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AMERICAN HISTORY
FOR NON-COLLEGE STUDENTS

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AMERICAN HISTORY
FOR NON-COLLEGE STUDENTS

BY

WILLIAM E. FENTON

A problem submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of
Science Degree

University of Massachusetts

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study -- According to the latest reliable figures available, no more than thirty per cent of our secondary school students will continue their education after graduation.¹ This means that almost seventy per cent of our children will have completed their formal training when they receive their high school diploma. Consequently, the schools have a tremendous responsibility placed upon them to see to it that this overwhelming majority of our school population is given the best possible preparation to meet the many and varied problems of life.

One of the seven objectives of secondary education, listed by the Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Education of the National Education Association, is CITIZENSHIP. For such citizenship it states the following are essential: a many sided interest in the welfare of the communities to which one belongs; loyalty to ideals of civic righteousness; practical knowledge of social agencies and institutions; good judgment as to means and methods that will promote one social end without defeating others; and as putting all these into effect, habits of cordial cooperation in social undertakings.²

(1) Bent, Rudyard K. and Kronenberg, Henry H., Principles of Secondary Education, p. 180

(2) Ibid, p. 62

Importance of American History -- There is almost universal agreement on the fact that knowledge of our own country is essential in the making of Americans. Just as the man is the boy who has grown up, our nation today is actually something which has lived and suffered and fought in times past, and is at this very moment the thing into which a nation that existed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries actually developed. Properly speaking, no one can adequately grasp what our country is and what it is doing unless he has at least a basic realization of its efforts and accomplishments in time gone by.

Furthermore, and this is a matter of primary importance, it is quite unnatural to expect a man to give affection and loyalty to the United States here and now unless he is quite well aware of this country's nature and qualities. Practical loyalty to and affection for our country, that complex quality known as patriotism, must manifestly be considered as one of the primary objectives of American education. Since some fundamental grasp of United States history is ordinarily an indispensable aid to an understanding of what the country is, and consequently, to a genuine loyalty to this nation, American history is definitely one of the most important subjects to be taught in the American schools.

The Wesley Report advances these four main reasons for studying American history:

1. History makes loyal citizens because memories

of common experiences and common aspirations are essential ingredients in patriotism.

2. History makes intelligent voters because sound decisions about present problems must be based on knowledge of the past.

3. History makes good neighbors because it teaches tolerance of individual differences and appreciation of varied abilities and interests.

4. History makes stable, well-rounded individuals because it gives them a start toward understanding the pattern of society and toward enjoying the artistic and intellectual productions of the past.³

Eminent educational authorities, with knowledge, experience and research, have thus placed the problem squarely before American teachers. They must assume a great share of the responsibility for molding the citizens of the future. Our country will be great only as long as her citizens are great, and continue to uphold and cherish the ideas and ideals that have been her's for nearly two centuries.

It is almost a self-evident observation that a person can neither love nor cherish something which he does not know or understand. By the same token, one who has no knowledge

(3) American History in Schools and Colleges, Report of the Committee on American History in Schools and Colleges of the American Historical Association, the Mississippi Valley Historical Association and the National Council for the Social Studies. p. 14

of the rights and duties of a citizen of the United States today, or who has never been encouraged, through the medium of history, to look back and see for himself just what forces and figures were instrumental in lifting this Republic to its present pinnacle, could hardly qualify as an ideal citizen in the true sense of the word.

It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that history is important simply because of some results which accrue from its study. The truth is important in itself, and history tells us the truth about the origin and rise of our own Republic. American History teachers must not lose sight of the fact that they are not trying to indoctrinate but to educate. They are not primarily concerned with inculcating a point of view, but with the manifestly worthier objective of teaching truth.

History for Non-College Groups -- This educational process must be especially adequate for those pupils who will not continue their studies beyond high school. In future years this "terminal" group will constitute nearly three quarters of the total number of voters in the country. They will be primarily responsible for the makeup of the various legislatures in Washington and throughout all of the states. National, state and local executives will be chosen by them. Most certainly, their influence, either for good or evil, will be widespread.

Consequently, during the few years that these young

people are in school, every effort should be made to prepare them thoroughly for this vital role of citizenship so that when these responsibilities do face them, they will be prepared to discharge them admirably. An American history course for such a group should be set up with this particular thought in mind. In all probability it will be their last formal preparation for citizenship. It should and it must do the job well.

Selection of Content for Non-College Groups -- Morison and Commager state that history embraces the whole of a people's activity: economic and social, literary and spiritual as well as political.⁴ Until rather recently it was most unfortunate that history courses in most high schools, and oftentimes in some colleges, were primarily concerned with the political development of the United States. The other phases were either neglected entirely, or touched upon so briefly during the year that they made little or no impression upon the pupils. As a result students received a rather incomplete, distorted picture of the origin and rise of their own country.

Within the past few years some effort has been put forth by certain history teachers to correct this deficiency. It is hoped that not too many years will elapse before a complete

(4) Morison, Samuel Eliot and Commager, Henry Steele, The Growth of the American Republic, p. v.

transformation has taken place. A student's proficiency in this subject should not be measured by the amount of isolated information that he can commit to memory. Every single aspect in the complex development of our nation should be considered, and each one should receive the amount of emphasis it deserves.

Obviously in an American history course it is impossible to cover every single phase of activity down to the present day. Of necessity history teachers must pick and choose only those events, ideas and personalities which seem to have been significant in the development of our country. With these basic choices as a foundation they must then build their history courses around them by interpretation and explanation so that the objective of citizenship will be attained, and the pupils will become worthy members of their community, their state, and their nation.

CHAPTER II

OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE

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OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE

Statement of Problem -- Here, finally, was the problem that presented itself; to determine exactly what material in United States history should receive special emphasis in a high school course for non-college students. It was obvious that such a course was necessary for all students to prepare them for citizenship. But this need was especially imperative for the non-college group. Their training had to be completed before graduation because, in all probability, they would have no other preparation.

Naturally, they could not be expected to absorb every bit of American history down to our present day. But they should be given the essential elements in such a course. They should become familiar with the most important phases in the rise and development of the United States so that they would realize just what forces and figures were primarily responsible for it.

Material -- In an effort to determine precisely what this essential material was, the entire content of the United States history course was channeled into five distinct categories. These were Dates, Events, Ideas Important to Democracy, Presidents, and Persons Other Than Presidents. In this way every single individual, incident and idea that ever appeared on the pages of our country's history could be catalogued. It would be from this list of representative inform-

ation, dealing with all phases of the rise and development of the United States, that the necessary material would finally be chosen.

Next, after consultations with the Head of the Education Department and a member of the History Department at the University of Massachusetts, the more important material in each category was selected and incorporated into a check list. In this way the essential points in each group were readily made available for evaluation. Sufficient space was provided in each case for additions and comments that might be forthcoming.

Subjects -- When the material to be included on the check list was finally determined, and a sufficient number of the lists had been prepared, only the problem of getting them into the proper hands remained. Accordingly check lists were sent to the Principals of one hundred forty-eight Senior High Schools in Massachusetts with the request that they, in turn, pass them on to their American history teachers for completion and return. Every Senior High School in every city in the state was included as well as Senior High Schools in every town of over five thousand population.

Procedure -- A total of eighty-nine check lists were returned which represented sixty per cent of the number originally sent out. Specifically check lists were sent to sixty-five schools located in the thirty-nine cities of the Common-

wealth. Of this number, replies were received from thirty-eight schools located in twenty-six cities. These figures represented fifty-eight per cent of the schools and sixty-seven per cent of the cities. The remainder, eighty-three check lists, were sent to schools located in a like number of towns. From this group, fifty-one responded which represented sixty-one per cent of the total.

Once the replies had been received, the statements of this group of Massachusetts teachers were carefully tabulated. The subjects set down on the original check lists were arranged in the order of their importance in the eyes of the men and women who had sent in responses. The results of this tabulation are presented in the following chapters.

CHAPTER III

DATES

CHAPTER III

DATES

Introduction -- Modern educators have almost completely abandoned the time-honored practice of requiring memorization of fragments of unrelated learning. History teachers were once among the chief offenders. Formerly students were expected to commit to memory an almost unlimited number of unrelated names, events, personalities and dates. Little time was spent in attempting to ascertain why certain events occurred or why other results followed, while the possibility of relationships between various happenings in history was completely overlooked.

At the present time American History teachers use a different approach in the classroom. One of the cardinal principles of teaching today, as Butler states, is that "learning should be unitary, not fragmentary."¹ Pupils are encouraged to tie together various bits of information in order that the complete significance of various phases of history may be grasped more easily.

Dates Appearing on Check List -- Yet all persons realize that there are a few basic dates which should be familiar to every student. Some of these are important in their own right while others serve as a sort of guide post, assisting pupils in their efforts to link together series of events over a long period of time.

(1) Butler, Frank, The Improvement of Teaching in Secondary Schools, p. 15

In all seventeen dates were listed on the check list, and sufficient space was provided for any others the evaluator might wish to write in. The results of the checking of these seventeen dates by the eighty-nine teachers who answered the check list are found in Table I.

TABLE I

Dates Mentioned On Check List

Rank	Date	Event	Votes
1	1776	Declaration of Independence	88
2	1787	Constitution drawn up	82
3	1823	Monroe Doctrine	78
4	1917	World War I	77
5	1492	Discovery of America	76
5	1941	World War II	76
7	1861	Beginning of Civil War	73
8	1803	Louisiana Purchase	72
9	1898	Spanish-American War	71
10	1789	Washington becomes first President	68
10	1865	Abolition of slavery	68
12	1619	Introduction of slavery	56

An examination of the findings in Table I shows that the

two dates considered most significant by representative Massachusetts teachers are both associated with events which occurred when our country was just beginning to take its place among the nations of the world. The most important date, by an almost unanimous choice, was 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was signed, while eighty-two teachers considered the year 1787 essential because of the drawing up of the Constitution. Furthermore, the two World Wars in which America has been involved were the only contemporary events deemed worthy to be included. Significantly enough, four wars appear among the first nine dates.

Dates Not Appearing On Check List -- As was stated previously, sufficient space was provided on the check list for the teachers to write in additional choices of their own which were not listed on the sheet. With few exceptions they availed themselves of the privilege, and their foremost selections appear in Table II.

It is apparent, from an analysis of Table II that in some instances a date was associated with more than one event. For example fifteen teachers considered the year 1619 important because of the first representative assembly in America in addition to the fifty-six who chose it for the introduction of slavery. Two teachers also noted that during this same year the first women colonists came to our shores. The year 1787 also placed second on this list with seven votes due to the Northwest Ordinance.

TABLE II

Dates Not Appearing On Check List

Rank	Date	Event	Votes
1	1619	First Representative Assembly	15
2	1787	Northwest Ordinance	7
3	1607	Founding of Jamestown	6
3	1763	Peace of Paris	6
3	1812	War of 1812	6
3	1887	Interstate Commerce Act	6
3	1933	Beginning of New Deal	6
8	1820	Missouri Compromise	5

The date of the beginning of the New Deal was apparently the only one in modern times considered to be extremely significant. This was rather surprising in view of the fact that persons are usually apt to place undue stress upon the happenings that take place in their own times. The first representative assembly in America and the founding of Jamestown are the two important dates in the seventeenth century while those of the Northwest Ordinance and the Peace of Paris represent the eighteenth. Three outstanding nineteenth century dates -- those of the War of 1812, the Interstate Commerce Act, and the Missouri Compromise -- were mentioned

by at least five teachers.

General Comments on Dates -- One teacher was of the opinion that wars should be remembered not because they were wars but because they were the beginnings or endings of epochs of history. Another favored the teaching of history by periods, for example the Progressive Era from 1896 to 1916, instead of isolated dates. A third held that very few exact dates should be taught in non-college classes because in most cases the quarter of the century was sufficient.

Several stated that they desired less emphasis placed upon wars, otherwise undue significance appeared to be attached to them. Comment in general seemed to follow the idea that dates should be used merely for relative associations.

The number of dates considered important by the teachers ranged from three (1492, 1776 and 1787) to an almost unlimited figure. One individual was convinced that a good history student in high school should at least have a fair knowledge of the significance of several times the number of dates listed.

Conclusion -- It is apparent that Massachusetts teachers have very definite opinions regarding the position of dates in American history courses. They are unanimous in their belief that dates should never be memorized simply for their own sake. On the other hand, most of them feel that students should be familiar with a reasonable number of them in order

that they may better be able to understand the chronological sequence of various other events. It follows that at least a dozen important dates should be known by non-college students. These should be so spaced throughout various periods of our country's history that they serve as guide posts in the efforts of the teachers to present as complete a picture as possible of the various phases of development of the United States. The dates concerning which there was the most general agreement were 1776, 1787, 1823, 1917, 1492, 1941, 1861 and 1619.

CHAPTER IV

EVENTS

CHAPTER IV

EVENTS

Introduction -- Any adequate preparation for citizenship obviously should include certain basic information about events that influenced the rise and growth of the United States. Down through the years one event after another has occurred with such rapidity that the total number at the present time would stagger the imagination. Some of these were highly spectacular at the time they took place and apparently were destined to play an important role in the future development of the country, but with the passing of time the luster of their significance was dulled to such an extent that eventually several of them were all but forgotten. Conversely others appeared upon the scene accompanied by little or no fanfare only to rise in prestige and stature as the years went on.

Events Appearing on Check List -- In this particular category eighteen representative events were listed on the check list together with sufficient space for the teacher to add personal choices. The results of the checking of these eighteen events by the eighty-nine teachers who answered the check list are found in Table III.

In analyzing the findings in Table III it is apparent that both the Northwest Ordinance and the Civil Service Reform Bill were considered of equal importance by the teachers. The former, one of the great creative contributions of America, bridged the gap between wilderness and statehood by pro-

TABLE III

Events Appearing On Check List

Rank	Event	Votes
1	Northwest Ordinance	77
1	Civil Service Reform Bill	77
3	Revolutionary War	72
4	Opening of Panama Canal	69
5	Invention of Cotton Gin	68
6	1929 Stock Crash	66
7	Wagner-Donnelly Labor Act	61
8	Standard Oil, the First Trust	58
9	Mexican War	53
10	First Airplane Flight, Kitty Hawk	51

viding a system of limited self-government, the essence of which has been repeated for all of the continental and most of the insular possessions of the United States. The Civil Service Bill provided for federal appointments only for those taking open, competitive examinations and forbade any assessments on office holders for political purposes. Both were forerunners of immeasurable progress in their own particular phase of our country's development.

Seventy-two teachers mentioned the Revolutionary War

and sixty-nine the opening of the Panama Canal. Other events receiving at least sixty votes were the invention of the Cotton Gin, the 1929 Stock Crash and the Wagner-Connery Labor Act.

Events Not Appearing on Check List -- As was the case with the other categories the teachers added several events of their own choosing which were not listed on the check list. A summary of the results tabulated in this group appears in Table IV.

Both the Taft-Hartley Act and the United Nations are so closely associated with present day happenings that they could hardly fail to gain consideration. The inclusion of the War of 1812 can only indicate that wars must be considered of some importance, even over the objections of several persons who would either ignore them entirely or at the most use them as guide posts for understanding and remembering other events. In addition to the three events mentioned above, the Homestead Act also received six votes. Both the Interstate Commerce Act and the Federal Reserve Act were considered significant by five teachers. Four votes were given to the New Deal and three each to the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, the Clayton Anti-Trust Act and what was termed the Depression and Prosperity cycles through which the Republic has passed.

General Comments on Events -- In line with the present policy in this particular field several teachers stated that they deemed it a wiser plan to study broad trends and move-

TABLE IV

Events Not Appearing On Check List

Rank	Event	Votes
1	War of 1812	6
1	Homestead Act	6
1	Taft-Hartley Act	6
1	United Nations	6
5	Interstate Commerce Act	5
5	Federal Reserve Act	5
7	New Deal	4
8	Depression and Prosperity Cycles	3
8	Sherman Anti-Trust Act	3
8	Clayton Anti-Trust Act	3

ments rather than to confine their classes to certain isolated events. Among the examples most frequently mentioned were Conservation, Influence of Inventions, Labor versus Capital and the Growth of Big Business. They believed that these could either be taken as separate units or incorporated into units which already existed. Others insisted on a more adequate coverage of pre-Revolutionary events which they maintained were being shamefully neglected more and more each year.

Conclusion -- As far as the presentation of events is concerned, the teachers felt that an adequate course could be given to non-college students by combining either some or all of the top choices in both the "dates" and "events" categories. If the pupils have a sufficient knowledge of this material, not as isolated occurrences but as related and associated incidents, then it is obvious that teachers have gone a long way toward giving them an adequate, complete understanding of the history of their own country. The events concerning which there was the most general agreement were the Northwest Ordinance, Civil Service Reform Bill, Revolutionary War, Opening of Panama Canal, Invention of Cotton Gin, War of 1812, Homestead Act, Taft-Hartley Act and the United Nations.

CHAPTER V

IDEAS IMPORTANT TO DEMOCRACY

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IDEAS IMPORTANT TO DEMOCRACY

Introduction -- Certain fundamental ideas are actually part and parcel of any democracy, especially our own. These basic tenets are often identified by many different names but in the last analysis several of them are so closely related that they are practically identical. Most of them are so familiar to the citizens of the country that they take them for granted, seldom stopping to realize that their forefathers actually had to struggle fiercely to obtain them, and that millions throughout the world today are existing without them.

Ideas Appearing on Check List -- In all eleven ideas fundamentally important to a democracy were listed on the check list. Sufficient space was provided for the teachers to write in any others of their choosing. The results of the checking of these eleven ideas by the eighty-nine teachers who answered the check list are found in Table V.

The word "freedom" has been bandied about so frequently in this day and age that it is not at all surprising to see that certain freedoms which are enjoyed by everyone are considered of the utmost importance. Free speech and free press, in the opinion of the teachers, are the backbone of any democracy. Not far behind in consideration is our system of free public schooling which is available to all. On a par with this is an adequate realization of the importance of the United States in world affairs.

Eighty teachers considered our methods of holding elec-

TABLE V

Ideas Appearing On Check List

Rank	Idea	Votes
1	Free speech and press	86
2	Free public schooling	82
2	Importance of the United States in world affairs	82
4	Methods of holding elections	80
5	Jury trial	78
5	Equal opportunity for all	76
7	A square deal for labor	74
7	Personal freedom	74
9	Manhood suffrage	70

tions to be significant, while seventy-eight votes were cast for both jury trial and the idea of equal opportunity for all. Others, in order of their rank, which received at least seventy votes were a square deal for labor, personal freedom and manhood suffrage. To a certain extent some of these choices could be combined; for example, free public schooling and equal opportunity for all. In this way even greater emphasis could be placed upon individual ideas.

Ideas Not Appearing on Check List -- In space which was provided the teachers were asked to submit ideas which they

deemed of prime importance and which were not listed on the check list. Results of these findings appear below in Table VI.

TABLE VI

Ideas Not Appearing On Check List

Rank	Idea	Votes
1	Duties and responsibilities of individuals as well as rights	9
2	Direct primary	5
2	Freedom of worship	5
2	Initiative and referendum	5
2	Separation of Church and State	5
6	Dignity of the individual	4

An examination of the results appearing in Table VI shows that nine teachers believe there is danger that our citizens may concentrate entirely upon the rights and privileges that they enjoy and neglect to consider the corresponding duties and responsibilities that are incumbent upon them by virtue of these rights. Both freedom of worship and the idea of separation of Church and State in a democracy were deemed of primary importance by five teachers.

Three were of the opinion that not only labor but the operator as well should be entitled to a square deal. The dignity of the individual in America as compared with the condition of that same individual in totalitarian countries was commented upon by four teachers.

General Comments on Ideas -- Perhaps with the notion that the check list leaned too strongly toward the side of labor the following comment is significant: "Labor's duty is to be informed, not led around by labor leaders who are not interested in good labor-management relations. Democracy is not static; it is a living thing, only as strong as the individuals who believe in it."

Another teacher had this to say: "All students and particularly the slow students need to be impressed with the idea that democracy is based on individual activity. Stress the danger to the individual who receives too much help from the government, not political danger so much as loss of sense of achievement and personal pride. Such persons are easy prey for false leaders. Workers in factories need an honest picture of labor-management problems. They often cause the discrimination which is attributed to the bosses."

Conclusion -- Pupils today must be taught the true meaning and significance of democracy. If our form of government is to survive an adequate knowledge of the fundamental ideas that are inherent in democracy must be implanted in the minds

of the youth so that the corresponding love of country will take root and flourish in their hearts. Democracy cannot be inherited, it must be born anew with each generation.

Consequently, each student should become familiar with every phase that is listed. As mentioned previously some of them can be combined. In particular the student should realize the various phases of freedom that are his in the United States today. Along with these he should be motivated by a desire to fulfill completely the corresponding duties and responsibilities that accompany these rights and freedoms. With this proper balance achieved in his education he will be admirably fitted to take his proper place in modern society. The ideas concerning which there was the most general agreement were free speech and press, free public schooling, importance of the United States in world affairs, methods of holding elections and the duties and responsibilities of individuals as well as rights.

CHAPTER VI

PERSONS OTHER THAN PRESIDENTS

CHAPTER VI

PERSONS OTHER THAN PRESIDENTS

Introduction -- When one considers the thousands of individuals who have appeared upon the stage of American life without ever having attained the Presidency, it seems an almost impossible task to single out certain ones among them for special study. So many factors can enter into the element of choice that unless certain basic standards are set up, the results achieved will often prove inconsequential.

The persons chosen in this particular category must be outstanding in their respective fields of endeavor. In whatever that field was, their contribution had to be of such great magnitude that the very development and growth of the United States was affected by it. In this way it would be possible to pick out those persons primarily responsible for the rise of this Republic, and to have the pupils, especially the non-college students, concentrate their greatest efforts on this particular group.

Persons Appearing on Check List -- A total of thirty-seven names of persons other than Presidents were placed on the check list with adequate space for the evaluator to write in additional names of his own choosing. The results of this checking of persons by the eighty-nine teachers who answered the check list appears in Table VII.

Only twelve votes separate the first and fifteenth choices on the list, a remarkable tribute to the esteem in which they must be held by historians, and to the lasting

TABLE VII

Persons Appearing On Check List

Rank	Person	Votes
1	Alexander Hamilton	87
2	Horace Mann	85
3	Samuel Compers	84
3	John Marshall	84
5	Henry Clay	83
6	Benjamin Franklin	82
6	Booker T. Washington	82
8	John C. Calhoun	79
8	Robert E. Lee	79
10	Clara Barton	77
10	Andrew Carnegie	77
10	Thomas Edison	77
10	Thomas Paine	77
14	John L. Lewis	76
15	Samuel Adams	75
15	Henry Ford	75

mark they themselves have left upon the pages of history. Significantly enough, only one living person, John L. Lewis, appears on the list. It is as representative a group as could

be chosen, the individuals themselves with their varied backgrounds, abilities, and achievement symbolizing in their respective fields of endeavor the traditions of free America, the land of opportunity for all.

Hamilton, the financial genius of the infant Republic, was justly an almost unanimous choice. Horace Mann, the father of the American public school system, could hardly be ignored, especially by teachers in the state where his great work began. Most of the benefits which labor enjoys to-day can be traced to the untiring efforts of Samuel Gompers who for forty years guided the destinies of the American Federation of Labor. John Marshall and the Supreme Court are practically synonymous terms, so completely did the eminent Chief Justice dominate its affairs during his long term of office.

All others on the list deserve to be remembered for their achievements. Statesman, philosopher, scientist, humanitarian, industrialist, general, labor leader -- all these and many more must be studied by American students so that their notable contributions to the history of American civilization will never be forgotten.

Persons Not Appearing on Check List -- Several teachers made additions to the check list in the spaces provided for that purpose. A list of those receiving the greatest number of votes in this particular group appears in Table VIII.

One of Massachusetts' immortal statesmen, Daniel Webster, received the votes of thirteen of the teachers in his own

TABLE VIII

Persons Not Appearing On Check List

Rank	Person	Votes
1	Daniel Webster	13
2	Susan B. Anthony	12
3	William Jennings Bryan	8
3	George Washington Carver	8
3	John Hay	8
6	John Peter Zenger	6
7	Stephen A. Douglas	5
7	George Gershwin	5
7	The Wright Brothers	5

state, more than any other whose name did not appear on the check list. Susan B. Anthony was second with twelve votes. Three individuals, William Jennings Bryan, George Washington Carver and John Hay, were chosen by eight teachers. George Gershwin and the Wright Brothers were the only contemporaries who were considered important enough to receive a significant number of votes.

General Comments on Persons -- In this particular category comments were relatively few with one exception. Several of the teachers suggested that many more of our prominent

Massachusetts men, from the colonial days to the present, might well be included. However it appears obvious that most good teachers take into consideration the matter of location and during their course bring in the names of several persons from that particular area for special treatment.

Conclusion -- In studying the various choices of Massachusetts teachers in this group it is evident that no one profession or no one era in our country's history has had a monopoly of outstanding personalities. Appearing on the list are representatives of such divergent groups as financiers, statesmen, scientists, jurists, military leaders, humanitarians, philosophers, industrialists, musicians, educators, and many more. Furthermore, the contributions which these individuals made to the story of America were all made at different periods in the phase of her development.

As is apparent from the closeness of the final tabulations, the teachers are definitely of the opinion that all of these individuals listed should be known by American history students. If pupils become familiar with the exploits of at least this representative group of Americans, the content of their course will be enriched tremendously, and the knowledge gained will be an invaluable aid in developing love of country and good citizenship. The persons concerning whom there was the most general agreement are Alexander Hamilton, Horace Mann, Samuel Gompers, John Marshall, Henry Clay, Benjamin

Franklin, Booker T. Washington, Daniel Webster and Susan B.
Anthony.

CHAPTER VII

PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES

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PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES

Introduction -- By virtue of his office the President of the United States is inevitably assured of some sort of immortality. As a group, the thirty-two gentlemen who have held this position since 1789 present an interesting and enlightening picture when viewed in terms of backgrounds, qualifications, abilities and accomplishments. From their biographies it is evident that their backgrounds varied considerably. At the present time it is known that their qualifications and abilities were by no means equal. Their accomplishments while in office run the range of ratings from excellent to failure. It is on this last point alone that they are being judged in this survey. They are being considered solely on the merits of their actions as Chief Executive of this nation.

Presidents Appearing on Check List -- Fourteen of the thirty-two Presidents had their names on the check list. The results of the checking of these names by the eighty-nine teachers who replied are found in Table IX.

Massachusetts teachers voted unanimously for Lincoln. Next in line, with but one dissenting vote each, came Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, followed closely by Theodore Roosevelt, Jackson and Wilson. Cleveland and Monroe each received between seventy and eighty votes while John Quincy Adams and Madison were the choice of sixty.

TABLE IX

Presidents Appearing On Check List

Rank	President	Votes
1	Lincoln	89
2	Washington	88
2	Jefferson	88
2	Franklin D. Roosevelt	88
5	Theodore Roosevelt	87
6	Jackson	86
7	Wilson	85
8	Cleveland	77
9	Monroe	71
10	John Quincy Adams	61
11	Madison	60
12	Grant	56
13	Polk	45
14	Coolidge	44

Grant, Polk and Coolidge received fifty-six, forty-five, and forty votes respectively.

Presidents Not Appearing on Check List -- Results of the tabulation of votes for those Presidents whose names did not appear on the check list are found in Table X.

TABLE X

Presidents Not Appearing On Check List

Rank	President	Votes
1	Hoover	15
2	Hayes	13
3	John Adams	9
3	McKinley	9
3	Taft	9
3	Truman	9
7	Arthur	8

Of those Presidents whose names did not appear on the check list Herbert Hoover was selected by fifteen teachers and Hayes by thirteen. These choices and those of the other five in the table constitute a significant tribute to these men because, undoubtedly, if their names had been listed they would have received several more votes.

General Comments on Presidents -- Most of the teachers who selected Grant explained that they were doing so in order to give an outstanding example of one of the most corrupt administrations in our country's history. Many frankly admitted that he was much more successful as a general than as President. Surely in this case there is something to be said

in their favor. Our country has grown and prospered during all types of administrations, and it is well to acquaint pupils with this fact. Too often in the past they have been given nothing but the brighter side of the picture and any material that might be construed as unfavorable has been omitted.

Five teachers said that they took up each administration in detail. This may be correct procedure with certain students but with the non-college group it would seem much more advisable to concentrate on a few of the more outstanding Presidents.

Choices of America's Outstanding Historians -- At this point it might be interesting to draw a comparison between the choices of America's outstanding historians and those of the history teachers in Massachusetts high schools. Arthur M. Schlesinger's eminent group of fifty-five authorities in this field also selected Lincoln unanimously. Bracketed with the Great Emancipator were Washington, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Wilson, Jefferson and Jackson. These six were named as the Great Presidents of our country. Classed as Near Great were Theodore Roosevelt, Cleveland, John Adams and Polk. Below Average ratings were given Tyler, Coolidge, Fillmore, Taylor, Buchanan and Pierce while Grant and Harding were considered Failures. William Henry Harrison, Garfield and Truman were not evaluated, the first two because of their brief terms of office and the latter because his record is not yet complete.

All others, eleven in number, were placed in the Average group.¹

Choices of the Wesley Report -- The Wesley Report recommends a list of representative persons to be studied in the various grades. Of the Presidents only Washington is mentioned for the Middle Grades.² Grant, Jackson, Jefferson, Lincoln and Washington are recommended in courses at the Junior High level.³ Listed for the Senior High school are John Quincy Adams, Cleveland, Hoover, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Madison, Monroe, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson.⁴

Comparison with Choices of Massachusetts Teachers -- Massachusetts history teachers are practically in agreement with the country's outstanding historians. Their first six choices are almost identical. Grant and Coolidge, both at the bottom of Table IX, are the only two listed by the teachers who fall below the Average group in the opinion of the eminent historians. As was commented upon previously, the fact that both names did appear on the check list undoubtedly had a bearing on the number of votes each received.

(1) Schlesinger, Arthur H., "Historians Rate U.S. Presidents." Life. Vol. 25 (Nov. 1, 1948) pp. 65-74

(2) American History in Schools and Colleges. op.cit. p. 76

(3) Ibid. p. 78

(4) Ibid. pp. 80-81

In like manner Massachusetts teachers appear to follow the recommendations of the Wesley Report. Andrew Johnson is the only choice of this Committee in all three grades of study who is not rated proportionately as important by the teachers. Johnson received seventeen votes from them.

Conclusion -- As was said at the beginning of this chapter any person who attains the Presidency of the United States must, to a certain extent, be dealt with in any American history course. But in this position as in all walks of life there are some whose conduct while in office was of such sterling caliber that the country grew and prospered immeasurably under their leadership. Lincoln, Washington, Jefferson, the two Roosevelts, Jackson and Wilson were men of this type. Any American history course worthy of the name must of necessity place special emphasis upon their terms of office. Others may have their place in the picture too, but not to the extent that these seven should be considered. In the opinion of Massachusetts' high school history teachers they are the outstanding presidents of the United States.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

Introduction -- As was emphasized at the outset this survey was undertaken for the sole purpose of determining what material should receive special emphasis in a high school course in American history for non-college students. No claim was advanced that upon the basis of these results alone a complete course could be formulated. It was not advocated that students acquire an understanding of only the Dates, Events, Ideas, and Personalities considered on these pages while ignoring everything else. What is maintained is that certain forces and figures in the history of our country were definitely responsible for most of its development and growth.

Nor, in this study, do we care to comment on the organization of the material in an American history course. The fact that for the sake of convenience the "period" organization has been used to show the results of this survey does not necessarily imply that other methods are of no value. Many teachers build their courses in units which trace the origin and development of various phases of American life. Others make use of still different methods but all of them have the same end in mind. If this common goal of citizenship is attained then, obviously, the course has proved its worth. In this survey then we are concerned only with finding out what material should be included in an American history course, not with how the material should be organized and presented.

This latter problem is and rightly should be the work of the individual teachers.

Dates -- The teachers for the most part agreed that memorization of dates was helpful for the sole reason that it enabled the students to see more clearly the complete picture of the rise and development of their own country. In chronological order, the important DATES were 1492, 1607, 1619, 1763, 1776, 1787, 1789, 1803, 1812, 1820, 1823, 1861, 1865, 1887, 1898, 1917, 1933 and 1941.

Events -- Closely tied in with the representatives Dates were the EVENTS. Most significant, in order of number of votes received were the following: Northwest Ordinance, Civil Service Reform Bill, Revolutionary War, Panama Canal, Invention of Cotton Gin, the 1929 Stock Crash, Wagner-Connery Labor Act, the Establishment of Standard Oil as the First Trust, Mexican War, the First Airplane Flight, War of 1812, Homestead Act, Taft-Hartley Act, United Nations, Interstate Commerce Act, Federal Reserve Act, the New Deal, Depression and Prosperity Cycles, and the Sherman and Clayton Anti-Trust Acts.

Ideas Important to Democracy -- Certain fundamental IDEAS IMPORTANT TO DEMOCRACY were listed in this order by representative Massachusetts teachers: free speech and press, free public schooling, importance of the United States in world affairs, methods of holding elections, jury trial,

equal opportunity for all, a square deal for labor, personal freedom, manhood suffrage, duties and responsibilities of individuals as well as rights, direct primary, freedom of worship, separation of church and state, and the dignity of the individual.

Persons Other Than Presidents -- From the large group designated as PERSONS OTHER THAN PRESIDENTS these individuals were considered as particularly significant: Alexander Hamilton, Horace Mann, Samuel Gompers, John Marshall, Henry Clay, Benjamin Franklin, Booker T. Washington, John C. Calhoun, Robert E. Lee, Clara Barton, Andrew Carnegie, Thomas Edison, Thomas Paine, John L. Lewis, Samuel Adams, Henry Ford, Daniel Webster and Susan B. Anthony.

Presidents -- In any American history course a certain amount of time is devoted to each PRESIDENT. However, in the opinion of the teachers only seven are deemed of sufficient importance to warrant any special attention. These are Lincoln, Washington, Jefferson, the two Roosevelts, Jackson and Wilson.

Outline for American History Course -- In summarizing the results obtained it seems fitting to incorporate them into their proper places in a typical American history course. For convenience sake our history will be divided into six typical periods. We realize that it is not always feasible to separate the various happenings of history into definite

categories. Overlapping is inevitable under such an arrangement. But in order to accomplish our purpose such a procedure is necessary.

1. Colonial Period to Revolutionary War

<u>Events</u>	Discovery of America
	Founding of Jamestown
	Introduction of Slavery
	First Representative Assembly
	Peace of Paris
<u>Persons</u>	John Peter Zenger
	Samuel Adams
	Thomas Paine
<u>Dates</u>	1492, 1609, 1619, 1763

2. Revolutionary War to 1789

<u>Events</u>	Revolutionary War
	Declaration of Independence
	Adoption of Constitution
	Northwest Ordinance
<u>Persons</u>	Benjamin Franklin
<u>Dates</u>	1776, 1787

3. 1789 to Election of Jackson

<u>Events</u>	Beginning of Federal Government
	Invention of Cotton Gin
	Louisiana Purchase

War of 1812

Missouri Compromise

Monroe Doctrine

Persons

George Washington

Thomas Jefferson

James Madison

James Monroe

John Quincy Adams

Alexander Hamilton

John Marshall

Ideas

Free Speech and Press

Free Public Schooling

Methods of Holding Elections

Jury Trial

Dates

1789, 1803, 1812, 1820, 1823

4. Election of Jackson to Beginning of Civil War

Events

Mexican War

Persons

Horace Mann

Henry Clay

John C. Calhoun

Daniel Webster

Stephen Douglas

Andrew Jackson

James K. Polk

5. Beginning of Civil War to 1900

Events

Civil War

Homestead Act

Abolition of Slavery

Civil Service Reform Bill

Interstate Commerce Act

Establishment of First Trust

Spanish-American War

Sherman Anti-Trust Act

Persons

Robert E. Lee

Clara Barton

Susan B. Anthony

Samuel Gompers

Andrew Carnegie

William Jennings Bryan

John Hay

Abraham Lincoln

Ulysses S. Grant

Rutherford B. Hayes

Grover Cleveland

Ideas

Equal Opportunity For All

Personal Freedom

Manhood Suffrage

Dates

1861, 1865, 1867, 1898

6. 1900 to Present Day

Events

Federal Reserve Act
Clayton Anti-Trust Act
Opening of Panama Canal
First Airplane Flight
Beginning of New Deal
Wagner-Connery Labor Act
Taft-Hartley Labor Act
1929 Stock Crash
United Nations
World War I
World War II

Persons

The Wright Brothers
Thomas Edison
Henry Ford
George Gershwin
John L. Lewis
Woodrow Wilson
Theodore Roosevelt
Calvin Coolidge
Herbert Hoover
Franklin D. Roosevelt

Ideas

Importance of United States in
World Affairs
A Square Deal for Labor
Duties and Responsibilities of
Individuals as well as Rights

Dates

1917, 1933, 1941

Conclusion -- Briefly then, the above is the basic material for any American history course for non-college students as determined by a survey of history teachers in Massachusetts high schools.

They deemed it the minimum necessary in any adequate preparation for citizenship.

APPENDICES

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

CHECK LIST

APPENDIX I

Huntington, Massachusetts
April 23, 1949

I am a teacher of American History in Huntington High School, and a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts. As a teacher I have become particularly concerned about the non-college group in American History, and I am attempting to construct for them a course which will have in it the essential elements, and yet will give the teacher time to make the course functional for these people. Obviously, the matter of selection is involved - and this I am attempting as part of the requirements for my degree of Master of Science in Education.

The purpose, then, of this survey is to try and determine just what persons, dates, and events in our country's history are considered the most important, the most outstanding, and the most influential by American History teachers in nearly 150 Massachusetts senior high schools. In addition, I am attempting to ascertain just what basic ideas important to democracy should be stressed. Your answers will assist me in my attempt to find out precisely what material should receive special emphasis in a course in United States History for non-college people.

I would appreciate your cooperation in kindly asking one of the teachers in your American History Department to evaluate the material on the enclosed check list. Substitutions may be made for any or all of the choices, as the material itself is intended merely for the sake of convenience.

It is my hope that these check lists can be completed and returned to me in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,

William E. Fenton

WF
Enc.

APPENDIX II

CHECK LIST FOR HIGH SCHOOL COURSE

IN UNITED STATES HISTORY

FOR NON-COLLEGE STUDENTS

Please indicate by your selections in the following five categories the ones you consider should receive special emphasis in a high school course in United States History for non-college students. Rather than limit you to a certain number of choices in each category, I would prefer that you indicate either as few or as many as you deem necessary in each group.

The material itself is intended merely for the sake of convenience, and all of the choices listed do not necessarily reflect either my own opinion or that of the History Department of the University of Massachusetts. If any of the choices are acceptable, please mark an X before them. If your choices are not listed, please list them in the spaces provided. Choices that I have listed and that are not marked by an X will be presumed to be unacceptable to you.

Additional comments, suggestions, or criticisms that you may care to add on the back of the sheets will be deeply appreciated.

IMPORTANT DATES

1492	Discovery of America	1845	Acquisition of Texas
1619	Introduction of Slavery	1850	Acquisition of California
1776	Declaration of Independence	1861	Civil War begins
1787	Constitution drawn up	1865	Abolition of slavery
1789	Washington, 1st President	1869	1st transcont. R.R. completed
1803	Louisiana Purchase	1898	Spanish-American War
1823	Monroe Doctrine	1917	World War I
1825	Erie Canal completed	1935	Social Security Act
		1941	World War II

EVENTS

Revolutionary War
Northwest Ordinance
Invention of cotton gin
1st cotton factory, Waltham
Patenting of reaper
Mexican War
Discovery of oil, Penna.
Introduction of barbed wire
1st Trust, Standard Oil

Morrill Land-Grant College Act
Civil Service Reform Bill
Forest Reserve Act
Introduction of 8 hour day
Opening of Panama Canal
1st radio station, Pittsburgh
1st airplane flight, Kitty Hawk
1929 stock crash
Wagner-Connery Labor Act

IDEAS IMPORTANT TO DEMOCRACY

A square deal for labor
Free speech and press
Free public schooling
Manhood suffrage
Personal freedom
Jury trial

Insurance vs. accidents in work
Methods of holding elections
Expansion into new areas of land
Importance of U. S. in world affairs
Equal opportunity for all

PERSONS OTHER THAN PRESIDENTS

Samuel Adams	Henry Ford	Horace Mann
Jane Addams	Stephen Foster	John Marshall
Clara Barton	Benjamin Franklin	J. P. Morgan
James G. Blaine	Samuel Gompers	Samuel F. Morse
Gov. Wm. Bradford	Charles Goodyear	Thomas Paine
John C. Calhoun	Horace Greeley	Walter Reed
Andrew Carnegie	Alexander Hamilton	J. D. Rockefeller
Henry Clay	John Hancock	Babe Ruth
Christopher Columbus	Mark Hanna	Capt. John Smith
Dorothea Dix	Oliver W. Holmes	Thaddeus Stevens
Thomas Edison	Robert E. Lee	Mark Twain
Ralph W. Emerson	John L. Lewis	Booker T. Washington
_____	_____	Noah Webster
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

PRESIDENTS

Washington	J. Q. Adams	Grant	Wilson
Jefferson	Jackson	Cleveland	Coolidge
Madison	Polk	T. Roosevelt	_____
Monroe	Lincoln	F. Rossevelt	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

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Problem approved by:

William M. Rowle
Albert W. Purvis

Date May, 1950

