Other Books by Arthur M. Schlesinger

AUTHOR

The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1763-1776. 1918.
New Viewpoints in American History. 1922.
Political and Social History of the United States, 1829-1925. 1925.
Revised editions, 1933, 1941.
The Rise of the City, 1878-1898. 1933.
The American as Reformer. 1950.
Prelude to Independence: The Newspaper War on Britain, 1764-1776. 1958.

CO-AUTHOR

The Reinterpretation of American Literature. 1928.
Research in the Social Sciences. 1929.
Essays on Research in the Social Sciences. 1931.
Approaches to American Social History. 1937.
Land of the Free, a Short History of the American People. 1944.

EDITOR

Great Charters of Americanism. 1920.
Historical Scholarship in America: Needs and Opportunities. 1932.
Marcus Lee Hansen, The Immigrant in American History. 1940.

CO-EDITOR

The Iowa Interlude

Iowa City, my academic home from 1919 to 1924, was a place of some 11,000 souls situated in gently rolling prairie country in the heart of a rich agricultural community. Once the town had been the territorial seat of government. Now it existed largely by grace of the University. The teaching staff and maintenance force plus the annual influx of six or seven thousand students provided the chief means of its livelihood. The discarded gray stone capitol, its classical symmetry overtopped by barrack-like but dignified classroom buildings, stood at the center of the campus, housing the administrative officials. An array of small stores and two hotels adjoined the grounds, and there were also two struggling dailies in addition to the college newspaper. To be adequately informed the citizens had to take Des Moines or Chicago papers. Automobiles for pleasure driving were few, for one could easily go about on foot in town, while the dirt country roads almost prohibited motoring in wet weather and reeked with dust in dry. No theaters were to be found, and the three movie houses offered only silent films in this era before photography acquired a voice. As for the newfangled radio, it was admit-
pected. The same two middle-aged sisters catered at all the functions, making us at first wonder why every accommodator in Iowa City looked alike. The Eighteenth Amendment, going into effect our first year, cast no pall on these affairs, since the Hawkeye state had long had prohibition, and none of our acquaintances showed the slightest desire to infringe the national ban.

Academically the University displayed a pleasing contrast to Ohio State. There, I had felt the lack of a considered overall aim, a tendency to drift with the tide; but Iowa, under President Jessup's vigorous leadership, had a well-defined purpose as well as a clear-cut program. The purpose was to place the University through its Extension Service and other means immediately at the disposal of all the people. The program was to offer on the campus a wide range of instruction in the liberal arts and the professions, both to broaden the students' intellectual horizons and to equip them for satisfying and useful careers. Unlike Ohio State, agriculture and the related subjects were taught elsewhere, at the land-grant college in Ames.

Jessup, a stocky, square-jawed man who looked and acted more like a business executive or banker than a university president, had held office since a year before the war; now, thanks to the retirement or death of a number of department heads and his success in obtaining increased postwar appropriations ahead of other state universities, he had lured scholars away from rival institutions, I being but the youngest of the lot. In this fashion he reorganized five other departments in addition to History, and the injection of fresh blood had a tonic effect throughout the faculty. From as far away as Yale, Professor Max Farrand wrote me, "Almost everyone is being attracted and being impressed by the various groups of workers that are gathered at the University of Iowa, and everything that has been done is watched with favorable eyes."

Jessup, however, wielded the reins with an ever vigilant eye on the legislature. This was first borne in on me shortly after arriving, when Jessup at the prompting of a lawmaker quizzed me about the Committee of Forty-Eight and was visibly relieved to learn I had ceased connection with it. And some months later, after the History Department included the Covenant of the League of Nations in Great Charters of Americanism, a booklet of documents published under my editorship, protests poured in on him from all over this bitterly isolationist state. In retrospect, I am bound to admit, the outcry had merit, for the Covenant was still being debated in the Senate, which was presently to reject it. The University to its credit, though suspending further distribution, did not withdraw the objectionable insertion until the Senate had taken final action. I summed up Jessup's philosophy of the relation of faculty members to public issues in response to a letter from Upton Sinclair, who was then gathering material on the invisible influences controlling American education for his book The Goose-Step. "His position," I said, is a purely pragmatic one. Since his main job is to get funds from the state legislature, he does not propose to allow the indiscretions of a professor to damage the cause of the University there. . . . He would even protect a professor from outside criticism, up to a certain point. But if appropriations are involved, then his allegiance is to the appropriation. But in justice to the president I must add that no alleged radical has been dismissed from the faculty.

One of the academic newcomers, Hardin Craig from the University of Minnesota, became a warm friend. The head of the English Department, he was an authority on Shakespeare, particularly concerned with the ideas about man and nature in the Elizabethan age which had influenced the great playwright's conception of his characters. But, this apart, he had wide-ranging intellectual interests and was a gifted raconteur with a special knack for telling Negro folk stories remembered from his Kentucky childhood. On Sunday mornings we would tramp the country roads, bowing low from time to time before the tall corn or the fat porkers in recognition of the twin foun-
ations of Iowa’s wealth and the University’s income. Frequently we were joined by Herbert F. Goodrich, a law professor who, like Craig, was well informed outside his own field and provided a further dimension to the exchanges. Both out-stayed me on the faculty, Craig eventually going to Stanford, while Goodrich moved on first to the University of Michigan, then to the deanship of law at Pennsylvania, and, finally, to a judgeship of a United States Circuit Court in that state.

Perhaps the most challenging intellect I encountered was Frank H. Knight, later of the University of Chicago, who specialized in economic theory. In the spirit of John Stuart Mill he accepted no doctrine “without a rigid scrutiny by negative criticism” and insisted “upon having the meaning of a word clearly understood before using it.” The impression he gave of thinking out loud reminded me of my old professor James Harvey Robinson. Among other things Knight helped clarify my conception of the economic interpretation of history by stressing that economic motives were not, and could not be, a mere mechanical factor, since people were just as apt to follow their supposed interests as their real ones and thus, in fact, go against their material advantage. I had not hitherto been blind to this, but Knight’s cogent way of putting it lodged it in the foreground of my mind.

The faculty, of course, contained its share of unusual characters, who perhaps stood out more prominently than elsewhere because the academic community lived so much to itself. There was the gentle little professor of chemistry dominated by a large masculine wife, who recovered his manliness after her death by marrying a deaf-and-dumb woman. There was the economics professor whose voice, the dean had said in advance of his coming, would “be heard all over the United States” and certainly could be heard all over the building where he lectured. There was the absent-minded professor of psychology who on taking off his clothes to dress for a party went to bed instead. There was, besides, the professor of liter-
Columbia, Walter I. Brandt, a Wisconsin Ph.D. in United States history, affords an especially interesting case. The Library had recently obtained a set of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, and since we had no Medieval specialist and Brandt was the only one on our staff with an easy reading knowledge of German, I offered to reduce his teaching schedule for a year if he would prepare himself to transfer to that period. Henceforth, both at Iowa and afterward at New York University, he made the Middle Ages his field.

For my part, I at first repeated the courses on American Diplomatic History and The History of Political Parties, given at Ohio State, adding one on Recent American History (since 1870) and a graduate seminar in that period. In the summer of 1920 I also taught the course on Some Revisions of American History—now retitled New Viewpoints in American History—for the second and last time. Then in the third year, 1922-23, I realized a long-cherished ambition by introducing a course on The Social and Cultural History of the United States (in lieu of the one on Political Parties) and began devoting my seminars to that field. This, so far as I know, was the first instruction ever offered in any college or university on that phase of our past. The Iowa undergraduates did not differ noticeably from those at Ohio State except that, being more inclined to regard higher education as a privilege and opportunity instead of a right, they generally worked harder. For most of them Iowa City itself, small though it was, proved an enlightening experience, since they typically came from farms or crossroads villages. The University Librarian complained of the mutilating of books and attributed it to the fact that the offenders had never before used a lending library.

Not having earlier offered graduate work, I could not compare the two institutions in this respect, but in ability and seriousness of purpose the students measured up well to those I was later to have at Harvard. Five doctoral theses fell to me in the five years. One, by Bessie L. Pierce, who helped give the elementary American history while instructing in the College of Education, was published by Knopf under the title *Public Opinion and the Teaching of History*. It surveyed the hitherto uninvestigated subject from colonial times onward. Another by Fred A. Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army*, brought out by the Arthur H. Clark Company, won both the American Historical Association's Justin Winsor Prize and the Pulitzer Prize. Miss Pierce and Shannon in due course became professors respectively at the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois.

As a representative of the Graduate School one year I visited various colleges of the state to lecture on a subject designed to interest students in continuing their education beyond the baccalaureate degree. My theme was "The Role of the Newspapers in the American Revolution," a matter which had aroused my interest when working on the *Colonial Merchants* and on which, though I as yet had no thought of it, I would eventually write a book. Of the thirty institutions, I spoke at fifteen. To reach some of them posed a real problem because the railroads running north and south were few and primitive. In going to Luther College at Decorah in northeastern Iowa, for instance, I had to take a bumpy, single-track, narrow-gauge line. The temperature was below zero, the handful of passengers, swathed in fur caps, overcoats, wool mufflers, and mittens, derived little comfort from the coal stove at the end of the car; and at every stopping place we all rushed out to huddle for the time around the blazing station stove. But my welcome on arriving more than made up for the discomfort.

These colleges had as a rule been founded by religious denominations and once been thriving institutions, but with the changing times and the growth of the state university a number had fallen upon evil days. Lenox College at Hopkinton offers a striking example. Only a corporal's guard of students now attended, and most of the half-dozen ivy-clad brick build-
ings were occupied by the county high school, whose teachers in some cases taught in the college as well. Yet in the 1880's and 1890's Lenox had been the alma mater of the brothers John C. and Charles E. Merriam, who at this later period were respectively president of the Carnegie Institution in Washington and professor of political science at the University of Chicago.

As another device to bring the University closer to the state, the faculty every spring fanned out in all directions to deliver high-school commencement addresses. Although this cast me in an unfamiliar role, nothing could have acquainted me so well with the surroundings from which most of my students came. In one instance, indeed—the name of the place now forgotten—the graduating class consisted of but two members, a boy and a girl. They sat proudly on a platform in a basement room of the Methodist Church under a large, spreading banner inscribed LAUNCHED BUT NOT ANCHORED. The hall was packed, for it was a gala occasion for the entire vicinity, with people paying a sort of admission fee by depositing gifts for the pair on a table at the door.

To supplement the policy of linking the University with the state, the History Department inaugurated on the campus an annual Conference of Teachers of History and the Social Studies. Professors from various Iowa colleges provided the papers along with our own staff, but the prime drawing card was always a distinguished figure, or more than one, from the Eastern seaboard. Among these were James Harvey Robinson and Carlton J. H. Hayes of Columbia, Charles M. Andrews and Max Farrand of Yale, and Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard.

On other occasions historians of note came to deliver special lectures. Two from England stand out, though for opposite reasons. J. Holland Rose of Cambridge University at once won all our hearts by his gracious and genial personality. A. Percival Newton of the University of London, on the other hand, was the traditional Briton at his worst—rude, supercilious, and self-centered. He obviously regarded himself a social lion, and it might have been said of him, as a Boston hostess had remarked many years before of a more eminent English scholar, E. A. Freeman, that he was in truth a king of beasts. At a dinner party Elizabeth and I gave for him he declined to shake hands with the guests, instructing them that this was not the English custom. Professor Andrews later told us that the only time in New Haven Newton appeared to realize he was not the sole person present was at the Harvard-Yale football game.

In a different category was Hamlin Garland, who remained for a few days after his talk. He had already written a number of novels and short stories about the frontier West and obviously enjoyed associating with professional historians. His autobiographical book A Son of the Middle Border, published several years before, had impressed me (and still does) as a minor American classic. Now he was engaged on a sequel to it, A Daughter of the Middle Border, and in due course he sent me an autographed copy. It seemed to me inferior to the earlier volume, and in a letter otherwise warmly appreciative I tactfully—or so I supposed—said as much. His reply made it evident he considered me a poor judge. I had yet to learn that an author's latest brain child is likely to be his best-loved one.

Meanwhile, as an outgrowth of the course on New Viewpoints in American History, I brought out a book under that title with Macmillan in April, 1922. The twelve essays treated such themes as "The Influence of Immigration on American History," "The Decline of Aristocracy in America," and "The Role of Women in American History," three of the chapters having previously appeared in learned journals in trial form. The volume was designed to direct the attention of the profession, and especially the younger members, to neglected or
underemphasized aspects of the nation's development. Though four decades later it is all an old story, the book continues to sell a few hundred copies each year.

In preparation for writing it I had had perforce to read extensively in works off the beaten track, which also yielded ore for my course on Social and Cultural History. Even so, the need in a systematic class presentation to fill in the many gaps and pattern the data period by period constituted a formidable problem. I have never composed history lectures in which I learned so much in the process or afterward kept revising so drastically. If similar offerings were to become standard over the country, as I hoped, obviously the teachers must be provided with a ready-made body of subject matter. This, moreover, would suggest significant new lines of research. When a Macmillan representative showed up a month after *New Viewpoints* appeared, I accordingly proposed for the purpose the issuing of a multivolume co-operative *History of American Life*. The company at once seized on the idea, brought into the discussions Dixon Ryan Fox; now an associate professor at Columbia, and Carl Becker of Cornell, and in September I went to New York to help work out the details. A few months later, in February, 1923, Fox and I signed a contract to edit the undertaking, with Becker and, by subsequent agreement, Ashley H. Thorndike of Columbia in consulting capacities. Neither of us realized what a wolf we had grasped by the ears, that a project planned to end in three years would eventually require twenty-one. That summer and the next I spent with the family in Cambridge, Mass., collecting material at the Harvard and Boston libraries for my own volume in the series.

The Hawkeye state brought many new experiences, but perhaps the strangest was the political climate in which I found myself. Since Fremont ran for President in 1856 Iowa had gone Republican every time save 1912, when the party by dividing between Taft and Roosevelt enabled Wilson to carry the state.

And in this postwar era the leadership proved, if anything, more conservative than ever. Perhaps for this reason, my faculty friends by and large showed little interest in national questions, Herbert Goodrich being the principal exception. It was chiefly through reading the *New Republic* that it was possible to keep in touch with liberal currents of opinion.

As the 1920 election approached, I satisfied a long-felt curiosity to observe a nominating convention in action, and the Republicans by meeting in nearby Chicago determined my choice. No spectacle could have proved less edifying. For four days I sat through the baking June heat while party spellbinders ranted and raved, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts capping them all with a poisonous personal attack on the now bedridden Wilson. Then, thanks to a midnight decision by an inner group in the famous "smoke-filled room"—of which we in the audience, of course, were ignorant—the nomination went on the tenth ballot to Warren G. Harding. So little known was the Ohio Senator that I overheard one of the spectators confidently identify him as the governor of Iowa, who bore the same surname. In the campaign the Republican candidate, it will be remembered, straddled and confused the crucial issue of League ratification, while his Democratic rival, James M. Cox, stoutly advocated America's joining. I unhesitatingly favored Cox, who, quite apart from his stand on the League, had earlier won my admiration by his progressive measures when three-term governor of Ohio. The fact that someone named Franklin D. Roosevelt shared the ticket made no impression on me; one way or the other. In the sullen postwar mood of the country they, of course, stood no show.

When the election of 1924 came around, I again voted Democratic, but this time by absentee ballot, since I was then residing in Massachusetts, temporarily as I thought. John W. Davis, the party's standard-bearer, seemed to me clearly better qualified for the chief magistracy than the lethargic Calvin
Coolidge, who had inherited the White House mantle upon Harding's death. Senator La Follette, the nominee of the newborn Progressive party, made in some respects an even greater appeal, but my conviction as to the futility of third-party efforts removed him from consideration. The country, it need hardly be said, preferred to "Keep Cool with Coolidge."

Several weeks before the election I published in collaboration with Erik M. Eriksson, a graduate student who did the statistical work, an article in the New Republic entitled "The Vanishing Voter." It had no partisan implications but to my mind probed to the core the problem of popular government. It showed that from the presidential contest of 1856 through that of 1920 the ratio of actual to eligible voters had dropped from 83.5 per cent to a little more than 52—a fall of over a third despite the intervening spread of public education and better means of communication. The first of such inquiries, it may have helped to increase the number of nonpartisan get-out-the-vote campaigns in the years that followed.

Meanwhile I faithfully attended the American Historical Association, twice presenting papers. The Columbus gathering in December, 1923, offered more than the usual attractions. For one thing it took me back to old scenes and friends. For another, I had been asked to reply there to a Harvard invitation to become a visiting professor during the next academic year upon Frederick Jackson Turner's retirement from teaching. William S. Ferguson, the chairman of the History Department, had wired me some days before, and Turner and Channing had written warmly supporting letters. The salary was to be $6,000—$500 more than at Iowa—with an additional $500 for repeating one of my courses at Radcliffe College. The Department, unknown to me, was actually seeking a permanent replacement for Turner, but the tender looked merely like a stopgap arrangement until Samuel Eliot Morison, a Harvard product and colonial historian, should return after a year from his post as the first Harmsworth Profes-