



## **After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection**



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# After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection

*James West Davidson, Mark H. Lytle*

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This text uses 15 dramatic episodes in American history to show students how historians go about the business of interpreting the past. It discusses historical methods within the context of an historical narrative so that students may learn about American history at the same time as seeing how historians use a variety of evidence (diaries, letters, photographs and records) and methods to explain the past. This edition contains a new chapter on the Vietnam experience that examines how Hollywood incorporated the horror of My Lai into their mythic formulations and how dramatic films can be used as historical evidence. Some chapters have been substantially revised or rewritten to take into account recently published material - "The Invisible Pioneers" (chapter 5), "Sacco and Vanzetti" (chapter 10), "The Decision to Drop the Bomb" (chapter 12).

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From the Publisher

-New Chapter 11! This entirely new chapter replaces the chapter on Huey Long with the story of the 'Dust Bowl Odyssey' and the migration of the Okies. -New Chapter 14! This chapter focuses on presidential audiotapes as a source for historians. While Watergate provides the major focus, transcripts based on tape recordings during the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon years are also examined. -Chapter 2 has been rewritten to incorporate recent scholarship on the witchcraft accusations and the psychological, social, and economic circumstances surrounding them. -Chapter 3 includes new information on slavery in terms of the views of Jefferson and the Continental Congress and in terms of how slaves affected the drafters of the Declaration of Independence. About the Author

James West Davidson received his B.A. from Haverford College and his Ph.D. from Yale University. A historian and full-time writer, he is author of *The Logic of Millennial Thought: Eighteenth Century New England*, *Great Heart: the History of a Labrador Adventure* (with John Ruge), and other books.

Mark H. Lytle received his PhD from Yale University and is Professor of History and Environmental Studies as well as Chair of the American Studies Program at Bard College. He is also Director of the Master of Arts in Teaching Program at Bard. His publications include *The Origins of the Iranian-American Alliance, 1941-1953*, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection* (with James West Davidson) and, most recently, "An Environmental Approach to American Diplomatic History" in *Diplomatic History*. He is at work on *The Uncivil War: America in the Vietnam Era*.

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