

Saturday, September 21, 2019
8am-3pm

2019

TEACHING HISTORY CONFERENCE

New Approaches to Old Topics

University of North Texas Gateway Center



*Anarchists
&
Assassins*



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CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Conference Theme

The overall theme for the conference, “Assassins and Anarchists,” offers an opportunity to explore social and political turmoil from a broad perspective. While the presentations all focus on specific incidents, the topics share a leitmotif of violence in transitional times, often when insecurity and fear have put established structures under severe pressure. Some conference speakers will lead participants to a better understanding of the causes and consequences of some of history’s most significant assassinations, such as the deaths of Abraham Lincoln, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, John F. Kennedy, Anwar el-Sadat and Yitzhak Rabin. Other presenters will consider more generalized violent upheavals, such as the pre-Revolutionary War vigilante activities of the Sons of Liberty, the Great Hanging in Gainesville, Texas, the terror of lynching in 19th and 20th century America, and the chaos of the Mexican Revolution.

Conference Format

The conference is a one-day event that will provide local middle and high school teachers and college faculty and students with an opportunity to interact with respected scholars, hear stimulating speakers, learn about local museum collections and exchange information and best practices with colleagues. Middle and high school teachers will receive Continuing Education Certificates.

The conference program offers sessions in Texas, U.S., and World History. There will be six breakout sessions in the morning, a luncheon with a Keynote speaker, and three breakout sessions in the afternoon.

One of the morning sessions will be a presentation by curators of The Sixth Floor Museum focusing on accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald. Additionally, the Kimbell Art Museum, the Dallas Museum of Art, the Old Red Courthouse Museum, the Sixth Floor Museum, the Morton Museum, the Collin County History Museum, the Texas Historical Commission: the Eisenhower Birthplace, the Sam Rayburn House, and the Sam Bell Maxey House State Historic Sites are scheduled to set up display tables and share information about permanent holdings that relate to the theme of the conference.



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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

| TIME | LOCATION | EVENT |
|-----------------|--|---|
| 8am-9am | Gateway Center Foyer | Conference Registration |
| 8am-9am | Gateway Center Ballroom | Breakfast |
| 8am-12pm | Gateway Center Ballroom | Museum Displays The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza and Information on Museums in the North Texas Region |
| 8:45am | Gateway Center Ballroom | Welcome Jane England, Professor of History & Humanities, North Central Texas College |
| 9am-10:15am | Gateway Center Room 42—Texas History Room 43—US History Room 47—World History | Breakout Sessions, Round 1 Lee Harvey Oswald: Alleged Assassin Stephen Fagin, Curator, The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza; with Lindsey Richardson, Curator of Collections, The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza Lynching as an American Norm Rick Halperin, Professor of History and Director of the Embrey Human Rights Program, Southern Methodist University Peacemaking Warriors: Making Sense of the Assassinations of Anwar Sadat and Yitzhak Rabin Nancy Stockdale, Associate Professor, Middle Eastern History, University of North Texas |
| 10:15am-10:30am | Gateway Center Foyer | Break |



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

| TIME | LOCATION | EVENT |
|-----------------|-------------------------|--|
| 10:30am-11:45am | Gateway Center | Breakout Sessions, Round 2 |
| | Room 42—Texas History | The Great Hanging of Gainesville, Texas Richard McCaslin , Professor of History, University of North Texas |
| | Room 43—US History | Teaching the Revolution from a Loyalist's Point of View: Mobs, Insurgents, and Sons of Anarchy Jacob Blosser , Professor of History, Texas Woman's University |
| | Room 47—World History | The Mexican Revolution Gets Messy Monica Rankin , Associate Professor of History and Director, UT-Dallas Center for US-Latin America Initiatives, University of Texas at Dallas |
| 11:45am-12pm | Gateway Center Foyer | Break |
| 12pm-1:30pm | Gateway Center Ballroom | Lunch and Keynote Presentation A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Hapsburg Empire Geoffrey Wawro , Professor of History and Director of the Military History Center, University of North Texas |
| 1:30pm-1:45pm | Gateway Center Foyer | Break |



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

| TIME | LOCATION | EVENT |
|------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1:45pm-3pm | Gateway Center | Breakout Sessions, Round 3 |
| | Room 42—Texas History | Smuggling Slaves on the Gulf Coast: How the Lafitte Brothers and Jim Bowie Made a Fortune in Human Flesh Andrew Torget , Associate Professor of History, University of North Texas |
| | Room 43—US History | The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln Kenneth Stevens , Professor of History, Texas Christian University |
| | Room 47—World History | Brendan Behan: The Assassin Who Wasn't Sara Fanning , Associate Professor of History, Texas Woman's University |



SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Round 1 9-10:15am

Room 42—
Texas
History

Lee Harvey Oswald: Alleged Assassin



Stephen Fagin, Curator, The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza; with **Lindsey Richardson**, Curator of Collections, The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza

This presentation will explore the controversial life of alleged assassin Lee Harvey Oswald and the interpretative challenges faced by staff of The Sixth Floor Museum about the role of Oswald in an exhibition in the former Texas School Book Depository building. Although there was an initial need to minimize the image and voice of Oswald in the Museum's earliest years, as memory has faded into history and questions about Oswald and

his motives are consistently asked by students at all grade levels, the institution today explores the character and enigma of Lee Harvey Oswald through artifacts, home movies and oral histories in a variety of exhibits and public and educational programming.



Room 43—
US History

Lynching as an American Norm



Rick Halperin, Professor of History and Director of the Embrey Human Rights Program, Southern Methodist University

Lynching. The word itself conjures up a deeply disturbing image of the American past and of a piece of our national character. Between the era of 1865-1945, thousands of African Americans, as well as Mexican Americans, Native Americans, Italian Americans, and others, were lynched in the defeated Confederate South and throughout the nation, profoundly impacting race relations in this country to this very day. Racial terror, segregation, white supremacy, the death penalty, local and national apologies (or the lack thereof), and a deeply flawed criminal justice system...these are all legacies of an era of lynching and impunity.

Room 47—
World
History

Peacemaking Warriors: Making Sense of the Assassinations of Anwar Sadat and Yitzhak Rabin



Nancy Stockdale, Associate Professor, Middle Eastern History, University of North Texas

In the late 1970s, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat shocked his nation when he decided to sign a peace treaty with Israel, a country with which Egypt had been at war since 1948. A few years later, he was assassinated. In the early 1990s, his former enemy, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin similarly shocked his country when he began a complex peace process with the Palestinians. Shortly thereafter, he, too, was assassinated. The world was surprised by these events, and historians continue to debate what these political assassinations mean. In this talk, Prof. Nancy L. Stockdale will give historical background to the assassinations of Sadat and Rabin, and discuss the many theories, controversies, and impacts that these political murders had - and continue to

have - on Egypt and Israel, and throughout the Middle East.



SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Round 2 10:30am-11:45am

Room 42—
Texas
History

The Great Hanging of Gainesville, Texas



Richard McCaslin, Professor of History, University of North Texas

In 1862, the largest extra-judicial mass execution in United States history tore the frontier town of Gainesville, Texas, apart, as over forty men were executed at the hands of a “citizens court.” Since most North Central Texas settlers were small farmers, not slaveholders, they were more focused on keeping their families safe from the Comanches than the state of the Union. Thus, when the Civil War came, Cooke County was within one of the few areas of the state to vote against secession. By 1862, Confederates dominated local offices and law enforcement, but the populace remained deeply divided. Opposition to the draft mounted, and suspicion of the Union sympathizers fueled a panicked response. In October, rumors that a local Peace Party was conspiring to overthrow the Confederacy led to mass arrests, vigilante trials, mob pressure, and the hanging of forty men. Two more were shot while trying to escape. The tragedy left a bitter legacy and a fractured community.

Room 43—
US History

Teaching the Revolution from a Loyalist’s Point of View: Mob, Insurgents, and Sons of Anarchy



Jacob Blosser, Professor of History, Texas Woman’s University

Sons of Liberty or Sons of Anarchy? In this animated presentation Jacob Blosser examines mobbings, crowd actions, and other extra legal measures undertaken by urban Patriots in the years before 1776. Rather than valorize these acts of violence, as is commonly done in the literature, the presentation discusses ways to teach Patriot protests from a fresh, and unexpected, perspective. Looking at the violence from the view of urban Loyalists, the presentation asks if illegal and anarchic attacks on private property and personal liberty can ever be justified - even in times of revolution? What type of liberty, for example, comes with the price tag of urban anarchy, destroyed houses, seized goods, and tarred and feathered citizens? Offering a more critical appraisal of the Sons of Liberty and their anarchic violence, this lively presentation will equip teachers with stories to tell and questions to raise.

Room 47—
World
History

The Mexican Revolution Gets Messy



Monica Rankin, Associate Professor of History and Director, UT-Dallas Center for US-Latin America Initiatives, University of Texas at Dallas

The Mexican Revolution (1910-20) created years of chaos and instability for the country. It can serve as a model to help educators understand the nature of revolutions. Assassins and anarchists—both official and unofficial—played a role in shaping the revolution. This talk will examine the actions of the revolutionary state and “lone gunmen” as perpetrators of violence.



SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Lunch Keynote Presentation

12pm-1:30pm

Gateway
Center
Ballroom

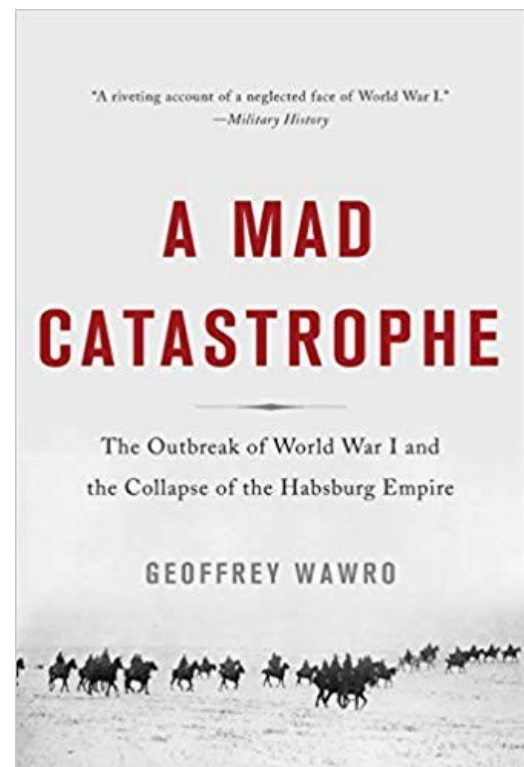
A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Habsburg Empire



Geoffrey Wawro, Professor of History, Director of the Military History Center, University of North Texas

Why and how was Archduke Franz Ferdinand assassinated in Sarajevo in June 1914? Who were the plotters? Why did they target the archduke? What did they hope to accomplish? Did the Austrians deplore or welcome the tragedy? And how did the murder end up triggering "the war to end all wars?"

Geoffrey Wawro, author of *A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Habsburg Empire*, will take a deep dive into the Sarajevo plot and its aftermath.





SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Round 3 1:45pm-3pm

Room 42—
Texas
History

Smuggling Slaves on the Gulf Coast: How the Lafitte Brothers and Jim Bowie Made a Fortune in Human Flesh



Andrew Torget, Associate Professor of History, University of North Texas

Andrew Torget will chart the rapid expansion of slave smuggling along the Texas-Louisiana border during the 1810s. The explosion of the cotton frontier in the Mississippi River Valley meant there was a fortune to be made smuggling enslaved people from Cuba to the United States, though Texas, during this period. Following famous outlaws like Jean Lafitte and James Bowie, Torget will explain the role of 1810s Texas in the secret smuggling of slaves along the Gulf Coast.

Room 43—
US History

The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln



Kenneth Stevens, Professor of History, Texas Christian University

On the night of April 14, 1865, the actor John Wilkes Booth fatally shot Abraham Lincoln while the president, his wife, and their two guests attended a play at Ford's Theater in Washington, DC. The president was carried to a house across the street where he died the next morning. It was not an isolated act. The same evening co-conspirators attacked other government officers. These many years later questions about those events continue to fascinate us. How big was the conspiracy? Who were the persons involved? Who were the intended victims? What did the plotters expect to accomplish? What were consequences of the assassination?

Room 47—
World
History

Brendan Behan: The Assassin Who Wasn't



Sara Fanning, Associate Professor of History, Texas Woman's University

This presentation examines the goals and historical context around the IRA bombing campaign in England in the 1930s. Behan, today best known for his literary genius, was a teenager at the time and had been recruited and sent to England to plant bombs for the campaign.



SUGGESTED READINGS

Anarchism

- *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* by Peter Marshall
- *On Anarchism* by Noam Chomsky (Author), Nathan Schneider (Introduction)
- *The Dynamite Club* by John Merriman

U.S. History

- *American Brutus: John Wilkes Booth and the Lincoln Conspiracies* by Michael W. Kauffman
- *Assassination and Commemoration: JFK, Dallas, and The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza* by Stephan Fagan, published by the University of Oklahoma Press in 2013
- “*Biography of Lee Harvey Oswald*” by Stephen Fagan, published in *American History Magazine* in 2013
- *The Assassinations: Probe Magazine on JFK, MLK, RFK and Malcolm X* by James DiEugenio (Author, Editor), Lisa Pease (Editor)

Texas History

- *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800-1850* (The David J. Weber Series in the New Borderlands History) by Andrew J. Torget
- *Tainted Breeze: The Great Hanging at Gainesville, Texas 1862* by Richard B. McCaslin
- *The Great Hanging at Gainesville, 1862: The Accounts of Thomas Barrett and George Washington Diamond* Richard B. McCaslin (Introduction), L.D. Clark (Afterword)

World History

- *A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Habsburg Empire* by Geoffrey Wawro
- *Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age* by S. Stephen Humphreys
- *Just Wars, Holy Wars, and Jihads: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Encounters and Exchanges* Sohail H.Hashmi (Editor)
- *One Morning In Sarajevo: 28 June 1914* by David James Smith
- *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World Before the War, 1890-1914* by Barbara W. Tuchman
- *Understanding Jihad* by David Cook

Films

- *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (2006) directed by Jeremy Earp, Sut Jhally; based on the book of the same name by Jack Shaheen



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