Eric Burin

Short Biography

Eric Burin is Professor of History at the University of North Dakota, where he teaches courses on the early American republic, the Civil War and Reconstruction periods, and African-American history. He earned his B.A. from Illinois State University in 1991. He also holds a M.A. (1993) and Ph.D. (1998) in History, both from the University of Illinois—Urbana-Campaign.

Burin’s best-known scholarly work is *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (2005). The book surveys the 19th century African Colonization Movement, whose proponents insisted that the only way to address the problems of slavery and racism in the United States was to colonize black Americans abroad. *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution* was an Honorable Mention for the Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award and is regarded as among the leading treatments of the American Colonization Society, Liberia, and related subjects. For this reason, Burin has been a consultant for *The Daily Show*, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, and *History Detectives*.

Burin also edited *Picking the President: Understanding the Electoral College* (2017). Taking note of popular interest in the Electoral College in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election, Burin produced this anthology in just five weeks. Following an Introduction by Burin that surveys how and why the Electoral College has changed over time, *Picking the President* showcases fourteen brief essays on the subject by scholars in a variety of fields, including history, political science, philosophy, mathematics, and others. Additionally, the volume includes a collection of historical documents concerning the Electoral College. Ideal for general audiences and classroom settings, an electronic version of [*Picking the President*](https://thedigitalpress.org/picking-the-president/)can be downloaded for free at the Digital Press at the University of North Dakota website while a hardcopy can be purchased for a modest sum at Amazon.com.

In 2018, Burin again edited a work with contemporary relevance: *Protesting on Bended Knee: Race, Dissent, and Patriotism in 21st Century America* was upon its release the most comprehensive treatment of the protests associated with professional football player Colin Kaepernick, who in 2016 began kneeling during the national anthem to draw attention to inequality and discrimination. The book features an extensive Introduction by Burin that situates the demonstrations within the context of the distant and recent past, the causes they symbolized, and the disparate reactions to them. The work also showcases thirty short essays written by scholars, attorneys, sportswriters, coaches, veterans, national anthem signers, and others, with each describing what he or she saw in the protests. [*Protesting on Bended Knee*](https://thedigitalpress.org/portfolio/protesting-on-bended-knee-race-dissent-and-patriotism-in-21st-century-america/)was thus a “first draft of history” and the digital version of it is free to download.

Burin is further known for his innovative teaching. In fall 2018, for example, he taught a “pop up” course on 1968. To better understand how that seismic year played out the University of North Dakota, the class met at the school’s Special Collections, where the students conducted archival research on the topic. The class culminated during Homecoming Week, during which students help run a reunion/retrospective with dozens of alumni from the class of 1968.

Burin’s most recent “public humanities” project is “Joy of Voting—Grand Forks.” Partnering with two nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations, Citizens University and The Digital Press, Burin is soliciting and curating Grand Forks’ residents’ favorite memories involving voting and then distributing those tales through social media. By these means, he and the partner organizations are literally broadcasting joy across the community.