

Seminar Preparation

Thursday, October 13

B. Digging up the bones of history: history as discovery

Reading: BG, cc. 2, 4. Wilbur Samuel Howell, "The Declaration of Independence: Some Adventures with America's Political Masterpiece." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 62 (1976): 221-33.

Discussion: We are concerned with the gathering of historical fact. The process involves two sensations: a "hypothesis-proof" cycle and a "solving the mystery" puzzle. The text provides some advice, Howell provides a glimpse of the ecstasy of discovery.

C. Constructing Accounts: history as narrative experience

Reading: [Marie Hochmuth Nichols, "Lincoln's First Inaugural: Part I." *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth Century Perspective*. Ed. Bernard L. Brock and Robert L. Scott. New York: Harper and Row, 1972. 32-54.](#)

Discussion: We are concerned with telling a story as a skill. This is, in fact, an essential skill of qualitative research. Even in modern ethnography understanding the forces that merge in a moment and providing an account of how they create the moment are essential skills.