Reading Lists for the pre-1877 American History Major Graduate Field,  
Department of History, Ohio State University

June 13, 2003

Candidates for the General exam in U.S. History, pre-1877, should plan on developing exam lists of 120 books, plus articles, using the following list as a point of departure. The final list for each exam is to be determined by the candidate in consultation with field advisors.

Sixty-six fundamental interpretive studies, chosen by OSU Faculty in American History to 1877, June, 2003.


Hurst, William J. *Law and the Conditions of Freedom in the Nineteenth-Century United States.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956. [Ch 1 or 2]


The following lists are recommended by the faculty as you develop your understanding of
the discipline and build your reading lists:

Some bibliographical resources:


Williamsburg: IEAHC, 1989. [Though this book is almost fifteen years old, it remains
useful as a broad list of titles dated before 1990.]

The ACLS History E-Book Project [http://www.historyebook.org/titlelist.html ] allows
electronic access to several hundred titles. This site provides the book lists; OSU is a
subscriber, and you can get access through OSCAR.

Mark Grimsley and John Brooke have developed extensive additional bibliographical lists,
which can be found on their department web-pages.

Works in American historiography:


1968.


Noble, David W. *The End of American History: Democracy, Capitalism, and the Metaphor of
Two Worlds in Anglo-American Historical Writing, 1880-1980*. Minneapolis: University

Novick, Peter. *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical


Important works of interpretation and synthesis. These are titles that are invaluable for understanding the field and for teaching purposes. Students should try to be familiar with as many of these titles as possible within the first year of graduate study.


Simmons, R. C. *The American Colonies: From Settlement to Independence*. New York:


Recommended Influential Essays.


Philips, U. B. "The Central Themes of Southern History"


Webb/Murrin Exchange on 1676, *WMQ*


Essays republished in *In Search of Early America: The William and Mary Quarterly, 1943-1993*. Williamsburg: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1993. [Eleven essays voted by the membership to be the most significant in the 3rd Series of the *WMQ*.]


Forum: "Why the West is Lost" *WMQ* 3rd ser., 51 (1994)


Benchmark Collections of Essays:


Axtell, James: five volumes of collected essays: *Natives and Newcomers, The European and the Indian, The Invasion Within, After Columbus, Beyond 1492.*


Tomlins, Christopher, and Bruce H. Mann, eds. *The Many Legalities of Early America*. Chapel


*In Search of Early America: The William and Mary Quarterly, 1943-1993*. Williamsburg: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1995. [Eleven essays voted by the membership to be the most significant in the 3rd Series of the WMQ.]

Two series of reprinted noted articles on Colonial America and the Early American Republic were published by Garland Publishers in 1988 and 1991, edited respectively by Peter Hoffer and Peter Onuf. These volumes [about twenty in total] can be found on Ohiolink via keyword searches on “Garland and Hoffer and 1988” and “Garland and Onuf and 1991.”
Books by OSU historians with which you should be familiar:


