech in Nineteenth-Century America* (1990). Laura Hapke's *Labor's Text: The Worker in American Fiction* (2001) expands earlier studies of labor fiction by including more ethnic minority literature. Douglas Foley's *Learning Capitalist Culture: Deep in the Heart of Tejas* (1990) is an ethnographic study of race and class in a high school in Texas. Class enters into the recent conflicts over censorship and public funding for the arts as detailed in James Davidson Hunter's *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (1991).

### *Gender & Sexuality*

*Body, Disability, Family, Childhood, Emotions, Medicine*

Gender, the third word in the mantra of race, class, and gender that has come to define American studies in the past 25 years, contains a multitude of ideas and related topics—sexuality, family, childhood, health, emotions, disability, concepts of the human body—that have produced a plethora of good scholarship. Early work focused on the neglected field of women's history. Mary Ryan's *Womanhood in America: From Colonial Times to the Present* (1983) and Martha Banta's *Imaging American Women: Idea and Ideals in Cultural History* (1987) remain good starting places. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich uses one woman's daily experience in the early national period to explore gender roles and family relations in *The Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812* (1990).

Women's studies led inevitably to men's studies. Anthony Rotondo's *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (1993) provides a starting place. The effect of the Vietnam War on the identity of American men is explored in Susan Jeffords' *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (1994). Gail Bederman looks at the turbulent period between the Civil War and World War I in her *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (1995). The topic of gender and sexuality leads to those of love and marriage. Using unpublished correspondence, Karen Lystra does a remarkable job of

exploring male-female relations in *Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth Century America* (1989). Nancy F. Cott's *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (2000) explores state laws on marriage, the effort to enforce monogamy, and the efforts to reconcile private behavior and public morality. Phyllis Palmer's *Domesticity and Dirt: Housewives and Domestic Servants in the United States, 1920–1945* (1989) provides insights into race and class relations as well as women's roles in the early 20th century.

One of the major triumphs of the revolution in American studies and literary scholarship that took place in the 1970s and '80s is the recognition that sexual identities and sexual behavior have a long history. John D'Emilio's *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (1983) was a pioneer effort to reveal that history and remains an important text in many courses on the history of sexuality. It has been supplemented by Allan Bérubé's *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* (1990). Bérubé's use of military and medical records has been praised by many reviewers. The role of the medical establishment in attempting to define the terms of the public debate over sexual identities is extensively surveyed in Jennifer Terry's *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (1999). In *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (2002), Joanne Meyerowitz provides a readable social history of sex change operations framed by the story, widely reported in the 1950s, of Christine Jorgensen, a "G.I. who became a blond beauty." Meyerowitz carefully distinguishes between transsexuality and homosexuality, adding a further dimension to the preceding histories.

Philosopher Judith Butler provides another essential reading on the topic of sexual identities in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990). Drawing on the work of Foucault, Lacan, De Beauvoir and others, Butler argues that our sexual identities are less biologically determined than shaped by culture. Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (1992), focuses on one aspect of cultural control, clothing, to examine how class structure, gender stereotyping, and self-image have been shaped by costume from the sumptuary laws of medieval Europe to the high fashions of the 1990s. Drawing on a wide variety of sources, Garber's lively and readable book is a model of scholarship. Another book that seeks to link European and American sexual attitudes and practices is Jonathan Goldberg's *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sensibilities* (1992). While sodomy might

seem an unlikely topic for an entertaining book, Goldberg's sharp eye for detail and command of his sources make this an accessible and timely book. *Sapphic Slashers: Sex, Violence, and American Modernity* (2000) by Lisa Duggan, uses the case of an 1892 murder of a lesbian woman in Memphis, Tennessee, to explore violence and sex in America. Drawing on the popular press and legal records, Duggan shows how violence against black men and those defined as sexually deviant was rationalized.

Two major studies of minority sexual communities have received praise from academic and popular critics alike. George Chauncey's *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (1994), and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis's *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (1993), are different in method and scope, but similar in their attention to social class as a factor in defining sexual identities. Chauncey's social history focuses chiefly on New York City and argues that the rigid distinction between heterosexual and homosexual is the creation of an insecure middle-class in the early 20th century. Kennedy, an anthropologist, and Davis, a political activist, use oral histories to tell the stories of working-class lesbian women and their bars in Buffalo from the 1930s to the 1970s.

Good studies of disability and body image are just beginning to emerge from the theoretical discussions of gender and sexuality. Rosemary Garland Thomson's *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Disability in American Culture and Literature* (1997) is an important beginning. Joan Jacobs Blumberg's *Fasting Girls: The History of Anorexia Nervosa* (1988) places a medical condition that has become common in contemporary America in the perspective of six centuries of Western history. Peter N. Stearns offers a comparative study of weight loss and body image in the United States and France in the 20th century in *Fat History: Bodies and Beauty in the Modern West* (1997).

Stearns has written a remarkable series of books and articles on emotions in American culture. Beginning with *Jealousy: The Evolution of an Emotion in American History* (1989), continuing with *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style* (1994), and ending most recently with *Battleground of Desire: The Struggle for Self-Control in Modern America* (1999), Stearns has pioneered a field that avoids the pitfalls of an early flirtation by historians with psycho-history. Stearns' work is solidly rooted in historical context and filled with original insights into middle-class values and behavior. *Battleground of Desire*, for example, suggests a new direction for the long-established interest in the self-made man.

Within American studies, disease and wellness have not received great attention, but Harvey Green's *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport, and American Society* (1986) made an important contribution to our understanding of how the human body may be a cultural construction. John Kasson narrows his examination of body building to a few icons of 20th century manliness in *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (2001). The quest for mental as well as physical self-improvement is surveyed in Eva S. Moskowitz's *In Therapy We Trust: America's Obsession with Self-Fulfillment* (2001). Recently, books on tuberculosis and smallpox—Katherine Ott's *Fevered Lives: Tuberculosis in American Culture Since 1870* (1996), and Elizabeth Fenn's *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775–82* (2001)—remind us that epidemics and medicine are intertwined with social class and geographic factors. James T. Patterson's *The Dread Disease: Cancer and Modern American Culture* (1987) remains an outstanding model for blending medical and cultural history. Alan M. Kraut links the history of disease with immigration history in his highly original book *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the Immigrant Menace* (1994). *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (1998) by Nancy Tomes traces the efforts by reformers to make the middle-class aware of bacteria. Gerald Grob, who has written a number of important studies of disease in the United States, has synthesized his work in *The Deadly Truth: A History of Disease in America* (2002). Paul Starr's Pulitzer Prize-winning history of the medical profession, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (1982) is still the best single volume on the health care industry.

Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg describe changes in the American family over three centuries in *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (1988). Gloria L. Main looks at white and Indian family life and childrearing in depth in *Peoples of a Spacious Land: Families and Cultures in Colonial New England* (2001). Stephanie Coontz's two books, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (1992) and *The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with America's Changing Families* (1997) provide a more detailed look at the demographics of contemporary American families. The history and cultures of childhood and youth have received considerable attention. See Harvey J. Graff, *Conflicting Paths: Growing Up in America* (1995) and Joseph Illick, *American Childhoods* (2002). Interesting work has been done on children in wartime. James A. Marten's *The Children's Civil War* (1998) relies heavily on diaries and books published for children during

the war. William M. Tuttle, Jr., bases his book, *Daddy's Gone to War: The Second World War in the Lives of American Children* (1993), on letters and interviews. Miriam Formanek-Brunell's *Made to Play House: Dolls and the Commercialization of American Girlhood, 1830–1930* (1993) uses the discussion of dolls and doll-making in trade journals and autobiographies to reveal the ways in which girls and women found ways to subvert the gendered roles they were taught to play.

The only book that attempts to present children's culture from a child's point of view is *Children's Folklore: A Sourcebook* (1999), edited by the psychologist and folklorist Brian Sutton-Smith and others. Its bibliographic essays point to a large body of primary material for future scholars of childhood.

### *Intellectual & Spiritual*

*Literature, Education, Religion, Law, Politics, National character*

Admittedly, this section includes a large number of fields that are seemingly unrelated, but the common thread is that they focus on that part of American culture that is explicitly meant to shape values and regulate behavior. Since many European colonists were motivated by religious creeds, it makes sense to begin with recent studies of religion in the United States. Catharine Albanese provides a good overview in *America, Religions and Religion* (4th ed., 1999). Barry Shain's *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought* (1994) makes an argument that the tension between individualism and community in American culture is rooted in the earliest settlement. He addresses the concern about excessive individualism expressed by sociologist Robert Bellah and his associates in *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (1985). David Hall, in *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (1989), provides a penetrating look at the superstitions, community life, emerging literacy, and festivals of 17th and 18th century New England.

Religion in the 20th century is intimately associated with commercial and media forces, which Leo Ribuffo in *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (1983), R. Laurence Moore in *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (1994) and Bill Ellis in *Raising the Devil: Satanism, New Religions, and the Media* (2000) investigate. Paul Boyer's *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy and Belief in Modern American Culture* (1992) calls attention to an important aspect of Christian fundamentalism. James Gilbert explores the impact of modern science on organized Christiani-

ty in *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science* (1997). For a fuller treatment of conservative Christianity see Philip H. Melling's *Fundamentalism in America: Millennialism, Identity, and Militant Religion* (2001). Garry Wills, a prolific historian and astute critic of contemporary American life, provides a readable assessment of one important topic in his *Under God: Religion and American Politics* (1990), while the distinguished literary critic Alfred Kazin explores another in *God and the American Writer* (1997). For an overview of secular philosophy, Bruce Kuklick's *A History of Philosophy in America* (2002) is essential. The utopian spirit in America is surveyed by Zachary Karabell in *A Visionary Nation: Four Centuries of American Dreams and What Lies Ahead* (2001). This study of perfectionism links future orientation and national character.

The Constitutions and laws of the federal government and the states are receiving more attention in American studies, although these topics have long been the domain of specialists. Historian Melvin I. Urofsky provides a good starting place in *A March of Liberty: A Constitutional History of the United States* (1988). Legal scholar Lawrence Friedman's *A History of American Law* (3rd ed., 1990) has not been updated in over a decade, but is a comprehensive overview of federal law. His *Law in America: A Short History* (2002) provides some new material and his *Crime and Punishment in American History* (1993) is a lengthy but readable account of criminal law. Helle Porsdam's *Legally Speaking: Contemporary American Culture and the Law* (1999) is an interesting study of legal activism in the U.S. drawing in part on novels by Tom Wolfe, Scott Turow, William Gaddis and Sara Paretsky, the mystery novelist, while Nan Goodman provides an interdisciplinary reading of law and fiction in *Shifting the Blame: Literature, Law, and the Theory of Accidents in Nineteenth-Century America* (1998).

Michael Kammen's *A Machine That Would Go of Itself: The Constitution in American Culture* (1986) is a lively survey of the ways the Constitution has been interpreted, celebrated, and misunderstood over the past 200 years. His brief earlier study of liberty, authority, and property in the 19th and 20th century U.S., *Spheres of Liberty: Changing Perceptions of Liberty in American Culture* (1985), is also useful for understanding how Americans understand their Constitutional rights. Literary scholar Jay Fliegelman and law professor Akil Reed Amar give specialized readings of two of the most important documents of the nation's early history: Fliegelman in *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, and the Culture of Performance* (1993) and Amar in *The Bill of Rights: Creation and Reconstruction* (1998). Indispensable for under-

standing American political culture is Daniel Rodgers' *Contested Truths: Keywords in American Politics Since Independence* (1987).

Questions of citizenship and American identity have been receiving more attention as well. Edmund Morgan, one of the great scholars of early American history, argues that American political stability arose from the idea of self-government instilled by the founding fathers in *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (1988). Rogers M. Smith's *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Versions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (1997) examines changing citizenship laws before 1912. Linda Kerber's *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (1998) is a subtle interpretation of gender and civil society. Michael Schudson's *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life* (1998) shows how concepts of good citizenship and the obligations of citizenship have changed over the past two centuries. He effectively refutes much of the recent concern over the decline of community life in America. Alexander Keyssar reviews the history of one of the most fundamental marks of citizenship in a democracy in *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (2001). Garry Wills identifies six kinds of anti-government ideologies in American history in his witty and timely book, *A Necessary Evil: A History of American Distrust of Government* (1999).

National identity and character are the subject of a study by British scholar Rupert Wilkinson who reviews the history of national character studies and offers a simple, but useful set of American characteristics in *The Pursuit of American Character* (1988). The essays in Michael Zuckerman's *Almost Chosen People: Oblique Biographies in the American Grain* (1993) use the lives of William Byrd, Horatio Alger, Dr. Benjamin Spock and others to reveal American characteristics, while Jill Lepore supports the argument that American identity emerged in the colonial period in *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (1998). *Who We Are: A History of Popular Nationalism* (2002), Robert H. Wiebe's exploration of the European origins and changing contexts of the concept of nation, provides an essential foundation for current debates over the end of the nation state. Celeste Condit and John Lucaites offer a stimulating history of the use of the word "equality" in African American sermons, political rhetoric, and literary texts in *Crafting Equality: America's Anglo-African Word* (1993).

Patriotism follows from citizenship and national identity and has been the subject of a number of excellent studies: Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American*

*Culture* (1993); John Bodner, *Bonds of Affection: Americans Define Their Patriotism* (1996); Cecilia E. O'Leary, *To Die for: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (1999); and Walter Berns, *Making Patriots* (2001). Kammen and Bodner look at popular celebrations and rituals, while O'Leary and Berns examine such issues as women's role in teaching patriotism, the "Pledge of Allegiance," and the duties of citizenship. The emergence of flag worship, a visible symbol of American patriotism, is explained in Scot Guenter's *The American Flag, 1777–1924: Cultural Shifts from Creation to Codification* (1990). The story from 1924 to the present still needs to be written. Richard Ellis makes a neat synthesis in *American Political Culture* (1993).

In 1999, three political scientists published books useful to anyone trying to present American culture as a whole. John McElroy's *American Beliefs: What Keeps a Big Country and a Diverse People United* (1999) is a brief discussion of 25 values that McElroy sees as crucial to understanding Americans. Many of the values are in conflict, e.g., (8) each person is responsible for his own well-being and (10) progress requires organization, but his explanation of when and why various values and beliefs arose is compelling. John W. Kingdon's *America the Unusual* (1999) compares American values and practices with those of other countries and supports the currently unpopular position of American exceptionalism. John Ehrenberg's *Civil Society: The Critical History of an Idea* is a wide-ranging review of ideas of civil society from the ancient Greeks to the present and a spirited attack on cultural studies theorists' rejection of the idea of nation. Historian Robert H. Wiebe's survey of American political culture, *Self-Rule: A Cultural History of American Democracy* (1995) provides many historical details to supplement the generalizations of Kingdon and Ehrenberg and supports their condemnation of "possessive individualism."

Some aspects of American character and law frequently puzzle visitors and scholars from outside the U.S.—among them are gun ownership, violence, and the death penalty. Alexander DeConde offers an explanation for the prominence of gun ownership in *Gun Violence in America: The Struggle for Control* (2001). Howard I. Kushner's *Self-Destruction in the Promised Land: A Psychocultural Biology of American Suicide* (1989) traces theories relating to one kind of violence. Stuart Banner's *The Death Penalty: An American History* (2002) examines the changing technology of executions and the debate over legal executions.

Part of the puzzle of American political culture arises from the federal system and states' rights. John C. Teaford's *The Rise of the States:*

*Evolution of American State Government* (2002) is the most recent study of federal-state relations. Neal Peirce's *The Book of America: Inside the 50 States Today* (1983) is a somewhat outdated, but still informative glimpse of state politics by a journalist. One of the most important manifestations of state power is control of public schools. This may account for the lack of scholarly work on education in American studies, but Joel H. Spring's books, first published in the 1980s, are the standard historical texts. *American Education* (9th ed., 2000) is an overview of the politics of education, while *The American School, 1642–2000* (5th ed., 2001) looks at the social aspects.

Cultural histories of various periods attempt to integrate intellectual, religious, and legal beliefs and values. For example, David Hackett Fisher's *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (1989) systematically compares migration from four regions of Great Britain to four areas of North America and shows how distinct traditions endured. The formation of selfhood and individual autonomy by people of all races and social classes is the subject of Michael Sobel's *Teach Me Dreams: The Search for Self in the Revolutionary Era* (2000). Richard D. Brown's *The Strength of a People: The Idea of Informed Citizenry in America, 1650–1870* (1996) focuses on the ways in which civic education took place, supplementing his early history of communications in the colonial period and the early Republic, *Knowledge is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700–1865* (1989). Rhys Isaac's much admired study of the political and community life of Williamsburg and plantation Virginia, *The Transformation of Colonial Virginia, 1740–1790* (1982), remains a model of an anthropological approach to history.

Thomas Bender focuses on the cultural life of one of the most important American cities in *New York Intellect: A History of Intellectual Life in New York City, From 1750 to the Beginnings of Our Own Time* (1987). Richard Bushman's *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (1992) focuses on the role of the middle-class in promoting a style of manners and decorative arts that defined good taste. Jackson Lears' influential study of conservative thought at the end of the 19th century, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture* (1981) remains relevant, as neo-conservative social thought continues to play a significant role in American politics. Another dimension of anti-modernism is explored by Carl Degler's *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought* (1991), which continues Richard Hofstadter's classic work on Social Darwinism by examining the rise of sociobiology in the 20th century.

The impact of World War II and nuclear weapons is readably recounted by Paul Boyer in *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (1985), but Tom Engelhardt's *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (1996) is a fuller treatment. For the 1950s alone, W.T. Lhamon's *Deliberate Speed: The Origins of a Cultural Style in the American 1950s* (1990, 2002) is highly recommended. The decade of the 1960s is analyzed in various ways as indicated by their titles, by Meta Mendel-Reyes in *Reclaiming Democracy: The Sixties in Politics and Memory* (1995), and by Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin in *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (2000). Whether we celebrate or condemn American culture of the recent past depends on many things, chiefly the perspective offered by time. Garry Wills offers a highly entertaining example of instant history in his view of the early 1980s, *Reagan's America: Innocents at Home* (1987). Australian scholar Keith Beattie tackles a still difficult subject in *The Scar that Binds: American Culture and the Vietnam War* (1998).

For American literature, turn first to Marcus Cunliffe's masterful one-volume history, *The Literature of the United States* (1986). For American literature since the 1980s, two other insightful scholars from outside the U.S., Englishman Tony Tanner—*The American Mystery: American Literature from Emerson to DeLillo* (2000)—and the French cultural critic Marc Chénetier—*Beyond Suspicion: New American Fiction Since 1960* (1996)—make insightful readings of American writers. Tanner's *Scenes of Nature, Signs of Men* (1987) is a survey of 19th and 20th century American literature. Cathy Davidson in *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (1986) combines a subtle rereading of women's novels in the 18th and early 19th century with a careful examination of the books as artifacts and the business of publishing and selling books. Thomas Scanlan offers a fresh reading of early colonial literature in *Colonial Writing in the New World 1583–1671: Allegories of Desire* (1999), while T. V. Reed, places *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, Invisible Man, and Armies of the Night* in historical and political context in his *Fifteen Jugglers, Five Believers: Literary Politics and the Poetics of American Social Movements* (1992).

Attention to readers and the ways in which books were printed, distributed, and consumed have resulted in two ground-breaking studies: Ronald J. Zboray's *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public (1993*) and Richard H. Broadhead's *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America*

(1993). Andrew Burstein focuses on sentiment and sympathy in American public life in the early 19th century in *Sentimental Democracy: The Evolution of America's Romantic Self-Image* (1999). Scott Casper examines another facet of literature and nationalism in *Constructing American Lives: Biography and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (1999). Casper's thorough and innovative study combines reader response theory and business history and places the subject within its cultural context.

David Minter places major early 20th century American literature in its historical context in *A Cultural History of the American Novel: Henry James to William Faulkner* (1994). Elizabeth Long's *The American Dream and the Popular Novel* (1985) covers a wide range of bestsellers and classic fiction. Carrie Tirado Bramen reevaluates American fiction in the context of multiculturalism in *The Uses of Variety: Modern Americanism and the Quest for National Distinctiveness* (2000). Bramen begins with the work of William James and his students on American pluralism, but also analyzes the power of the particular and local in American culture.

***Popular Culture & Folklife***

This section will be limited to broad themes in popular culture, print media, radio, music, sport, and speech. The visual arts, film and television, and public ceremonies are treated in later sections. Popular culture is notoriously difficult to define and carries a great deal of political weight. Lawrence Levine's *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (1988) and Michael Kammen's *American Culture, American Tastes: Social Change in the Twentieth Century* (1999) offer hypotheses for understanding how tastes are defined in a seemingly classless society. *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (1989) by Andrew Ross examines the tension between intellectuals such as Dwight McDonald and Clement Greenberg and mass culture in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. He concludes with a chapter on the TV quiz show scandals of 1959 and the rise of pornography. Jim Cullen's *The Art of Democracy: A Concise History of Popular Culture in the United States* (1996) updates Russel Nye's encyclopedic history *The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America* (1970). Cullen has extended his analysis in two directions. His *The Civil War in Popular Culture: A Reusable Past* (1995) complements the books by David Blight and Tony Horwitz mentioned on page 10 by analyzing film and video treatments of the war; and Cullen's *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea that Shaped a Nation* (2002) revisits an idea that was once a major topic in American studies.

As mentioned in the introduction above, American studies scholars tended to treat popular culture as trivial in the 1960s and 70s. The publication in 1984 of Sean Wilentz' *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1780–1850* linked popular culture and the new social history and inspired dozens of new works that mine the rich ore of labor newspapers, burlesque, dime novels, parades, and community festivals. Michael Denning's *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (1987) expanded the geographic scope and David Reynolds offered a full rereading of both popular and elite literature of the 1840s and '50s in his important and readable *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (1988).

Twentieth century American popular culture has received extensive treatment. Miles Orvell explores the problem of determining what is authentic in an age of inexpensive reproduction and mass marketing in *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880–1940* (1989). Kathy Peiss focuses on the appeal of the new entertainment industry to immigrant women in *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (1986). Prohibition and the rise of organized crime gave popular culture in the 1920s its peculiar twist. See David Ruth's *Inventing the Public Enemy: The Gangster in American Culture, 1918–1934* (1996) and David Gid Powers' *G-Men: Hoover's FBI in American Popular Culture* (1983).

The 1930s is an especially fruitful period in the production and consumption of popular culture with the coming of sound in movies, the expansion of radio, and the revival of pride in local cultures in the Depression. Michael Denning's *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (1997) looks at the interplay of labor, radical political thought, and popular culture. Joan Shelly Rubin explores the success of art appreciation classes, book clubs, and other middle-class phenomena in *The Making of Middle Brow Culture* (1992).

Early radio is just receiving scholarly attention. Susan Smulyan's *Selling Radio: The Commercialization of American Broadcasting, 1920–1934* (1994) is limited in scope, but rich in detail. Melvin Patrick Ely's *The Adventures of Amos 'N' Andy: A Social History of an American Phenomenon* (1991) is a detailed look at one of the most popular radio shows of the 1930s, which featured white actors doing African American comic characters.

Another form of popular culture that first appeared in the 1930s was comic books with heroes such as "Superman." M. Thomas Inge's

*Comics as Culture* (1990) is a good introduction, since he includes newspaper comic strips, which began in the first decade of the century. In *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (2001) Bradford Wright makes a good case for the relative freedom of comic book publishers in the 1940s and early 1950s to satisfy the tastes of their customers. The comic book was thought to be the cause of much of the juvenile crime of the 1950s, as James Gilbert shows in his entertaining *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (1986). Paperback romance novels published by Harlequin and other companies are popular with a large number of women. Janice A. Radway studied the reading habits and attitudes of about forty readers in her very influential book, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (1991).

Recent scholarship on American music has followed the currents of writing on race and gender. But Barbara Tischler's *An American Music: The Search for an American Musical Identity* (1986) addresses early concerns with high culture and national culture, as does John Dizikes' *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (1993) on a form of music that demands cross-cultural comparison. Robert J. Branham and Steven J. Hartnett have written an interesting and timely history of the popular patriotic song, "My Country 'tis of Thee," which uses the melody of the British anthem "God Save the Queen/King." Their book, *Sweet Freedom's Song: "My Country 'tis of Thee" and Democracy in America* (2002) is an excellent example of an American studies approach to music, placing the song in its various historical contexts over two centuries.

More recent popular songs are studied by Philip Furia in *The Poets of Tin Pan Alley: A History of America's Great Lyricists* (1990), Allen Forte, Richard Lalli, and Gary Chapman in *Listening to Classical American Popular Songs* (2001), and Lawrence Starr and Christopher Waterman in *American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MTV* (2002). Forte discusses twenty-three songs from George Gershwin's "Fascinating Rhythm" (1924) to Irving Berlin's "Steppin' Out with My Baby" (1947). Starr and Waterman provide detailed discussions of particular songs, biographical sketches, and analyses of broader historical and cultural themes in American music from the early 19th century to Reggae, MTV, and Hip-Hop. Their book, like Furia's, includes an audio CD.

The bibliography of jazz is extensive. James Lincoln Collier's *Jazz: The American Theme Song* (1993) and Burton W. Peretti's *The Creation of Jazz: Music, Race, and Culture in Urban America* (1992) are highly recommended, but music, like other arts, generates strong opinions and

passionate fans who feel strongly about scholarly interpretations. No single book is likely to satisfy them. The precursors of jazz were often played on an instrument said to have been invented by slaves in America. Karen Linn provides a history of that instrument in *That Half-Barbaric Twang: The Banjo in American Popular Culture* (1991).

The banjo can sometimes be found in country and western music. Curtis W. Ellison's *Country Music: From Hard Times to Heaven* (1995) is a useful introduction. Cecelia Tichi's *High Lonesome: The American Culture of Country Music* (1994) comes with an audio CD. Rock and roll, like jazz, has generated a small library of books, mostly from fans. Greil Marcus's books are all good and his attempt to place Elvis Presley into an American studies context, *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'n' Roll Music* (3rd revised ed., 1990) is still readable and informative. Robert G. Pielke's *You Say You Want a Revolution: Rock Music in American Culture* (1986) is a useful catalog of music and events. Erika Doss investigates the subculture of Elvis fans in *Elvis Culture: Fans, Faith, and Image* (1999). One of the first attempts to make sense of recent urban music is *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (1994) by Tricia Rose. For the impact of jazz, Elvis, and rock 'n' roll on other cultures, see German scholar Uta Poiger's well-documented study, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (2000).

Folklore often overlaps with popular culture and music, but contains many other strains of American culture. Labor historian and folklorist Archie Green's *Calf's Head & Union Tale: Labor Yarns at Work and Play* (1996) is an entertaining collection of jokes and stories with a brief introduction. Food preparation and consumption within social classes and ethnic groups have also received considerable attention in recent years. One of the best is Donna Gabaccia's *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (1998). Sport, amateur and professional, also helps to define American values. Allen Guttmann has written extensively on the subject. His *A Whole New Ball Game: An Interpretation of American Sports* (1988) is a good starting place. Elliott Gorn and Warren Goldstein survey a larger number of sports in *A Brief History of American Sports* (1993). Michael Oriard, a professor of literature and former professional football player, provides a good look at American-style football in *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle* (1993). Humor is sadly neglected in American studies. Daniel Wickberg's *The Senses of Humor: Self and Laughter in Modern America* (1998) looks at theories of humor and some examples.

Surprisingly, the American language has not been a subject of much interest in American studies. Irving Lewis Allen's *The City in Slang: New York Life and Popular Speech (*1993) is a history of language in the New York press. Kenneth G. Wilson's *Van Winkle's Return: Change in American English 1966–1986* (1987) covers the crucial decades in which middle-class Americans began using the profanity of the working class. Raymond Gozzi, Jr. provides a reliable guide to the living language in *New Words and a Changing American Culture* (1990). Journalist William Safire's *Safire's New Political Dictionary: The Definitive Guide to the New Language of Politics* (3rd ed., 1993) is a good read. Two historical dictionaries have reached the letter "O." Both are indispensable for the serious student of American literature and culture: Frederick Cassidy's *Dictionary of American Regional English* (vol. I, A-C, 1985; vol. II, D-H, 1991; vol. III, I-O, 1996) and J. E. Lighter's *Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang* (vol. I, A-G, 1994; vol. II, H-O, 1997).

Finally, where does one place such seemingly simple everyday acts as naming children? Our given names (as well as family names) carry much information about American history and culture. Sociologist Stanley Lieberson provides a fascinating account in *A Matter of Taste: How Names, Fashions, and Culture Change* (2000). He also suggests ways in which fashions in dress and music change.

### *Visual Culture & Media*

*Arts, Movies, TV*

David Bjelajac's textbook, *American Art: A Cultural History* (2001) is a welcome addition to the growing number of studies of American fine arts because it provides a 500-year survey. Most recent studies are confined to a few years and a single theme. In *Plain Painters: Making Sense of American Folk Art* (1988), folklorist John Vlach argues that "folk art" and "primitive art" are misnomers. His most recent study of neglected American artists focuses on Southern landscape painting. *The Planter's Prospect: Privilege and Slavery in Plantation Painting* (2002) is a companion volume to Vlach's *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (1993) described in the following section. Angela Miller's *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825–1875* (1993) reinterpreted the Hudson River and Rocky Mountain painters by placing them in the context of westward expansion. Sarah Burns has contributed two excellent monographs, *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (1989), and *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age*

*America* (1996). The latter addresses issues of gender, art as a business, and nationalism. Elizabeth Johns' *American Genre Painting: The Politics of Everyday Life* (1991) is more concerned with defining a style of art than with historical context, but it is a good introduction to its subject. Kirsten Swinth focuses on the education and training of women artists and their struggles with male art critics in *Painting Professionals: Women Artists and the Development of Modern American Art, 1870–1930* (2001).

Versions of modernism are explored in three essential books. In *Benton, Pollock, and the Politics of Modernism: From Regionalism to Abstract Expressionism* (1991), Erika Doss argues that Jackson Pollock's rejection of the realist style of his teacher Thomas Hart Benton was less dramatic than it appears and that they were bound by similar aesthetic and political strategies. Doss places their lives and work in the larger context of the Depression, World War II, and the Cold War. While focusing on gender issues, Barbara Melosh provides a sweeping survey of public arts of the 1930s in the midst of the debates over modernism in *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in New Deal Public Art and Theater (*1991). Wanda Corn's *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915–1935* (1999) places abstract art in the context of technological and social change. Other students of American visual arts have broken new ground with studies of book illustration and private collecting. Gregory M. Pfitzer's *Picturing the Past: Illustrated Histories and the American Imagination, 1840–1900* (2002) deals with an important but neglected genre of art. Elizabeth A. Schultz's exhaustively researched and beautifully illustrated *Unpainted to the Last: Moby Dick and Twentieth-Century American Art* (1995) will delight any reader interested in book illustration. David Halle's *Inside Culture: Art and Class in the American Home* (1994) looks at how 160 New Yorkers of three social classes choose to display art and family photographs in their homes.

American studies scholars have paid more attention to documentary photography than to art or commercial photography, but the list of significant books is expanding. Alan Trachtenberg's *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (1989) remains the best starting place. Trachtenberg does an excellent job placing Brady, Hine, Stieglitz, Evans and others in their historical contexts. Nancy West's *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia* (2000) provides a look at the popularization of amateur photography after George Eastman's invention of flexible film and the disposable Brownie camera. Many of the early photographers—portrait, landscape, and documentary—were women. *Women's Camera Work: Self/Body/Other in American Visual Cul-*

*ture* (1998) by Judith Fryer Davidov is a sophisticated interpretation of gender and photography. Many Americans saw their first photographs at public exhibitions, the subject of Julie K. Brown's well illustrated *Making Culture Visible: The Public Display of Photography at Fairs, Expositions, and Exhibitions in the United States, 1847–1900* (2001).

After the development of the photogravure process in the 1880s, another popular way to see the work of professional photographers was in magazines. An interesting study of the cultural meanings of photographs in one of the most popular and influential magazines in American history is provided by anthropologists Catherine A. Lutz and Jane L. Collins in *Reading National Geographic* (1993). The value of photography for public relations was immediately recognized by business, as David Nye shows in *Image Worlds: Corporate Identities at General Electric* (1985). The role of photojournalists is revealed in Michael L. Carlebach's two histories: *The Origins of Photojournalism* (1992) and *American Photojournalism Comes of Age* (1997), while Susan Moeller concentrates on *Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience of Combat* (1989). Maren Stange provides an overview of documentary photography in *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America, 1890–1950* (1989), and James Curtis supplies a more detailed look at the great New Deal Farm Security Administration photo project in *Mind's Eye, Mind's Truth: FSA Photography Reconsidered* (1990). Photography since the 1930s has not yet been placed in its historical contexts, but Eric Sandeen's *Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America* (1995) reveals the interplay of photography and politics.

The place of motion pictures in American culture has received considerable attention. The outstanding general histories are: Robert Sklar's *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (1975, revised & updated 1994) and Richard Maltby's *Hollywood Cinema* (1999), although Maltby is more concerned with the influence of business on art than on broader questions of cultural values. Gregory A. Waller's *Main Street Amusements: Movies and Commercial Entertainment in a Southern City, 1896–1930* (1995) is a model for the kind of work that needs to be done on the impact of movies in specific places. Waller looks at Lexington, Kentucky, a city undergoing modernization of both work and leisure. The power of movie critics to shape attitudes toward motion pictures is carefully analyzed by Raymond J. Haberski in *It's Only a Movie!: Films and Critics in American Culture* (2001).

The story of the struggle for control of the content of movies is well told in Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons' *Dame in the Kimono: Hol-*

*lywood, Censorship, and the Production Code* (1996, 2001). Studio control of movies collapsed in the 1950s and a rating system replaced the old code. The radical change in movie content, especially in terms of sex and violence, has not yet been fully analyzed. William J. Palmer has made an attempt in his decade studies: *The Films of the Seventies: A Social History* (1987), and *The Films of the Eighties: A Social History* (1993). Thomas Cripps, who has chronicled African American cinema, offers a good survey of race relations in *Hollywood in Making Movies Black: The Hollywood Message Movie from World War II to the Civil Rights Era* (1993). Robert Brent Toplin critiques the uses of history in eight recent movies including "Mississippi Burning" and "JFK" in his entertaining *History by Hollywood: The Use and Abuse of the American Past* (1996). On Walt Disney see Steven Watts, *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life* (1997).

The mass media in general and television in particular have not been fully analyzed. Daniel Czitrom made a splendid and still useful beginning in *Media and the American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan* (1982) and textbooks such as *Voices of a Nation: A History of Mass Media in the United States* (4th ed 2002) by Jean Folkerts and Dwight L. Teeters provide an overview. Lynn Spigel's *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Post War America* (1992) is a thoughtful analysis of the ways in which TV affected family relations. Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis look closely at the content and style of one popular TV show of the 1980s in *Enlightened Racism: The Cosby Show, Audiences, and the Myth of the American Dream* (1992). An outstanding book that examines TV news coverage of the Gulf War and other events in the Middle East, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East* (2001) by Melani McAlister is a model for media studies. By placing TV in the context of other media and the full range of discussion of Islam and the West, McAlister is able to give a balanced picture of American attitudes, misconceptions, and enthusiasms.

### *Material Culture, Built Environment, & Technology*

Interest in objects, architecture, and technology was prominent in American studies from it earliest years, although it took several years for it to be manifested in publications other than those of Lewis Mumford and John Kouwenhoven. Thomas J. Schlereth's introduction to *Material Culture Studies in America* (1982), a collection of essays on various topics, is still the best introduction to the history of the field, but it is somewhat out of date. Folklorists have made material culture a central part of their study, as Simon Bronner's *Grasping Things: Folk Material Culture*

*and Mass Society in America* (1986) eloquently demonstrates. Arthur Asa Berger's *Bloom's Morning: Coffee, Comforters, and the Secret Meanings of Everyday Life* (1997) is a brief, amusing application of deconstructionist theory to household objects, recommended for students. Another popular book is James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life* (1977, revised ed. 1996), which is based on the author's extensive fieldwork. Laurel Ulrich brings her unique blend of careful research and lucid writing to a study of ten objects from New England's past in *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (2001). Among the things she describes and explains are an Indian basket, spinning wheels, a pocketbook, a tablecloth, and an unfinished stocking.

The best material culture studies are focused on a limited number of specific objects. Jeffrey Meikle's *Twentieth Century Limited: Industrial Design in America, 1925–1939* (1979) is based largely on the papers of industrial designers Normal Bel Geddes, Raymond Loewy and others, but considers the cultural meanings of the objects and is well illustrated. Katherine C. Grier's *Culture and Comfort: People, Parlors, and Upholstery, 1850–1930* (1988) is a model of careful documentation of furniture and decorative arts material and solid interpretation of their meanings. Kenneth Ames analyzes similar objects in his lively study, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture* (1992). Colleen McDannell surveys the vast array of religious icons and objects in *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (1996).

Material culture studies often demand technical knowledge of the object studied. Henry Petroski, an engineer, has written several excellent studies of everyday objects. *The Pencil: A History of Design and Circumstance (1989)* and *The Evolution of Useful Things* (1992) are filled with fascinating details on the objects and the process of innovation. Witold Rybczynski's *One Good Turn: A Natural History of the Screwdriver and the Screw* (2000) is a similarly engaging history of an object and its technology. Historian Robert Friedel's *The Zipper: An Exploration in Novelty* (1994) combines the history of technology, business history, and material culture study. Literary scholar Fred Miller Robinson takes a more traditional approach to an object in his *The Man in the Bowler Hat: His History and Iconography* (1993), but the result is an insightful contribution to the meaning of clothing in general.

With such abundance of material objects in America the problem of disposal of unwanted material culture looms large. Three scholars have looked at the meaning of junk. Archaeologist William L. Rathje began

studying household refuse in the 1970s and his book, *Rubbish! The Archaeology of Garbage* (1992), written with Cullen Murphy, is a summary of his findings that relate types of discarded material to social class. City planner Kevin Lynch offers a philosophical meditation on the way Americans think about unwanted things in *Wasting Away* (1990). Historian Susan Strasser's *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash* (1999) looks at trash as a problem of consumerism and the recycling movement. Problems of municipal sanitation have been explored by Martin Melosi, whose books are listed in the next section on the environment.

Architecture and the built environment is too specialized a field to cover thoroughly, but some architectural historians and American studies scholars have a common interest in the cultural meanings of buildings rather than simply in style. There are two excellent surveys of American architecture: Alan Gowans, *Styles and Types of North American Architecture: Social Functions and Cultural Expression* (1992) and Dell Upton, *Architecture in the United States* (1998). Upton organizes his book by topic with emphasis on buildings in the contexts of business and the environment. He begins with a chapter on the house as icon, then looks at communities, nature, and technology. His examples are beautifully illustrated with many color plates. Neil Harris offers a novel interpretation of urban commercial architecture as part of the life cycle of cities, focusing on the rites and ceremonies of design, cornerstone laying, construction, use, and demolition of buildings in *Building Lives: Constructing Rites and Passages* (1999). Robert Blair St. George looks at colonial New England architecture in the context of material culture, landscape, and social organization in *Conversing by Signs: Poetics of Implication in Colonial New England Culture* (1998). John Michael Vlach's *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (1993), mentioned above on page 28, combines the folklorist's interest in community, performance of culture in daily life, and vernacular architecture.

Commercial architecture, often associated with suburban malls and highway strips, has received much attention. Good examples are Richard Longstreth's two detailed studies of southern California: *City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles, 1920–1950* (1998) and *The Drive-In, the Supermarket, and the Transformation of Commercial Space in Los Angeles, 1914–1941* (1999). In *The Gas Station in America* (1994) geographers John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle look at design and cultural meanings of a ubiquitous landmark of American cities and highways. Recent events have made the cultural meanings of skyscrapers and embassies all too obvious. Angus K. Gille-

spie's *Twin Towers: The Life of New York City's World Trade Center* (1999, updated 2002) and Jane Loeffler's *The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building America's Embassies* (1998) provide detailed information and suggest new avenues of approach.

For a good overview of the cultural meanings of technology in America begin with Thomas P. Hughes, *American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870–1970* (1989). A beautifully illustrated history of industrialization in the 18th and 19th centuries employing the insights of historical archaeologists and historians is *The Texture of Industry: An Archeological View of the Industrialization of North America* (1993) by Robert B. Gordon and Patrick M. Malone. Laura Rigal's *The American Manufactory: Art, Labor, and the World of Things in the Early Republic* (1998) combines a number of disciplines in explaining the image of the American "mechanic" as culture hero.

Electricity was, of course, the technological innovation that created modern America. David Nye's *Electrifying America: Social Meanings of a New Technology* (1990) provides numerous insights into the impact of electricity on individuals, communities, and the nation. His book *American Technological Sublime* (1994) links the idea of the sublime in the landscape of America to the new technological landscape of dams, bridges, and skyscrapers. It is an original and stimulating synthesis. In *Consuming Power: A Social History of American Energies* (1998), Nye carries his arguments forward by examining in detail water and steam industrial systems, and the electric and nuclear power economies. John Jakle explores another aspect of electrification on American culture in his *City Lights: Illuminating the American Night* (2001). Much of the cultural impact of electricity was in the home, as Susan Strasser shows in *Never Done: A History of American Housework* (1982). No technological innovation changed American indoor living more than heating and cooling technologies. Marsha Ackerman's *Cool Comfort: America's Romance with Air Conditioning* (2002) focuses on the cultural aspects, while Gail Cooper's *Air-Conditioning America: Engineers and the Controlled Environment, 1900–1960* (1998) has more on technology.

Of the many major technological innovations that shaped America, none changed it more profoundly than the automobile. James Flink's *The Automobile Age* (1988) is a comprehensive survey of the technological and social changes. The impact of the airplane is considered briefly in Joseph Corn's *Winged Gospel: America's Romance with Aviation* (1983, 2nd ed. 2002). The romance with aviation began long before powered flight, as Tom Crouch makes clear in his comprehensive history *Eagle*

*Aloft: Two Centuries of the Balloon in America* (1983). The meanings of flight beyond the atmosphere are well analyzed by Walter McDougall in *…the Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age* (1985). The material that made much of the space age possible is analyzed in Jeffrey Meikle's *American Plastic: A Cultural History* (1995).

### *Place & Environment*

*Rural, City, Cultural geography, Tourism*

The continental United States is composed of many distinct regions and places and its geography is one of its major distinguishing characteristics. D. W. Meinig's projected four-volume historical geography, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History*, will be the standard basic text for many years. The first three volumes are: *Atlantic America, 1492–1800* (1986), *Continental America, 1800–1867* (1993), and *Transcontinental America, 1850–1915* (1998). A somewhat dated, but insightful political and social study of American regionalism by journalist Joel Garreau, *The Nine Nations of North America* (1981) is still readable and useful. In light of recent discussions of "homeland security," Richard L. Nostrand and Lawrence E. Estaville's collection of essays, *Homelands: A Geography of Culture and Place Across America* (2001) is timely. The essays cover New England, the plantation South, south Texas, Navajo and Mormon lands in the west, Montana, and Old Order Amish lands, among others.

Some regions are more distinct than others. New England, as Joseph Wood argues in his *The New England Village* (1997), was shaped by its physical geography and climate as well as by the dreams of its settlers for community and salvation. There are many Souths, one of which Edward Ayers explores in his award-winning book, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (1992), a masterful synthesis of social and cultural history. No region has had more attention in the past few years than the West. Revision of the old triumphalist narrative began with Patricia Limrick's *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (1987) and continued with Richard White's comprehensive *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History of the American West* (1991).

The origins of American geographical knowledge are investigated in Bruce Harvey's *American Geographics: U.S. National Narratives and the Representation of the Non-European World, 1830–1865* (2001) and Susan Schulten's *The Geographical Imagination in America, 1880–1950* (2001). Perhaps a study of the teaching of geography in the past 40 years would explain how Americans have become so ignorant of their own and the

world's geography. David Jacobson tries to explain how place matters to *Americans in Place and Belonging in America* (2002).

Given the ubiquity of the automobile, the vigorous promotion of tourism by local officials and the tourism industry, and the American public's desire to discover their roots, it is not surprising that tourism has become a prime topic in American studies. John Jakle's *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth Century America* (1985) is a descriptive account of automobile travel. Marguerite Shaffer offers a more interpretive account in *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880–1940* (2001). John Sears traces the roots (and routes) of earlier, railroad-sponsored tourism in *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (1989). Dona Brown questions the authenticity of some early tourist sites in *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (1995). Hal Rothman critiques the promise of prosperity from tourist dollars in his lively *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth Century American West* (1998), focusing on the environmental damage caused by over-development of parks and recreation areas. The exploitation of local people by tourists is the focus of Jane Desmond's *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World* (1999).

Environmental historians continue to feel marginalized in American studies, despite the increasing number of books about human impact on nature and the rise of ecocriticism within literature departments. One book, which bridges the gap between early American studies interest in "the virgin land" and "the machine in the garden" is Roderick Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind.* First published in 1967, before the passage of environmental protection laws in the 1970s, Nash has revised it four times since, most recently in 2002. Several new environmental histories have been published recently, but few directly address the interplay of nature and culture. Instead, they focus on the passage of environmental legislation and the rise of private conservation organizations. John Opie's *Nature's Nation: An Environmental History of the United States* (1997) is reliable and thorough. Theodore Steinberg's *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History* (2000) attempts to depict history from nature's point-of-view. Samuel P. Hays offers two histories of the environmental movement since World War II. *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955–1985* (1987) is sweeping in scope and makes a good argument that the new environmentalism is driven by aesthetic and health concerns and is fundamentally conservative in its attitude toward change. *A History of Environmental Politics Since 1945* (2000) updates the earlier volume.

Most environmental histories focus on single topics or a single location. David Cronon's brief but compelling *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (1983) is a brilliant tour de force that focuses on the contrasting ideas of land ownership held by natives and colonists. His conclusion that labor scarcity and abundant land turned "a people of plenty…to a people of waste," has been borne out countless times in the ravaging of natural resources. The legacy of colonial environmental ignorance is taken up by Theodore Steinberg in *Nature Incorporated: Industrialization and the Waters of New England* (1991). Steinberg looks at dam building and water law from 1813–1894, and the social and ecological consequences of industrialization. Literary scholar Laura Dassow Walls looks at the same period through the writings of Thoreau who was struggling to reconcile his spiritual and scientific views of nature. Her *Seeing New Worlds: Henry David Thoreau and Nineteenth-Century Natural Science* (1996) argues that the author of Walden became a convert to the ideas and methods of the German naturalist and philosopher Alexander von Humboldt.

Women have been prominent in environmental study and protection as Marcia Myers Bonta and Vera Norwood make clear. Bonta's *Women in the Field: America's Pioneering Women Naturalists* (1991) sketches the lives of several 20th century scientists and educators, while Norwood's *Made from the Earth: American Woman and Nature* (1993), includes writers and illustrators as well as scientists from the time of Thoreau to the present. For a detailed biography of the most influential woman environmentalist, see Linda Lear's *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature* (1997).

As Americans pushed west, they built cities as well as homesteads. The complex connections between urban centers and their hinterlands is convincingly illustrated by William Cronon in *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (1991), an impressive and detailed account of the ways Chicago's lumber, meat, and grain merchants learned to control the flow of nature's products regardless of seasons. The other side of the urban environment, the management of air pollution, solid waste, and clean water supply, is the subject of two books by Martin Melosi: *Garbage in the City: Refuse, Reform, and the Environment, 1880–1980* (1981) and *The Sanitary City: Urban Infrastructure in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (2000).

Long ignored as a valuable resource, water emerged in the late 19th century as the most important element in conservation. Donald Worster's *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (1985) is an impressive blend of political, social, and cultural

history that explains many of the current issues in American environmental politics. Mark Fiege's scope is much smaller, irrigation in Idaho, but his book, *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West* (1999) adds vivid detail to Worster's broad canvas. Fiege is especially good in showing how Idaho farmers defined their landscape and blurred the distinctions between nature and culture. In the American west water unused is water wasted. Richard White explains why in a brilliant brief analysis, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (1995).

The ultimate source of more than half of the water west of the 100th meridian is snow. Bernard Mergen's history of the ways in which snow has been important in North American history and culture, *Snow in America* (1997), examines the symbolic meanings of snow from the 1780s to the 1990s, as well as the contributions of meteorology, hydrology, and physics to the scientific understanding of snow and its management for transportation and recreation. Stephen Pyne has written several volumes on the impact of wild fires throughout the world. *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire* (1982) is a detailed critique of fire management by Native Americans, colonists, and state and federal agencies. Fire was one of the tools farmers used to clear land of forests and unwanted grasses, but management of the land for agricultural purposes involves many technologies.

Mart Stewart's environmental and agricultural history, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe": Life, Labor, and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680–1920* (1996), clearly shows the evolution of human control in one part of southern agriculture. The success of American agriculture has always depended on the support of the federal and state governments. The interplay of law, science, and technology is explored by Frieda Knobloch in *The Culture of Wilderness: Agricultural Colonization in the American West* (1996). By the 20th century the chemical industry had developed numerous pesticides and herbicides that were used indiscriminately. The technology and the cultural attitudes that supported their use is the subject of Edmund P. Russell's excellent *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring* (2001). Douglas Hurt's *American Agriculture: A Brief History* (1994) provides an adequate overview of the larger topic.

Farmland continues to disappear as suburban sprawl spreads out from cities or around highways. Kenneth Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (1985) remains the essential history of this process, but Adam Rome's *The Bulldozer in the Countryside:*

*Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (2001) adds new information on land use policy and places the process in the context of ecological impacts of, for example, septic tanks. Urban history too has shifted its focus away from architectural and economic characteristics to the social and cultural, returning in part to the cultural criticism of urbanization that characterized the work of Lewis Mumford and Jane Jacobs. The Mumford of the present is Mike Davis, whose *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (1990) was part history and part call for action. He continued to explore the darker side of urbanism in *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (1998), which used science-fiction movies and other popular culture sources to ask why LA is central to so many apocalyptic visions of the future. In a third book Davis focused on the impact of immigration from Mexico and Latin America on cities in the U.S. in *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City* (2000). Thomas E. Muller looks at the impacts of all immigration and emigration on cities in the U.S. in *Immigrants and the American City* (1993).

New York continues to fascinate historians as well as tourists. Elizabeth Blackmar's *Manhattan for Rent, 1785–1850* (1989) scrutinizes the real estate development that led to the uncharacteristic American city with downtown rental housing. Blackmar joined Roy Rosenzweig in telling the story of Central Park in Manhattan in *The Park and the People* (1992). Matthew Gandy provides a sweeping panorama of New York City's development in *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City* (2002). Las Vegas, a town of eight thousand in 1940, was over one million in 1995, and has been the fastest growing city in the U.S. for the past several decades. Hal Rothman provides insights into the gambling and tourist industry as well as the paradoxes of oasis cities in his lively book *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the Twenty-First Century* (2002). Less flashy, but more important to the nation, Washington, D.C. has a complex and sordid history of its own based on the aspirations of its founders and the reality of racism. Howard Gillette tells this story well in *Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning, and the Future of Urban Policy in Washington, D.C.* (1995).

City planning receives scrutiny from historians John D. Fairfield and Witold Rybczynski. Fairfield's *The Mysteries of the Great City: The Politics of Urban Design, 1877–1937* (1993) looks at the era of the "city beautiful" movement through New Deal planning. Rybczynski's *City Life: Urban Expectations in a New World* (1995) takes a broad philosophical view of America's struggle to embrace the city. Robert Fogel-

son's *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880–1950* (2001) suggests that no amount of city planning and renewal can overcome the anti-urban bias in American culture. David Russo attempts to explain the myth and reality of American cities in *American Towns: An Interpretive History* (2001).

### *Public History*

*Museums, Monuments, Ceremonies, Holidays, Oral history, Memory*

Interest in understanding how and why popular versions of historical events may differ from academic interpretations, the role of memory in writing history, and the desire to teach history outside classrooms and books has been an impetus to what is loosely called "public history." Oral history became an important method in American studies in the 1960s, as a way of retrieving the history of non-literate and neglected groups. History museums received increased funding and attention after the creation of the National Endowment for the Humanities and many patriotic initiatives at the time of the Bicentennial of 1976. With the recognition that American culture resides in the customs, rituals, and memorials of thousands of individual communities throughout the U.S., scholars have been busy reexamining the meaning of ceremonies and holidays. The question of "who owns history?" looms large in American studies at present.

Michael Frisch, past president of the American Studies Association, was a pioneer in these fields. His *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (1990) is filled with insights into the theory and practice of public history. Michael Kammen's *In the Past Lane: Historical Perspectives on American Culture* (1997) explores the uses of tradition and history in commercial culture and the problems of memory and history and elaborates some of the material he introduced in *Mystic Chords of Memory* (1993) mentioned on page 20. David Glassberg's *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (2001) is a collection of essays on the importance of place in public history. Literary scholar John Seelye illustrates this point with a finely detailed look at one of the oldest public memorials in *Memory's Nation: The Place of Plymouth Rock* (1998). Good institutional histories of museums in their cultural contexts are still scarce, but Steven Conn's *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876–1926* (1998) is a beginning.

Two excellent examples of the use of oral narratives in writing history by folklorists are Jack Santino's *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle: Stories of Black Pullman Porters* (1989) and Edward Ives' *George Magoon and the Down East Game War: History, Folklore, and the Law* (1993). Santino tells the history of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters through the

eyes of some of its members, while Ives shows how stories about a subsistence farmer and game poacher reflect the conflict between local residents and out-of-state sport hunters. Oral testimony and personal observation over more than 20 years allowed Jay Mechling to create an intimate history of a Boy Scout summer camp in California. *On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth* (2001) with its mingling of participant observation and research, may herald a new kind of American studies scholarship.

Robert Rydell's pioneering books on the cultural meanings of world's fairs in the U.S. helped to establish scholarly interest in public rituals. *All the World's a Fair* (1984) and *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (1993) are valuable for their detailed record of the ephemeral events and for Rydell's careful analysis of the role of race in their exhibits and programs. Nationalism and patriotism are, of course, inherent in trade fairs. Robert M. Fried investigates a whole range of public ceremonies that were part of the anti-communist movement of the 1950s in his splendid book, *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!: Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America* (1998). Edward T. Linenthal's *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (1991) reviews many of the controversies over the design and building of monuments. He continues his discussion in *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory* (2001).

Holidays, parades, and other civic rituals have been indicators of American identity since the late 18th century, as a number of recent books have pointed out. Among the best are: David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (1997); Susan G. Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theater in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (1986); Ellen M. Litwicki, *America's Public Holidays, 1865–1920* (2000); and Matthew Dennis, *Red, White, and Blue Letter Days: An American Calendar* (2002). Two holidays in particular deserve special treatment. Len Travers in *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (1997) provides a good starting place, but July 4th ceremonies have changed greatly over the centuries. Christmas is thoroughly deconstructed by Stephen Nissenbaum in *The Battle for Christmas* (1996) and by Karal Ann Marling in *Merry Christmas! Celebrating America's Greatest Holiday* (2000). Leigh Eric Schmidt in *Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays* (1993) looks at the impact of commercialization on several holidays.

### *International*

*Cultural exchange*

Although the United States has been deeply involved in world affairs for more than a century, and the rest of the world has joined in the study of the history and culture of the U.S., American studies remains inwardly focused. Many American historians and literary scholars are interested in comparative studies, of course, but the awareness that American culture exists in a global context has yet to take hold among most U.S. American studies scholars. Austrian scholar Reinhold Wagnleitner's *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the U.S. in Austria after the Second World War* (1994) presents a detailed account of the effects of cultural diplomacy in one country. Dutch Americanist Rob Kroes analyzes the ways in which American culture has been accepted, rejected, and "creolized" in two important books: *If You've Seen One, You've Seen The Mall* (1996) and *Them and Us: Questions of Citizenship in a Globalizing World* (2000). The problematic side of cultural diplomacy is explored in Francis Stoner Saunders' *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (1999).

Political scientist Richard Merelman offers a useful comparison of three closely related, but significantly distinct nations in *Partial Visions: Culture and Politics in Britain, Canada, and the United States* (1991). Matthew Frye Jacobsen's *Barbarian Virtues: The U.S. Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876–1917* (2000) synthesizes the experience of immigration and imperialism in the U.S. British scholar Paul Giles' *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary* (2002) places work by Herman Melville, Frederick Douglass, Vladimir Nabokov, Sylvia Plath, and Thomas Pynchon in the context of British literature and history. Giles forcefully argues that American literature has been too narrowly focused on a nationalist perspective. Melani McAlister's *Epoch Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000* (2001), described on page 31, suggests a fruitful international direction for future research.

Despite some protestations to the contrary, most American studies scholars in the U.S. remain unaware of much of the work being done by their colleagues in other countries. *Amerikastudien/American Studies,* the bilingual journal of the German Association for American Studies, has been published since 1955, *American Studies* in Scandinavia since 1956, the *British Journal of American Studies* since 1967, *The Canadian Review of American Studies* since 1969, the *Indian Journal of American Studies* from 1970 to 2000, the bilingual *Revue Francaise D'Etudes Américaines*

since 1976, and the *Nanzan Review of American Studies* since 1979. Today there are more than 40 American studies journals published in more than 35 countries.

The series sponsored by the European Association for American Studies (EAAS) and published by VU Press in The Netherlands contains much of the best American studies scholarship of the past 25 years. Among their recent publications the following are outstanding: *Predecessors: Intellectual Lineages in American Studies* (1999), edited by Rob Kroes. This volume contains 30 essays by scholars from all over the world. It contains the history of the internationalization of American studies. *Through the Cultural Looking Glass: American Studies in Transcultural Perspective* (1999), edited by Jans Krabbendam and Jaap Verheul has essays by two dozen American and European scholars on comparative history and the study of the U.S. in a global context. *TransAtlantic Encounters: Multiculturalism, National Identity and the Uses of the Past* (2000) edited by Günter Lenz and Peter J. Ling has a number of fine essays on ethnicity in the U.S. and Germany and on the perception of America in Europe. *Not English Only: Redefining "American" in American Studies* (2001), edited by Orm Øverland, features 18 essays by European and Asian scholars on multilingual writing and culture. It makes a good companion to Sollor's *Multilingual America* mentioned on page 11. The Lenz and Ling book has now been supplemented by *Multiculturalism in Contemporary Societies: Perspectives on Difference and Transdifference* (2002), edited by Helmbrecht Breinig, Jürgen Gebhardt, and Klaus Lösch.

In the U.S., *American Studies International,* published by George Washington University, in Washington, D.C., has been publishing work by international scholars and articles about American studies outside the U.S. since 1963. A newly organized International American Studies Association has announced a new journal, *Comparative American Studies: An International Journal* to begin publishing in 2003.

## Resources

The publication of the four-volume *Encyclopedia of American Studies* (2001), edited by George T. Kurian, Miles Orvell, Johnnella E. Butler, and Jay Mechling, provides students of American history and culture with brief essays on hundreds of topics. It has a useful index. The American Studies Association of the U.S. publishes a *Guide to American Studies Resources* every two years as a supplement to the *American Quarterly*. In addition to descriptions of American Studies programs in U.S. and international universities, it contains a list of Internet resources, fellow-

ships and grants, a bibliography of scholarly journals, and the addresses of academic organizations and regional chapters of the ASA. Among the many Internet sources, four, I think, standout:

| | |
|---|---|
| The American Studies Association | www.georgetown.edu/crossroads |
| The European Association for American Studies | www.let.uu.nl/eaas |
| The Library of Congress | www.loc.gov |
| The University of Virginia | www.xroads.virginia.edu |

The ASA and EAAS sites are good for learning about conferences. The Library of Congress site offers access to the Library's vast holdings of photographs as well as bibliographic information. The University of Virginia site offers the full text of many important works in American literature and history. Each of these web sites has links to other sites.

## The Future

Judging from the program for the 2002 American Studies Association annual meeting, there has been little change in American studies in the past twenty-five years. Membership in the ASA has grown, but in many ways the subjects covered at the meetings have narrowed. Although the theme of the 2002 meeting is "The Local in the Global," most of the more than 200 sessions focus on race and gender in the U.S. While there are more participants from ethnic minorities in the U.S., there are fewer international scholars than at many past meetings.

Nevertheless, many of the leading theorists of American studies are proclaiming the end of the nation as an identifiable unit, replaced by transnational cultural identities. Much of the recent discussion of internationalizing American studies assumes that the traditional questions of national identity are either answered or impossible to answer, but much of the literature cited above belies this. Unquestionably American identity and the culture from which it springs are more complex and problematic than ever before. This is one reason George Lipsitz entitles his collection of essays, *American Studies in a Moment of Danger* (2001), and why Donald Pease in his *The Futures of American Studies* (2002) and John Carlos Rowe in his *The New American Studies* (2002) put forth a wide variety of arguments for the relevance of American studies in a rapidly changing world.

At this stage of its history American studies can only be defined by its practice, as two recent anthologies suggest. Lucy Maddox, editor of the *American Quarterly* for the past seven years, compiled 17 articles from 50 years of the journal's existence that she feels defined the field.

*Locating American Studies: The Evolution of a Discipline* (1999) contains essays by the leaders in the field, and commentary from some of the emerging leaders. Another anthology, *Here, There, and Everywhere: The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture* (2000) edited by Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May contains 19 essays, mostly by non-Americans, on the ways in which American culture is reformulated in specific contexts. These anthologies, summarizing and inaugurating a vast range of American studies topics, make both an appropriate end and beginning for this bibliography and for anyone wishing to become familiar with the subject.

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