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## Featured Bookshelf: 2017 American History

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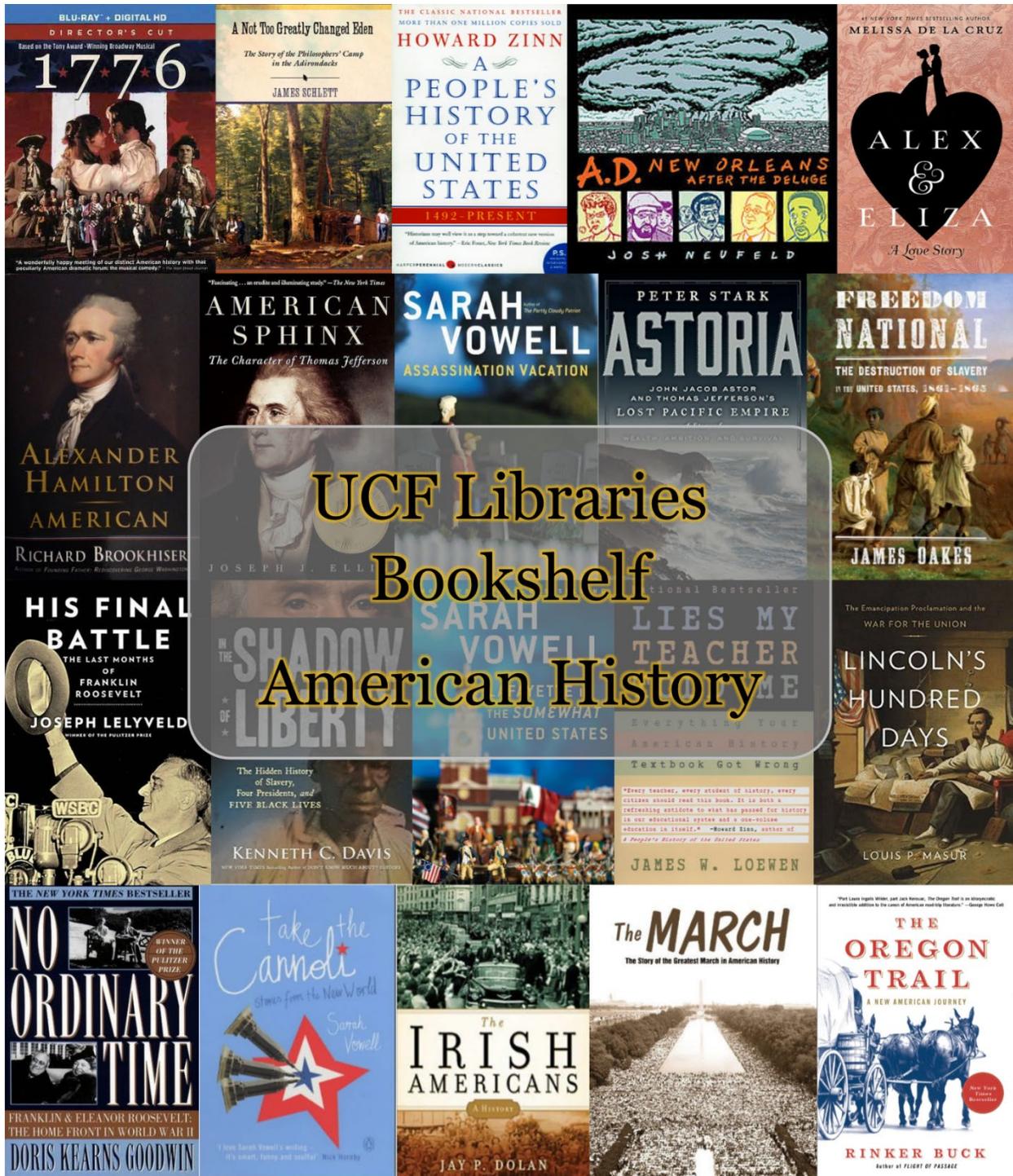
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American history is a broad and varied topic. It ranges from the native inhabitants who formed communities here thousands of years ago to the creation of a new nation of states to the dreamers who immigrate to these shores today. It is a vast tract of information to cover, but it is important that we all learn about our past. As Edmund Burke said in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, "Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it."

The founders of the United States, beyond their faults and foibles, began this nation with a grand and noble sentiment of “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity....”

Never forget “We the people” is *us*.

### **[1776](#) directed by Peter H. Hunt**

You'll be seeing stars and stripes as the most fascinating leaders in American history come to life in 1776, a musical about the birth of a nation. With the Boston Harbor still stained from over-taxed British tea, a revolution is brewing in the colonies, and now England has thousands of troops headed for America's shores to squelch her subjects' freedom-loving spirit. It's up to John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson to convince a stubborn congress of British colonists to unite as American patriots turn the inevitable war with England into a Declaration of Independence!

*Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services*

### **[A Not Too Greatly Changed Eden: the Story of the Philosophers' Camp in the Adirondacks](#) by James Schlett**

In this book, James Schlett recounts the story of the Philosophers' Camp, from the lives and careers of—and friendships and frictions among—the participants to the extensive preparations for the expedition and the several-day encampment to its lasting legacy. Schlett's account is a sweeping tale that provides vistas of the dramatically changing landscapes of the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century.

*Suggested by Christina Wray, Digital Learning & Engagement Librarian*

### **[A People's History of the United States](#) by Howard Zinn**

Known for its lively, clear prose as well as its scholarly research, A People's History of the United States is the only volume to tell America's story from the point of view of -- and in the words of -- America's women, factory workers, African-Americans, Native Americans, working poor, and immigrant laborers.

*Suggested by Mary Rubin, Special Collections & University Archives, and Susan MacDuffee, Acquisitions & Collections*

### **[A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge](#) by Josh Neufeld**

A stunning graphic novel that makes plain the undeniable horrors and humanity triggered by Hurricane Katrina in the true stories of six New Orleanians who survived the storm. A.D. follows each of the six from the hours before Katrina struck to its horrific aftermath. Here is Denise, a sixth-generation New Orleanian who will experience the chaos of the Superdome; the Doctor, whose unscathed French Quarter home becomes a refuge for those not so lucky; Abbas and his friend Mansell, who face the storm from the roof of Abbas's family-run market; Kwame, a pastor's son whose young life will remain wildly unsettled well into the future; and Leo, a comic-book fan, and his girlfriend, Michelle, who will

lose everything but each other. We watch as they make the wrenching decision between staying and evacuating. And we see them coping not only with the outcome of their own decisions but also with those made by politicians, police, and others like themselves--decisions that drastically affect their lives, but over which they have no control.

*Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections*

### **[Alex and Eliza](#) by Melissa de la Cruz**

As battle cries of the American Revolution echo in the distance, servants flutter about preparing for one of New York society's biggest events: the Schuylers' grand ball. Descended from two of the oldest and most distinguished bloodlines in New York, the Schuylers are proud to be one of their fledgling country's founding families, and even prouder still of their three daughters—Angelica, with her razor-sharp wit; Peggy, with her dazzling looks; and Eliza, whose beauty and charm rival those of both her sisters, though she'd rather be aiding the colonists' cause than dressing up for some silly ball. Still, Eliza can barely contain her excitement when she hears of the arrival of one Alexander Hamilton, a mysterious, rakish young colonel and General George Washington's right-hand man. Though Alex has arrived as the bearer of bad news for the Schuylers, he can't believe his luck—as an orphan, and a bastard one at that—to be in such esteemed company. And when Alex and Eliza meet that fateful night, so begins an epic love story that would forever change the course of American history.

*Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections*

### **[Alexander Hamilton, American](#) by Richard Brookhiser**

Alexander Hamilton is one of the least understood, most important, and most impassioned and inspiring of the founding fathers. In these pages, Alexander Hamilton sheds his skewed image as the "bastard brat of a Scotch peddler," sex scandal survivor, and notoriously doomed dueling partner of Aaron Burr. Examined up close, throughout his meteoric and ever-fascinating (if tragically brief) life, Hamilton can at last be seen as one of the most crucial of the founders. Here, thanks to Brookhiser's accustomed wit and grace, this quintessential American lives again.

*Suggested by Larry Cooperman, Research & Information Services*

### **[American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson](#) by Joseph Ellis**

For the historian Joseph J. Ellis, the experience of writing about Jefferson was "as if a pathologist, just about to begin an autopsy, has discovered that the body on the operating table was still breathing." In *American Sphinx*, Ellis sifts the facts shrewdly from the legends and the rumors, treading a path between vilification and hero worship in order to formulate a plausible portrait of the man who still today "hover[s] over the political scene like one of those dirigibles cruising above a crowded football stadium, flashing words of inspiration to both teams." For, at the grass roots, Jefferson is no longer liberal or conservative, agrarian or industrialist, pro- or anti-slavery, privileged or populist. He is all things to all people. His own obliviousness to incompatible convictions within himself (which left him deaf to most forms of irony) has leaked out into the world at large--a world determined to idolize him despite his foibles.

*Suggested by Larry Cooperman, Research & Information Services*

**[Assassination Vacation](#) by Sarah Vowell**

Sarah Vowell exposes the glorious conundrums of American history and culture with wit, probity, and an irreverent sense of humor. With *Assassination Vacation*, she takes us on a road trip like no other -- a journey to the pit stops of American political murder and through the myriad ways they have been used for fun and profit, for political and cultural advantage

*Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections*

**[Astoria: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire: a story of wealth, ambition, and survival](#) by Peter Stark**

In the tradition of *The Lost City of Z* and *Skeletons in the Sahara*, Astoria is the thrilling, true-adventure tale of the 1810 Astor Expedition, an epic, now forgotten, three-year journey to forge an American empire on the Pacific Coast. Peter Stark offers a harrowing saga in which a band of explorers battled nature, starvation, and madness to establish the first American settlement in the Pacific Northwest and opened up what would become the Oregon Trail, permanently altering the nation's landscape and its global standing.

*Suggested by Christina Wray, Digital Learning & Engagement Librarian*

**[Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865](#) by James Oakes**

*Freedom National* is a groundbreaking history of emancipation that joins the political initiatives of Lincoln and the Republicans in Congress with the courageous actions of Union soldiers and runaway slaves in the South. It shatters the widespread conviction that the Civil War was first and foremost a war to restore the Union and only gradually, when it became a military necessity, a war to end slavery. These two aims—"Liberty and Union, one and inseparable"—were intertwined in Republican policy from the very start of the war.

*Suggested by Larry Cooperman, Research & Information Services*

**[His Final Battle: The Last Months of Franklin Roosevelt](#) by Joseph Lelyveld**

"By far the most enigmatic leading figure" of World War II. That's how the British military historian John Keegan described Franklin D. Roosevelt, who frequently left his contemporaries guessing, never more so than at the end of his life. Here, in a hugely insightful account, a prizewinning author and journalist untangles the narrative threads of Roosevelt's final months, showing how he juggled the strategic, political, and personal choices he faced as the war, his presidency, and his life raced in tandem to their climax.

*Suggested by Richard Harrison, Subject Librarian*

**[In the Shadow of Liberty: the Hidden History of Slavery, Four Presidents, and Five Black Lives](#) by Kenneth C. Davis**

Through the powerful stories of five enslaved people who were "owned" by four of our greatest presidents, this book helps set the record straight about the role slavery played in the founding of America. From Billy Lee, valet to George Washington, to Alfred Jackson, faithful servant of Andrew

Jackson, these dramatic narratives explore our country's great tragedy—that a nation “conceived in liberty” was also born in shackles.

*Suggested by Emma Gisclair, Curriculum Materials Center*

### **[Lafayette in the Somewhat United States](#) by Sarah Vowell**

Chronicling General Lafayette's years in Washington's army, Vowell reflects on the ideals of the American Revolution versus the reality of the Revolutionary War. Riding shotgun with Lafayette, Vowell swerves from the high-minded debates of Independence Hall to the frozen wasteland of Valley Forge, from bloody battlefields to the Palace of Versailles, bumping into John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Lord Cornwallis, Benjamin Franklin, Marie Antoinette and various kings, Quakers and redcoats along the way.

*Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections*

### **[Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong](#) by James W.**

**Loewen**

Americans have lost touch with their history, and in *Lies My Teacher Told Me* Professor James Loewen shows why. After surveying eighteen leading high school American history texts, he has concluded that not one does a decent job of making history interesting or memorable. Marred by an embarrassing combination of blind patriotism, mindless optimism, sheer misinformation, and outright lies, these books omit almost all the ambiguity, passion, conflict, and drama from our past.

*Suggested by Nola Pettit, Research & Information Services*

### **[Lincoln's Hundred Days: the Emancipation Proclamation and the War for the Union](#) by Louis P. Masur**

This title tells the story of the period between September 22nd, 1862, when Lincoln issued his preliminary Proclamation, and January 1st, 1863, when he signed the significantly altered decree. As battlefield deaths mounted and debate raged, Lincoln hesitated, calculated, prayed, and reckoned with the anxieties and expectations of millions.

*Suggested by Mary Page, Administration*

### **[No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: the home front in World War II](#) by Doris Kearns**

**Goodwin**

With an extraordinary collection of details, Goodwin masterfully weaves together a striking number of story lines—Eleanor and Franklin's marriage and remarkable partnership, Eleanor's life as First Lady, and FDR's White House and its impact on America as well as on a world at war. Goodwin effectively melds these details and stories into an unforgettable and intimate portrait of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt and of the time during which a new, modern America was born.

*Suggested by Meg Scharf, Administration*

### **[Take the Cannoli: Stories from the New World](#) by Sarah Vowell**

While tackling subjects such as identity, politics, religion, art, and history, these autobiographical tales

are written with a biting humor, placing Vowell solidly in the tradition of Mark Twain and Dorothy Parker. Vowell searches the streets of Hoboken for traces of the town's favorite son, Frank Sinatra. She goes under cover of heavy makeup in an investigation of goth culture, blasts cannonballs into a hillside on a father-daughter outing, and maps her family's haunted history on a road trip down the Trail of Tears. *Take the Cannoli* is an eclectic tour of the New World, a collection of alternately hilarious and heartbreaking essays and autobiographical yarns.

*Suggested by Joanie Reynolds, Interlibrary Loan & Document Delivery Services*

### **[The Irish Americans: A History](#) by Jay P. Dolan**

Jay Dolan of the University of Notre Dame is one of America's most acclaimed scholars of immigration and ethnic history. In *The Irish Americans*, he caps his decades of writing and teaching with a magisterial history of the Irish experience in the United States—the first general-reader's account to be published since the 1960s. Dolan draws on his own original research and much other recent other scholarship to weave a fresh and vivid narrative. He follows the Irish from their first arrival in the American colonies through the bleak days of the potato famine that brought millions of poor immigrants; the years of ethnic prejudice and "No Irish Need Apply;" the rise of Irish political power and the heyday of Tammany politics; to the historic moment when John F. Kennedy was elected to the highest office in the land.

*Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services*

### **[The March: the Story of the Greatest March in American History](#) produced by Smoking Dog Films**

Witness the compelling and dramatic story of the 1963 March on Washington, where Dr. Martin Luther King gave his stirring "I Have a Dream" speech. This watershed event in the Civil Rights Movement helped change the face of America. Recounts the events when 250,000 people came together to form the largest demonstration the young American democracy had ever seen.

*Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services*

### **[The Oregon Trail: A New American Journey](#) by Rinker Buck**

In the bestselling tradition of Bill Bryson and Tony Horwitz, Rinker Buck's "The Oregon Trail" is a major work of participatory history: an epic account of traveling the 2,000-mile length of the Oregon Trail the old-fashioned way, in a covered wagon with a team of mules--which hasn't been done in a century--that also tells the rich history of the trail, the people who made the migration, and its significance to the country.

*Suggested by Christina Wray, Digital Learning & Engagement Librarian*