Immigrants: Have We Learned from Our Past?  
One of Our Many Upcoming Fall Courses  
By Mary Meagher, PR & Marketing Committee

Winston Churchill is purported to have said, “Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” This is the quote that Bill Fetsko told me is a source of his inspiration for his six-session course, “United States Immigration: An Historical Perspective,” that begins on October 21. The other source is his own background as a grandchild of immigrants and growing up with neighbors from Italy and Eastern Europe.

Have we learned from the past? According to Bill, we can trace how we got here through past government actions and responses to people entering our borders. But the deeper question he asks is whether “as individuals have we taken the time to acquaint ourselves with how the U.S. arrived at this stage?” For meaningful discussion on this topic, it is important to understand the history of immigration and the policies that impacted it, Bill also notes. “The focus of my presentation is to provide a historical overview of past actions as they relate to immigration from the mid-1800s to the present time. My intent is to try and move the current debate forward in a more positive and responsible manner.”

Bill Fetsko, author and retired educator, teaches about the history of immigration in America in a course that begins October 21. Photo by Meagher

Immigration is a major theme of a program Bill taught at the Colonial Williamsburg Summer Teaching Institute for several years. He has a doctorate from the University of Colorado, Boulder. He worked in public education for 35 years in both teaching and administrative capacities. He authored or co-authored a number of educational related articles including a textbook entitled, “Participation in Government: Making A Difference”.