



# Historians in Public: The Practice of American History, 1890-1970

*Ian Tyrrell*

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From lagging book sales and shrinking job prospects to concerns over the discipline's "narrowness," myriad factors have been cited by historians as evidence that their profession is in decline in America. Ian Tyrrell's *Historians in Public* shows that this perceived threat to history is recurrent, exaggerated, and often misunderstood. In fact, history has adapted to and influenced the American public more than people—and often historians—realize.

Tyrrell's elegant history of the practice of American history traces debates, beginning shortly after the profession's emergence in American academia, about history's role in school curricula. He also examines the use of historians in and by the government and whether historians should utilize mass media such as film and radio to influence the general public. As *Historians in Public* shows, the utility of history is a distinctive theme throughout the history of the discipline, as is the attempt to be responsive to public issues among pressure groups.

A superb examination of the practice of American history since the turn of the century, *Historians in Public* uncovers the often tangled ways history-makers make history—both as artisans and as actors.

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