

Response to Reading

Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton, *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America* (Penguin, 2005).

Due: Monday, June 22, 2009

Andrew Cayton and Fred Anderson survey American history through the theme of war. The authors, as they say in their Introduction, “narrate the ambiguous and ironic relationship between war and freedom in the making of North America and in the creation of the United States as an actor on the world stage. It does not devote much attention to battles or to military history at the operational level; rather it investigates wars as defining moments in the construction of cultural and territorial borders, in North America and beyond.” Wars, the authors conclude, “have furnished crucial occasions for Americans to debate who they are and to express what they hope their nation represents.”

As you read think about the following questions and answer ONE of them in one to two typed pages:

1. How do the authors suggest events as a new turning point or new way to divide American history? Does this suggest a new way of teaching a topic in your curriculum?
2. Describe how the ideas of imperialism and republicanism interacted in an event about which you read.
3. One of the themes in the book is the contingency of history—that events were dependent on certain things happening before, and that accident and chance had a large part to play in what happened. What are some examples of this historical contingency that you found in your reading?