

Fairfax County Public Schools
IB Teachers Workshop
History of the Americas
Sept 20, 2017: Smith Library for the Study of George Washington, Mt. Vernon, VA

Revolutions and Independence in the Americas, 1770-1825:
New Understandings

John Tutino
Georgetown University

Suggested Materials for Teachers and Students

My presentation today aims to introduce teachers to an emerging new historical vision of the transformation of the Americas as most of its peoples broke away from European empires and began the process of forging nations. Long established traditions frame that process to begin with the North American rejection of British rule and the construction of the U.S. constitutional regime from 1774 to 1787. The movement for political liberation then flowed back across the Atlantic to influence France's revolutionary struggles toward a more participatory polity from 1789 to 1800. Then the combined influence of the US and France are seen as stimulating and influencing broader movements for (and against) independence across the hemisphere from 1808 to 1824.

Those regions and political process remain essential to understanding the transformations of the Americas in the world after 1770.

The emerging new history argues that there is a linked trajectory that focuses on power and politics—and on production, popular rebellions, and everyday life—that runs from British North America as it became the United States (1774-1800); to Saint Domingue as revolutionary slaves made an unprecedented Haiti (1791-1804); and to New Spain as insurgent communities forced transformations that remade the world economy while Mexico emerged as a nation (1808-1824).

Together, those three revolutionary transformations changed the Americas and the world, ensuring that nation making was never easy anywhere in the hemisphere—while shaping much of the world as we know it today. In the new vision, the emergence of the American nations becomes far more complex—and far more important to world history.

Here I provide a selected bibliography of some of the key studies that have led to this new vision—and the debates they have stimulated. After all, the important questions of history are always subject to debate, re-formulation, and more debate. All these works are accessible to teachers—and to most upper level IB students.

I mark with an asterisk (*) those that are more accessible.

I list studies by region and order of publication—to indicate the time depth of this emerging conversation to rethink the origins of the American nations.

U.S. Independence:

*Morgan, Edmund, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*. New York: Norton, 1975 (new edition 2001).

*Morgan, Edmund, *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America*. New York: Norton, 1989.

*Taylor, Alan, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832*. New York: Norton, 2013.

*Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*. New York: Knopf, 2014.

Haitian Revolution:

Fick, Carolyn, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990.

*Dubois, Laurent, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

*Dubois, Laurent, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012.

New Spain, Insurgencies, Mexico, the Americas, and the World:

Tutino, John, *Making a New World: Founding Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

*Tutino, John, ed. *New Countries: Capitalism, Revolutions, and Nations in the Americas, 1750-1870*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

*Guardino, Peter, *The Dead March: A History of the Mexican-American War*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017.

*Tutino, John, *The Mexican Heartland: How Communities Shaped Capitalism, a Nation, and World History, 1500-2000*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.