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Chalk, Talk, and Videotape: Utilizing Ken Burns's Television Histories in the Classroom

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January 2002

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ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN HISTORIANS

MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

FOR TEACHERS OF HISTORY

Volume 16, Number 4
Summer 2002

FILM AND HISTORY

On the cover: The Strand Theater in Delaware, Ohio, 2002. (Photo courtesy J. Whitfield Robbins)

Published by

OAH

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN HISTORIANS

112 North Bryan Avenue
Bloomington IN 47408

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Chalk, Talk, and Videotape: Utilizing Ken Burns's Television Histories in the Classroom

Ken Burns is an admittedly controversial figure in historical circles. He has single-mindedly pursued his dual obsession with film making and history for over a quarter of a century now, anticipating a much broader surge of interest in all things historical among the general population. When Burns first began work on the film that would eventually become his Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) debut, *Brooklyn Bridge* (1981), the historical documentary held little interest for most American television viewers. By 1997, however, audience preferences had changed dramatically as *TV Guide* reported: "Seven years after Ken Burns's *The Civil War* proved that history on TV could be engaging—and attract millions of viewers, documentaries are all over the dial" (1). Burns, in this way, has emerged as the signature figure for a much larger trend in historical programming, primarily because of the unprecedented success of *The Civil War* (1989) as well as the consistently robust showings of his other television specials. He has likewise become a lightning rod for professional historians to express a spectrum of pro and con reactions about the growing popularity of films and television programs about the past, overshadowing the one-time preeminence of written histories alone.

Ken Burns at Monticello during the filming of *Thomas Jefferson*, his 1996 documentary about the third president.

Ken Burns's position as a historical documentarist essentially straddles two well-established and typically distinct professions. He is a highly accomplished television producer-director, and, as he often characterizes himself, "an amateur historian" with a wide-ranging interest in American history but no special scholarly training or specialization in any one particular area. His work habits, nevertheless, do have a great deal in common with many standard academic practices. Preparing each historical documentary includes the disciplined rigors of thoroughly researching his subject, writing grant proposals, collaborating and debating with an assortment of scholarly advisors, composing multiple drafts of the off screen narration, as well as gathering and selecting the background readings and the expert commentaries. The final 372-page script for *The Civil War*, for instance, was its fifteenth version (2).

Ken Burns is, accordingly, an able if "self-taught" historian, but he is not a professional. In contemporary America, the term *professional* suggests a person who has made a lifetime commitment to a specialized career and thus belongs to an exclusive and highly select group. An amateur, in contemporary terms and by contrast, is not to be taken all that seriously; he or she is considered a beginner, a dabbler, or in the worst-case scenario, a dilettante. "I just wanted to say that I wasn't a historian in the traditional, professional sense," admits Burns, "and I think it may have been a little insulation or armor that would protect me" (3). In today's parlance, therefore, he is more precisely a popular historian rather than an amateur, who uses the power and influence of film to reach well beyond a scholarly audience with his television histories.

All told, Ken Burns has created sixteen major specials so far—*Brooklyn Bridge*, *Shakers: Hands to Work, Hearts to God* (1984), *Huey Long* (1985), *The Statue of Liberty* (1986), *Thomas Hart Benton* (1988), *The Congress* (1988), *The Civil War*, *Empire of the Air: The Men Who Made Radio* (1992), *Baseball* (1994), *The West* (1996), *Thomas Jefferson* (1997), *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery* (1997), *Frank Lloyd*

Wright (1998), *Not For Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony* (1999), *Jazz* (2001), and *Mark Twain* (2002). Most remarkably, seventy million Americans have now seen *The Civil War*. Fifty million have watched *Baseball*; and all of his other television productions over the last decade have averaged more than fifteen million viewers during their initial telecasts (4). The cumulative popularity of Burns's biographical or quasi-biographical histories is striking by virtually any measure, and they have over time redefined the place of historical documentaries on prime-time television.

Ken Burns's made-for-television histories are also regular features in high school and undergraduate history courses throughout the country. This development, too, began in the immediate wake of *The Civil War* when over sixty colleges and universities licensed the series for classroom use in only the first month after its premiere telecast, while more than a decade later, the seventy-nine-page *Telecourse Student Guide: The Civil War*, containing episode synopses, thematic overviews, key concepts and names, questions for review, and recommended readings, is still in print and widely utilized as a teaching supplement (5). Elaborate web sites containing similar kinds of educational materials are now readily accessible to teachers and students alike on his seven latest historical documentaries (6). Overall, then, what issues need to be considered when adopting Ken Burns's work on videotape or DVD as a pedagogical aid?

I have often screened examples from Burns's films in my own courses over the last decade. Analyzing either entire episodes or shorter clips from his television histories requires both a basic knowledge of the subject at hand as well as a certain degree of media literacy. As with any film maker, aesthetic and technical factors always influence the kinds of historical representations that result. In the remainder of this article, I will focus primarily on Ken Burns's combined perspective as a television producer-director and a popular historian, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of this multifaceted viewpoint. In the process, I will hone in on the stylistic, narrative, and ideological features which typify Burns's work as a whole, suggesting several classroom strategies that should help in revealing more about the filmic and historical choices that he generally makes. Finally, I will end with some brief concluding observations about the ways in which Burns's popular histories complement the mostly different though reciprocal purposes of professional history.

Ken Burns as Stylist

Any understanding of Ken Burns's work must begin with the fundamental assumption that television's representation of the past is an entirely new and different kind of history altogether. Unlike written discourse, the language of television is highly stylized, elliptical (rather than linear) in structure, and associational or metaphoric in the ways in which it portrays its historical themes, figures, and events. At first it may appear that Burns has embraced a wide assortment of subjects in his sixteen television histories—a bridge, a nineteenth-century religious sect, a statue, a demagogue, a painter, the legislative branch of government, a civil war, a mass medium, the national pastime, the frontier, a founding father, a pair of explorers, an architect, two pioneering feminists, a musical genre, and a writer—but there are four underlying common denominators that bind his approach as a producer-director and popular historian together.

First, Ken Burns has created a distinctive and well recognizable style based largely on techniques first introduced decades ago; however, he arranges these constituent elements into a wholly new and highly complex textual arrangement. Beginning with *Brooklyn Bridge* and continuing through *Mark Twain*, Burns blends narration with what he calls his "chorus of voices," meaning readings from personal papers, diaries, and letters; interpretive commentaries from onscreen experts, usually scholars, critics, and witnesses; his rephotographing technique which closely examines old photographs, paintings, drawings, and other artifacts with his movie camera; all backed up by sound effects and a musical track that features period compositions and folk music. The effect of this collage of techniques is to create the illusion that the viewer is being transported back in time, literally finding an emotional connection with the people and events of America's past.

I frequently use a short clip from *Huey Long* to illustrate Burns's many skills as a stylist. Approximately twelve minutes into chapter one, "Every Man a King," a brief fifty-five-second vignette containing five period stills ideally captures the subtle effectiveness of Burns's poetic approach to history. This section is part of a slightly larger two-minute scene that begins with stock footage of Long, speaking energetically to a large crowd, as narrator David McCullough recounts off screen: "His listeners loved to hear him lash the rich and powerful—the thieves, bugs, and lice who dared oppose him." The screen, then, cuts after this forty-five-second long shot to a static image of the Kingfish with his arms and hands spread outward, speaking into an old NBC microphone at another public gathering, as the lens slowly tilts upward, closely inspecting his standing presence on the podium. This photograph almost instantly springs to life with the clamor of cheering people fading up on the soundtrack several seconds before McCullough begins speaking: "But they loved still more his vision of a new Louisiana." The dramatic coup de grâce of this filmic moment occurs with the introduction of Jay Ungar's heartrending lament, "Ashokan Farewell," the very same violin piece that would become the signature theme of *The Civil War* five years later. Burns, first and foremost, brings these old archival pictures alive by synesthesia or the process by which one type of sensory stimulation enhances another. In this specific case, the simulated realism of the crowd noises, the narrative context provided by the narration, and the climactic emotional force of the background music literally jump starts this static image of Huey Long in such a way that the audience is better able to suspend its disbelief, thus perceiving the film's protagonist as vital (and maybe even moving for just an instant) in that photograph.

Ken Burns also employs accompanying sights as well as sounds to similarly animate these old archival images. This same scene cuts to an old black-and-white photo of a majestic oak tree, as the haunting strains of "Ashokan Farewell" and David McCullough's expressive narration continue off screen:

At the little Cajun town of St. Martinville, he set forth his hopes for the future. "It is here," he said, 'under this oak [dissolve to a live color shot tilting slowly downward on the same oak tree as it looks today], where Evangeline waited for her lover who never

Burns uses his 1985 film *Huey Long* to dramatize the rise, reign, and assassination of one of the most compelling and powerful figures in all of American politics: Louisiana's corrupt champion of the poor, the turbulent and self-proclaimed "King Fish."

came. This oak is an immortal spot made so by Longfellow's poem. But Evangeline is not the only one here in disappointment [dissolve to a black-and-white photo of Myrtle Bigler of Atchafalaya River as a young girl]; Where are the schools that you waited for your children to have [dissolve to live color shot of Myrtle Bigler as an old woman]? Where are the roads and highways [dissolve to black-and-white picture of Edmond Riggs of St. Martinville at about twelve years old] that you sent your money to build [dissolve to live color shot of Edmond Riggs as an old man] that are no nearer now than ever before [dissolve to black-and-white still of Alcide Verret of Atchafalaya River as a young boy]? Where are the institutions to take care of the sick and the disabled [dissolve to live color shot of Alcide Verret as an old man]? Evangeline wept bitter tears in her disappointment [cut to stock footage of a poor middle-aged woman scrubbing clothes at a wash tub outside her small tenant home on the Bayou], but it only lasted through one lifetime. Your tears have lasted through generations. Give me the chance to dry the tears of those that weep here" [as "Ashokan Farewell" reaches its poignant conclusion off screen]. (*Huey Long*. Alexandria, VA: PBS Video, 1985)

In this specific example, Ken Burns revivifies five early twentieth-century black-and-white photographs by merging them sequentially with contemporary color footage. Still and moving images of the actual Evangeline oak and the same three average Louisiana citizens correspond one-to-one, young-to-old over the course of just fifty-five seconds. Burns recognizes that film and television are incapable of rendering temporal dimensions with much precision. The media have no analogues for the past and future tenses of written language. These visually based media, instead, amplify the present sense of immediacy out of all proportion. The producer-director recognizes this characteristic of film grammar and capitalizes on it by mixing and matching historical source material (such as the five static photos) with contemporary sights and sounds, putting them all on an equal footing in the present tense. In this particular scene, the live quality of the contemporary color footage encourages audiences to interpret the matching black-and-white stills as if they were also alive and animated. Huey Long's populist message and raw political talents, in this way, grow far more immediate and tangible to current viewers. Audiences can, in effect, experience and better understand the charm of his rhetoric and the appeal of his message for ordinary voters throughout Louisiana at the time—such as the Myrtle Biglers, the Edmond Riggses, and the Alcide Verrets—whom McCullough describes in his off screen narration as the "trappers and fishermen of the Bayou, redneck farmers from the hills, sharecroppers and tenants and small town storekeepers, Catholics and Protestants alike." Instead of overwhelming viewers with too many details, Burns strategically provides just enough information about Huey Long's platform for governor in six representative lines from his stump speech, thus connecting his concerns for education, highways, and health care with memorable imagery—both old and new—as well as with an evocative melody, which together convey a deeply emotional sense of the past to audiences with great staying power and personal impact.

Ken Burns as Storyteller

Second, Burns relies strongly on a seamless, solidly constructed plot structure which reflects his partial integration of the Hollywood classical style into his methods as a popular historian. As with all of his miniseries, *The Civil War* exhibits an epic storyline overflowing with historical people, places, and events. At the same time, its extended eleven-hour narrative design is virtually transparent to most of the viewers who follow along on television, episode by episode, through the full extent of its chronological and biographical structure. Burns and his colleagues, in this way, strive for the seemingly realistic presentation strategies of Hollywood, which involve telling stories in a straightforward if formulaic manner, relying heavily on one or more star protagonists (Abraham Lincoln, for example, among many others) and employing the elements of film form (camera work, editing, sound) as their main means of always keeping the mechanics of the plot line hidden from millions of viewers.

"I am the audience," Burns readily admits, "if I have one gift, I think it is that I have an ability in the editing room to be my audience's representative" (7). Nowhere is this trait more apparent than in the producer-director's ability to transform history into narrative and thus wake the dead by bringing select historical characters back to life within the confines of a well-told story about America's past. A case in point is *The Civil War's* most celebrated set piece, the poignant and eloquent voice-over of

Major Sullivan Ballou's parting letter to his wife before he was killed at the first battle of Bull Run (accompanied again by the haunting lament that serves as the series anthem, "Ashokan Farewell"). I have used this clip in class many times to demonstrate Burns's abilities as a storyteller. This three and one-half minute scene is placed out of sequence in episode one ("1861—The Cause") to elicit its full dramatic effect. Referring solely to events in July, this chapter, entitled "Honorable Manhood," actually concludes the episode after all the events of fall and winter have already been covered, thus rendering the preceding ninety-five minutes with an air of melancholy, romance and higher purpose.

It is important to recognize and point out to students that poetic license is used throughout the segment, as Ballou's declaration of love is heard over images that have nothing factually to do with Sullivan Ballou but evoke the emotional texture of his parting sentiments: photographs of the interior of a tent where such a letter might have been written; a sequence of pictures portraying six other Civil War couples; and three static filmed shots of Manassas battlefield as it looks today in a pinkish twilight. The effectiveness of this scene is profound in its ability to engage an audience emotionally at a strategic moment in the plot. Such dramatic liberties regularly draw criticisms from some professional historians, however. One scholar, for example, chided Burns for utilizing the Sullivan Ballou letter without "report[ing] in *The Civil War* . . . that the letter was never sent; it was discovered among Ballou's possessions" (8). Another historian raised the question that a number of different versions of the letter do in fact exist (9). Burns responds that "poetic license is that razor's edge between fraud and art that we ride all the time. You have to shorten, you have to take shortcuts, you have to abbreviate, you have to sort of make do with, you have to sometimes go with something that's less critically truthful imagery-wise because it does an ultimately better job of telling the larger truth" (10).

Ken Burns as Biographer

Third, Ken Burns stresses the biographical approach in creating his made-for-television histories. Biography, above all else, is the central organizing principle around which Ken Burns builds all of his historical narratives. He believes that "[t]he way we come to terms with our common past is through a doorway that is the lives of other people" (11). *Brooklyn Bridge*, for instance, starts out as a dramatic rendering of John and Washington Roebling's combined struggle to design and oversee the construction of this inspired American landmark. Mother Ann Lee is likewise the seminal presence behind the story of *Shakers*. *The Statue of Liberty* begins by chronicling the creative obsession of Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi. *The Congress* is successively comprised of historic accounts and anecdotes concerning that institution's "Builders," "Debators," "Bosses," "Progressives," and "Managers." *Baseball*'s over eighteen-hour narrative likewise boasts a cast of approximately seventy-five key figures; a similar number of historical characters animates the nearly nineteen hours of *Jazz*.

"I've been working in two parallel tracks," Burns reveals, "one has been a trilogy of three major series—*The Civil War*, *Baseball*, and *Jazz* . . . [a]nd in a parallel track, I've been working on a series of biographical portraits" (12). This unwavering allegiance to biographical storytelling is also another one of the prime reasons why Burns is sometimes criticized by members of the academic community. The biographical approach probably reached its nadir in the historical discipline with the growing influence of the new social historians of the late 1960s and 1970s. This scholarly movement infused techniques mainly associated with the social and behavioral sciences into professional history, including a wide range of quantitative methodologies that succeeded in more effectively delineating the social, economic, and demographic aspects of their subjects. The old-style historical biographies appeared hopelessly unscientific and impressionistic in comparison, with their traditional reliance on narrative and their larger-than-life looks at "Great Men."

The most prominent and successful practitioners of the biographical approach to history during this era actually came from outside the academic world, led by best-selling writers such as Shelby Foote with his three-volume *Civil War: A Narrative*; David McCullough with early works such as *The Great Bridge*; and Michael Shaara with his Pulitzer Prize-winning Civil War novel, *The Killer Angels* (13). Foote, McCullough, and Shaara, among others, were working within and renewing a much longer tradition of popular history, while also inspiring an even younger generation of nascent filmmakers who would initiate a mini-revival in the historical documentary on television just a decade later. Ken Burns, in particular, adapted McCullough's *The Great Bridge* as his first film, and decided to produce *The Civil War* after he finished reading *The Killer Angels* on Christmas Day of 1984, an experience he describes as "chang[ing] [his] life" (14). In discovering his own personal niche somewhere between the general public and the academy, Burns has seized the attention of tens of millions of viewers by the subjects he chooses and the way that he presents them.

Ken Burns as Liberal Pluralist

Fourth and finally, Ken Burns articulates a version of the country's past that conveys his own perspective as a popular historian, intermingling many widespread assumptions about the character of America and its liberal pluralist aspirations. In this way, most of his subjects are recognizable rather than marginalized—such as the Statue of Liberty, the Congress, the Civil War, baseball, and in this next example, Thomas Jefferson—although he does incorporate multi-cultural issues and outlooks into the broader panorama of his nationalist narratives. Burns has always contended that in making all of his documentaries he is "asking one deceptively simple question: who are we? That is to say, who are we Americans as a people?" (15). This preoccupation with the elemental question—who are we as Americans?—could not be more relevant in an era when multiculturalism has become the source of sweeping and fundamental reappraisals of almost every aspect of national life.

Thomas Jefferson, for instance, is designed as such a reexamination. Jefferson's image is clearly in transition today, and his racial legacy is the major reason why he now occupies such a problematic place in American history and culture.

Burns's most effective tool in reexamining this issue (and all of the other controversies that he examines in his work) is his creation of numerous *editing clusters*. I use examples of these scenes all of the time to illustrate the way in which he utilizes opposing points of view to debate relevant and important historical matters. In the coda of *Thomas Jefferson*, for example, paintings of Jefferson by Rembrandt Peale (1800), Charles Wilson Peale (1791), and Gilbert Stuart (1805) are interspersed with seven separate opinions of Jefferson's accomplishments, his shortcomings, and his current significance. Burns refers to Joseph Ellis: "There is a simple but extraordinarily resonant message that Jefferson somehow symbolizes, namely the future is going to be better than the past"; and Gary Wills: "I think the thing to remember from Jefferson is the power of the word—that ideas matter." A shot of the Declaration of Independence pans across the phrase "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," after which viewers consider Clay Jenkinson's opinion that: "It is Jefferson who is indispensable because he is mysterious, idealistic, pragmatic, misunderstood, complicated, paradoxical, hypocritical. He is the stuff of America and that is who we are and that is why Jefferson has to be the center of our national discourse." Then, a shot of a slave accompanies John Hope Franklin's quote: "The legacy of Jefferson is both a gift and a curse . . . he cursed us with a practice of inequality and slavery and a denial of justice that scarcely can be erased by anything we can think of."

July 14, 1861
Camp Clark, Washington

My very dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days — perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more....

I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American Civilization now leans on the triumph of the Government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and sufferings of the Revolution. And I am willing — perfectly willing — to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this Government, and to pay that debt....

Sarah my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me unresistibly on with all these chains to the battle field.

The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together, and seen our sons grown up to honorable manhood, around us. I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me — perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar, that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battle field, it will whisper your name. Forgive my many faults, and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have often times been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears every little spot upon your happiness....

But, O Sarah! if the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the gladdest days and in the darkest nights...always, always, and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath, as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again....

* * *

Sullivan Ballou was killed a week later at the First Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861. This copy of his letter to his wife, Sarah, is courtesy of General Motors, corporate underwriter of Ken Burns's award winning THE CIVIL WAR series on PBS.

Burns then allows the audience to rest for a moment and absorb what has been said as he inter-cuts an old photograph of Monticello, the Capitol in Washington, D.C. at mid-century; another image of several slaves; and a live shot of the Jefferson Memorial. Andrew Burstein prefigures the Civil War in the next statement, "I don't think he was convinced that America would be able to advance without fits and seizures and numerous torments. He didn't know how to hold the union together, but in the end I'm sure he felt he had done his best—that he had lived up to his dreams." The coda continues with Gore Vidal: "With all his faults and contradictions . . . if there is such a thing as an American spirit, then he is it." Finally, Clay Jenkinson returns off screen over various portraits of Jefferson:

> Jefferson essentially tells us that we cannot be complacent until two conditions are met. Every human being born on this continent has a right to equal, indeed, identical treatment in the machine of the law, irrespective of race, gender, creed, or class of origin. And, secondly, everyone born on this continent has a right to roughly equal opportunity at modest prosperity, and until these conditions are met, we cannot rest. When those conditions are met, we may say as Jefferson said he would, *nunc dimittis*, you may dismiss me, my work is done. (*Thomas Jefferson*. Alexandria, VA: PBS Home Video, 1997)

This specific sequencing of opinions underscores Burns's liberal pluralist perspective because individual speakers differ on the exact meaning of Jefferson's legacy throughout this editing cluster, but disagreement ultimately takes places within the broader framework of agreement on underlying principle. The scene ends

with a dramatic time-lapse shot of the sun setting with the words of Thomas Jefferson spoken by Sam Waterston about the enduring nature of representative government and "this country['s aim] to preserve and restore life and liberty." Like other popular and professional historians of his generation, Burns, too, addresses matters of diversity, but unlike many of his contemporaries, he presents an image of the United States pulling together despite its chronic differences rather than a society coming apart at the seams.

Finding a Place for Popular History Alongside Professional History

The mutual skepticism that sometimes surfaces between popular and professional historians is understandable and unfortunate. Each usually works with different media (although some scholars do produce historical television programs, videos, and films); each tends to place a dissimilar stress on the respective roles of storytelling versus analysis in relaying history; and each tailors a version of the past that is designed for disparate—though overlapping—kinds of audiences. These distinctions are real enough. Still, the artist and the scholar, the popular and professional historian can complement each other more than is sometimes evident in the expressions of suspicion, defensiveness, and even on occasion, scorn, that too often arise on both sides.

Burns uses this anonymous Civil War couple to put a human face on Sullivan Ballou's last letter to his wife. (see opposite page)

Professional history typically rejects the mythmaking of popular history. This tradition, which dates back to the second half of the nineteenth century, recasts the study of history inside the larger framework of scientific inquiry with an allegiance to objectivity (albeit modified these days), a systematic and detached method of investigation, and the pursuit of new knowledge. The much older legacy of popular history, in contrast, is far more artistic and ceremonial in approach. It is usually consensus-oriented, narrative and biographical in structure, and intended to link producers and audiences in a mainly affirming relationship based on the immediate experience they are sharing together around the characters and events of their cultural past. Most surprising today, the most prominent and influential examples of popular history in America now originate on prime-time television and many of these made-for-television histories eventually find their way into the country's classrooms as tools to help stimulate teaching. Ken Burns's work, in particular, can serve as a useful point of departure for further analysis and debate about the subjects that he covers.

Granted, each one of the sixteen historical topics that Ken Burns has produced on film so far is much more complex and sweeping than can be adequately addressed or explained by any one television documentary or book for that matter. Too often, made-for-television histories are hastily misperceived as the last word on any given topic, simply because of the unprecedented power and influence of television as a medium. Rather than being definitive, Ken Burns's historical documentaries are best understood as dramatic alternatives to the many published histories that exist within a general subject area. Burns's work revivifies a historical topic for both television and classroom audiences, spurring some of these viewers to pursue this newly cultivated interest beyond the screen and into other forms of professional and popular history. Ken Burns's television histories can be utilized as an engaging and effective pedagogical aid when paired with an assortment of related scholarly readings as well as supplemented with thorough class discussions about the ways in which Burns actually constructs these television histories, the strengths and limitations of his filmic representations, and what issues he covers or leaves out and why. ❑

Endnotes

1. Neal Gabler, "History's Prime Time," *TV Guide* (23 August 1997): 18.
2. The final draft of the script, dated 17 July 1989, is in the Ken Burns Collection at the Folklore Archives of the Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. *The Civil War* materials include all drafts of the script, all the filmed interviews with various scholars and experts (including outtakes), other footage, notes on decision making; test narrations, some financial records, correspondence, other related data.
3. Ken Burns in response to a question during the Historians Film Committee panel, "Television and History: Ken Burns's *Thomas Jefferson*," at the 112th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, 10 January 1998, Seattle, Washington.
4. Ken Burns, interview by author, 27 February 1996.
5. Dylan Jones and Dennis Kelly, "Schools Use Series To Bring History

To Life," *USA Today* (1 October 1990): D4; and Mary Drake McFeely, *Telecourse Student Guide: The Civil War* (McLean, VA: ?PM Publications, 1990).

2 the following websites:*Frank Lloyd Wright* (1998) at <http://ww.pbs.org/flw>;*Jazz* (2001) at <http://www.pbs.org/jazz>; *Lewis ? Clark* (1997) at <http://www.pbs.org/lewisandclark>; *Mark Twain* 1998) at <http://www.pbs.org/marktwain>; *Not For Ourselves Alone: he Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* (1999) at http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony>; *Thomas Jefferson* (1997) at ttp://www.pbs.org/jefferson>;*The West* (1996) at <http://ww.pbs.org/thewest>.

Burns, interview by David Thelen, "The Movie Maker as ...storian: Conversations with Ken Burns," *Journal of American History* 81.3 (1994): 1043.

8. Robert Sullivan, "The Burns Method: History or Myth-making?" *Life* (September 1994): 42.
9. Cathryn Donohoe, "Echoes of a Union Major's Farewell," *Insight* (5 November 1990): 54-55; and Susan Bickelhaupt, "Civil War Elegy Captivates TV Viewers," *Boston Globe* (29 September 1990): 1, 5.
10. Ken Burns, telephone interview by author, 18 February 1993.
11. Ken Burns, in "Film makers: Meet Ken Burns and Lynn Novick," interview by Eric Yeater, May 1998, on the *Frank Lloyd Wright* (1998) website at <http://www.pbs.org/flw/filmmakers/filmmakers_qa.html>.
12. Ken Burns as quoted in "Ken Burns: Uncovering American History," interview by Sharon McRill, at <http://go.borders.com/fcgi-bin/part?PID=12...Eborders%Ecom%2Ffeatures%2Fskm990330%2Excv>.
13. Shelby Foote, *Civil War: A Narrative (Fort Sumter to Perryville, Fredericksburg to Meridan, Red River to Appomattox)*, 3 vols. (New York: Random House, 1958-1974); David McCullough, *The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972); and Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels* (New York: Ballantine, 1974).
14. Ken Burns, "Four O'Clock in the Morning Courage," in *The Civil War: Historians Respond*, ed. Robert Brent Toplin (New York: Oxford, 1996), 157.
15. Ken Burns speech, "Sharing the American Experience," Norfolk Forum, Norfolk, Virginia, 27 February 1996.

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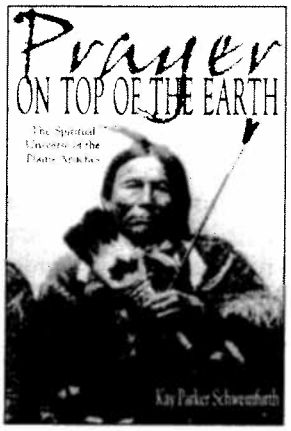

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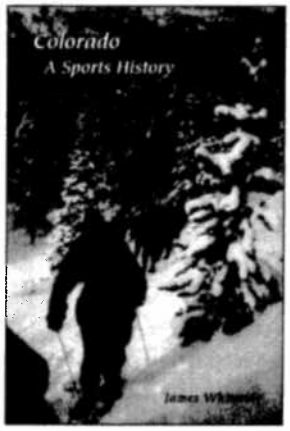

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