

## Making of America: Gilded Age to Global Power

512:104: 01-02

Campbell Hall (River Dorm) Room A5  
Tuesday & Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> Period 2:200-3:20pm

Through lecture, discussion of primary sources (written documents, film clips and other visuals), and analysis of historical debates, we address the major themes in American history from the end of "Reconstruction" of the South (1877) to the American war in Afghanistan and the presidencies of Barack Obama, Donald Trump and Joe Biden. We will explore: (1) the emergence of the United States as an international power; (2) the expanding role of the federal government and the creation of the "welfare state;" and (3) the struggle for individual rights, especially those of women and of black and brown Americans, through today's #MeToo and Black Lives Matter.

'We Are in a Forest Fire of Ignorance'  
(Patrick Oliphant, Sept. 13, 2001 – two days after 9/11)



Patrick Oliphant (b. 1936) is an Australian-born, Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonists.

Topics in the *Making of America: Gilded Age to Global Power, 1877 to the Present*, include: the making of an industrial economy (Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller). We also look at the parallel of economic growth, the immigrant experience (that brought the great grandparents of some students from Europe to America between 1880 and 1917, and that brought the parents of many other students here since World War II from Latin America and Asia. Today that experience includes the undocumented immigrants who may be you or your classmates at Rutgers. We explore the birth of a consumer culture

(the movies, baseball, Atlantic City, flappers). The course also covers the United States rise to world power (the Philippine War, Spanish American War, World War I and II), and the subsequent testing of that power in Korea, Vietnam and the Middle East. We look at a low point in modern American history, the Great Depression and the national response, the New Deal, which led to the modern welfare state. We parallel the birth of consumer culture with a look at the 1950s (from Elvis to Kinsey, rock to sex) and the 1980s (Madonna and Michael Jackson). Nearer the end the course, we try to understand the turn to the right in American politics (and the so-called cultural wars) and what historians now call neo-liberalism. Most classes involve significant student participation. We ask all students to develop their own, brief PowerPoint slide show on one contemporary issue: climate change, #MeToo, Racial Justice/Injustice (Black Lives Matter), immigration., US-China relations, and the pandemic in N.J. or the World.



**Meet the Professor.** I am a colonial historian, who trained as a mathematician (BS) at the University of Maryland, and then got my PhD in history at the University of Wisconsin (so proof that your undergrad degree does not decide your life choices). At Rutgers, I have taught the American Revolution, Constitutional History, Famous Trial, and both halves of the American history survey, Making of America. I have also taught research seminars for undergraduates on Rutgers history while I was writing my book, *Rutgers since 1945*. I am currently on a book project on the Pandemic at Rutgers, and am collaborating in this project with a colleague who works on medical history.

I love teaching and try to integrate it with academic advising (hope to see each of you in person or virtually beyond the classroom this semester.)

Fun fact: I'm a hiker (the picture comes from Kings Canyon National Park, California – google the Hart Tree Trail if you want to know about one of the great sequoia hikes in the world—but sadly in an area threatened by California wildfires. I have two older children—both work for Sony doing video animation for PlayStation (if you have used a PlayStation game in the last decade or so, my daughter probably worked on the animation).

### **Books to Purchase (Check Rutgers Bookstore online to see if the prices for ebooks are better).**

Nancy Hewitt and Steven Lawson, *Exploring American Histories: A History with Sources, Volume 2, 4th edition* (Macmillan Learning, 2021. ISBN: 9781319331269. Available from Rutgers (B&N) Bookstore and from Amazon.com in several formats Amazon DOES NOT YET (10/27)LIST THIS EDITION. MacMillan Learning lists the price on their webpage as:

- a) paperback \$74.99 (recommended if you plan to become a social studies teacher)

- b) rent paperback edition \$40.99 (4 months)
- c) eText \$34.99 - ok, but we do close reading of documents and small screen viewing will cause you problems.

We will use this from the start of the course and on the exam. Very important that you have a copy. You can find **discounted 3<sup>rd</sup> editions**. The pagination will be different but the earlier 3<sup>rd</sup> edition in any format will suffice. Listed on syllabus throughout as ***EAH***.

Melba Pattillo Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High* (Washington Square Press, 1995) ISBN: **9780671866396**.

a) paperback \$9.99

b) kindle \$6.99

**Do NOT buy the edition with a red, white, and black (photograph) cover published by Simon Pulse**, ISBN: 978-1416948827. It is for high school students, and while cheaper, several of the scenes from her experience of been removed from the book as unsuitable for younger readers. This book will be the basis for a paper.

**Hope to see you in the classroom this spring. Stay safe, stay well.**