A Glimpse of Columbia History . . .

Anthropologist Margaret Mead and former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt (center left and right) were present as Boughton Cobb and Edith Cobb donated the Cobb Collection of childhood autobiographies to the New York School of Social Work, when it was still located at the Carnegie Mansion in the 1950s.

Making History Come Alive: Columbia Online Teaching Tool Honored

Columbia American History Online (CAHO), an interactive online teaching tool, took the first place award for electronic products in the humanities from the Professional and Scholarly Publishing Division of the Association of American Publishers.

CAHO was created by Columbia Digital Knowledge Ventures (DKV), known for publishing the work of Columbia faculty and researchers online in creative ways. CAHO showcases e-seminars, taught by distinguished Columbia faculty members such as Casey Blake, Alan Brinkley, Eric Foner and Kenneth Jackson; original historic documents; historic periods; interactive classroom simulations recreating thought-provoking questions; original historic documents; audio slide shows; and more.

“We are particularly proud to receive this award,” noted Todd Hardy, executive director of DKV. “To be recognized by such an esteemed group of publishers as Casey Blake, Alan Brinkley, Eric Foner and Kenneth Jackson; original historic documents; historic periods; interactive classroom simulations recreating thought-provoking questions; original historic documents; audio slide shows; and more.

“We found that the key is to get students to think like historians,” Hardy added. “By incorporating primary sources in CAHO, students can read narratives, view documents and work with interactive maps depicting the changing landscape of American history. The students then interpret the material and offer reasons why changes occurred or why a particular pattern developed over a period of time, rather than simply reading an account in a textbook.”

The editorial development of CAHO was overseen by Kate Wittenberg, director of the Electronic Publishing Initiative at Columbia.

The Professional and Scholarly Publishing Division offers awards annually in 30 publishing categories covering a wide range of academic disciplines. Reflecting on DKV’s latest award, Ursula Bollini, senior director of marketing and development, said: “Most online titles in the humanities remain true to their print roots and are either reference works or aggregations of a large amount of material all on the same subject. Rather than attempting to be exhaustive, CAHO was designed to encourage comprehension. We felt that this should be the goal of all good scholarship.”

CAHO is available on a paid subscription basis to high school, college and public libraries across the country. DKV has licensed the distribution rights for the high school market to publishing giant Scholastic Library Publishing.

DKV develops digital resources that extend Columbia’s teaching and research beyond its classrooms, building learning resources that support the goals of the University community.