

Teaching American History Presentations

Edward T. O'Donnell, Ph.D. is a professional historian, author, and speaker. He earned his Ph.D. in American History from Columbia University (1995) and is Associate Professor of History at Holy Cross College in Worcester, MA. He is the author of many scholarly articles and several books, including *Visions of America: A History of the United States* (co-author, Pearson, 2009). Since 2002 O'Donnell has served as lead historian for several Teaching American History grants. He has also made 100's of professional development presentations for more than 40 TAH grant programs in 21 states, from New York, Massachusetts, and Virginia, to Michigan, Florida, Wyoming, and California. For a full c.v., detailed descriptions of his programs, and information about references, please visit his website www.EdwardTODonnell.com or contact him at 508 826 1572 | eodonnell@holycross.edu.

About the Presentations: Today's students are visual and interactive learners – and so are their teachers. Consequently, these multimedia presentations are built around 50+ unique and carefully selected visuals, including vintage photographs, etchings, maps, cartoons, and documents (samples appear on this page). O'Donnell uses them to enhance a lively and interactive presentation. Ample time is allotted for Q & A, but O'Donnell always welcomes questions at any time during the session. **The presentations are available as content lectures or in workshop format with an emphasis on pedagogy, primary sources, and using images to teach history.**

Benefits for your teachers:

- a renewed and/or deepened awareness of topic's **essential content**.
- an enhanced understanding of the topic's critical **questions, concepts, and ideas**.
- new ideas for finding and using **primary sources** and developing DBQ's, simulations, projects, debates, and field trip preparation.
- an introduction to O'Donnell's *How to Use Images to Teach History* and his unique S.I.G.H.T.[™] method of visual analysis.

Programming Options:

- Time Flexibility – all presentations and workshops can be tailored to meet your needs, from 1 to 3 hours.
- Pedagogy Workshops – on primary sources, using images to teach history, DBQ's, simulations, projects, and debates.
- Walking Tours & Historic Site Visits - O'Donnell has led thousands—just ask!

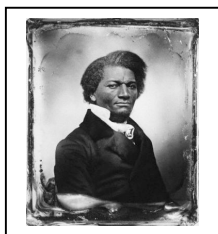
PRESENTATION TOPICS



How to Use Images to Teach History – Everyone agrees that today's students are visual learners. But how do we translate this vague notion into a concrete pedagogical strategy in the classroom? Using his unique S.I.G.H.T.[™] method, a program developed over two decades of conducting teacher workshops and teaching his own students, O'Donnell reveals the techniques for effectively using images to teach history. Through his multimedia presentations O'Donnell shows how images can become foundational tools for the teaching of history. **Note:** this presentation is available with a **focus on any era in American history**, from the Revolution to Reconstruction to the Sixties.

A Nation of Immigrants: How America Became a Multicultural Society or Tolerance vs. Hate: America's Uneasy Relationship with Immigration – how and why have so many millions come to the U.S. and what challenges has this tradition posed to national identity, tolerance, and democracy? This talk explores the key periods of immigration in U.S. history, the major immigrant groups who arrived, the vibrant ethnic enclaves they established (i.e., Little Italy), their struggles to earn a living and adjust to new surroundings, and the contributions they made to American life. This talk also addresses the persistent problem of nativism.

Also available: a focus on one ethnic group such as *The Asian Experience*, *The Irish Experience*, or *The Jewish Experience*, etc.



Making Sense of the Great Debate over Slavery (and Why the Abolitionists Won) - The abolitionist crusade is one of the central stories of the nineteenth century and Frederick Douglass without question is its most notable figure. But because abolition was achieved during the Civil War, many Americans today have a hard time comprehending just how radical the idea of abolitionism was in the 1830s-1850s. Likewise, they are not aware of how powerful and persuasive the pro-slavery argument was (that, for example, southerners answered Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with no fewer than ten proslavery novels with names like *Aunt Philliss's Cabin*). Using images, songs, and documents, this presentation examines fully both sides of this raging debate to reveal the strategies the used by proslavery partisans and antislavery activists

like Frederick Douglass.

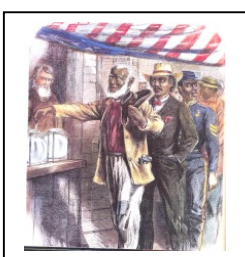
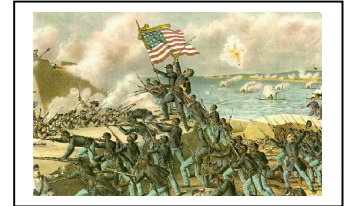
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The Transformation of Antebellum America – Antebellum America experienced dramatic changes with the onset of mass immigration, industrialization, urbanization, and technological innovations such as the telegraph and railroad. It was an age of surging nationalism that preached Manifest Destiny and westward expansion, a spirit that ultimately led to Native American removal and war with Mexico. These decades also witnessed the Second Great Awakening and movements for temperance, women’s rights, and abolition. The latter reflected the increasingly contentious issue of slavery that eventually came to dominate national politics, leading to secession and Civil War.

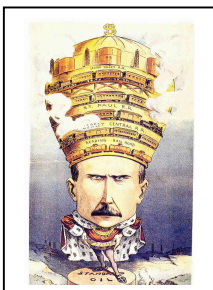
Also available: a talk focused on one particular aspect of the period such as abolition, temperance, or westward expansion.

The Civil War and the New Birth of Freedom - The Civil War was not only America’s bloodiest conflict but also its most radically transformative. The war ended slavery, created a vastly stronger federal government, and left much of the South in ashes.. This presentation examines the key factors that led to Civil War, the critical battles and policy decisions, the role of African Americans in forcing the issue of emancipation, and the impact of new technology and military tactics in the first “modern war.” Also Available: ***Streets of Fire: The New York City Draft Riots of July 1863***



Now That We Are Free: The Triumph and Tragedy of Reconstruction – the end of the Civil War resolved the questions of slavery and secession, but it ushered in several new ones, the most compelling of which were: What is the status of the newly freed slaves? Would they become citizens entitled to all the rights enjoyed by white Americans? If so, to what extent was the federal government obligated to protect those rights and freedoms? The ensuing years of struggle began with an extraordinary experiment in multiracial democracy. But southerners never accepted black equality and ultimately, as the northern commitment to Reconstruction waned in the late 1870s, regained power and restored white supremacy. Also available: ***Thomas Nast & Shaping Northern Public Opinion during Reconstruction***

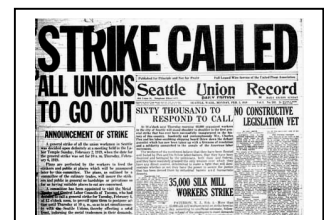
Conflict and Conquest in the American West - Beginning in the 1850s white settlers, spurred on by enthusiastic reports of open land and the Homestead Act, began pouring into the trans-Mississippi West. They established millions of farms and created thriving railroad, ranching, and mining industries. But these achievements came at the expense of the hundreds of thousands of Native Americans who resisted for a time, but eventually succumbed to the Army and life on reservations. This presentation examines the ideas, policies and events that shaped the conquest of the West. It also looks at the ways in which an image of the West shaped, and continues to shape, the American imagination and self-image. Also available: ***The Transcontinental Railroad or Custer’s Last Stand and the Image of the West in the American Mind***



The Gilded Age: Robber Barons, Radicals, and Reformers –Gilded Age (1870-1900) America experienced astonishing growth in prosperity, population, industry, urbanization, and westward expansion. Many Americans, as the name suggests, considered it a golden age of progress. Yet others perceived these trends as only superficial—just as a gilded piece of jewelry has only a thin layer of gold on its surface—covering temporarily the harsh realities of urban squalor, political corruption, worker and farmer exploitation, Robber Baron ruthlessness, as well as an alarming growth in the gap between rich and poor. This presentation examines this contentious era of American history, one marked by record numbers of strikes and several insurgent political movements, but also the beginning of reform ideas that eventually formed the basis of the succeeding Progressive Era (1900-1920).

Also available: ***Making Sense of Gilded Age Labor-Capital Conflict***

From Farm to Factory: How the Industrial Revolution Transformed America or The Fight for Right: The Labor Movement in America – In 1820 the United States was essentially a “third world” country, with few cities, an economy based on agriculture, and nearly all manufacturing limited to small-scale craft production by skilled artisans. Eight decades later America was the world’s leading industrial power. This astonishing transformation produced unprecedented levels of prosperity, life expectancy, leisure time, and material comforts. But industrialization also brought poverty, exploitation, and suffering and raised troubling questions about the conflict between economic inequality and democracy. This presentation examines the key factors (technology, resources, etc.) that contributed to American industrialization, the rise of the labor movement, and the ongoing struggle to strike the right balance between business regulation and free market principles. Also available: ***Age and Reform: The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire; The Homestead Strike of 1892; and Making Sense of Gilded Age Labor-Capital Conflict***



Shedding the Light on Poverty: The Work and Impact of Jacob A. Riis – Jacob A.

Riis was one of the most influential and effective urban reformers. This presentation examines Riis' pioneering investigative photography and book, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) and how they led to greater public awareness of urban poverty and significant reforms in tenement housing laws. Also available: with a talk on Progressive Era urban reform (i.e., settlement houses, labor law, etc.)



The Progressive Era – The period 1900-1920 was marked by a wide-ranging effort by many Americans to rein in the excesses and abuses that accompanied the industrial boom of the Gilded Age. This spirit of reform (Progressivism) brought about significant changes in politics, business regulation, labor law, women's rights, and social welfare policies. Yet there were limits to this reform, most notably in the area of race relations. This presentation examines the ideas and motivations of these reform movements and assesses their success and enduring legacies.

Also available: *Jane Addams and the Settlement House Movement* AND *Shedding the Light on*

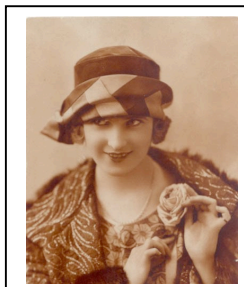
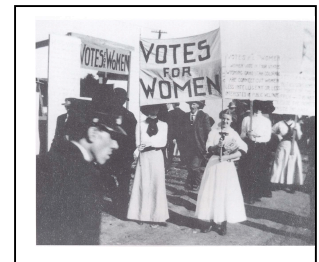
Poverty: The Work and Impact of Jacob A. Riis

America Becomes an Imperial Power – Until the 1890s, America prided itself for its isolation from world affairs and territorial ambitions that were limited to westward expansion. But in the 1890s, as the nation emerged as the world's leading economic power, America took an increasingly aggressive role in international affairs. By 1910 America had become an imperial power, controlling territories around the globe, from Puerto Rico to the Philippines. This presentation examines the isolationist tradition in American political culture, the sources of emerging imperialist spirit and policy, key events like the annexation of Hawaii, the Spanish-American War, the Filipino insurrection, and building the Panama Canal, and the anti-imperialist movement and the argument that imperialism was incompatible with republican government.

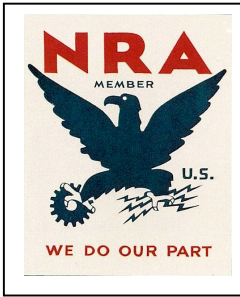


The Era of World War I: Idealism and Anxiety – The Era of World War I was one of the most contentious in the nation's history, as Americans struggled with the challenges of corporate power, labor unrest, record immigration, and the rising demand for women's suffrage. Americans were likewise divided over the U.S. entry into World War I and later, following the armistice, over membership in the League of Nations. These and many other unsettling changes ultimately led to a resurgent conservatism (red scare, immigration restriction, and prohibition) that would last through the 1920s. This presentation examines these trends and the many questions they raised. Also available: *How Women Won the Vote*

How Women Won the Vote – Seventy-two years after the Seneca Falls, NY convention called for women to gain the right to vote, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified. It represented a dramatic expansion of American democracy and led to significant changes in American politics and society. This multimedia presentation examines the long struggle for women's suffrage, including the bitter internal divisions over philosophy and strategy that threatened to derail the movement, the key initiatives like parades and picketing that helped build public support, the role of World War I in gaining President Wilson's support, and the effort by some feminists to achieve an Equal Rights Amendment.

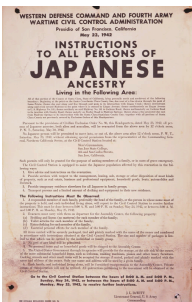
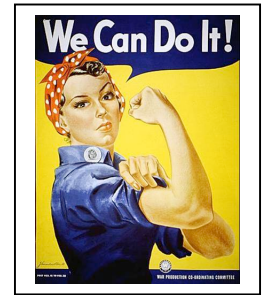


The Twenties: Roar and Reaction – The American economy "roared" in the 1920s as never before, until late 1929. The decade also witnessed profound social and cultural change as Americans embraced jazz, the Charleston, silent movies, and radio. Many women shocked their contemporaries by taking on the so-called "flapper" look with short hair and short dresses. These trends eventually prompted a conservative backlash that saw the revival of the Ku Klux Klan, immigration restriction, and religious fundamentalism. This presentation examines the main sources of the economic boom (and its underlying weaknesses), the explosion of consumer culture, key cultural trends such as Jazz, the Harlem Renaissance, the "flapper" style, silent movies, and radio, the rise of reactionary movements like the KKK and immigration restriction, and the 1929 Crash and coming of the Great Depression.



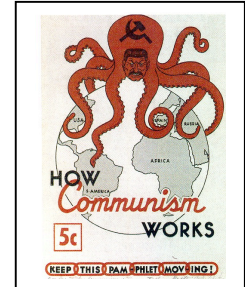
The Great Depression and the New Deal – During the early years of the Great Depression Americans experienced economic hardship (25% unemployment) on a scale that was without precedent in U. S. history. This multimedia presentation explores the causes and impact of the Great Depression. It also examines the key aspects of President Roosevelt’s New Deal, including the key philosophical and political ideas behind it, the goals and outcomes of the short-term programs like the WPA and permanent reforms such as Social Security, the conservative challenge to the New Deal (i.e., Liberty League), and the formation of the New Deal coalition. Finally, it offers an assessment of the successes and failures of the New Deal.

World War and the Transformation of America – This multimedia presentation examines the extraordinary changes ushered in by the U.S. entry into World War II. First, it brought millions of American women into the workforce where, unlike World War I, they stayed after the war. Second, the war provided an opportunity for African Americans to demand a new federal commitment to civil rights, beginning what were the early rumblings of the formal civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Third, World War II ended the Great Depression and launched the greatest peacetime expansion of the economy in American history. Finally, the war firmly established the U.S. as one of the world’s two superpowers, setting the stage for the Cold War. Also available: ***Japanese Internment***



Japanese Internment – Two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor the U.S. government sent more than 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry—most of them American citizens—to the internment camps. This dark chapter in American history caused many Japanese Americans to lose their homes, farms, and businesses, not to mention their dignity and self-esteem. This presentation examines the role longstanding anti-Asian racism played in the establishment of the internment policy. It also assesses the impact of internment on the lives of its victims and how they developed a variety of survival and coping strategies. It also explores the deep divisions that emerged within the Japanese American community between those who advocated resistance and those who urged peaceful acquiescence. Finally, it looks into the long lost-war struggle by Japanese Americans to rebuild their lives and to receive an apology and compensation from the U.S. government.

A Hard and Bitter Peace: The Cold War – Even before World War II ended, disputes had begun between the U.S. and Soviet Union over the shape of post-war Europe. In the decades that followed virtually every foreign policy decision of the U. S., from the Marshal Plan to the Space Program were made with the Cold War in mind. This multimedia presentation explores the origins of the Cold War, the emergence of the so-called “military industrial complex,” the U.S. intervention in wars in Korea and Vietnam, and the threat of nuclear war. It will also examine the influence of the Cold War domestic affairs, ranging from the rise of Sen. Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s to the conservatism of the American labor movement.



The Civil Rights Movement – African Americans fought for their civil rights long before the 1950s, but it was in that decade that a full-blown Civil Rights Movement began to gain traction. Led by inspirational figures like the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. the movement staged nonviolent marches, filed law suits, and pressured political leaders to restore to African Americans their constitutional rights won during Reconstruction. By 1965 the movement achieved passage of the Civil Rights and the Voting Rights Acts. This presentation examines the origins of the movement, the philosophy of nonviolence, and the key strategic decisions of the movement. It also explores the role played by more militant leaders such as Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael pushed the movement to confront more contentious issues such as entrenched poverty, police brutality, affirmative action, and the war in Vietnam. Also available: ***Days of Hope, Days of Rage: Tumultuous 1960s***

Vietnam: America’s Longest War – No event in recent American history, with the possible exception of the Civil Rights Movement, was more controversial than the Vietnam War. After initially supporting the war, the American public turned against it, eventually compelling withdrawal (but not before 58,000 soldiers were killed). It was a humiliating defeat for the world’s leading superpower, and its military, diplomatic, and political impact would be felt for at least another generation. This multimedia presentation will explore the Cold War context that led to U.S. involvement, the key military features of the war, the role of the U.S. media, the anti-war movement, and the long-term military, political, and diplomatic legacies of the war. Also available: ***Days of Hope, Days of Rage: Tumultuous 1960s***

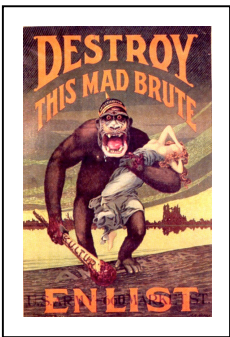




Uncle Sam and All That: The History of American Symbols –Throughout the history of the United States, Americans have developed symbols to express their most cherished values, hopes, and institutions. These include familiar ones like the American flag, Statue of Liberty, the Liberty Bell, Uncle Sam, the White House, and the bald eagle. They also include symbols that challenge the establishment to promote social change. Consider the peace sign or the clenched fist of the Black Power movement. And what about all those now forgotten symbols that once carried so much significance—like the pineapple (hospitality), bee hive (hard work), and the ballot box (democracy)? This presentation explores the role of symbols in American history and these key questions: Where do these symbols come from? How have they functioned in society? How and why does their meaning change over time? Also available: *The Story of the Statue of Liberty*

Fact vs. Fiction: The Role of Myths, Legends, and Tall Tales in American

History – How and why do societies develop historical myths? What purposes do they serve? In this session we'll explore the role myths have played in shaping American history, from the story of Betsy Ross and the American flag to the legend of Custer's Last Stand and from Horatio Alger's "Rags to Riches" tales to myths about happy and contented slaves on antebellum plantations. In so doing we'll identify the most prominent kinds of myths and the key functions they play in telling Americans about their past, present, and future. Participants will come to see that myths do not arise by accident. They are consciously created and perpetuated to serve the needs of a particular group, be they immigrants, segregationists, or politicians. Finally, we'll explore the ways historians untangle myths, separating fact from fiction, to uncover a more accurate understanding of the past.

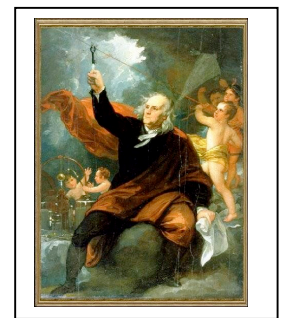


Wars and Rumors of Wars: How War Has Shaped and Reshaped American History –

From the very beginning of European settlement in North America, war has shaped and reshaped American society. Some of these conflicts, like the Revolution, the Civil War, and World War II, are very familiar. Others, like King Philip's War (1675-76), the War of 1812, or nearly all the wars in the west involving Native Americans, are not. Yet virtually every American war has generated rapid, unexpected, and often unwanted social change. The Civil War, for example, led to emancipation, even though few Americans at the start of the conflict wanted or expected it. Similarly, World War I led directly to women's suffrage. But wars have also led to profound changes in Americans have come to understand and define the role of the state, civil liberties, and the Constitution. This presentation examines these and many other compelling aspects of how war has made, and continues to shape, American history.

Why History Matters: How an Understanding of History Is Essential to Citizenship, Morality, Leadership, Business, and Even Personal Happiness --

Almost everyone, it seems, knows a variation of the quote by the American philosopher George Santayana, "Those who do not learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat its mistakes." But do we really know why it's important to study history? Do we know what separates history from other academic subjects like math, science, or psychology? Do we know what it is that historians do? Why it matters? This session will broaden participants' understanding of the significance of history beyond some elusive notion of "learning lessons." Using vivid examples from topics such as the history of slavery, the Civil War, immigration, and women's rights we'll explore the **five essential elements of history** and how they hold the potential to strengthen our democracy, promote human rights, boost a healthy patriotism, and inform our public policy decisions on issues such as taxes, healthcare, war, and privacy.



Teacher Professional Development Programs with Edward T. O'Donnell, Ph.D.

Don't Just Take His Word for It ...

"Ed is a master historian and educator, knowledgeable, entertaining, and informative. ... I was deeply impressed by his skill in dealing with teachers, particularly his ability to build interest and evoke reactions from nearly everyone in attendance. ... He has a creative approach to teaching history that encompasses a wide variety of media and sources, including documents, visuals, literature, newsprint, and songs. If [you are] seeking an historian to assist in educational programs for schoolteachers and other school personnel, Ed O'Donnell is, in my view, one of the finest candidates around for the job."

-- Jack Zevin, Professor of Social Studies Education, Co-Director, Teaching American History Program at Queens College

"Edward O'Donnell is one of the most outstanding teacher workshop leaders with whom I've had the pleasure of working. Teachers find his multimedia presentations both fascinating and extremely helpful in developing lesson plans and ways of using primary sources. Their evaluations rave about his enthusiasm, engaging style, and accessibility."

-- Linda Harris, Social Studies Coordinator, TAHG Project Director, New York City Board of Education

"Thank you once again for the tremendous job you did with the Chesterfield County teachers last week. I hope it was apparent how much they enjoyed you, and how much they got from your presentations. The teachers were really engaged throughout ... I coordinate a number of teacher programs and get a chance to see a lot of presenters, but I don't think I have ever seen anyone do a better job. I was really impressed with the way you worked with the teachers."

-- William B. Obrochta, Director of Education, Virginia Historical Society

"I highly recommend Dr. Edward T. O'Donnell as a presenter for K-12 teachers. Dr. O'Donnell led a seminar entitled "Nineteenth-Century Immigration" ... [and] during this five-hour session he provided an overview of immigration, led a discussion of Jacob Riis photographs, and facilitated a primary-source workshop using political cartoons. ... Dr. O'Donnell's overview of immigration was informative and engaging. The participants loved his conversational speaking style and very much appreciated his use of technology. ... The twelve participants absolutely raved about the quality of the session on feedback forms at the end of the seminar. ... A few of the participants have taken part in a number of seminars offered by the Keepers of the Republic TAH grant, and two of the veterans told me that Dr. O'Donnell's seminar was the best they'd attended over the course of almost three years!"

-- Amy Sopcak-Joseph, Education Coordinator, The American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts

"It is rare to find historians that work so well with teachers. The care, effort and passion you put into your work is reflected by the energy of the teachers and the excitement they bring back to the classroom. I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for your making our Teaching American History summer institute a success. It was a pleasure to work with you. All of our participants made it a point to tell me how much they enjoyed your insightful and thoughtful presentations."

-- Erik Baumann, Project Director, Teaching American History Grants, Bristol Community College, Fall River, MA

"Your presentation on the 'Making of the Empire City' made a strong impression on the teachers, and their evaluation forms were filled with praise. Participants enjoyed the excellent documents and images you used to support your lecture and commented that your talk was 'fascinating' and was filled with useful and relevant information that 'makes the study of history more interesting.'"

-- Suzanne Wasserman, Gotham Center for New York City History, City University of New York

"Thank you for joining us during our Teaching American History Grant (TAHG) Summer Seminar Session on June 19, 2008. You were, indeed, one of the most engaging presenters we have hosted. Your presentation on the Reconstruction Era captured the interest of our teachers and reinvigorated their awareness of this important age in American history. Thank you for providing such useful hand-outs and CD materials; teachers have begun to implement the resources and information you provided into their classroom instruction. Your delivery style is to be highly commended. We were delighted to have you join us."

-- LaNesha DeBardelaben, Project Manager, TAHG, Flint Michigan Community Schools
