Fourth Edition

These United States

The Questions of Our Past

Concise Edition • Volume 2: Since 1865

Irwin Unger

New York University, Emeritus

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Rita and Mickey, Libby and Arnie, Phyllis and Jerry,
and Norma and David—once more

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pulitzer Prize winning historian Irwin Unger has been teaching American history for over forty years on both coasts. Born and largely educated in New York, he has lived in California, Virginia, and Washington State. He is married to Debi Unger and they have five children, now all safely past their college years. Professor Unger formerly taught at California State University at Long Beach, the University of California at Davis, and New York University. He is now professor emeritus at NYU.

Professor Unger’s professional interests have ranged widely within American history. He has written on Reconstruction, the Progressive Era, and on the 1960s. His first book, The Greenback Era, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1965. Since then he has written The Movement: The New Left and (with Debi Unger) The Vulnerable Years, Turning Point: 1968, The Best of Intentions (about the Great Society), LBJ: A Life, The Guggenheims, A Family History. He has just completed a book on the 1960s and he and Debi Unger are working on a biography of General George C. Marshall.
PREFACE

This is the fourth edition of These United States: Concise Edition. Like its predecessor, it is a compact version of These United States: The Questions of Our Past and is designed to present all the essentials of the larger work in a briefer format to facilitate readability and reduce the price of the work to the student. The compression process has not, I believe, sacrificed essential material. Rather, redundant examples, overextended treatments, and marginal topics have been eliminated, a process that drew on reviewers' and adopters' evaluations. And to constrain costs, we have also reduced the number of illustrations and maps and removed the “Portraits” from the main body of the text and placed them in a separate booklet.

In most significant ways the books' plan remains the same, however. First, unlike virtually every other introductory text, it still has a single author and speaks in a single voice. I hope readers will agree that a book by an individual has inherent advantages over one composed by a committee. Second, each chapter is still organized around a significant question, each designed to challenge students with the complexity of the past and compel them to evaluate critically different viewpoints. This plan, I believe, makes the learning of history a quest, an exploration, rather than the mere absorption of facts. Yet, at the same time, “the facts” are made available. These United States provides the ample “coverage” of standard texts.

The word “standard” here does not mean old-fashioned. Though the work treats political, diplomatic, and military events, it also deals extensively with social, cultural, and economic matters. It concerns itself not only with “events,” moreover, but also with people, “forces,” currents, and themes. It is in the modern mode in another way as well: it enlarges the “canon” to include those people who have traditionally been excluded from the American past and seeks to embrace the enormous diversity of the American people. The reader will find in These United States women as well as men; people of color as well as those of European extraction, youths as well as adults; the poor as well as the rich; artists, writers, and musicians as well as politicians, generals, and diplomats.

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS EDITION

• New sections on various aspects of social history, particularly on slavery, on the Salem witch trials, and on daily life. In addition, the author has sought to introduce environmental considerations into the treatments of economic growth and development. Finally, since our view of the past is inevitably influenced by our experience of the present, there are expanded discussions of social legislation in the past, especially of health care reform.
• Extends the story through the events of the 2008 presidential campaign, the onset of the post-2007 recession, and the first six months of the new administration of Barack Obama., including its efforts to check the economic decline and to reverse the direction of the Bush administration on issues of health care, the environment and America's relations with the rest of the world.

I hope that, like its precursors, this edition meets with favor among faculty and students and serves both as a successful teaching instrument and an absorbing introduction to the American past.

Irwin Unger
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ANCILLARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

These United States Concise Edition comes with instructor and student supplementary materials, which are available for download from the online Instructor’s Resource Center (http://www.pearsonhighered.com/educator). Select “Download Instructor Resources.”

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