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Being A Historian: An Introduction To The Professional World Of History



Synopsis

Based on the author's more than 50 years of experience as a professional historian in academic and other capacities, *Being a Historian* is addressed to both aspiring and mature historians. It offers an overview of the state of the discipline of history today and the problems that confront it and its practitioners in many professions. James M. Banner Jr. argues that historians remain inadequately prepared for their rapidly changing professional world and that the discipline as a whole has yet to confront many of its deficiencies. He also argues that, no longer needing to conform automatically to the academic ideal, historians can now more safely and productively than ever before adapt to their own visions, temperaments, and goals as they take up their responsibilities as scholars, teachers, and public practitioners. Critical while also optimistic, this work suggests many topics for further scholarly and professional exploration, research, and debate.

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Customer Reviews

"At once a strong advocate and an impassioned critic of the historical profession, James Banner insists in specific and telling ways that history's mansion has many rooms and a public responsibility. What a shame that so many historians are crowded into one room and cut off from our public. All historians, all humanists, should read this book." -Thomas Bender, New York University
"Being a Historian ranges widely and expertly over the past and present forms of historical work. It's the only book I know that offers anything like a survey of the multiple forms of historical practice in contemporary America, and seeks to put them into context. This book is sharp and

up-to-date, and it will help to set off discussions that the historical profession and the nation's history departments need to hold." -Anthony Grafton, Princeton University"James Banner is history's Dutch uncle. His *Being a Historian*, which examines developments, problems, and issues in the field over the last several decades, pulls no punches and should be required reading for those contemplating careers in history, as well as their teachers and mentors. But readers should not assume that Banner is here making a plea for returning to a mythical or imagined golden age in history-far from it. Informed by an impressive command of recent research and writing on history, as well as a lifetime of varied experience as an historian, Banner finds much about which to be optimistic. His chapter on public history is one of the most perceptive and informed analyses I have seen to date of how the field has developed, including its growing pains and problems, as well as its promise for enhancing historical scholarship and the practice of history in the future. Leaders in the field, for whom public history has become a major focus of interest, would do well to give this work serious attention." -Arnita A. Jones, Executive Director Emerita, American Historical Association

A book for beginning and experienced academic and public historians, *Being a Historian* concerns the condition of the discipline of history in the United States today, what aspiring and mature historians need to know about it, and what might be undertaken to remedy its shortcomings. This is an overview of the diversity of professional history that historians need to consider as they learn and practice history.

Anyone thinking of grad school in history should read this gracefully written book...an elegant and balanced view of what we do and what we still need to do

I got it for class but it is so difficult to read. I like what he has to say about history and historians in the work force.

Good read.

Extremely well structured in both its presentation and content, for those finding and for those refreshing their passion for history. I have drawn the text many times to support my role as an organisational development consultant. Assisting organisations to enhance their performance against global competition often comes down to understanding and learning from one's own organisational history and the organisational history of one's competention in the international

marketplace. 'Being a Historian' has proved to be a most valuable learning and reflection tool for my clients across a diverse range of industry sectors.

Purchased as a gift from recipient's Wish List. She being a history teacher, this will be an added asset to her history book collection. Came quickly.

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