

definition "micro" in relation to the sweep of history. Its organization presents problems similar to previous ones: how to create a narrative that carries the reader along while providing the context and demonstrating the historical significance. But in other respects I am finding this work considerably different. Lange is "famous," unlike anyone in *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*. Some readers will care about the minutiae of her life. A great deal has been written about Lange but I cannot let my hesitance to repeat what's already been published interfere with telling a whole story, a whole life. So I have less of the pleasure of discovery and more of the challenge of synthesis. I'm still figuring it out.

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## Church People and Others

When I was a child in Idaho, I learned that human beings were divided into groups. There were church people, who were good, and not-church people, who were bad. Within the ranks of the church people, there were more refined distinctions. Mormons, Catholics, and Pentecostals went to the wrong churches. Methodists, Presbyterians, Brethren, Mennonites, Lutherans, Quakers, and Congregationalists were prominent among those who went to the right churches. I did not know that it was possible to divide people up into groups on any basis other than what churches they went to, or whether they went to church at all, unless they were Japanese or German. I knew about the Japanese as a separate group because my parents told me how dreadful it was that Americans of Japanese ancestry had been taken from their homes and put into camps during the Second World War. I assumed this had been done by not-church people, but later found out that it was more complicated. I knew about the Germans because when my mother sent relief packages to her cousins in Germany right after the war, I discovered that having German ancestors was an important part of me, and that because of my father's German heritage from a migration much earlier than my mother's, our family was Pennsylvania Dutch even though we did not live anywhere near Pennsylvania and had no ancestors from Holland. Most Germans in Germany were not church people, my mother explained, and that is why there had been a war, but her cousins most definitely went to a Lutheran church. I did not

meet a black person until I moved away from Idaho, and I did not realize that Jews were a contemporary presence, rather than merely a group that flourished in Biblical times, until I was in the seventh grade in California and met a boy named Stan Swerdloff who went to church on Saturdays but who was not a Seventh Day Adventist.

I also knew about Indians, and that's how I got started as a historian. Or, more precisely, it was in reading about the Nez Perce Indians after moving away from Idaho that I became interested in becoming a historian. But once I really got going as a historian, some years later, what most engaged me was a tension between cosmopolitan and provincial impulses that assign significance—or deny it—to distinctions between human beings based on race, ethnicity, religion, location, and nationality.

Our family had moved to California by the time I started reading about the Nez Perce, but we often went back to Idaho to visit an aunt and I retained a strong Idaho identity as a teenager. I was fourteen when I first decided I wanted to be a historian, and the decision was marked by my purchase of *War Chief Joseph*, by Helen Addison Howard and Dan McGrath. This was the first book I bought with my own money, earned by mowing lawns. I had read a library copy, but loved it so much I was determined to have a copy of my own. When this biography of the great Nez Perce chief arrived in that summer of 1955 by mail-order from the Caxton Printers in Caldwell, Idaho, I felt a personal connection to the writing of history that I had not felt in reading library books, or even the few history books owned by my parents. The following spring, I had mowed enough lawns to buy Bruce Catton's three-volume history of the Army of the Potomac.

Why the Nez Perce and the Civil War? I was approaching history through specific local settings that were meaningful to me. The Idaho with which I identified was the land of the Nez Perce Indians, and thus the story of the Nez Perce was "ancient history": the part of the past that came before "we" did—the European-derived settlers who, I was often told, had simply stolen Idaho from the Indians. The American Civil War was also "local" for me because my father had grown up on a farm just north of the Gettysburg battlefield, and the stories he and his siblings told of life in Gettysburg evoked for me a past larger than Idaho's, yet equally accessible to me personally.

My father and my aunts and uncles were present in 1913 at the fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg. Their recollections of the Confederate and Union veterans I had heard long before I first saw the film of the

aged Blues and Grays shaking hands on Ken Burns's PBS documentary. At fourteen I thrilled to Catton's account of Gettysburg in *Glory Road*, and even more to "Toward the Dunker Church" in *Mr. Lincoln's Army*—still affecting as I read it again more than fifty years later because there Catton's description of the battle of Antietam centered on a tiny church in which my own great-grandfather may have preached before the war. No ancestor of mine had fought in the Civil War (as German Baptist Brethren, or "Dunkers," and Mennonites, they refused military service on scriptural grounds). But the notion that the two greatest battles of the nation-defining struggle over slavery had taken place partly on ground that the Hollingers had owned or on which they had worshiped gave me a connection to Catton's books akin to that felt by descendants of the soldiers.

My attraction at the age of fourteen to a career as a historian was not quite a desire to celebrate my own ancestors, or even to find fault with them. Chief Joseph and Gettysburg were most important as local points of access to a more general engagement with the ways in which contemporary life had been shaped by previous events. Why did I experience this engagement at age fourteen, rather than some other?

I fell into history largely because it seemed the most accessible to me of all learned endeavors at a time when I was in the process of deciding that I'd like to be a professor of one kind or another. In a moment, I'll talk about why I was attracted to academia in general. But history was appealing in part because I could pick up widely praised works of history and absorb them with pleasure and understanding. Catton's *Stillness at Appomattox* was just then being hailed as a masterpiece, although not so much by professionals, I later learned, as by lay audiences and journalists. I was less comfortable with what samplings I managed of other fields, of whose character I understood even less than I understood history. Theology and philosophy, to both of which I felt attracted, were less welcoming, at least as I encountered them. The analytic vocabulary in both cases was too technical for me. And neither of these subjects was taught in junior high school. Science and math were taught, but neither grabbed my attention so firmly as did the fields I later learned to call the humanities and social sciences. English literature I knew only as novels and poems and plays, not as criticism. I was engaged by what was called "social studies," but even the best teachers of that amorphous subject did not put me in contact with sociology, economics, and political science the way an eighth grade history course seemed to put me in touch with what historians did.

Only geography seemed remotely as accessible as history, but I never heard about individual geographers by name the way I heard about Arnold Toynbee and Will Durant, and, of course, Bruce Catton. I loved *National Geographic*, and in later years defended it against critics unable to forgive its bourgeois ethos and its too-often patronizing view of societies beyond the North Atlantic West. This magazine opened up countless worlds for me, symbolized by the wonderful maps, dozens of which I still own. The journey from the local to the global has to start somewhere, and for many of us growing up in the 1950s *National Geographic* was not a bad starting point. But *National Geographic* did not translate geography into the terms of a vocation, unless it might be that of explorers like Admiral Richard Byrd. I did try to imagine what it would be like to be a writer or editor for that magazine, but the prevailing popular culture and the junior high schools of the day did not encourage me to see geography as a career. They did enable me to see history in that way.

Am I suggesting that I went for history because it appeared to be easy? Yes. History was one learned pursuit that I thought I understood well enough to see myself in it. That was the key. By why was I, at fourteen, so inclined to say, "I'd like to become a college professor," whenever I was asked what I wanted to do when I grew up? That was more complicated, psychologically and culturally. I am not certain that I understand it even now. But I do know one thing for sure: a powerful factor was the deep respect both my parents had for learning.

My father had earned his high school diploma at the age of thirty-three, having gone to night school for three years while working forty-hour weeks as a shoe salesman at a Sears store in Chicago. He came there to begin the education he needed to become a minister. He later worked his way through college, too, painting houses, and even through a theological seminary, although by the time I reached adolescence he had left the ministry and was earning a living again as a self-employed house painter. My father, who never put any pressure on me to pursue any particular calling, said little, then or later, about this huge change in his life. Yet as an early teen I was puzzled and privately disturbed by the obvious gap between how he spent every working day and the education he had struggled to attain and of which he remained proud. He remained active in the church, and did some guest preaching. One of my uncles, who also painted houses for a living, had no schooling beyond the eighth grade. Another uncle, who had completed high school, was a school custodian. My mother,

who had been a high school home economics teacher before she stopped working outside the home when I was born, was much more direct in encouraging me to read and to stretch myself intellectually. I sensed that she wanted me to make a life in which education would be put to good use. Both of my parents spoke with reverence about great scholars and great universities.

"He's got a Ph.D.," my father used to remark of this or that visiting speaker at church, or, more often, of someone who appeared on the TV shows of Alastair Cooke (*Omnibus*) and David Garroway (*Wide Wide World*) that we watched every Sunday afternoon. I absorbed my parents' awe for people with doctorates. I later came to see my parents' respect for learning as part of a secularization process. They inherited a feel for the value of Biblical learning, but they had come to believe that all truth was sacred. My parents never gave up the religious faith, away from which I gradually drifted, but I understood even as a teenager that Biblical scholarship and other kinds of learning were somehow part of a single intellectual piece. By pursuing learning, I would be carrying on a family tradition of sorts, even though the many preachers in my father's "Pennsylvania Dutch" ancestry had all been farmers with very little schooling. They were "called" to the ministry by their congregational peers in classic Anabaptist fashion, but continued to live as farmers. My father had been part of a generation that sought to modernize the Brethren ministry.

Yet academia was remote. One aunt whom I rarely saw approached it late in life, earning her masters at age fifty-eight. She taught education at Gettysburg College and was the only one of my father's siblings to remain in Pennsylvania and to leave the Brethren (she married a Presbyterian). She contributed to the mystique of elite higher education by repeatedly telling us, during occasional visits to the West Coast, the story of once having seen the great scholar Owen Lattimore standing outside the library at Johns Hopkins. "He was smoking a cigarette during a break from his research," she invariably said, as if the mere sighting of such an important academic in an informal moment was a moving experience.

The closest I came to viewing the academic life during my high school years was meeting some faculty members at our local denominational institution, La Verne College. Those people, whom my parents and I met in church, usually got their Ph.D.s at mid-career. "He's working on his Ph.D. at USC," it was said of one La Verne professor after another. I got the impression that the Ph.D. was an enormous undertaking, achieved fairly late

in life, and that to teach at USC, like Frank C. Baxter, the English professor whose local program, *Shakespeare on TV*, I watched every week, was the pinnacle of academic achievement.

Given the apparent difficulties of getting into academia, I needed a path to it that I could reasonably hope to actually travel. History, being uniquely accessible, was that path, and choosing it happened simultaneously with my starting to tell people that I expected to become "a college professor." It is ironic that my idol, Bruce Catton, was not a college professor, did not have a Ph.D., and dropped out of Oberlin College without even completing his bachelor's. I did not know this at the time, of course, and I associated Catton with all that talk about having a Ph.D. Moreover, what I thought historians did had little relation to the more realistic conception to which I was later introduced. Indeed, it may be misleading for me to claim that I had decided at the age of fourteen to be a historian. What I eventually became was rather different from the practice exemplified so wonderfully by Bruce Catton.

The latter meant telling stories about the past and making sure that the documentary record supported the stories. This conception stayed with me through my high school years, when I wrote term papers on the Nez Perce. I had no grasp whatsoever of the hermeneutic problem. Like most high school students and most readers of Bruce Catton's books, I assumed a single and permanent historical truth that was there to be discovered. Indeed, had I any inkling of the challenges of historical interpretation as I later faced them, I cannot imagine having started down the historian's path. I suppose I might have eventually gotten there from some other domain, but I was able to hold fast throughout high school to my ambition of becoming a historian because I had very little idea what it really involved. One might say that I became a historian because I did not know what I was doing.

During my senior year in high school teachers encouraged me to consider a career in law or business, but I shied away from both. Our family knew intimately not a single lawyer or businessman. I had the impression that colleges and universities were more rationally stable and ethically sound settings than courtrooms and corporations, less subject to the abuses of charismatic authority. I would not have used this phrase then, but my suspicions had developed in high school in response to television and film portrayals of lawyers and businessmen, who seemed to get ahead—in terms of money and status—by manipulating people with sheer force of personality. My parents' greatest living hero was the self-effacing mission-

ary doctor, Albert Schweitzer, and they were never comfortable with profit-making, rather than merely life-sustaining endeavors.

My concern about charismatic authority was accentuated by discussions of religion with other high school students. Many of the latter were evangelical Protestants, deferring to an emotional preaching style violently at odds with the plainer style of the Brethren and Mennonite tradition. The families of these young people generally took Billy Graham as their hero, and I remember being shocked that youths who went to church every Sunday, and were good at quoting scripture, had never heard of Schweitzer. My mother had been raised in the Church of the Nazarene, and had fled that denomination's florid alter calls to join the more reserved Brethren. She warned me against the revivalist sensibilities of some of my high school friends. Although I was not considering the ministry as a vocation, my contacts with Southern Baptists moved me further from anything associated with charisma and the playing on the emotions of one's fellows. Hence I finished high school with a renewed resolve to become a professor of history, a job I associated with reason, fair-mindedness, and lack of avarice. It was a secular vocation of which church people of my kind could approve.

College changed my understanding of what it meant to be a historian, but not much. As a history major at La Verne College, which I entered in 1959, I found the study of facts comforting. I was good at memorizing details, and did much better on multiple-choice tests than on the essay examinations, which required a facility for abstraction and a capacity to mobilize facts in support of an argument. Nevertheless, while at La Verne I did encounter two understandings of what historians did that were, for me, "post-Catton." Both sustained my vocational choice while expanding my horizons, yet continued to protect me, so to speak, from what I would encounter in graduate school. One of these understandings was embodied in the work of Arnold Toynbee. The other was the Amherst Pamphlets.

I actually read only snippets of Toynbee's prodigious *A Study of History*, but at La Verne I often heard it said that Toynbee addressed the *meaning* of history. *All* history. Toynbee generalized; he had a "theory" of history. He had apparently discovered the dynamics by which entire civilizations rose and fell on the basis of the same kind of detailed evidence that Catton used to explain General Grant's military success in Virginia. I had been accustomed to thinking of the historian's calling as a modest and manageable one, but Toynbee, or I should say the image of Toynbee, made me wonder if history might be a successor-subject to theology and

philosophy. I had yet to hear of Vico, nor did I have a sense of the claims that the ostensibly particularizing study of history might make on the domains of the generalizing social sciences. The buzz about Toynbee gave me a hint of a grander dimension of historical study. I was intimidated by this, and also attracted to it. Perhaps the path I had chosen had more possibilities than I supposed? Above all, what I heard said about Toynbee got me brooding about "meaning." Catton had implied something of what the Civil War "meant," but he never said it explicitly; rather Catton left me with the impression that the meaning of events was transparent in their accurate description.

This impression was challenged more directly by the Amherst Pamphlets. Popular with the history professors at La Verne, these practical, 100-page, double-columned paperback anthologies of prominent scholarly writings on major questions introduced me to the idea that responsible scholars could offer conflicting interpretations of historical events. The basic character of episodes like the American Revolution and Jacksonian Democracy could be contested. Properly called "Problems in American Civilization," these pamphlets were known popularly by the name of Amherst College because its American Studies faculty designed them for the D. C. Heath publishing company.

The Amherst Pamphlets encouraged students to evaluate conflicting interpretations, usually presented in the form of two easily summarized alternatives. *The New Deal: Revolution or Evolution?* is the title of one I still own. The mood was well put in the introduction to another I have kept on my shelves all these years, *Reconstruction in the South*: "The reader will have to determine," declared Edwin C. Rozwenc, "whether the Reconstruction of the South must be judged to have been primarily 'a blackout of honest government' resulting from political rule by ignorant Negroes and villainous white carpetbaggers and scalawags, or whether the story of Reconstruction should be written in terms of 'quietly constructive' political and social achievements." Reexamining this pamphlet now, what I find most striking is not the antiquated construction of the issues and the heavy tilt toward what we now recognize as a deeply racist interpretation of Reconstruction (Rozwenc described the excerpt from W. E. B. Du Bois as written with "racial feeling" but said nothing of the sort about the several white supremacist writers he anthologized, including Woodrow Wilson). Rather, what hits me now is that there were two sides—and only two—to every story, or at least to most of the stories historians tell. This made it easier to deal with conflicting interpretations: historians debated questions

in straightforward terms, and, like a courtroom jury, decided them either one way, or the other. That simplified the matter of "meaning": an event meant one thing, or it meant another.

One nonacademic experience at La Verne affected my later choices as a historian. During the fall of 1960 while driving through Oklahoma with seven other La Verne students, one of whom was black, I saw with my own eyes racial segregation in public accommodations. Our group was returning from a national meeting of Brethren youth leaders in Ohio. Our Volkswagen microbus broke down on Highway 66 near the town of Vinita, Oklahoma, where, while the vehicle was being repaired, we found we could not eat or sleep in the same facility. We were not "freedom riders." We had neither the political sophistication nor the personal courage to undertake such a project. We were simply Californians caught by surprise. During the two or three days it took to repair the vehicle we could sleep and eat together only in the homes of members of the nearest Church of the Brethren, in Bartlesville. Eventually, having been immersed in a racially segregated society for several days, one of our hosts, a beautiful young mother of two children in whose home I stayed, explained to me with great patience that we young Californians would approve of segregation if we lived in the South and saw "how the Negroes actually live, you know, the dirt and all." We resumed our journey on Highway 66 back to La Verne. On the way, we tried a pancake house in Amarillo, Texas, but were again turned away.

The experience of segregation marked all of us in ways that did not always register immediately. One of the travelers, my closest friend at La Verne, transferred the very next year to historically black Howard University, partly because he wanted to engage the parts of the world we encountered in the South. I did not see him again for another forty years, but at our reunion he and I immediately began talking about that incident and the ways in which it had changed each of us. We both remembered seeing our fellow student weeping disconsolately, and were glad we cannot remember what we said to her, because neither of us could imagine that it was up to the occasion. That so tame an incident could mark us white students so vividly is no doubt a sign of how insulated we were from major features of the society in which we lived. But my own engagement with the history of the black-white color line dates from that experience.

I felt increasingly isolated at La Verne during my four years there. My three closest friends—two others, in addition to the one Howard-bound—left after the sophomore year for other colleges. Almost none

of the remaining students shared my academic ambitions. I spent more and more time in the library exploring what my friends regarded as obscure periodicals. I was befriended there by the campus's handful of foreign students, some of whom saw me reading *The Manchester Guardian Weekly* and were pleased to learn that I cared about what was going on in Africa and India. I regularly read essays and reviews in *Partisan Review* and *Hudson Review*. As editor of the campus newspaper, I imitated the *Hudson's* enthusiastic reviews of foreign films. These movies I saw in the neighboring town of Claremont, site of a number of colleges, including Pomona College, that were much closer to the academic mainstream than La Verne. To Claremont's Village Theater I took several uncomprehending dates. "What was that about," the girl would ask about *Virgin Spring*, or *L'Avventura* or *La Dolce vita*. Not that I was so wise about Bergman, Antonioni, and Fellini. I just wished that others I knew were as engaged by their movies as I was.

My difficulty in finding college friends, male or female, who were interested in the same issues I was renewed my determination to go forward in academia. I appreciated the personal qualities of many people I got to know at La Verne, but I was looking for a different kind of intellectual community. I felt I belonged somewhere else, but I was not sure where. History was the strongest undergraduate major at La Verne, reinforcing my vocational choice. I joined the American Historical Association and what was then the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (later the Organization of American Historians). Professional journals, along with the *Hudson Review*, which I liked so much I became a paid subscriber to it, now came directly to my dormitory room. My friends were amused, but they put up with my peculiarities. They knew I was headed for someplace really different from La Verne, and they wished me well.

That someplace turned out to be Berkeley. Shortly after arriving in the fall of 1963, I was immersed in a practice built around the making of arguments. That historians were mostly in the business of making arguments was implicit in some of my previous experience, especially through the Amherst Pamphlets, but I had not fully absorbed it. The other graduate students, in and out of class, talked about assessing so-and-so's argument about this or that, or about how they were making this or that argument in a paper they were writing. Most people who become historians probably get that from the start, and thus know what they are doing when they decide to go into history. It was more like being a lawyer than I had re-

alized. For me the insight, however elementary, came late, and I could quickly see that nearly all of the other graduate students I came to know that first year were a lot better at making arguments than I was.

I decided to specialize in colonial American diplomatic and constitutional history because in those fields, it seemed to me, arguments were easier to make without having to know much about social theory and other modern discourses of which I was so much more ignorant than were the other students. Wrong again. Even in those ostensibly less theoretically entangled subfields, I was out of my depth. My first research paper, based on a reading of the *Archives of Maryland* from 1634 to 1670, was close to a disaster. I studied all the documents and reported what seemed to be their most important content, but could not figure out what they meant, except in the most literal of terms. What was my argument? What assumptions about human behavior enabled one to explain the actions of magistrates? The instructor, Winthrop D. Jordan, then teaching his first graduate seminar at Berkeley, was terribly generous, but also made abundantly clear in both written and oral comments that I did not know what I was doing.

Finding my way as a historian that first year at Berkeley was made more difficult by the distractions of culture shock. The transition from La Verne to Berkeley was not easy for me. In making friends with other graduate students, I soon learned to shut up about my own background because the graduates of Columbia and Harvard were stunned when I told the truth, and implied that I was from a distant and exotic country. One emblem for the culture gap was the practice of moderate social drinking, which was altogether new to me. La Verne banned the consumption of alcohol out of deference to the Brethren tradition (I Corinthians, 6:19, to the effect that the body is the temple of the holy spirit, which was understood to ban smoking, too). Before arriving at Berkeley I had never been at a social event, even a dinner in a private home, at which wine was served. I had never met an atheist or a communist, and had met so few Jews that I had trouble distinguishing them from persons of Italian extraction.

Toward the end of that year a graduate student from New York rather awkwardly asked me (this was while drinking coffee in the Mediterranean Café on Telegraph Avenue, then a favorite hangout for humanities graduate students), "If you don't mind a personal question, I'd like to know what it feels like for someone like you to be a member of a minority group." I had no idea what he was talking about. Then he, incredulous, explained

that he knew me to be an Anglo-Saxon Protestant, and that most of the graduate students in our circle were Jewish. I had not yet learned how to read the signs, nor to assign to them the socially prescribed significance.

Yet amid these striking novelties, that first year at Berkeley was as thrilling for me as it was unsettling. I met people who really did share my intellectual interests. I felt I was in the right place, however challenging and numerous were the changes I had to make in myself in order to function in that new environment. Many of my new acquaintances from New York and New England and San Francisco were humane and responsive as well as intellectually acute. Some others, however, made me feel like a hick. I can see why meeting someone like me tested whatever generosity of spirit they possessed: I *was* a hick by their standards! At the time I was too willing to accept their standards and to take their superciliousness as something I deserved. It took me too many years to realize that most of the people who treated me as a hick had their own problems to deal with—hidden from me by their superior social skills—the working out of which entailed being condescending toward me.

The following year was easier for me personally, and was enlivened by the career-transforming experience of reading the works of Perry Miller. Here was a really different kind of history: intellectual history, and directed at the history of theological and philosophical ideas, yet it was more rigorously argumentative than what I had been reading in diplomatic and constitutional history, to say nothing of Bruce Catton, or even most of what appeared in the Amherst Pamphlets. It was also literary in the finest sense: Miller was a compelling and even commanding writer, and by then I had realized that very few works by professional historians of the United States reached the prose standard attained by the better works in European and Asian history. Had I read Miller earlier, I probably would not have been prepared to appreciate his work. But I encountered Miller at just the right time. More than a year of professional immersion had prepared me to understand and appreciate something so very different from what I had previously understood history to be. Intellectual interests of my own that I not yet found a way to explore suddenly came into play. It was a bracing, integrating experience. The immediate setting was the graduate seminar on colonial America taught by another then-junior professor, Robert L. Middlekauff. He assigned not only both volumes of *The New England Mind*, but also *Jonathan Edwards* and several of the essays in *Errand into the Wilderness*. Week after week of that fall of 1964, I alternated

between Puritan theology and the Free Speech Movement. Both proved to be exciting.

I invoke the Free Speech Movement in relation to becoming a historian because at the time, generated by issues in free expression closely connected to the civil rights movement and by quarrels over the role of universities in society, it invigorated interaction among Berkeley graduate students. I was quickly absorbed into a larger, more interactive community. Conversations about contemporary political affairs and about whatever we were reading in our classes or were teaching to undergraduates as teaching assistants somehow got connected in one long, informal seminar that lasted all day and well into many nights. My social integration into a community of intellectually ambitious and politically engaged graduate students meant that I was no longer “bowling alone,” to borrow Robert Putnam’s popular figure of speech. I found every aspect of life lived to a higher degree of intensity just as Putnam argues that interactive behavior in one domain can promote it in other domains as well. Discussions about the professional merged with conversations about the political. Yet lines could be drawn. Middlekauff’s sympathy for the Free Speech Movement was undisguised, but my friends and I admired his professionalism and when we went to his classroom in Haviland Hall, we knew we were there to talk about Puritanism, and we did. The moral intensity of the Free Speech Movement and of the seventeenth-century Puritans and of Miller himself all spun into one another, without getting in each other’s way.

Miller’s *The New England Mind* did more than any other work to reveal to me the promise of intellectual history as a specific kind of scholarship. The essays collected in his *Errand into the Wilderness* did more than any other writings to provide me with a sense of what it meant to write an analytic essay on a historical question. Richard Hofstadter performed the latter service for most historians of my generation who were attracted to the analytical essay as a genre, but despite my respect for Hofstadter’s work, especially his *American Political Tradition*, I found Miller to be a more ambitious writer and more capable of achieving empathic identification with historical actors different from oneself. Miller, an atheist, showed great appreciation for the hold of religious ideas on previous generations, while Hofstadter seemed less able to get out of his own generational and ethno-religious skin. Once I focused on writing analytic essays, I found the form more challenging and satisfying than the sort of narrative history Catton had led me to emulate. I never lost my

appreciation for good narrative history, but part of Miller's impact on me was to convert me to the analytic essay as my favored genre. To this day, most of what I write takes that form. Finally, I knew what I was doing methodologically, at least as judged from the perspective of the historian I eventually became.

Figuring out what I was doing substantively, rather than methodologically, came about through reading scholarly books and essays about China. This may seem odd, since I as a specialist in United States history have never worked in the field of Chinese history, never even took a course in it, and cannot read a word of Chinese. Graduate students in Asian history, whom I probably would not have gotten to know without the cross-field connections created by the Free Speech Movement (and its successor, the antiwar movement), often talked about one of their professors, the esteemed sinologist, Joseph R. Levenson. "If you are going to be an intellectual historian, you've got to read Levenson," they would say.

Immediately after passing my U.S. history orals in the spring of 1966 I read all three volumes of *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*. I was captivated by the vast scope of the enterprise, and, subversive as this may be of an authentically sinological focus, I was captivated even more by Levenson's use of Western European categories to interpret Chinese history. He was constantly citing European and American philosophers and writers, and representing aspects of the Chinese past in their terms. I was enthralled by his conclusion to volume 3 that the Confucian bureaucracy's aestheticism and antispecialized amateur ideal had rendered China incapable of defending its culture against the scientific-rationalist-specialized energies of the West: Confucianists never "had to fight Jonathan Swift's battle of the books, for the ancient against the modern," because "when the issue arose in China it was post-Confucian, forced in China because it had come to the test in Europe first, and Swift had lost."

I was also attracted to Levenson's combination of abstraction (he meditated on the difference between "historical significance" and "historical significance") and playfulness. He was not afraid to have fun, even if some readers suspected that levity took precedent over *Wissenschaft*. He loved language, as Miller did, but Levenson let himself go in ways that the more austere Miller did not. At the end of his imposing trilogy, having written a conclusion to his third volume, he added, characteristically, this note to the reader: "Having concluded roundly, let us conclude squarely with a concluding conclusion." He then brought all three volumes to a close. Levenson wrote "musically," it was often said. No wonder a book of essays

dedicated to his memory was entitled *The Mozartian Historian*. Levenson's books, chapters, pages, and paragraphs were all subject to a certain architectural design. I could understand readily why some China specialists found Levenson's approach insufficiently empirical, but I was reading these volumes less for their truth-value than for their conceptualization and style. Beyond all that, however, I discovered something else in Levenson that was altogether unexpected and that proved to be much more important.

Levenson was interested in the world-historical dynamic of provincialism and cosmopolitanism, and more specifically in the ways historical actors dealt with the threats and opportunities presented by a traditional community's contact with modern formations of larger scale, if not global in scope. This was true of *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, but more explicitly in the work he did immediately thereafter, including the posthumously published *Revolution and Cosmopolitanism: The Western Stage and the Chinese Stages*. It was Levenson who first engaged me with the tension between cosmopolitanism and provincialism, and with the questions of identity, peoplehood, and nationality that have dominated my work. It was also Levenson's obvious projection onto China of some of the dilemmas of Jewish identity in the West that propelled some of my investigations of the history of Jewish intellectuals in the United States. Nothing of Levenson's did more to shape me intellectually than an article of 1967 entitled "The Province, the Nation, and the World: The Problem of Chinese Identity." This essay helped me formulate for United States history the chief questions on which I have worked for more than forty years.

Ostensibly about China, this remarkable essay is, like so much of what Levenson wrote, a meditation on the effect of modernization on localities in Europe and the United States as well as China. Laced with references to Trotsky, Freud, Emerson, Blake, Levi-Strauss, Allen Tate, Henry James, Marx, Hume, Dickens, Lawrence, Proust, Ortega y Gasset, Yeats, Michelet, and a variety of Chinese thinkers of whom I had never heard, this essay amounted to a magnet drawn through the canon of world literature and philosophy charged with picking up bits of discursive metal defined by provincialism or cosmopolitanism. For me, it was a de-facto anthology of shorthand references to aspects of history about which I wanted to learn more. "Yeats, like Tagore with his cosmopolitan culture," runs a typical sentence, "was as far from a lost Bengal or Connemara as any faceless victim of standardized mass society." Someone with a better education than I had might have been less dazzled by Levenson's learning.



But as with Miller, Levenson came at the right time for me. I was ready to go in directions I did not recognize until I saw them in Levenson's work.

Why was I so engaged with the tension between provincialism and cosmopolitanism? No doubt being from Idaho and the Brethren, surrounded with Ivy League graduates and others from backgrounds very different from my own, usually more broadly educated, had something to do with it. I understood what it meant to be provincial. Nobody else I knew in graduate school had grown up with the view of human groups I summarized at the start of this essay. I also understood—without, I hope, judging provincials, in Idaho and elsewhere, too ungenerously for being what history had made of them—what it meant to try for a more capacious life, one that embraced more of human possibility. "Variousness and possibility" was the theme of another work I was reading in 1967, Lionel Trilling's *Liberal Imagination*. I was especially affected by the essay on *The Princess Casamassima*, in which Trilling connects James's hero in that novel, Hyacinth Robinson, to the "Young Man from the Provinces," equipped with "poverty, pride, and intelligence" as a standard character in modern literature. Such a young man "stands outside life and seeks to enter," wrote Trilling, and seeks entry usually by going to the metropole. Of course I thought of my father, penniless and alone, hitchhiking to Chicago during the depression summer of 1933 from Saskatchewan, where, after departing Gettysburg, he had tried to make a living as a wheat farmer. And I thought of myself more fortunate than my father, yet also recognizable as a variation on the type.

In 1967 I switched from the intellectual history of the eighteenth century to that of the twentieth; largely because it was about the twentieth century that I thought I had the most to learn, and potentially the most to contribute to the study of provincialism and cosmopolitanism. Henry F. May, the director of my dissertation, was wonderfully kind in putting up with a period of indecision, during which I dropped a dissertation topic on John Locke in America, in which May had been vitally interested, and took up instead, the career of the Jewish cosmopolitan philosopher of science, Morris R. Cohen. By then, I knew what I was doing. Perhaps for the first time? At least I felt that I was making an informed decision between viable alternatives, rather than being pushed and pulled by circumstance, and ending up with position achieved largely by default.

The China connection thus amounts to a hauling of coal to Newcastle. Levenson's sensitivity to the dynamics of provincialism and cosmopolitanism in the North Atlantic West, especially as those dynamics affected

Jews in relation to the Enlightenment, framed his study of Chinese history. Yet it was in reading Levenson on China that I came to recognize the questions about the United States that most engaged me. And so it happened: a son of Idaho and of a small Anabaptist sect, having been inspired by a Harvard atheist's studies of New England Puritanism, found his career-defining preoccupations when connections made through a political movement brought him into contact with the work of an orthodox Jew addressing the cultural dynamics of the modernization process through a meditation on Confucian China's encounter with communism.

Was there a more efficient way for me to get from Idaho and La Verne to Morris Cohen, Jewish intellectuals, and the tension between cosmopolitanism and provincialism in American culture? No doubt there was. Perhaps this turn in my life, which I make so much of here, is simply another instance of my not knowing what I was doing? I don't think so. Rather, I take it an example of how an individual makes his or her decisions on the basis of an inventory of possibilities that happen to be at hand. You play, as they say, the cards you are dealt. Levenson was one of the best cards I was ever dealt. I never met Levenson, who died in 1969 in an accidental drowning in the Russian River at the age of forty-nine. I was still in Berkeley that spring, finishing up my dissertation. I went to his funeral.

During the years after Levenson's death, when China specialists warned me more and more often of Levenson's peculiar "take" on China, Levenson's example ended up presenting me with yet another gift: a profound cautionary tale. Levenson seems to have weakened his interpretation of Chinese history by projecting too much of himself into his subject. I wanted my own pursuit of the cosmopolitanism-provincialism dynamic to be heuristically informed by my own experience, but not captured by it. Would my ambivalence toward the provinces known to me, and my attractions to many varieties of cosmopolitanism, prevent me from seeing and proclaiming the most warrantable of the truths embedded in my objects of study? Whatever the answer to this question, the frequency with which I have interrogated myself in its terms is another way in which Levenson's writings affect me to this day.

My Levenson-inspired self-interrogation has been keyed by Idaho and the Brethren. My trajectory away from what a great antiprovincial called "the idiocy of rural life" has made it too easy for me, I have reminded myself repeatedly through the decades, to treat in too frosty a fashion worlds of the sort from which I myself had come. Having found the cultures of my upbringing too confining, there was a danger that my appreciation for the

cultures of my adulthood would blind me to the needs many people have for tightly bounded communities and to the dignity that can attend on a provincial life. I have also been aware of the possibility that I would blind myself to the particular virtues of the kind of Protestantism with which my life began. This self-interrogation has affected most of what I have written, especially *In the American Province* (1985), *Postethnic America* (1995), and *Cosmopolitanism and Solidarity* (2006).

But the very attraction to cosmopolitanism and the self-interrogation about it that defines so much of the historian I became is deeply embedded in my Brethren past. I want to elaborate a bit more on that past. Most important was a formidable universalist strain in Christianity that came to me through the Brethren.

The German Baptist Brethren were anything but universalist. This sect was ethnically defined for two hundred years before its name became Church of the Brethren in 1908. The Brethren remained a largely descent-defined denomination in fact long after it ceased to be so in name. During the years of my upbringing, however, Brethren leaders were in a decidedly ecumenical phase. I was exposed to a certain selection of Brethren themes, focusing on service and inclusion. This was the agenda of the educated elite of the Church, especially the editors of denominational periodicals and the professors at the denominational colleges and seminary. These leaders wanted to make the Brethren more like the Methodists, that is, to walk humbly in the Lord but to do so in a more modern manner, less suspicious of the world. The old Brethren tradition had been highly sectarian. The celebration of Christmas was too worldly (the view of my grandfather). Women were to be excommunicated ("churched" was the Brethren term) for not wearing the proper bonnet (the fate of my aunt who married a Presbyterian and became a professor at Gettysburg College).

In this new ecumenical context, universalist sentiments flourished. Galatians 3:28 taught that in Christ there is no Greek or Jew, no male nor female, no slave nor free. The second chapter of Acts advanced this universalist vision at its most radical and dramatic, presenting the reader with a mythic moment when the curse of Babel was revoked and all the tribes of the earth could understand each other as they spoke the gospel with cloven tongues of fire. In church in Idaho and later in California, we used to sing "In Christ there is no East or West, In Him no South or North; But one great fellowship of love, throughout the whole wide earth" (Hymn 362 in *The Brethren Hymnal*, 1943 edition). I soon learned to take this

extravagant idealism for what it was, the enunciation of an ideal rather than the summary of a practice, but the ideal was presented to me with sufficient vigor that I know it had something to do with my engagements as a historian.

The work of another Berkeley professor of Levenson's generation, with whom I did not study, led me to conclude that I should engage the cosmopolitanism-provincialism problematic through the cultural functions of science and the ways in which science was defined by public moralists. It was also in 1967 that I first read Thomas S. Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn had left Berkeley by then, but the memory of him was still vivid in Dwinelle Hall and every "with-it" graduate student had read his great book. The issues to which Kuhn introduced me led me to choose, as the topic of my dissertation, the career of a philosopher known for his defense of science as a foundation for culture.

Kuhn led me not only to Morris Cohen, but also to a sharpening of the methodological principles I had derived from Perry Miller. Kuhn's account of the dynamics of scientific communities spoke to the dynamics of other kinds of discursive communities in much the same way that Levenson's account of Chinese history spoke to other cases of the tension between provincialism and cosmopolitanism. During the next several decades I would repeatedly cite the methodological good sense embedded within Kuhn's understanding of how science works. But Kuhn's legacy in the Berkeley of my graduate years consisted also in the contribution he made to the department's remarkable focus on intellectual history.

Berkeley in the 1960s was truly an extraordinary place to do intellectual history. At the time I did not recognize this distinction. Of the Berkeley historians I have already mentioned, Kuhn, Levenson, and May were primarily intellectual historians, but Jordan and Middlekauff, too, were then doing important work in intellectual history. I served as a research assistant for Jordan's *White over Black: White Attitudes toward Negroes in America, 1550-1812*. May's lecture course on the intellectual history of the United States since 1865 has always been a model for my own, and has affected the character of the source book, dedicated to him, that I have coedited in many editions with Charles Capper, another Berkeley Ph.D. from that era. But there were many more intellectual historians, including William J. Bouwsma, the Renaissance and Reformation specialist, in whose historiography seminar I wrote what would become my first published article (on Perry Miller). I did not study with Carl Schorske, Samuel

Haber, Hunter Dupree, Nicholas Riasanovsky, Adrienne Koch, George Stocking, or Martin Malia, but I invoke their names here to mark the department's exceptionally strong representation of intellectual history during the time that I was deciding just what kind of historian I wanted to be.

I was lucky to have been at Berkeley when I was. Indeed, so much of what I have narrated here seems to me a story of luck, mostly good. I am breaking off this account in the late 1960s because by then the basic foundation of the historian I became had been established, mostly by the remarkable people with whom I came into direct or indirect contact as a graduate student at Berkeley. Nearly all of these Berkeley people, as it happened, were not church people, including Joan Heifetz Hollinger, whom I married in 1967. But the good luck goes back even prior to Berkeley, back to the church people. From my parents and their religious culture I derived a set of basic resources that served me remarkably well as I proceeded to a life very different from the ones they had led. Long after I left the ranks of church people, my favorite scripture remained Amos 9:7, in which those who think their group superior to others are urged to cool it: "Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel?" I was lucky enough, also, to go through the state of California's junior high and high schools at a time when these schools actually delivered—magnificently!—on the promise of public education.

Perhaps the luckiest thing of all was simply to have been part of a small enough generational cohort to enable me to gain admission to a place like Berkeley on the basis of my unimpressive qualifications. Having served now on the admissions committee of the same department that admitted me, I know full well that I would not be accepted at Berkeley now. An irony of my career is that nearly all of the graduate students I now teach at Berkeley are better than I was at their stage, yet here I am, one of their professors. I hope they have a streak of luck as good as I have had, but I fear that many of them will not. There are not enough jobs now. And this brings me to another instance of generational good luck.

When I went on the job market in the fall of 1968, I told my doctoral mentor, Henry May, that I did not want him to nominate me for any job south of the Mason-Dixon line or in the cities of New York and Chicago. The brass of it now seems incredible. Was this yet another case of my not knowing what I was doing? In terms of taste and tact, probably yes. But cognitively, I acted on the valid understanding that there were plenty of jobs. I wrote in a matter-of-fact way, simply registering a set of preferences as to where I did and did not want to live. The job market was so

flush that it did not occur to me that I would not get a job, and a good one. Some of us were able to develop full careers as historians because the institutional support was there to enable us not only to get started, but to stay with it, and to act upon whatever intellectual ambitions we had developed as graduate students. Talent and enterprise? Of course they play a role. But those of us who became historians under the fortunate circumstances of the 1960s should never forget how much luck had to do with it.