

Engagement with the Past: The Lives and Works of the World War II Generation of Historians

By William Palmer

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Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., John Hope Franklin, Daniel Boorstin, C. Vann Woodward, Edmund S. Morgan, Barbara Tuckman, Eric Hobsbawm, Hugh Trevor Roper, Lawrence Stone?aside from carrying the distinction as some of the most successful and well-respected historians of the twentieth century, these scholars found their lives and careers evolving amid some of the world's pivotal historical moments. Dubbed the World War II Generation, the twenty-two English and American historians chronicled by William Palmer grew up in the aftermath of World War I, went to college in the 1930s as the threats of the Great Depression, Hitler, and Communism loomed over them, saw their careers interrupted by World War II, and faced the prospect of nuclear annihilation. They gained from their experiences the perspective and insight necessary to write definitive histories on topics ranging from slavery to revolution. *Engagement with the Past* offers biographies of these individuals in the context of their generation's intellectual achievement. Based upon extensive personal interviews and careful reading of their work, *Engagement with the Past* is a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at a generation of historians and how they helped record and shape modern history.

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Review

"A most engaging book about the generation of British and American historians who challenged the orthodoxies sustaining some of the most cherished national myths." *Wilson Quarterly*

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"A fascinating, seminal study on a generation of historians whose impact on world culture we are just beginning to fully appreciate. This is intellectual history at its absolute finest. A landmark book brimming with analytical savvy, narrative flare, and sound judgment." *Douglas Brinkley*

"A unique group biography of this unusually talented class of history-makers." *Giustificativo*

"Addresses an important subject with wit and good writing and provides a collection of memorable bon mots from a group of notable historians." *Journal of American History*

"This work is extraordinarily informative, rationally organized, and written with clarity and grace." *William B. Gatewood*

About the Author

William Palmer, professor of History at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia, is the author of numerous scholarly articles in a variety of disciplines and two books.

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