

## MICHAEL DAVID COHEN

[mdcohen@american.edu](mailto:mdcohen@american.edu)

### CURRENT POSITION

**American University**, Washington, DC

Editor/Project Director, Correspondence of Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore 2020–present

Research Professor, Department of Government 2020–present

Faculty Fellow, Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies 2019–present

### EDUCATION

**Harvard University**, Cambridge, MA

PhD, History, 2008

**Carleton College**, Northfield, MN BA, *summa cum laude*, History and Mathematics, 2002

### PREVIOUS EDITING & RESEARCH POSITIONS

**University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

Research Associate Professor, Department of History 2016–2019

Research Assistant Professor 2009–2015

Editor, James K. Polk Project 2015–2019

Assistant Editor 2009–2015

**Rutgers University**, Piscataway, NJ

2008–2009

Postdoctoral Fellow in Historical Editing, Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony

**American Antiquarian Society**, Worcester, MA

2001, 2002

Summer Intern, Graphic Arts Collections

**Carleton College**, Northfield, MN

2000–2001

Research Assistant, Department of History

### EDITED & AUTHORED BOOKS

Editor, *James K. Polk and His Time: Essays at the Conclusion of the Polk Project*. Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2022.

Editor, *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, vol. 14, *April 1848–June 1849*. Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2021. [Published online, Charlottesville: Rotunda, eds. by Univ. of Virginia Press, 2022, <https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/POLK.html>, and Knoxville: Newfound Press, 2024, [https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_polk/15/](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_polk/15/). Advance edition published online, Knoxville: Newfound Press, 2019. <https://newfoundpress.utk.edu/correspondence-of-james-k-polk/>.]

Editor, *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, vol. 13, *August 1847–March 1848*. Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2017. [Published online, Knoxville: Newfound Press, 2019, [https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_polk/14/](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_polk/14/), and Charlottesville: Rotunda, eds. by Univ. of Virginia Press, 2021, <https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/POLK.html>.]

Coeditor, *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, vol. 12, *January–July 1847*. Edited by Tom Chaffin and Michael David Cohen. Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2013. [Published online, Knoxville: Newfound Press, 2015, [http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_polk/3/](http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_polk/3/), and

- Charlottesville: Rotunda, eds. by Univ. of Virginia Press, 2021,  
<https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/POLK.html>.]
- Assistant editor, *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 6, *An Awful Hush, 1895 to 1906*. Edited by Ann D. Gordon. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2013.
- Reconstructing the Campus: Higher Education and the American Civil War*. Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2012.

### RESEARCH ARTICLES

- “Campaigning on the Constitution: Zachary Taylor, Millard Fillmore, and the Presidential Election of 1848.” *University of St. Thomas Journal of Law & Public Policy* 17, no. 1 (2023): 225–39.  
<https://researchonline.stthomas.edu/esploro/outputs/journalArticle/Campaigning-on-the-Constitution-Zachary-Taylor/991015248698903691>.
- “My *manusc[r]ipt papers . . . are safe*”: The Correspondence of James K. Polk, 1816–2021.” In Cohen, *James K. Polk and His Time*, 305–30.
- “School for Suffrage: The American Woman’s Republic.” *The Good Society* 25, no. 2–3 (2016): 209–30. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/goodsociety.25.2-3.0209>.
- “James K. Polk and the Mystery of Amor Patriæ.” *New England Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (June 2013): 266–92. <https://polkproject.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/NEQ-Article.pdf>.
- “‘What Gender Is Lex?’: Women, Men, and Power Relations in Colleges of the Nineteenth Century.” *Perspectives on the History of Higher Education* 24 (2005): 41–90.
- “Bartlett’s *Familiar Quotations*: ‘A Glancing Bird’s Eye View’ by a ‘Morbid Scholiast.’” *Harvard Library Bulletin*, n.s., 14, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 55–74.  
<https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/42673641>.

### BOOK REVIEWS

- Review of *Daniel Webster and the Unfinished Constitution*, by Peter Charles Hoffer. *Journal of the Early Republic* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2022): 313–16.
- Review of *Slavery and the University: Histories and Legacies*, edited by Leslie M. Harris, James T. Campbell, and Alfred L. Brophy. *American Historical Review* 125, no. 1 (Feb. 2020): 231–32.
- Review of *Athens of the New South: College Life and the Making of Modern Nashville*, by Mary Ellen Pethel. *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 117, no. 3–4 (Autumn 2019): 618–20.
- Review of *Uncompromising Activist: Richard Greener, First Black Graduate of Harvard College*, by Katherine Reynolds Chaddock. *Black Perspectives*, Oct. 4, 2018.  
<https://www.aaihs.org/richard-greener-first-black-graduate-of-harvard-college>.
- Review of *Educational Reconstruction: African American Schools in the Urban South, 1865–1890*, by Hilary Green. *Journal of American Studies* 52, no. 3 (Aug. 2018): 852–53.
- Review of *Reparation and Reconciliation: The Rise and Fall of Integrated Higher Education*, by Christi M. Smith. *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 116, no. 1 (Winter 2018): 128–30.

Review of *University, Court, and Slave: Pro-slavery Thought in Southern Colleges and Courts and the Coming of Civil War*, by Alfred L. Brophy. *Journal of Southern History* 83, no. 4 (Nov. 2017): 960–62.

Review of *Adventures Abroad: North American Women at German-Speaking Universities, 1868–1915*, by Sandra L. Singer. *Paedagogica Historica*, n.s., 41, no. 6 (Dec. 2005): 788–91.

### OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Taylor and Fillmore Correspondence Blog. 2020–present.

<https://edspace.american.edu/taylorandfillmore/blog>.

“Polk, James K.” In *America in the World, 1776 to the Present: A Supplement to the Dictionary of American History*, edited by Edward J. Blum, 2:840–42. Farmington Hills, MI: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2016.

“The First Desegregation of the University of South Carolina–October 10th, 1873.” The Jubilee Project 2013: Commemorating 150 Years of Emancipation and Educational Access in South Carolina, Oct. 10, 2013. <http://jubileeprojectsc.wordpress.com/2013/10/10/the-first-desegregation-of-the-university-of-south-carolina-october-10th-1873>.

“Schools for Soldiers.” In *The New York Times: Disunion: 106 Articles from the New York Times Opinionator: Modern Historians Revisit and Reconsider the Civil War from Lincoln’s Election to the Emancipation Proclamation*, edited by Ted Widmer, 312–15. New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2013. [First published in *Disunion/Opinionator: Exclusive Online Commentary from the Times*. *New York Times*, July 3, 2012. <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/03/schools-for-soldiers>.]

“Historian as Editor: The Correspondence of James K. Polk.” *The Federalist: Newsletter of the Society for History in the Federal Government*, 2nd ser., no. 31 (Fall 2011): 1, 3–4. [https://polkproject.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Historian\\_as\\_Editor.pdf](https://polkproject.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Historian_as_Editor.pdf).

“Belva Lockwood” and “Equal Rights Association.” In *Encyclopedia of Women and American Politics*, edited by Lynne E. Ford, 172–73, 188–89. New York: Facts on File, 2008.

Contributions to *Baton Rouge Advocate*, *The Conversation*, *History News Network*, and *New York Times’ Disunion*.

### INVITED LECTURES

“A Troubled Partnership: Secretary Buchanan and President Polk.” Presidential Lecture Series, LancasterHistory, Lancaster, PA, May 18, 2023.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIV7DITDRS4>.

“President James K. Polk and the Expansion of America.” One Day University (now Curiosity University), June 7, 2022. <https://www.curiosityu.com/videos/president-james-k-polk-and-the-expansion-of-america>.

“Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore (1849–1853): Meet America’s Lesser-Known Presidents of the Mid-19th Century.” Annual Presidential Lecture, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Mar. 22, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZ5W8clGneI>.

Lecture on the Civil War’s impact on higher education. Daughters of the American Colonists, Knoxville, TN, Chapter, Mar. 23, 2016.

“James Knox Polk (1845–1849): Meet America’s Most Important Unknown President.” Annual Presidential Lecture, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Mar. 1, 2016.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IysLOYgNYK4>. Followed by presentation to faculty and staff on digital editing and publication, Mar. 2, 2016.
- “Colleges in and after the Civil War.” Twin Cities Civil War Round Table, St. Paul, MN, Dec. 17, 2013.
- “College Women and Men in the American Civil War.” Wesleyan College, Macon, GA, Apr. 23, 2013.
- “The Civil War and the Transformation of American Higher Education.” University of Georgia, Athens, Apr. 22, 2013.
- “How Did the Civil War Affect Colleges?” Carleton College, Northfield, MN, Feb. 6, 2013.  
<https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/history/news-events/speakers/cohen>.
- “Colleges and the Civil War.” Worcester State University, Worcester, MA, Nov. 15, 2012.

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “James K. Polk, Zachary Taylor, and the Lives of Enslaved Mississippians.” Southern Historical Association, Kansas City, MO, Oct. 24–27, 2024.
- Participant in “Still Important Today: Recognizing Historical Patterns in the Present.” Roundtable, Association for Documentary Editing, Washington, DC, June 22–25, 2023.  
<https://youtu.be/Y-EsmTeA118>.
- “Constitutional History of the Presidency; Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore.” University of St. Thomas Symposium on Constitutionalism, Minneapolis, Nov. 18, 2022.  
<https://youtu.be/uoRuLWoZ8tIs>.
- Participant in “Editing Documents in US Political History.” Roundtable, American Political History Conference, West Lafayette, IN, June 9–11, 2022.  
[https://youtu.be/pXfPTVkn\\_7M](https://youtu.be/pXfPTVkn_7M).
- “James K. Polk and the Freedom of Religion.” Presidential Politics Conference of Iowa, Sioux Center, Oct. 24–26, 2019.
- “Concluding the James K. Polk Project,” part of the roundtable “In Light of the Evidence: End-of-Project Goals and Reflections.” Association for Documentary Editing, Princeton, NJ, June 20–22, 2019.
- “‘My *manusc[r]ipt papers* . . . are safe’: The James K. Polk Project, 1958–2019.” Valedictory address, James K. Polk and His Time: A Conference Finale to the Polk Project, Knoxville, TN, Apr. 12–13, 2019.
- “The James K. Polk Project: A President’s Letters in Print and Online.” Poster, American Historical Association, Denver, Jan. 5–8, 2017.
- “Absent Authors and Missing Manuscripts: Editing the Letters of James K. Polk.” Manuscript Cultures Minicon, Knoxville, TN, Oct. 29, 2016.
- “One-Term Wonder: The Strong Presidency and Single-Term Pledge of James K. Polk.” Iowa Conference on Presidential Politics, Sioux Center, Oct. 29–31, 2015.
- “School for Suffrage: The American Woman’s Republic, 1911–1915.” History of Education Society, Seattle, Nov. 1–4, 2012.
- “The Civil War Origins of a Federal Role in Education.” Organization of American Historians, Washington, Apr. 7–10, 2010.
- “Missouri, the Civil War, and the Rise of a Comprehensive University.” History of Education Society, Philadelphia, Oct. 22–25, 2009.
- “College Admission and the American Civil War.” History of Education Society, Ottawa, Canada, Oct. 26–29, 2006.

- “‘What Gender Is Lex?’: Women, Men, and Power Relations in Colleges of the Nineteenth Century.” History of Education Society, Kansas City, MO, Nov. 5–7, 2004.
- “Ballots, Beaux, and Arrows: Gender Relations at Carleton College in the Late Nineteenth Century.” Northern Great Plains History Conference, Bismarck, ND, Oct. 27–30, 2004.
- “Bartlett’s *Familiar Quotations*: ‘A Glancing Bird’s Eye View’ by a ‘Morbid Scholiast.’” Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing, Claremont, CA, July 9–12, 2003.

### MEDIA CONTRIBUTIONS

- Humanities advisor for *University of Reconstruction*, documentary about the University of South Carolina under development by Historic Columbia and ETV and funded by National Endowment for the Humanities, 2021–present.
- Interviewed in “Zachary Taylor: From National War Hero to Forgotten President” in podcast series *American History Gazette*, Feb. 21, 2024. [https://youtu.be/x8iuVQIbC\\_8](https://youtu.be/x8iuVQIbC_8).
- Interviewed in “The Truth About U.S. Presidents and Slavery” in podcast series *Myhistoryvibe*, Feb. 15, 2024. <https://youtu.be/FDtZLd8ejil>.
- Interviewed in “President Millard Fillmore: The Most Handsome President?” in podcast series *American History Hit*, Jan. 18, 2024. <https://open.spotify.com/episode/0n5TtXZ8bVYTYAJmIMWY9E>.
- Contributed research to television series *Jeopardy!* for clue in category “A Few Moments with Millard Fillmore,” Mar. 14, 2022. <https://edspace.american.edu/taylorandfillmore/videos>.
- Interviewed in “Reconstructing the Reconstruction: The Aftermath of Slavery, and the Continuing Fight for Equal Justice” in cable/web/podcast series *The Legal Edition: Legal, Business & Policy News*, Oct. 20, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6Dnyt4unGs&t=5s>.
- Interviewed for and contributed research to documentary about James K. Polk in podcast series *Presidents Are People Too!*, Audible.com, May 2, 2016.
- Interviewed in radio documentary about Sarah Childress Polk in series *American First Ladies*, Voice of America, Korean Service, June 19, 2013.

### GRANTS & AWARDS

#### Grants for Taylor and Fillmore Correspondence

- Publishing Historical Records in Collaborative Digital Editions Grants, National Historical Publications and Records Commission, 2020–21, 2021–22, 2022–23, 2023–24, 2024–25, 2025–26
- Humanities Grants, Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, 2022–23, 2023–24, 2025–26
- Texas History Grants, Summerlee Foundation, 2021–22, 2022, 2024–25
- Project Grant, Watson-Brown Foundation, 2021–22
- Special Interest Grant, William G. Pomeroy Foundation, 2020
- Historical Preservation Grant, Delaplaine Foundation, Inc., 2019–20

#### Grants for Polk Project

- Scholarly Editions and Translations Grant, National Endowment for the Humanities, 2016–20
- Publication Grants, Tennessee Historical Commission, 2015–16, 2016–17, 2017–18, 2018–19, 2019

- Publishing Historical Records in Documentary Editions Grants, National Historical Publications and Records Commission, 2015–16, 2016–17, 2017–18 (assisted in writing five earlier grants, 2010–15)

#### **Article and Book Prizes**

- Boydston Essay Prize, for “My *manusc[r]ipt papers . . .* are safe,” Association for Documentary Editing, 2024
- Tennessee History Book Award, finalist/honorable mention, for *James K. Polk and His Time*, Tennessee Historical Society and Tennessee Historical Commission, 2022
- Linda Eisenmann Prize, for *Reconstructing the Campus*, History of Education Society, 2014
- Critics’ Choice Book Award, for *Reconstructing the Campus*, American Educational Studies Association, 2014

#### **Other Grants & Awards**

- Scholar of the Week, University of Tennessee, Sept. 16, 2012, Oct. 31, 2014
- History Department Publication Grant, University of Tennessee, 2010
- Graduate Society Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Harvard University, 2007–8
- Charles Warren Center Summer Research Grants, Harvard University, 2005, 2006
- Richard A. Berenson Graduate Fellowship, Harvard University, 2005–6
- CBS Bicentennial Narrators Scholarship, Harvard University, 2002–3

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

#### **American University**

- Graduate, Undergraduate, and High School Assistant Supervisor, Taylor and Fillmore Correspondence, 2020–present

#### **University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

- Graduate Editorial Assistant Supervisor, Polk Project, 2015–16, 2018–19
- Guest Seminar Leader, The Profession of History, spring 2016, fall 2018
- Instructor, History of American Education (independent study), spring 2011

#### **Harvard University**

- Teaching Fellow, American Social History Since 1920, spring 2005, spring 2007
- Teaching Fellow and Guest Lecturer, History of American Education, 1636 to 2000, fall 2006
- Head Teaching Fellow, The American Civil War: Waging a War in History and Memory, spring 2006
- Senior Thesis Grader, History, spring 2005, spring 2006
- Tutor and Administrative Tutor, Historical Analysis (sophomore writing), fall 2004, fall 2005
- Tutor, Major Themes in American History, spring 2005
- Senior Thesis Grader/Oral Examiner, Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, spring 2005

#### **Carleton College**

- Statistics Computer Laboratory Assistant, 2001–2
- Mathematics and Statistics Grader, 1999–2002
- Designed Survey Course in US History, winter 2001
- Mathematics Skills Center Tutor, spring 1999

## **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

### **To Association for Documentary Editing**

- Local Arrangements Committee for 2025 conference, 2024–present
- Chair, Semiquincentennial Committee, 2023–present
- Strategic Planning Committee, 2023–24
- Program Committee for 2023 conference, 2022–23
- Chair, Local Arrangements Committee for 2023 conference, 2021–23
- Chair, Communications Committee, 2020–22
- Chair, Lyman H. Butterfield Award Committee, 2020
- Councilor-at-Large, 2017–20

### **To Northwestern Oklahoma State University**

- Advisory Board, 2024–present

### **As Article or Book Manuscript Reviewer**

- *American Nineteenth Century History*
- Fordham University Press
- *Highlights* (children's magazine)
- *History of Education Quarterly*
- Kent State University Press
- *New England Quarterly*
- *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*
- University of Alabama Press
- University of Tennessee Press

### **As Book Content Consultant**

- *Civil War Causes*, by Michael Capek (Minneapolis: Abdo, 2017)
- *The Emancipation Proclamation*, by Judy Dodge Cummings (Minneapolis: Abdo, 2017)

### **As Conference Leader**

- Session Organizer, “New Sources for the Enslaved and Enslavers,” Southern Historical Association, Kansas City, MO, Oct. 24–27, 2024.
- Roundtable Organizer and Moderator, “Editing Documents in US Political History,” American Political History Conference, West Lafayette, IN, June 10–11, 2022.
- Roundtable Organizer and Moderator, “In Light of the Evidence: End-of-Project Goals and Reflections,” Association for Documentary Editing, Princeton, NJ, June 20–22, 2019
- Conference Organizer, James K. Polk and His Time: A Conference Finale to the Polk Project, Knoxville, TN, Apr. 12–13, 2019
- Program Committee Member, History of Education Society, 2010–15
- Session Chair and Discussant, “Cultures in Conflict and Dialogue,” History of Education Society, Nashville, Oct. 31–Nov. 3, 2013; Session Chair at meetings of Nov. 3–6, 2011 (Chicago), Nov. 1–4, 2012 (Seattle)
- Session Organizer, “Federal Expansion in the Civil War Era,” Organization of American Historians, Washington, Apr. 7–10, 2010



### **To Students**

- Guest Roundtable Member, Digital Scholarly Editing (course), University of Virginia, Charlottesville, May 5, 2021
- Guest Lecturer, The American Presidency (course), Western Reserve Academy, Hudson, OH, Dec. 10, 2020
- Interview Subject, East Tennessee History Day, 2014, 2018
- Guest Lecturer, Disunion: The Civil War and Reconstruction (course), University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Feb. 14, 2013
- Judge, East Tennessee History Day, Knoxville, Mar. 1, 2010, Mar. 7, 2011
- Chair, Ferguson Prize Committee (best sophomore essay), Harvard University, 2006; Member, 2005
- History Student Departmental Advisor, Carleton College, 2001–2

### **VISITING AFFILIATIONS**

- Visiting Researcher, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, 2011–19
- Visiting Scholar, Center for Studies in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, July 2004
- Affiliate, Nuffield College, University of Oxford, UK, July 2003

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Introduction to TEI for Scholarly Texts, School of Advanced Study, University of London, UK, May 2021
- Conceptualising and Creating a Digital Edition, Digital Humanities Summer Institute, University of Victoria, Canada, June 2018
- Institute for the Editing of Historical Documents, National Historical Publications and Records Commission and Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, July 2008
- Christensen Discussion Seminar, Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University, 2005–6
- Graduate Writing Fellow, Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University, fall 2005

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

American Historical Association  
Association for Documentary Editing  
Organization of American Historians  
Southern Historical Association