

## MTS HINTS ON LOCATING REVIEWS OF HISTORY BOOKS

A word about book reviews: The print “book review” is an endangered art form in our time, as newspapers and magazines retreat from allotting expensive space for coverage of a low-priced commodity.

But books are hardly obsolete: even print books. Just turn on *The Daily Show* or NPR for the latest in book promotions; imagine the volume of business carried on by Amazon.com; wander through your local bookstore – if you still have one – and note the numbers of excellent offerings in all fields, not least of all history. Check out [www.npr.org/books](http://www.npr.org/books) for a sampling.

So it's not that books or book reviews are going anywhere, but rather the media in which they are produced. In fact, I'm skeptical that e-books, Kindle books, and I-PAD books will replace the “codex,” or bound-paper book, any time soon. But book *reviews*, like a lot of read-today-who-cares-tomorrow literature, may become strictly Internet phenomena. Just google “history book reviews” for a taste of the future.

In the meanwhile, here's where you can still find useful reviews of history books, online and in print:

**1. Good internet sites begin with “Books about History and Historians” on HNN (History News Network) at <http://hnn.us/roundup/77.html>; as well as UC Berkeley's “Finding Book Reviews in History” at <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/doemoff/history/book.html>; and H-Net at <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/home.php>.**

**2. Most academic history journals and journals published by historical societies include book reviews. As noted on the MTS handout about academic articles, the standard source for American history teachers and historians is the *Journal of American History*, published by the Organization of American History (join now!). *The History Teacher*, published by the Society for History Education (join now!), with which you're probably familiar, also publishes reviews: see <http://www.thehistoryteacher.org>. Also useful but focusing exclusively on monographs and historical research is the free-standing quarterly, *Reviews in American History*. And the American Library Association publishes a book review digest called *Choice*: their endorsements are important for historical scholars.**

**3. Finally, history books are also reviewed – who knows for how long -- In newspapers and magazines. Especially recommended are *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Atlantic*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The Nation*, and *The New Yorker* (history appears in the last in entertaining “synthetic” articles based on recent history books, usually by columnists Caleb Crain, Jill Lepore, and Louis Menand). The titles and headquarters of these media say it all: historically New York is the publishing capital of the country, and most book reviews produced by newspapers and magazines still emanate from there. At least until California's digital revolution overtakes it ...**