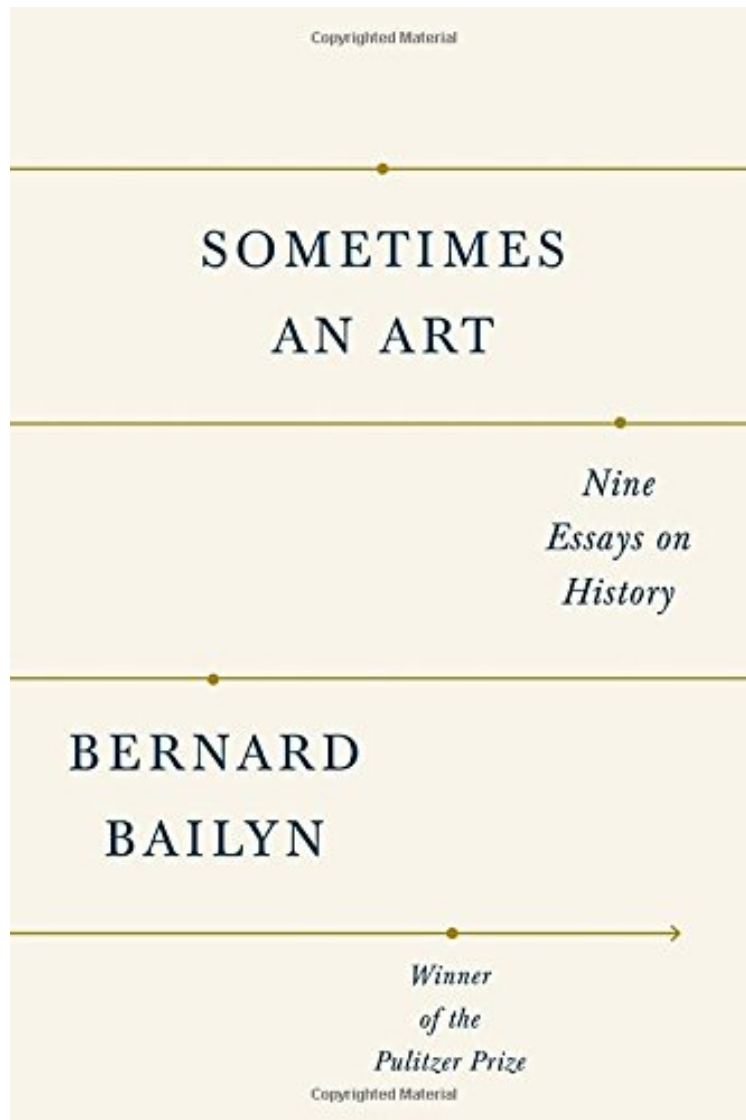


(Mobile ebook) Sometimes an Art: Nine Essays on History

## Sometimes an Art: Nine Essays on History

*Bernard Bailyn*

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#662772 in Books 2015-01-20 2015-01-20 Format: Deckle Edge Original language: English PDF # 1 8.74 x 1.17 x 5.98l, 1.25 #File Name: 1101874473320 pages | File size: 44.Mb

**Bernard Bailyn : Sometimes an Art: Nine Essays on History** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Sometimes an Art: Nine Essays on History*:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Douglas Breeden An insightful look into history and the colonial period of America  
2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Don Anderson Excellent. Great writing style.  
13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. *Bailyn on History--Techniques and Results* By Ronald H. Clark  
Bernard Bailyn (born 1922) has been one of our leading historians of the colonial and revolutionary

period since he began teaching at Harvard in 1953. His recognition has been consistent and substantial: two Pulitzer prizes; a Bancroft award; the National Book Award; and most recently the National Humanities Medal in 2010. He has practiced a variety of historical modes, everything from straight narrative history, to intellectual history, and recently his unique studies of the Atlantic World. He has written a whole slew of important books. So, the bottom line, is that he is one of our most distinguished historians and knows what he speaks. This book consists of a series "of nine essays on history" delivered at various times on a variety of topics and approaches. However, I found that the reader did not need to worry about a lack of integration and common themes--each essay is rich and reflects Bailyn's interests, so the essays can stand alone. One theme that is reflected is Bailyn's willingness to employ new tools, such as statistics and data bases, to support his studies. This is reflected in the first essay on the slave trade, which draws upon some digital sources to fill out our understanding of this period. Bailyn next discusses one of his key themes, the need for historians to maintain the proper context in which the events they write about occurred. He ties this to Herbert Butterfield who wrote eloquently of the "inevitable falsification" when historians study the past with reference to the present. This essay also reflects another of Bailyn's interests: comparative historical analysis--in this case Australia and the U.S. The third essay on recent trends in modern history is particularly interesting given Bailyn's long career. Here he discusses such themes as quantification; integration of latent and manifest events; inter-relationships in large-scale systems (such as his interest in Atlantic history); and the role of subjective experience. The essay on history and creative imagination I also found quite interesting, since Bailyn evaluates a number of major historians and tries to explain how they employed creative imagination in their studies. A fifth essay, "The Losers," on the Loyalists during the revolution affords the opportunity to show how historical interpretation can change over time in the light of current events. Next, Bailyn takes a second look at Governor Thomas Hutchinson, the subject of one of his most renowned books. Hutchinson learned that when faced with emotional founding fathers, logic and legal arguments can only carry one so far and not very far at that. One of Bailyn's interests, center v. periphery in the British empire, is reflected in an essay which discusses how both America and Scotland, long distances away from England, were "cultural provinces" impacted by England, in some similar ways. The eighth essay reflects a recent interest of the author, how the early British empire moved population around from various territories to each other. This represented one of the largest movements of population in history. The reasons for these transitions were varied, to settle colonies, to rid the homeland of "undesirables" such as convicts, and to provide the labor needed to develop colonial economies among others. Finally, in a most interesting discussion, Bailyn argues how the search for perfection, such as Utopianism, can turn dangerous if not enlightened. He discusses some specific examples, including the Puritans, the Jesuits and native peoples, Cromwell and William Penn. The author has included some 30 pages of helpful notes, an appendix listing the original locations of the essays, and a minimal index. Bailyn at his best is extraordinarily insightful and perceptive, and most stimulating to boot. These essays well demonstrate why he holds such unique predominance in his field. This is not dry historical theorizing but a gifted senior member of the profession able to look back over more than 50 years of teaching and writing, and share his insights with us.

From one of the most respected historians in America, twice the winner of the Pulitzer Prize, a new collection of essays that reflects a lifetime of erudition and accomplishments in history. The past has always been elusive: How can we understand people whose worlds were utterly different from our own without imposing our own standards and hindsight? What did things feel like in the moment, when outcomes were uncertain? How can we recover those uncertainties? What kind of imagination goes into the writing of transformative history? Are there latent trends that distinguish the kinds of history we now write? How unique was North America among the far-flung peripheries of the early British empire? As Bernard Bailyn argues in this elegant, deeply informed collection of essays, history always combines approximations based on incomplete data with empathic imagination, interweaving strands of knowledge into a narrative that also explains. This is a stirring and insightful work drawing on the wisdom and perspective of a career spanning more than five decades a book that will appeal to anyone interested in history.

Praise for *Sometimes an Art: Nine Essays on History: Engaging . . .* Mr. Bailyn's scholarship reveals a colonial world that is hard to see in buildings and other physical artifacts. Among much else, he captures the early fragility of the British Atlantic along with its emerging identities. Bringing such a world into focus on its own terms and presenting it in a compelling narrative puts the craft of history on display and illuminates precisely the art of history that Mr. Bailyn champions so eloquently. William Anthony Hay, *The Wall Street Journal* The persona that presides in these nine extraordinary essays is one of humility at the daunting limitations of seeking to re-create the past . . . One of the delights of this book is that it gathers discordant threads and historical oddments that Bailyn strews throughout his narrative, in a light display of erudition . . . If there is a remonstrance with this collection, it is a complaint that any single one of its nine essays is worth a review in itself. This book would serve as a fitting valedictory for the author's career and is required reading for anyone interested in the historians calling. If history is sometimes an art, Bernard Bailyn is surely an artist in its service. Jack Schwartz, *The Daily Beast* Dedicated to understanding the English-speaking world in the colonial era . . . The nine essays in this volume, written at various moments in Bailyn's career,

show the author at the top of his game, deeply immersed in his specific area of inquiry but also contemplating broader questions about historiography and the goals of historical inquiry. Brendan Driscoll, *Booklist* Bernard Bailyn is one of the most distinguished historians in the Western world . . . He has brought his own creative and imaginative powers to bear on the his field of early American history . . . This collection gives a sampling of his skills and his historical imagination. Gordon S. Wood, *The Weekly Standard* Further critical acclaim for Bernard Bailyn and his work: For approximately half a century, Bailyn has been the countrys most distinguished and influential scholar of the Revolution . . . It is no exaggeration to say that his influence on what the nation knows about its beginnings is immense, if incalculable. Jonathan Yardley, *The Washington Post Book World* One of Americas most discerning historians. His thinking is subtle. His style is forceful . . . Throughout [To Begin the World Anew] he retains a sense of wonder that those men in a clump of distant British provinces could have wrought a political system, a view of the world, that is so imaginative and enduring. Anthony Day, *Los Angeles Times* [Bailyns] fusionsof the general and the particular, of the abstract and the concrete, of thought and feeling are the ideal of modern historical writing. Naomi Bliven, *The New Yorker* (on *Voyagers to the West*) If we are lucky, we will have our times analyzed by a historian with the intellectual and literary skills of Bernard Bailyn, who in *The Barbarous Years* provides a highly detailed and meticulously researched account of the first great stage of Englands dominion over North America . . . *The Barbarous Years*[is] a cornucopia of human folly, mischief and intrigue. James A. Percoco, *The Washington Independent of Books* [The *Barbarous Years* is] simply magisterial: sweeping, authoritative, commanding. But it is that and so much more. It has rare scholarly warmth, an understanding of how to be nimble with the material, to be an entertainer as well as a teacher. Peter Lewis, *The Christian Science Monitor* About the Author BERNARD BAILYN is Adams University Professor and James Duncan Phillips Professor of Early American History Emeritus at Harvard University. He founded, and for many years directed, the International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World, which helped to reorient the study of the Atlantic region in the early modern era. His previous books include *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, which received the Pulitzer and Bancroft Prizes in 1968; *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*, which won the 1975 National Book Award for History; *Voyagers to the West*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1987; *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*; and *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675*.