

**American Institute
FOR HISTORY EDUCATION**

"Well done is better than well said"

The AIHE Gazette

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**AIHE Introduces
Newest Member:**

Robert "Robby" Brown

Coordinator for Professional Development • rbrown@aihe.info

New Book Released:

Kings Mountain and Cowpens — Our Victory Was Complete



As a history teacher I was always cognizant of the fact that I may be the last historian that my students would come into contact with and as a result I had to do it right. It is absolutely essential that teachers have complete command of their content and the ability to get students to understand

it. The Teaching American History grant program has had a profound impact on my personal understanding of American history and has helped teachers across the country increase their content knowledge and skill.

Five years ago, Cleveland County Schools in North Carolina gave a colleague and me the opportunity to pursue a Teaching American History grant. Frankly, I believe they agreed to let us pursue this project to keep us out of trouble rather than from a belief that we would be able to put together a successful application. The previous statement is somewhat tongue-in-cheek. We were two history teachers who had experienced the highs and lows of the classroom along with the often-ineffective workshops that passed for professional development. While we did not know exactly what the finished product would look like, we did know we wanted teachers to learn from passionate experts and experience authentic history.

Our first project that was funded, not an American Institute for History Education (AIHE) project, was a work in progress for its three-year life. We fought constantly, and often unsuccessfully, to get professors to understand what we wanted to accomplish and what our teachers needed. We struggled with developing a pedagogy component that was meaningful in the real world of the classroom. Finally, while we worked with some great people and made some powerful friendships along the way, there was little collegial relationship between our teachers and some of the experts that worked with us.

Even with all of the aforementioned issues with our first TAH project, we found our teachers wanted more. They had never been provided with professional development that was targeted specifically at history teachers, and they were clamoring for another project. As the time came to apply for a new grant, we sat down and decided we needed a new perspective and some fresh ideas. We contacted Dr. Kevin T. Brady at AIHE and the program that he described had all of the elements that we had been trying so long to develop. After three years and two TAH grants, I could not be happier with the relationship and

results from working with AIHE.

The colloquia model that AIHE utilizes has been designed with actual classroom teachers in mind. The whole setup fosters a sense of teachers as equal partners in the history education process. Instead of a system that relies on one college or university and a small number of other partners, AIHE has presenters available in different specialties from across the country. In each colloquium there was a historian, a history education expert, and a master teacher. The different roles that each of these people played in the colloquium addressed the problems that we experienced in our first project. Not only is there substantive history content being delivered, but there is a focus on new teaching methods and techniques, and ways to incorporate this newfound skill directly into the classroom. In short, the AIHE model delivers exactly what the TAH program is designed to do — teachers gain increased content knowledge and skill in traditional American history, and they learn enhanced methods and techniques to get students to think critically and improve their achievement. Flexibility has also been one of the hallmarks of our experience with AIHE. Along the way we made some minor changes in scope and sequence, and the staff at AIHE has been extremely accommodating in working these changes into our program.

Just a bit about my background. I graduated from UNC-Charlotte in 1994 with a B.A. in history and began teaching social studies and history at Crest High School immediately thereafter. For fourteen years I taught history at my alma mater and loved every moment of it, from AP U.S. History to civics and economics, I taught it all. In 2007 I was awarded a master's degree in school administration from Gardner-Webb University. After fourteen years of teaching and writing three TAH projects I thought it was time for a change and accepted a position as an assistant principal at Crest High. While

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Project Directors Welcomed into AIHE Family at Annual MEETING OF THE MINDS

Project directors from their first, second, and third years of the Liberty Fellowship program met beginning Wednesday night, September 16, with the American Institute for History Education (AIHE) staff at the Holiday Inn Olde City in Philadelphia for the fourth annual Teaching American History Grant “Meeting of the Minds” Conference.

AIHE President Dr. Kevin T. Brady and the staff developed the four-day Meeting of the Minds to allow new and experienced project directors nationwide to share information regarding AIHE’s unique grant services. The conference’s goal was to provide project directors with the tools necessary to take full advantage of their Teaching American History grants. The Meeting of the Minds, which wrapped up on Saturday, September 19, provided insight into running a colloquium and gave project directors the chance to meet, mingle and network.

The conference began with a cocktail reception hosted by

AIHE and Dr. Brady. During the conference, project directors were instructed on operating a colloquium and developing and evaluating effective lesson plans. Project directors also learned more about AIHE through a video presentation and a closer look at the AIHE web site. A variety of presentations were made, including those on best practices, online resources, “Heroes,” AIHE Signature Strategies, and “Thinking Historically,” plus detailed looks at AIHE’s online web resources: CICERO: History Beyond the Textbook™ and SojournerHistory™.

As part of the conference, participants visited the nearby National Constitution Center, an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to increasing awareness about the Constitution and its relevance in Americans’ daily lives. Along with meals, including two banquets and musical entertainment, the conference closed with tours of Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Christ Church and other historic locations.



Dr. Brady explains a point during the Meeting of the Minds.

50 American Heroes Every Kid Should Meet Introduces Children to Real American Heroes

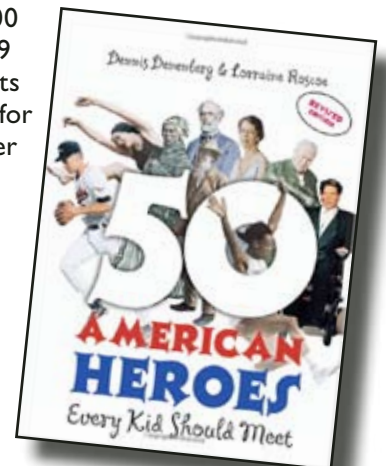
50 American Heroes Every Kid Should Meet, written by Dr. Dennis Denenberg and Lorraine Roscoe, is an interactive “kid-friendly” book that motivates kids (and adults) to explore the lives of heroes at home or at school. Each page includes an important quote by each hero, a short biography about each hero, photographs; a section where readers are encouraged to extend their learning, and other books about that hero. The book also includes activities for children that make learning about American heroes interactive and fun.

“Children need to see that they can achieve just like real heroes — they can make mistakes, learn from them, keep striving, and eventually succeed. I CAN is a powerful message that REAL heroes can teach,” says Dr. Denenberg.

Dr. Denenberg is a professor emeritus from Millersville University. He is a nationally known speaker, and has

spoken to more than 75,000 educators and parents in 39 states. He regularly presents for the American Institute for History Education. To order Dr. Denenberg’s book or heroes trading cards, visit www.heroes4us.com.

Lorraine Roscoe is a freelance writer who specializes in education. She presents highly interactive and entertaining programs for any kind of children’s group: schools, scouts, religious clubs — anywhere that she can help kids learn about REAL heroes.



Teachers from the Mount Vernon Liberty Fellowship Share Their Experiences



Barbara Mohr, Lawrence **Central High School —** **Indianapolis, IN**

*(9th-12th Grade Law Education, 9th Grade
Gifted and Talented Geography and History of the World)*

The Mount Vernon Liberty Fellowship confirmed that my inclusion of primary sources in the curriculum is imperative, regardless of the discipline taught. The knowledgeable presenters not only shared their expertise on Civil War Reconstruction, they also provided “hands on” material, via CICERO: History Beyond the Textbook™, that any social studies teacher may utilize. The Binary *Paideia* training encouraged an entire “unit” design, facilitating student learning.

Teaching about historical places within one’s own community was rejuvenating. Every educator needs to consider contacting his local historic landmark foundation or society to create links within the curriculum. It has been my experience that my small vision can be developed by these professionals, and a quality field trip or presentation can be provided. The American Institute for History Education provided us with a well-spent, renewing week.

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Effie Keys, Lawrence **Central High School —** **Indianapolis, IN** *(9th Grade History and Geography of the World)*

The Mount Vernon Liberty Fellowship strived to make the experience exceptional in each and every one of the real applications and presentations brought forth by the presenters from the American Institute for History Education (AIHE), I sincerely hope that describes the experiences of others who attended as well.

For one week the AIHE presenters took the time to show us exactly how a web site, PowerPoint, or other techniques could be used in the classroom to make the material relevant and engage students. They made the experience tangible. The Civil War lecture was not just any ordinary lecture given by a colleague. It was given by Abraham Lincoln himself — OK an actor, but it made it come alive and made one sit up and pay attention. The lectures and presentations over the early to mid-1900s became tangible with the overnight field-study trip to French Lick/West Baden, where we were briefed on its history and relevance to the time period. As teachers we know students like to be involved in the learning process. The Mount Vernon Liberty Fellowship provided the materials to do just that — engage the students in the classroom and in the curricular material. The Mount Vernon Liberty Fellowship provided

us with the resources and ideas that we could take back to the classroom and begin using on day one. We did not have to go out and find those materials or piece them together from each presenter. They were all provided to us via personal flash drives. The fellowship also provided for all expenses to be covered through a stipend. For once I did not have to pay for gas, lunch, accommodations, or incur any other expenses to participate in this institute as one usually does.

I strive to make the learning experience relevant for my students in each and every lesson that I teach, and I sincerely believe the Mount Vernon Liberty Fellowship gave me materials I can use to do just that!

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Robert Hasty, Lawrence **Central High School —** **Indianapolis, IN** *(10th-11th Grade AP U.S. History, 10th World History)*

Beginning for two days in April and culminating in a week-long symposium in June, a number of educators from the Indianapolis, Central Indiana region were afforded the opportunity to engage in learning and dialogue over the topic of the American Civil War causes, events of the war, and results of the conflict. College professors, high school educators, and the American Institute for History Education representatives provided an arsenal of material, perspective, and teaching resource materials. The entire program was stimulating and provided me with invaluable resources for teaching American history. As a veteran teacher and a teacher of AP history, the tendency sometimes is to believe that there just isn’t much out there that you do not know. I really know better, and it was apparent immediately that tremendous resources were available for anyone willing to participate in the program.

Three areas of presentation for me made the experience “priceless.” Presenters were of the highest caliber. College professors, high school teachers, and area experts provided topic-rich material and classroom friendly lessons on the Civil War and Reconstruction period. We can truly be lifelong learners. Important cause-and-effect examples were introduced. The use of primary documents for understanding and appreciation of the events of the time period were amazing.

The opportunity to use the lesson designs and library of resources on CICERO should excite any teacher of history. The resources available are nearly unlimited and the suggestions for teaching strategies and lessons become very helpful to the classroom instructor.

Finally, the group was able to take an overnight trip to French Lick/West Baden, Indiana. Participants marveled at the rich architecture and elaborate

See **MOUNT VERNON**, page 6



Robby Brown

“Thinking Historically for Teachers in the Real Classroom” Helps Teachers and Students Build Knowledge and Understanding

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the Teaching American History grant program “is designed to raise student achievement by improving teachers’ knowledge and understanding of and appreciation for traditional U.S. history.” When you look at this purpose, the intention of the program is for increases in teacher knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of American history to translate into increased student achievement. On the surface this looks like a logical step; if teachers know more and have a better understanding of the subject matter, then students will demonstrate higher achievement. To quote ESPN’s Lee Corso, “not so fast my friend!”

Think about the following scenario and see if anything similar has happened to you in your classroom:

You have just taught the Compromise of 1850 as part of your unit on the Decade of Crisis. In preparation for your teaching, you have gathered articles on the compromise itself, the principal personalities involved in the compromise, and analysis of the results. You have taken all of this material and sifted through it and compiled it into a well-oiled set of lessons and activities that walk students through this critical piece of legislation step by step. There are excerpts from Calhoun, Webster, and Seward, there are bulleted lists of the seven main parts, the students read pieces of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, there are even anecdotes about how medical practices of the day may have killed President Zachary Taylor. You have nailed this portion of the curriculum! Then the test arrives and the students bomb out.

This scenario plays out far too often in history classrooms around the nation every day. Teachers work hard to become more knowledgeable and to put together lessons they think will bring that knowledge to their students. When this transference doesn’t happen, it is frustrating for teachers and students. One of the most frustrating problems in the Teaching American History (TAH) programs is getting the increases in knowledge and appreciation of American history to translate into increases in student achievement.

In order to help solve this problem we need to take a moment to look at the big picture so to speak. Woodrow Wilson said history endows us with the “invaluable mental power we call judgment.” That is a bold statement from a president who refused to take any of the opposition with him to Versailles in 1919, but nevertheless is true. Dr. Sam Wineburg tells us that history is a tool for changing how we think, for promoting a literacy of discernment, judgment, and caution rather than names and dates. Harry Truman’s history teacher, Margaret Phelps, said this about history, “It cultivates

every faculty of the mind, enlarges sympathies, liberalizes thought and feeling, furnishes and approves the highest standards of character.”

With all of this being said, why do we have such problems with student achievement in a subject that is so powerful and so liberating? I believe the answer lies in the differences between the students and ourselves as history teachers. When you read the quotes from Ms. Phelps and Woodrow Wilson you find yourself saying, “Why, of course, history does that!” History teachers by their very natures are passionate about their material. We live it, breathe it, and work with it in our spare time. As history professionals we have developed sets of innate skills that help us process complex material and think logically about different philosophies and interpretations of history. To us, the true believers, this is as involuntary as eating when you are hungry.

Most students on the other hand do not have the well-developed ability to think historically that we do. While we may find great pleasure in hearing Joseph Ellis waxing philosophic on the leadership of George Washington, students upon hearing the same thing may really be hearing “blah blah blah.” Their lack of skills for thinking historically prevents them from taking advantage of the increases in knowledge and skill that we have developed through participation in TAH projects. While we as teachers may have experienced those increases that the Department of Education desires, at times the student achievement portion is lacking because they do not have the critical thinking skills to digest the new material.

So we throw all of this together, teachers working hard to learn more, and teachers teaching their hearts out, and we still end up with students who have a hard time grasping complex historical material. What can we do to alleviate this situation? First, we can use a series of skills that will help students to think historically, allowing them to understand complex material and grasp the nuances of history that we as teachers naturally understand. Second, we can embed the use of those skills as part of the daily instructional process. This sounds like a win-win situation for teachers and students alike. Teachers will be able to effectively utilize the new knowledge and skills they have learned, and students will be able to understand and use that material to increase their achievement.

We have developed a series of skills for thinking historically that will help teachers and students build their historical knowledge and understanding in a way that makes it meaningful. These tiered skills build on each other from the broadest to the most

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AIHEtv Hits the Airwaves



Last month the American Institute for History Education entered a new medium when it introduced AIHEtv. The new venture is a 30-minute cable television program aimed at history teachers, students and history buffs. Content includes interviews, tours of

historical sites, content for the classroom and more.

The pilot episode, hosted by AIHE's Dr. Yohuru Williams,

aired on Sunday, August 30, and was available to nearly 2 million television households in the South Jersey, Philadelphia and Delaware markets. The episode featured interviews with historical re-enactors, including President Abraham Lincoln.

For viewers in the tri-state area, you can watch AIHEtv on WMCN-DT cable on Sundays, 5:30 p.m. For a channel listing in your area, go to www.wmcn.tv/cablecoverage.html.



Minute Man National Historical Park Salutes Start of American Revolution

At Minute Man National Historical Park in Massachusetts, the opening battle of the Revolution is brought to life as visitors explore the battlefields and structures associated with April 19, 1775, and witness the American revolutionary spirit. These ideals led to an American literary revolution the following century, introducing Concord authors Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Louisa May Alcott and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

On September 21, 1959, Congress established Minute Man National Historical Park to preserve important sites associated with the opening battle of the American Revolution; a battle that led to the creation of our country. It was here that the "shot heard 'round the world" was fired, igniting a flame of liberty that still burns brightly in the hearts of freedom-loving people around the world. This year is the park's 50th anniversary. Through September there will be a series of special events (including lectures, scholars forums, living history demonstrations, ranger-led walks, concerts, and historical house "open houses") designed to serve 1.2 million park visitors, to engage youth and families and to attract new and diverse audiences.

Minute Man National Historical Park was created by an act of Congress in 1959 to preserve and interpret the events, ideas, significant historic sites, structures, properties and landscapes associated with the opening of the American Revolution at Concord's North Bridge and along the Battle Road on April 19, 1775.

The park, with its restored colonial landscape, sites, structures, and knowledgeable staff, is a valuable resource for teachers and students of American history. Ranger-guided and self-guided field trips to the



Cannons at Smith House

park bring the story to life for students and connect classroom lessons to memorable field experiences. Visiting Minute Man National Historical Park is a memorable experience for students and teachers alike.

Begin your park visit at the Minute Man Visitor Center, near the eastern entrance of the park. "The Road To Revolution," a multimedia theater program, provides an excellent introduction to the main park story. The program depicts Paul Revere's ride and the battles at Lexington Green, North Bridge and along the Battle Road. The visitor center exhibits include a forty-foot mural that portrays the fighting between Colonists and British Regulars.

After leaving the visitor center, explore the Battle Road Trail. This five-mile trail connects historic sites from Meriam's Corner in Concord to the eastern boundary of the park in Lexington. The main theme of the trail is the Battle of April 19, 1775, that launched the American Revolution. Moreover, the trail interprets the broader human story of the people whose lives were altered by the events that took place here. Much of the trail follows original remnants of the Battle Road; other sections leave the historic road to follow the route of the Minute Men, traversing farming fields, wetlands, and forests.



British soldiers on Battle Road

If you do not wish to hike, you can stop at two key points, the Paul Revere Capture Site and the Hartwell Tavern Historical Area.

Minute Man National Historical Park is located 22 miles outside of Boston within the towns of Lexington, Lincoln and Concord, Massachusetts. For more information, please visit www.nps.gov/mima.

this job was rewarding in many aspects, it was not what I loved, and that is history. This summer Dr. Brady offered me a job as a coordinator for professional development with AIHE. The passion and desire I had to work with history and history teachers made it an offer that I simply could not turn down, and it has been a wonderful experience thus far.

In 2008 we were awarded a TAH grant specifically for elementary and middle school teachers. One of the things we wanted to do with this group was to train them in the use of historic sites to enhance their history teaching. For years I have been taking student groups on field experiences to the local Revolutionary War battlefields of Kings Mountain and Cowpens and we wanted to do the same thing with our group. After some discussion it was determined that we may need to provide the teachers with some background information prior to the trip in order to make the experience as rich and worthwhile as possible. Over the course of the year this idea continued to grow and evolve into something far larger than I ever intended. While my days were spent dealing with the mundane problems

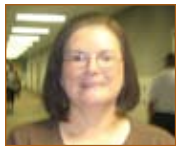
of lunch schedules and bus routes, my evenings were taken up with research and writing. I wanted to make the information these teachers received second to none. Eventually this writing and research became a full-fledged book on the battles of Kings Mountain and Cowpens and how they changed the course of the American Revolution titled *Kings Mountain and Cowpens — Our Victory Was Complete*. These two little-known battles (excepting the travesty that is the feature film “The Patriot”) literally changed the course of the American Revolution and put the British irrevocably on the road to Yorktown. History Press in Charleston, S.C., read a chapter and decided to publish the book. Without the experiences of directing and participating in three TAH projects, along with the help of many friends, I would never have been able to put such a book together.

To order a copy of *Kings Mountain and Cowpens— Our Victory Was Complete*, visit the AIHE Bookstore at www.aihe-bookstore.com and click on the link for AIHE Professor Books.



construction of the hotel region famous as a “healing get-away” place for some of the biggest name, power people of the first half of the 20th century. The views were breathtaking. It was certainly a trip most of us will retain in memory for a very long time.

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**Judy Beckner, Lawrence
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(11th Grade U.S. History)

The Mount Vernon Liberty Fellowship has provided me with personal learning as well as improving my craft. The topic of Reconstruction was appropriately addressed by expert guest speakers who reminded me about the struggles of mainstream society with this era of Jim Crow. Through the use of primary sources, cartoons, pictures, and CICERO resources, our class had lively discussions similar to the kind we desire from our students.

Several of our guest speakers, like Dr. Holly Fisher, challenged us to think deeply and make connections from the Civil War era to the Spanish-American War. She challenged our concept of our definition of an American. In contrast to the age of Jim Crow, we took a field-study trip to the nearby French Lick Springs and neighboring West Baden to see how the wealthy spent their leisure time.

I enjoy spending my leisure time as a life-long learner and finding new resources like CICERO and the wealth of information from the local historical societies. I look forward to another year of learning.

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specific. Each skill is designed to use prior knowledge and natural curiosity to take history away from a grab bag of facts and dates and transform it into a coherent process. This process is based on two core fundamental assumptions: that content, pedagogy, and skills for thinking historically must be interwoven, and that content, pedagogy, and skills for thinking historically must be related to classroom experience.

Utilizing these skills in the classroom will help teachers bridge the divide between their experiences in TAH projects, with what they are teaching in the classroom. Students will no longer see history as a bunch of dry facts, stale dates, and dead people. History will become a living, breathing subject that is as exciting and enticing to students as it is to us.



Introducing
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development tool for teaching American History that can
best be described as the ultimate resource
for elementary, middle and high school teachers.

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