

# Historía

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Newsletter of the UCSB History Associates

March 1990

## Brownlee Twins EXPOSED!

After months of relentless investigation, the truth can finally be told: this month's History Associates speaker, Prof. W. Elliot Brownlee, is really one of a pair of identical twins who share a single identity.

History Chair Hal Drake, who unmasked the charade, said he realized his gentle and self-effacing colleague had to be twins after taking over the chairmanship from him three years ago.

"He simply did too much work for one person," Drake said. "Then I saw logs that had him presiding over two different meetings at the same time."

The solution was obvious once he thought about it, Drake said.

"I decided Elliot must be identical twins who decided in childhood that, rather than lead two mediocre lives, they would pool their identities and live one brilliant one."

Thus began an intensive pursuit.

"No one would believe me," Drake said. "Even the twins' wife, Mary, was unconvinced."

All that ended recently when Drake encountered the twins in a local park.

"At first they tried to deny any relationship," Drake said. "But pictures don't lie."

A veteran Brownlee watcher, Drake said there are many ways to tell the difference between the two if you



*CAUGHT TOGETHER. Rare Photo shows Brownlee twins Elliot (left) and Skippy planning their day's activities during a secret meeting in local park. Long suspected of being a twin, Prof. Brownlee will speak on the history of the federal income tax at the next History Associates' luncheon. But which Brownlee will it be?*

look for them.

"The twin, Skippy, has a slight speech impediment that becomes really noticeable if he eats crackers before lecturing," Drake noted. "Also, he has a slight nervous tic over his left eye."

There are other, subtler signs, Drake added.

"Elliot really wants to be nice, but Skippy won't let him," he theorized.

Drake recommended that Associates watch for these

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# 'Why I Like History'

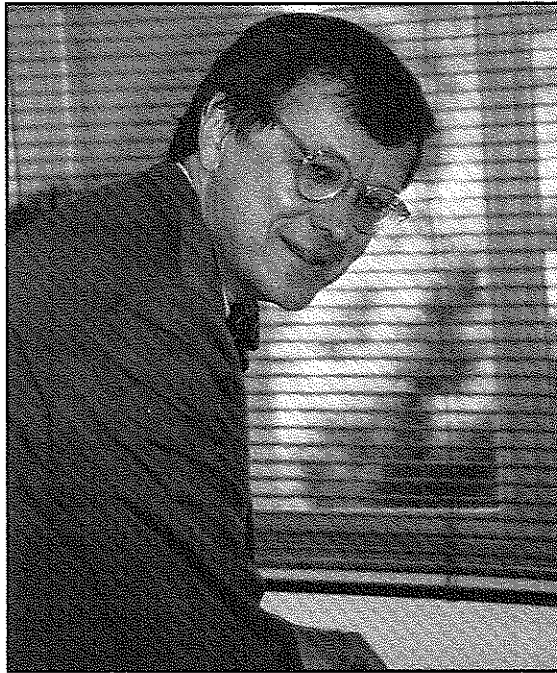
(Ed. Note: The following remarks were taken from a speech delivered by Prof. John E. Talbott at the Phi Alpha Theta Winter Banquet, February 22, 1990. Author of "The War Without a Name: France in Algeria, 1954-1962" and an award-winning study of U.S. interest in submarine warfare in World War I, Prof. Talbott currently is writing a book on Sir Charles Middleton, an 18th century administrator who he believes is the real founder of the modern British navy.)

**By J.E. TALBOTT**

*Robert Benchley was once a well-known American humorist. At Harvard he took a course in the history of International Law that completely defeated him—partly because he didn't study much, and partly because what he did study always seemed to be the wrong thing. So when the final exam came around, he was barely getting by. The main essay question asked him to discuss the Newfoundland fisheries dispute between the United States and Great Britain. Benchley knew almost nothing of the United States's position; he knew even less about Britain's. So he took a chance and answered the question from the point of view of the fish.*

*This story recently came in handy when I found myself criticizing two papers on subjects I didn't know much about. But I have to admit that I don't really identify with Benchley's predicament at all. For as an undergraduate I was always an eager beaver—let's face it, I was something of a grade-grubber—when it came to history. The question is: Why? Why do I like history? Why did I like it well enough to decide to make my living doing history?*

*Steve Potter's invitation to speak to you tonight gave me an excuse to think about that question—and to hope an answer would*



*Prof. J.E. Talbott  
....PAT Speaker*

*interest somebody besides me. The more I pondered the question, the more convinced I became that, like most of the questions historians ask, it's really a how question. For historians aren't very good at answering "why" questions. We can offer countless explanations of "how" the First World War came about; we can't really say "why" it did. So how did I become a historian?*

*Time and place had, of course, everything to do with it. I grew up in Iowa in the 1940s and '50s. Those of you who have seen the movie*

*"Field of Dreams" will know that Iowa is a sea of cornfields lapping up against hundreds of small-town islands. My town was Grinnell—a town of 5000 souls, as they say in Russian novels. I once suggested to one of my daughters that she might be interested in attending Grinnell College. "Dad," she said, "I don't want to go to school in the middle of a cornfield."*

*People who grow up in big towns often don't like small towns much. But perhaps they underestimate them, perhaps they especially underestimate what might be called a small town's cultural resources. I can think of three, in particular, that had a big impact on me: the movie theater, the public library, and my father's books.*

*Grinnell actually had two movie theaters. One of them ran a double-feature every Saturday afternoon. You could get in for a quarter, popcorn was a dime, and I rarely missed a Saturday. Almost invariably, the first feature was a comedy. I preferred Abbott & Costello to the Three Stooges, although the travails of Larry, Moe, and Curley now seem an apter metaphor for our world. The second feature*

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# Prof. Hsu Holds Group Spellbound

By Joe Finnigan

The February 21 History Associates' Luncheon was one of the most well attended and informative events in the organization's history, as Dr. Immanuel Hsu spoke on the 1989 demonstrations and subsequent massacre of students in China's Tiananmen Square.

Tracing some of the background of the unrest Dr. Hsu said "when we discuss the crisis in China and the Tiananmen Square massacre, we need to go back to the contemporary Chinese history of the past ten years." Recalling that China was closed to the West from 1949 to 1979, Dr. Hsu said that when ties to the West were re-established the leadership hoped that China would import Western science, technology and skills, but not Western culture and values. There was a policy of openness that would introduce what he called "four modernizations," the modernization of industry, of agriculture, of national defense, and of science and industry. What was not included was a modernization of the Chinese political system. It was a time when upwards of 80,000 Chinese students were going abroad to study in the U.S., Britain, France and other nations.

What struck these students most, he said, was the freedom that Westerners enjoyed which included a division of powers, elections, freedom of speech, and a free press.

At the time, in China, there was an abuse of powers by the Nation's privileged Communist party leadership. "In front, they professed idealism, dedication to communism, but in private they lived decadent, lavish lives," Dr. Hsu revealed.

As the students saw and heard of freedoms enjoyed by citizens in other countries they began agitating for political change in China. Those early calls for change—some made by students in 1986—were rejected by the nation's leadership. Dr. Hsu said the leadership reacted by saying "we must draw a line, we must not allow the students to go too fast. The students disagreed and started their own movement to discuss democracy, freedom and political pluralism. They organized a small demonstration on the campus of Peking University." This 1986 demonstration was the first round in the democratic movement.

Three years later, in 1989, there would be a series of significant anniversaries from which to select an auspicious time for a demonstration. That year marked the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Chinese Peoples Republic, the 70th Anniversary of The May Fourth Student Movement of 1919, and the bicentennial year of the French Revolution. Another more current event which contributed to student unrest occurred in February 1989 when President George Bush visited China. While there he invited a group of Chinese intellectuals, including some dissidents, to a state dinner at the American Embassy. Two of the intellectuals were blocked from attending the event by the Chinese Government. It was an act of repression that angered students and intellectuals.

By mid April students were marching on Tiananmen Square demanding that the Government clear the name of a deceased Com-

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## History

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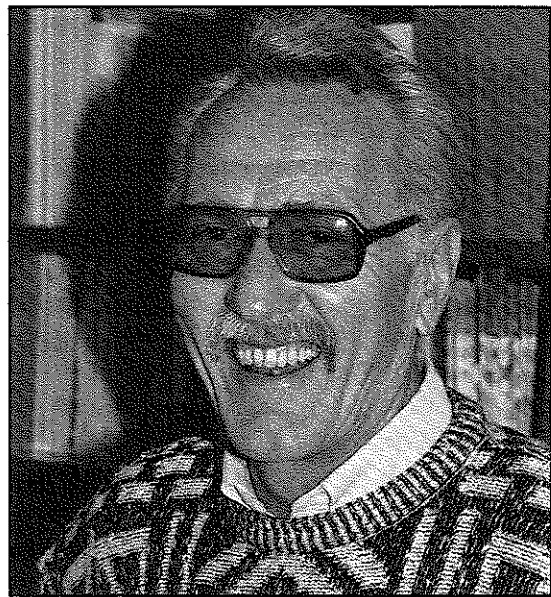
*was usually an adventure story. In the '40s that often meant a Western, or a World War II movie, or an historical drama. John Wayne and Gregory Peck constantly showed up in all three, with Maureen O'Hara in roles as assertive as women were ever allowed to get. Which is to say, not very.*

*We took our sense of history—of what World War II was about, and how the West was won—from what happened on the screen on Saturday afternoons, not from what we read in our school books (which in any case deployed their own set of myths).*

*The second cultural resource—and ostensibly a more respectable one—was the public library, which Grinnell owed to that Medici of small-town America, Andrew Carnegie. Anyway, I say ostensibly more respectable because I went to the library not to drink deep from the wellsprings of Western literature, but for another dose of World War II, which I found mainly in back issues of "Popular Mechanics" and "National Geographic." For hours I sat on the glass floor of that library, on summer afternoons the coolest place in town, poring over old magazines.*

*The third resource that made an impression on me was my father's books. They weren't a library, really, but a haphazard and idiosyncratic collection of the sort to be found in many other middle-class houses around town. Two books—or two writers who wrote many books, I should say—I especially remember. The first was C. S. Forester, who wrote countless stories about the adventures of Horatio Hornblower, a fictitious naval hero of the Napoleonic Wars. With Hornblower when he was the rawest of midshipmen, I scrambled up the rigging of a sailing man-of-war, frightened and sea-sick. I was with Hornblower when he died, a peer of*

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**Prof. Abraham Friesen**  
*...Müntzer Book*

## Prof. Friesen Publishes New Müntzer Study

The key to understanding 16th century Reformer Thomas Müntzer lies in the works that he read as a young man, according to a new book by Prof. Abraham Friesen.

In "Thomas Müntzer: A Destroyer of the Godless," which will be published this Spring by University of California Press, the UCSB History professor challenges traditional views of the man who became the "Satan of Allstedt" to Martin Luther and a proto-Marxist hero to Marx and Engels for his role in the Peasants' War of 1525.

Concentrating on the years immediately before and after the famous "Leipzig Disputation" between Martin Luther and John Eck in 1519, Friesen argues that Müntzer was not crucially influenced by Luther as scholars have long believed, but was an independent and creative thinker.

The current book is the result of a recent re-reading of Müntzer's works after several years of working on other topics. "The motives for his Reform program just leaped out at me," Friesen says.

Prof. Friesen has been teaching courses on Renaissance and Reformation history at UCSB since 1967. He is the author of several studies of Marxist interpretation of the Reformation and of the Anabaptist movement.

## History

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*the realm and an admiral of the fleet, borne on a gun-carriage past throngs of weeping Londoners for burial at Saint Paul's. Only later did I learn that Horatio Nelson had shared a remarkably similar fate.*

The other writer was Bruce Catton, who must have written as many books about the American Civil War as Forester wrote about Hornblower. Here's a passage from one of Catton's early ones:

*...to look at that hour is to see it [July 3, 1863] through the eyes of the sweating Federals who crouched on Cemetery Ridge and squinted west, peering toward the afternoon sun.*

*What they saw was an army with banners, moving out from the woods into the open field by the ranked guns, moving out of the shadow into eternal legend, rank upon endless rank drawn up with parade-ground precision, battle flags tipped forward, sunlight glinting from musket barrels—General George Pickett's Virginians, and ten thousand men from other commands, men doomed to try the impossible, and to fail. It takes time to get fifteen thousand men into line, and these Southerners were deliberate about it—perhaps out of defiance, perhaps out of sheer self-consciousness and pride. Then at last they had things the way they wanted them and they went marching up toward the clump of unattainable trees, and all the guns opened again, and a great cloud of smoke and dust filled the hollow plain.*

*The rolling cloud crossed the fields and went up the slope, and the crash of battle rose higher and higher as the men came to grips with each other on Cemetery Ridge, choking fog hiding the battle flags, Federals from right and left swarming over to join in the fight. Then suddenly it was finished. The charging column had been broken all to bits, survivors were going back to the Confederate lines, the smoke cloud was lifting as the firing died down—and the battle of Gettysburg was ended.*

*When I was in high school my father and I*  
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## Historia

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# Phi Alpha Theta Inducts New Members

Twenty-four new members were inducted into UCSB's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta during the history honor society's annual Winter Banquet last month.

The new members are: Aaron Michael Armstrong, Mary Bolger, Paul J. Byrne, Lorena M. Caviezel, Merrick Paul Dresnin, Robert Alfred Duquette, Patrick Durkee, Raymonda Kay Fitzgerald, Michael E. Flach, Gregory M. Gillinger, Lara N. Gilman, David G. Hendricks, Martin Kagan, John Kurth, Robert Brian Kavanaugh, Barbara H. McKee, Gary Steven Moran, Thomas Fisher Morrison, Anne Elizabeth Ogostalick, David Randrup, Annette Marie See, Lori K. Seils, Christine K. Senecal, Irene Blanche Seyer.

Minimum requirement for membership in the international society is completion of at least five courses in History with a grade-point average of 3.4 or better.

UCSB's Gamma-Iota chapter of Phi Alpha Theta was founded in 1956. This year's officers are Steve Potter, president; Erik Ortmann, vice president; and Melissa Wood, treasurer.

## Hsu

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Communist Party leader who had been unfairly criticized. The Government refused.

It was the beginning of the demonstrations which would grow to an estimated one and half million people. "The old leaders of China, seven or eight of them, shuddered in their palaces." Dr. Hsu said.

Responding to the students, the Government issued a carefully worded editorial in the State controlled newspaper. In the editorial the Communist's referred to the demonstrations as "turmoil and conspiracy" instead of the less threatening "student demonstration." It was, according to Dr. Hsu, a calculated choice of words. "When you say conspiracy and turmoil, you empower the Government with the legal right to suppress," Dr. Hsu said. "When you say student demonstrations, spontaneous but unarmed people, then you cannot use force. That was the first inkling of the government's intention to take forceful measures against the students." What finally led to the tragic end of the Tiananmen occupation by students was the arrival of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev for a state visit in Peking. The student uprising had forced changes in the government's plan to welcome its guest and further embarrassed the

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## History

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*visited Gettysburg. I stood on Cemetery Ridge where the sweating Federals had crouched, and looked down across the wheat field whence Pickett's Virginians had come, and I felt chilled to the bone.*

*So much for the movies, the library, and my father's books. It's time to perform the historian's task, and find the patterns in these stories. What you might see is a bookish kid preoccupied with war. That's certainly one theme, but I don't think it's the most interesting or significant one—at least, not to me. In the late '40s and early '50s, it was hard to get away from war, unless you wanted to stay away from movies, and I certainly didn't.*

*What I see is a boy addicted to routine Hollywood films, slick magazines, escapist fiction, and narrative history. Did I distinguish then between fiction and non-fiction, between what had actually happened, and what someone had imagined, between John Wayne's adventures on the screen and the episodes of "Victory at Sea," the great television documentary series of the early 1950s? I doubt it.*

*I also see that my tastes in terms of culture ran to the low—or at best middle—brow. John Wayne's Academy Award came late in his life; C. S. Forester wasn't a bad novelist, but he wasn't a great novelist, either; "National Geographic" has never been charged with taxing the mind; Bruce Catton worked without a net—or to put it another way, he didn't have tenure.*

*But the most significant pattern in all this, I think, is my preoccupation with pictures: moving pictures, still pictures, pictures formed by words jumping off the printed page. I now see that for me,*

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## Exposed

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signs when Brownlee speaks March 20 on the topic, "The History of Taxation in America: Chaos Revisited."

Specialists in American economic history, the Brownlee twins have written extensively on fiscal policy and taxation in the United States and currently are writing a book on "Taxation and Social Choice in America."

The luncheon meeting will be held at the Sheraton Hotel. Tickets, at \$12 for members and \$14 for non-members, can be reserved by phoning the UCSB Alumni Association, (805) 961-2288.



# History

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*history was precisely that: enacted pictures, vicarious experience, lived in the mind's eye.*

*This is not very professional, I suppose. But the idea of history as vicarious experience is probably what made me a historian; it's what's kept me a historian. I'm reasonably conversant with the "Annales" school and the new cultural history, for keeping up with such things is a professional responsibility. None of this touches me as much as seeing Mozart described, by a contemporary, as "an extraordinarily small man, very thin and pale, with a mass of beautiful blond hair of which he seemed proud." Here a human being is evoked, as well as the creator of "Don Giovanni."*

*To put it another way, I turn to the closing lines of Robert Darnton's "The Great Cat Massacre": "If there were any [last words]" Darnton says, "they would belong to Marc Bloch, who knew that when historians venture into the past they seek to make contact with vanished humanity. Whatever their professional baggage, they must follow their noses and trust to their sense of smell: A good historian resembles the ogre of the legend. Wherever he smells human flesh, he knows that there he will find his prey."*

*I guess I was disposed toward becoming an ogre by the time I was ten or eleven. The rest, as they say, is history.*

## Historía

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# Hsu

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Chinese leadership. The students had "humiliated" the leadership in front of the Soviet guest, Dr. Hsu said.

Shortly afterward, martial law was declared and military units from ten different parts of China—approximately 600,000 men—were chosen for the assault on those in the square. At the same time the students erected their "Goddess of Democracy" statue which was to become their symbol to the outside world.

As the army advanced on the Square, local citizens joined the students in blocking the soldiers. "It was during the advance toward Tiananmen Square, that most of the killing was done," Dr. Hsu said. There would,

however, be killing in the Square itself. When the soldiers reached the square in the middle of the night, he said, some of the students were sleeping in tents, others were guarding their positions and some were standing together, arms linked, protecting the Goddess of Democracy. As they advanced, the armies' tanks rolled over the tents and, in Dr. Hsu's words, "made mincemeat, made meat patty out of the students who were still inside." By 6 o'clock in the morning army trucks and bulldozers were pushing the bodies together and setting them afire. Other corpses were taken to a crematory. It has been estimated that thousands died in the onslaught and the round-up of demonstrators who were later arrested.