

Society of Early Americanists Newsletter

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“Notes on the 2017 Biennial Conference”

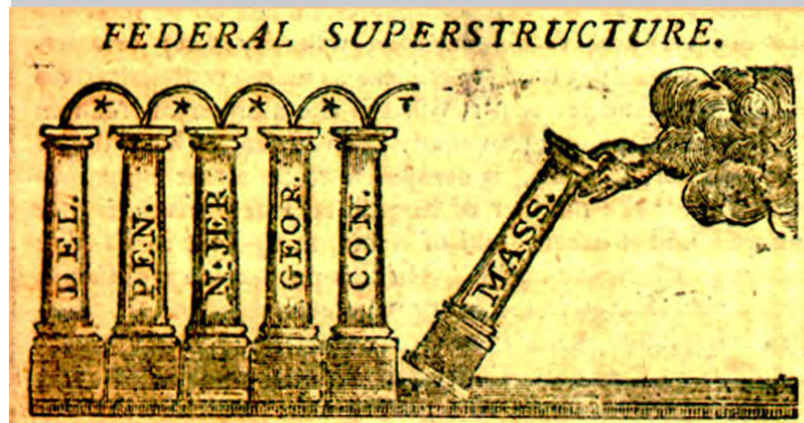
It’s both electrifying and gratifying to begin my term as president just after the wonderful joint OIEAHC-SEA conference organized by our past president, Kristina Bross, and by Erik Slauter on behalf of the Omohundro Institute. This event also has presented an opportunity for us to reflect on the importance of both continuity and change for our organization and especially our biennial conferences. Ideally, academic conferences combine the best elements of novelty and tradition, reconnecting us with old friends and colleagues even as we welcome new members, allowing us to continue conversations that have unfolded over the years while we also branch into new topics, and most of all introducing us to new methods, texts, and ideas for our teaching and research at the same time that we refresh our acquaintance with the more familiar aspects of our field. Like the joint SEA-Omohundro conference of 2007, this was an event that brought new ideas, new people, and new energy to the SEA, as we adopted a different schedule and structure, brought together the scholars who traditionally attend just the SEA or just the OIEAHC events, experienced an almost unprecedented level of interdisciplinary dialogue, and experimented with a range of exciting formats in the Thursday workshops.

Altering the structure of our regular conference as we did this year helps illuminate what features of our regular biennials are most beloved by our membership, but also how we benefit from innovation. The 2017 biennial conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma, will in many ways entail a return to the familiar for our longstanding membership. We will begin on a Thursday morning and conclude on Saturday evening in our traditional time of early March, we will kick off with a presidential address (a very short one, I promise!) and awards presentation, we will be based in a downtown hotel (with an excellent room rate of under \$120), there will be some opportunities for field trips and walking tours for smaller groups during the regular conference, and we will plan for the traditional number of concurrent sessions along with plenary events. There will also, however, be some changes to our format, which I’d like to outline here.

First, as the biennial conference has grown over the past sixteen years, the task of organizing individual paper proposals into panels has become increasingly difficult. I therefore want to encourage our members as strongly as possible to submit paper proposals as part of a complete panel or directly to the chair of an open panel. There are

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two deadlines: first, a call for session proposals with a deadline of May 1, 2016; second, a call for individual proposals to open sessions, with a deadline of August 15, 2016. A list of open panels will be posted by late June of 2016, and a draft program in early October. In keeping with our new policy for affiliate organizations, affiliates will have the option of sponsoring their own sessions within our conference, as long as they send a session proposal to us by May 2.

Second, I would like to continue the efforts of the 2015 conference organizers to encourage innovative formats. Three-panel papers will remain the staple of the concurrent sessions, but I think that we learn more and are more intensively engaged with the conference when we can alternate formal paper presentations with roundtable discussions, seminars, and other formats. The program committee will look especially favorably upon proposals with innovative formats. I additionally will organize a series of "How-to Workshops" that teach specific, practical skills such as interpreting seventeenth-century handwriting, using a particular database, or teaching a single class on a challenging text. I am mindful that many universities will only fund conference attendance if the attendee's presentation is featured in the program, and so all sessions, including roundtables and seminars, will continue to list attendees in the program along with the titles of their contributions, even if those contributions are not formal papers. As is SEA custom, attendees may have one major and one minor form of participation on the program or two minor ones. Exceptions will be made for those conducting the How-to Workshops. If you are interested in organizing one of these workshops please contact me directly. I'd love to hear your ideas.

Third, I am scheduling the business meeting on Friday afternoon to encourage attendance. I feel that it is not healthy for a scholarly organization to have only a few of its members aware of our finances and operations, let alone involved in long-term planning, and I'd like to see more of our members, especially junior scholars, at the business meeting. My hope is that the gentler hour will encourage higher attendance. Budget permitting, I'll offer refreshments – really, whatever it takes to get you all to attend.

Fourth, while proposals are welcome on all aspects of early America, the conference is organized around the theme of "Early America and the Public," with several types of public outreach supplementing the traditional conference, and with some panels addressing this topic directly. There will be opportunities before the conference begins for volunteer work in local schools, libraries, and archives, a few of us will be giving lectures in the community, and we will replicate efforts made in previous SEA events to welcome the active attendance of local schoolteachers, historical society and library staff, tribal historians and curators, and some other interested members of the Tulsa and Northeastern Oklahoma community.

My hope is that the public outreach components of the conference will enrich and enhance our more traditional events, even as the core of what are now the SEA traditions involving the biennial remain in place.

Before I conclude, a message for our members with disabilities: My tentative plans are that most events will take place in the Grand Hyatt Hotel of downtown Tulsa, while one keynote address and reception will be at the University of Tulsa, and a closing reception will be at the Gilcrease Museum and Helmerich Center for American Research. Each site is ADA-compliant, but there are details you may want regarding access, and you may have questions or needs regarding transportation between these sites or regarding the two optional field trips I'll be setting up. I can also arrange through the University of Tulsa to hire sign language interpreters as long as we have sufficient notice. I will include general information about accessibility in my regular updates on conference plans to the membership, but if you have any particular questions you would like me to research or address please feel welcome to contact me personally.

As I move forward with planning for this event, I invite our members to let me know what they most want from our biennial conference. To our longstanding members, what aspects of former conferences have you most loved? To our new members, what has brought you to one of our conferences, and what makes you feel most welcome? To all our membership, what would you like to happen in our future biennials? Please feel welcome to contact me directly with your thoughts: laura-stevens@utulsa.edu. I very much look forward to seeing you in Tulsa in March 2017.

**Laura Stevens, SEA President
University of Tulsa**



"Two Historical Sites in the Pacific Northwest"

We early Americanists most often study literature and culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth century colonies that began on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, and our SEA biennial conferences have until this year always been held on the East coast (with the 2009 conference in Bermuda). But since the SEA's founding more than twenty years ago, members' interests have grown to include Spanish, French, Dutch, and German colonies as well as many indigenous languages, and a geographic breadth that includes the

Caribbean and trans-Atlantic settings stretching to Africa, Central America, and South America

With the 2015 joint conference in Chicago, and the 2017 meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the SEA is moving west! It will soon reach the west coast, as I look forward to organizing the 2019 conference in Oregon, either in Portland or my hometown of Eugene. While there is nothing to rival Deerfield or Williamsburg, there are small but interesting colonial historical sites in the Pacific Northwest, including a few I hope we might visit in 2019. In the week following our Chicago event, as I travelled to Moscow, Idaho, for the eleventh biennial conference of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, I found two more I had not known about before.

Just west of Walla Walla, Washington, the National Park Service manages the Whitman Mission National Historic Site. Marcus and Narcissa Whitman were Presbyterian missionaries from western New York who were recruited by the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions, and arrived with another couple, Eliza and Henry Spaulding, in 1836. As the Oregon Trail migration began, the ABCFM wanted to try to convert the Indians of the northwest and to minister to the growing numbers of settlers there. The Whitmans chose to build at Waiilatpu, a Cayuse town on the Walla Walla River and a long-established trading post.

Displays in the small visitors center contrast Native dress and customs with those of the Whitmans, and invite sympathy for Narcissa's efforts to uphold her standards of bourgeois domesticity in a setting where few cared for such affectations. They suggest that both the Cayuse and the Oregon trail settlers who passed through were happy to stop by the Whitmans' for a meal, but uninterested in helping to clean up afterward. A tragic martyrdom came for the Whitmans in 1847. Some of the Oregon trail pioneers had brought measles, which devastated the Cayuse. Marcus, a physician, was helpless to cure the disease and around two hundred Cayuse died.

Some accused him of poisoning his patients, and on November 29th of that year some men from local tribes rose up and killed the Whitmans and eleven others, beginning an extended conflict known as the Cayuse War. The grave of some of the victims is on the site, marked by two large stone memorials.

A couple of miles down the road I found another historical marker, a small picnic shelter, a refurbished cabin, and a few interpretive signs. This is the Lower Frenchtown historic site, developed in the past five years by a group of descendants, local amateurs, and tribal historians. Frenchtown was so named for the francophone fur traders and their families who settled there years before the Whitmans arrived. They were metis people of mixed French Canadian and Native ancestry, not just the local Cayuse and Walla Walla but Cree, Ojibwa, and even Iroquois who had been swept into the fur trade further east. A photograph from the Allotment period in

1877 shows the Pambrun, LaBrach, and many other families. Plans are afoot to rebuild a replica of the St. Rose mission church, a Catholic congregation that, though much larger than Marcus Whitman's, has not been so honored in public history.

For me the contrast between the two historic sites tells as powerful a story as the exhibits at each. The Anglo Protestants won the support of the U.S. Park Service for an air conditioned visitors center, large paved parking area, and interpretive trails around a site where none of the original buildings have been preserved. The Francophone, Catholic, mixed-blood peoples upon whom the Whitmans tried to impose their standards got none of this support. The melodrama of white womanhood and a Protestant missionary martyred by Indians drowned out all other stories during the twentieth century. The new commemoration at the Frenchtown site is a local affair, administered by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, and the Frenchtown Historical Foundation. They arranged to move the cabin from a nearby farm, which supposedly date from the 1820s and is the oldest extant building in Washington state. It is encouraging to see that descendants of the metis residents of this area, some of whom are enrolled tribal members and some not, have become equally proud of their heritage as are the descendants of Oregon Trail pioneers.

In the Portland area the fur trade and its mixed cultural heritage is better remembered. The John McLoughlin House in Oregon City, Champoeg state Park on the Willamette River a short distance upstream, and Fort Vancouver in Vancouver all interpret the history of Hudson's Bay and Northwest company traders, Native peoples, and even the members of the Astoria expedition who stayed in the area after the War of 1812. At the Chicago conference I heard a couple papers, such as those by Christian Ayne Crouch and Karen Marrero, that touched on this history, and I hope we will see more research about it in the next four years.

**Gordon Sayre, SEA Vice-President
University of Oregon**



"A Brief Inquiry into Time: When is *Early America*?"

What is early America? Where does it begin and end? The SEA's executive committee has received a proposal for expanding the chronological range of our society to 1830, and thus my column frames some considerations in the conversation. The current Mission and the Constitution of the SEA include a cut-off date that already leaves some room for expansion and inclusiveness: "The purpose of this Society shall be to further the exchange of ideas and information among scholars of various disciplines who study the literature and culture of America to approximately 1800." How far does "approximately" take us in casting our web? Does this dating match the activities of our

members, as well as the new members and affiliate societies we wish to attract? In officially expanding our Mission to 1830, would we step on the turf of other societies and scholarly organizations?

The official journal of the Society of Early Americanists, *Early American Literature*, defines as its province "American literature through the early national period (about 1830)." Yet *EAL* is also the journal of the MLA's Division on American Literature to 1800, with which the SEA is affiliated as well. In her 2013 PMLA essay "What's in a Date? Temporalities of Early American Literature," *EAL* editor Sandra Gustafson suggests that chronological ranges and "competing narratives of early American literary history [. . .] have the potential to shape scholarship on a deeper level" (963). C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists has created an expansive reach by proclaiming a "long American nineteenth century," 1789 to 1914. SHEAR (Society for Historians of the Early American Republic) is "dedicated to exploring the events and the meaning of United States history between 1776 and 1861." What historical marker do we currently observe? What events would the expansion to 1830 highlight? The passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830? Even here, the Act itself only cemented what government policy and settler colonialism created before and after 1830. Whatever date we choose, we will find historical timelines exceeding it.

Perhaps our society prefers to define itself in terms of literary history. The *Norton Anthology* ends its first volume in 1820, with writers like Irving and Apress falling into the second. The 1820s posit some conundrums for literary temporalities; for example, few SEA members would be surprised to hear a conference presentation on William Apress's *A Son of the Forest* (1829), while Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok* (1824) appears only rarely. In the blurry space between 1800 and 1830, do we sort texts and authors by their directionality—quietly deciding whether they point toward the "colonial" or the "national"? In how far do any of these date ranges confirm or challenge literary periodization that our scholarship and teaching already turned upside down? Would a range to 1830 entrench the concept of an "American Renaissance" as the true starting point of a national literature, or would it acknowledge the overlapping nature of colonial and national/post-colonial identities and forms in American literature and culture? For SEA members critiquing literary and historical genealogies per se, such an expansion—even this discussion—may evidence an excessive concern with lineages and chronologies. Maybe our primary consideration should be how an extended date range would affect the community of scholars and teachers we call the SEA.

What literatures, archives, and scholars do specific dates include or exclude? For example, the 1820s hold another important marker: the first publication of the *Freedom's Journal* in 1827 and inception of African-American print culture. Could such an expansion help us

attract more African Americanist scholars to our society?

With or without an expansion of the date range to 1830, the SEA will always comprise an intriguing mix of scholars studying the colonial, Revolutionary, and early national literature of the Americas and its global connections—in English and many other languages. Let's discuss what "early" means to us and whether an expansion beyond 1800 will help us do even better what we already do well, or whether it would alter too much who we are as the Society of Early Americanists.

Works Cited

Gustafson, Sandra. "What's in a Date? Temporalities in Early American Literature." *PMLA* 128.4 (2013): 961-967.

Patrick Erben, Executive Coordinator
University of West Georgia

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE GETS NEW WEBSITE

At the SEA-OIEAHC Conference in Chicago, June 18-21, 2015, Sandra Gustafson, editor of *Early American Literature*, revealed the journal's new website. For more information, visit <http://earlyamlit.nd.edu/>.

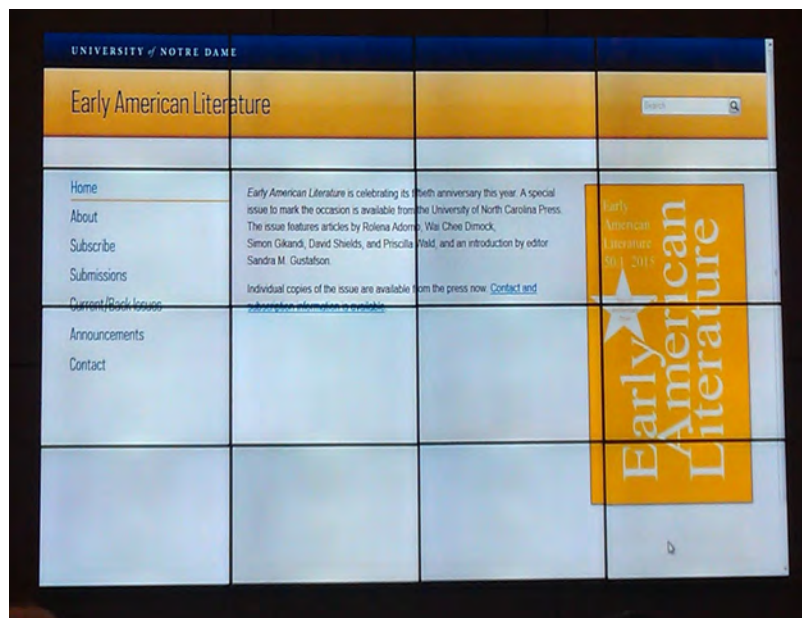


Image of Early American Literature's new website, from the SEA-OIEAHC conference

**Reflections on the
ASECS Annual Conference
Los Angeles, CA, March 19-22, 2015**

Literary history was still on trial at ASECS 2015 in Los Angeles. From Jonathan Kramnick's panel on the anthropocene to a compelling series on the rise of fictionality, scholars of the eighteenth-century used literary history to interrogate the methodologies of writing literary history. The most provocative panel I attended was "Against History," a roundtable organized by Sandra Macpherson of the Ohio State University. In this conversation another theme emerged: the alternative to history is reading. Almost all the participants who set themselves "Against History" expressed a longing, in some cases openly nostalgic, for traditional practices of reading. In an era that has disciplined itself to the idea that professional success comes with detailed, often arcane historical study, the close reading of texts has taken up the status of play. At ASECS, scholars were conducting themselves as excellent professionals, but they were also talking about how much they wanted to play.

Wilson Brissett
United State Military Academy

For me, now, ASECS is sensory overload. So many panels to choose from and so many colleagues to meet and catch-up with--especially for someone like me who also moves in SEA circles. Add this year's venue (nothing less than the City of Los Angeles and a hotel that Frederic Jameson describes as "a total space, a complete world, a miniature city," a gathering-place for a "hypercrowd") and the flu I was still wrestling with, and, well, it was a great deal to take in. A few trends I noticed--based on nothing other than fleeting impressions--were a preponderance of presentations on Romantic-era materials and a relatively low number of graduate students in attendance. Data on both these questions would be interesting to see. My favorite paper was delivered by Dahlia Porter. It explored ways museum collections script affective responses to their holdings, both for their visitors as well as for the scholars who engage in archival research. My favorite panel was the first of two on "Revisiting Personification" (I didn't attend the sequel), which featured a set of very different papers that, taken together, were rather thought-provoking and produced an animated and productive Q&A. Two firsts for me: seeing a paper delivered by a graduate student I am advising, Lindsay Moore, (she did great!) and a paper co-presented by Jessica Richard, which was the result of a collaboration with one of her undergraduate students, Emma Skeels, at Wake Forest (also great!).

Gabriel Cervantes
University of North Texas

This year at ASECS I was struck with the variety of serial and sponsored sessions, from the three Re:Enlightenment Project panels to "The Short Eighteenth Century," from a pair of panels on eighteenth-century scholar Michael McKeon to three exciting SEA-sponsored sessions. Junto-like, ASECS is becoming an ever-denser series of networks.

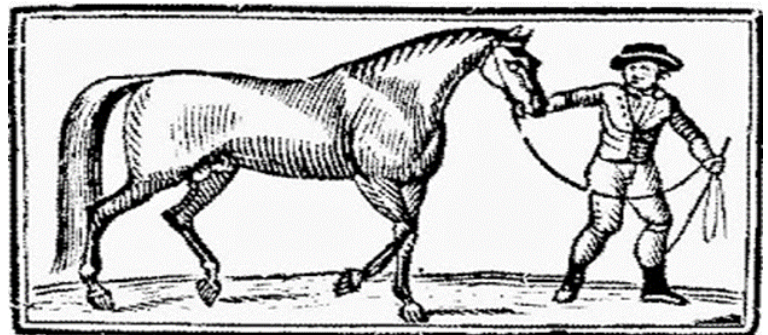
Joseph Chaves
University of Northern Colorado

It's been some days since the ASECS conference, and I am still thinking about the vibrancy and generosity that characterized the event. Many thanks to Dennis Moore and Hilary Wyss, chair and author respectively, for making the roundtable on *English Letters and Indian Literacies* so stimulating and valuable--and, of course, thanks as well to my fellow panelists and our engaged, thoughtful audience. A testament to the strength of the event more broadly: even the weather in Los Angeles couldn't pull us from the labyrinthine conference center--mostly. This was my first ASECS, but unlikely my last.

Dan Radus
Cornell University

Once again, ASECS proved to be a dynamic conference with a broad representation of interdisciplinary work across a number of fields. For a variety of reasons--some budgetary, others accidental--a number of Americanists were unable to come this year. This was a shame; LA was lovely, and the Westin Bonaventure was quite a marvel of architectural and vertiginous space (as those of you who have seen, well, any number of recent action films set there already know). There were lovely poolside receptions and a generally collegial atmosphere as people gathered in local restaurants, in the halls of the conference hotel, and, of course, in panels, keynote addresses, and other meetings. Despite the slightly smaller than usual number of Americanist attendees, there were numerous panels of interest to transatlanticists and Americanists: a panel on Benjamin Franklin chaired by Robert Craig, "Empires and Oceans" chaired by James Mulholland, as well as at least two Pacific-focused panels and a wonderful panel on George Whitefield and his American influence. I was especially gratified to have my book featured at an author's colloquy so ably organized by our own Dennis Moore. All in all it was a lovely conference.

Hilary Wyss
Auburn University



At this year's ASECS conference in Los Angeles, I had the chance to participate in a roundtable on interrogating methodologies in eighteenth-century Americanist scholarship. My talk focused on digital methods, as I brought up the question of voice when encoding embedded slave narratives using the Text Encoding Initiative for the digital project I work for at Northeastern University, the Early Caribbean Digital Archive. However, I was also excited to hear about the range of methodologies my colleagues utilized. Our panel adopted a spectrum of scholarly approaches. Erin Sweeney emphasized the spatial turn and fictive houses as material culture while Jillian Sayre proposed a consideration of dogs in frontier literature as affective companions, highlighting a dependency between human and animal. Both Thomas Koenigs and David Lawrimore spoke on the novel; whereas Thomas questioned fictionality in the variegated genre of the novel, David suggested that we move away from the term "novelist" and instead consider early American authors as "intellectuals" to reframe the genre and form of the novel. Andrew Dyrli Hermeling's presentation most closely aligned with my own, as he also reflected on the question of archival voice by looking at indigenous American treaty negotiations through a micro-historical lens. Overall, I was fortunate to take part in a discussion with scholars who are expanding the research possibilities in the field of early American studies and I look forward to attending future ASECS conferences.

Liz Polcha
Northeastern University



Margaret Gibbs of Boston c 1670



From my perspective as a Hispanist specializing in colonial and eighteenth-century Spanish American and transatlantic literary and cultural studies who's been attending ASECS conferences for almost two decades and who's committed to fomenting an interdisciplinary scholarly dialogue that crosses boundaries defined by linguistic and national traditions, I found the 2015 meeting in LA to be extremely engaging and, in some aspects, even groundbreaking. I thought that the session on "Slaves and Slavery in the Global Eighteenth Century" included stellar and complementary presentations by Jeremy Popkin, Nicholas Valvo (in addition to my own). But there were other moments that stood out. The sessions on "Eighteenth-century Quixotes and Quixotisms," marking the four hundredth anniversary of the publication of the second volume of Cervantes's masterpiece, underscored the centrality of Don Quixote for our understanding of the modern novel. "Alta and Baja: California in the Eighteenth Century" explored the importance of place and the ways in which the eighteenth-century and its legacy were/experienced on the ground. Two other moments stand out.

Stephen Pincus, in the Race and Empire session on "Empires and Oceans" talked about the 1766 Esquilache Riots that took place in Madrid as part of a global context for the 1765 Stamp Act Revolt – the first time to my recollection that I have ever heard any scholar whose research was not directly related to Spain or Spanish America refer to the Spanish-speaking world in an ASECS presentation. Pincus later made an impassioned plea for scholars to commit to comparative empire studies as fundamental to a global perspective on the eighteenth century. Later, Matthew Goldmark, in his comments at the Roundtable on "Race, Colonialism, and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century" (sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Caucus), reminded us that Spain and Spanish America have an eighteenth century, too. He questioned to what degree the imperative to advocate for evidence of Latin America's secular modernity in the eighteenth century leads us to focus on similarities across empires and overlook examples of coevalness around empire, such as casta paintings and Spanish missionaries practices that suggest new ways of looking at kinship and reproduction. I am already looking forward to 2016.

Karen Stolley
Emory University

Combine a cranky traveller with an awkward networker and you get low motivation for gearing up for another conference trip, except that this same cranky-awkward has never departed from SEA confabs without renewed allegiance, an updated vocabulary, and new areas for exploration. Chicago SEA-IEAHC 2015 was another happy proof, except of course that I could neither attend every panel nor mingle with everyone at the receptions, which indicates, of course, that there was more to do than one person could experience. From this tunnel's vision: I was reminded of how crucial the Stuart Restoration was in the development of New England (in petitions and in print practices); Cotton Mather's angelic discriminations is worth considerable consideration; the robust and pluralistic plurisignification of "devotion"; I'll have to rethink my position in the anthropocene (and others); and the diverse artefactualities to be unearthed from the archive (some with rather grotesque literalness, thinking of the right 7th rib of one Mr. George Whitefield scattered not to the winds but to the files; plus: sermon mss.; dream diaries; numeromaniacal annotators; repurposed books) – in short, just when one thinks one has read it all, there's more to read/misread/unread/reread/rethink than have been dreamt of hitherto. And I haven't even touched on the twittery tweeting!

Michael Ditmore
Pepperdine University

As an art historian, one of the pleasures of attending interdisciplinary conferences is to learn about what's happening elsewhere in the world of early American studies. This year's joint SEA-OIEAHC conference did not disappoint. Friday's standing-room-only roundtable on "The Colonial and the Provincial" was especially thought-provoking. The panel's mix of speakers from the disciplines of history and literary studies offered a range of fascinating perspectives on the uses of these key terms. When Sophie White, speaking about the history of New France, observed that "provincial" was a rarely encountered word in the historiography, I realized with a start that it was just as uncommon in the American art history of the long eighteenth century. But why? I don't think I had ever considered its omission from the art-historical scholarship before that moment. To be sure, "provincial" carries negative connotations in visual and material culture studies; it suggests a lack of originality, a cultural naiveté, a vacuous kind of imitation. These are not good things within the value systems of artistic production and commodification. "Colonial" has long been the preferred scholarly term, perhaps because, at least within art history, it suggests a political relationship instead of aesthetic inferiority.

Yet it is a descriptor that American émigrés to London may not themselves have recognized: upon their arrival in the artistic center of the British empire, painters such as Benjamin West and John Singleton Copley were flatly called "provincials." No ironic derision was intended. And none, presumably, was taken: both artists rose to the highest ranks of the English art world. Mulling this over during the course of the weekend (and ever since), it seems altogether appropriate to have come away from Chicago, where I attended graduate school, with much food for thought and more ideas to research. Thank you, conference organizers and speakers, for a most energizing intellectual weekend.

Wendy Bellion
University of Delaware

"It'll be great to get the gang all back together again." Said by a colleague about a previous SEA conference, these words perfectly capture one of the main reasons I look forward to our biannual meetings, and I often recall them when anticipating an upcoming gathering. Our collegiality, desire for inquiry, and willingness to share ideas about early America were fully present at the Chicago conference. It's an especial pleasure to come together every two years not just to renew old friendships but to meet scholars who have just entered the field, to see what fresh perspectives and critical approaches they bring to our shared passion for early America. The sheer range of topics from this last conference testifies to the vibrancy of our field. One of the strengths of the Chicago program was the variety of panel types, from traditional to keyword to roundtable to



Gordon Sayre and Sharon Harris
at the SEA-OIEAHC Conference

workshop to a wonderful tribute to Sharon Harris. As with so many SEA meetings before, I left Chicago feeling energized about my own and my fellow panelists' presentations, about the audience's response, about early America. I headed for home fully recharged to explore the field anew. Thanks, gang!

Scott Slewinski

Western Michigan University

This conference had me thinking about spaces—both material and immaterial. The traditional powwow hand drummers at the opening reception created vibrations and opened up a space that, for me, resonated over the next few days. They reminded us that everything to come, all discussions about literature and history, would deal with human activities that were layered onto what already existed when the Potawatomi inhabited this place. A roundtable on Friday morning considered the way our study of discourse and power relations has not fully interrogated the impact of observed natural phenomena that shaped the early American experience. The papers on this panel circled back to food pathways and our relationship with plant life, living realities over which we claim to have agency, but that are not typically foregrounded in the texts we study. The material turn in our field has seeped into the biological and geographical concerns of the North American continent, and we are negotiating this space between the sciences and the humanities. Another discussion, on the “colonial” and the “provincial,” raised the concept of the “territorial,” which does not denote people, but instead indexes a relationship between a legal system and the land. The person, who appears to be excluded from this relationship, is in fact lighting out for the territory, extricated from the grip of colonial power. The nuance in language exemplified by the term “territory” highlights an early American psychological strategy for imaginatively existing in a space unconnected to the crown. Several papers at the conference suggested that such intentionally created, immaterial spaces could generate real power. One panel examined emotion as an arena where power relationships are worked out.

In the realm of emotion, levels of joy are regulated to secure social status for members of the elite class; fear is employed as a political tool of persuasion; and, affection is manipulated by slaves and slaveholders alike to protect perceived bases of authority. Another panel, on the figure of the public woman, suggested that the feminine intellect could be admired profusely in early America only if the woman herself were dead, or if still living, if she were to limit her (spoken) thoughts to the confines of an intimate salon setting. What was unacceptable and highly circum-spect in early America, was a woman with a pen,

writing in the public spaces in real time, engaging in the current debates. The idea of a feminist geography—where women can circulate and where they cannot—was also the core of a panel on women and empire, which concluded with the question of locating women in American literature anthologies.

We have often placed women writers not according to where they originally entered the discourse, but according to how they supported (without necessarily interrogating) contemporary theoretical debates. The good news: an entire panel on alternatives to seduction demonstrated how the palpable pleasure of women—both intellectual and physical—finds tenacious expression in early American texts and their interstices, if only we look for it. This brings me back to the hand drummers who communicated the jurisdiction of the Potawatomi in the Chicago region.

Their existence does not depend on the authority of the text but on the spirit of the people who live in a particular place at a particular time. This conference has shown me that early Americanists are productively exploring, and only scratching the surfaces of, those spaces beyond the text.

Maureen Tuthill

Westminster College



***Kristina Bross, SEA President,
at the SEA-OIEAHC Conference***



**Karin Wulf, Director, OIEAHC,
at the SEA-OIEAC Conference**

As always, the meeting of the Society of Early Americanists offered attendees a feast of knowledge. Two particular opportunities associated with the conference captured my imagination: I make it a practice when attending conferences to visit the local historical societies or archives, even if I don't have a current project related to their collections. On a pragmatic level, I might stumble upon a new project idea; being able to discuss a collection in concrete terms is enormously helpful for fellowship applications. Or, I might simply enjoy an afternoon of looking at old books, seeing in material form texts that I've seen only in digital formats. As a first-time visitor, I impressed with the easy accessibility of the Newberry Library. The library's online registration and book request portal streamlines the process and enables scholars to maximize limited research time, while the staff was speedy in retrieving requests. Kudos to the conference organizers for bringing SEA members to the Newberry for several events.

I also found particularly engaging an on-going discussion of access and texts: how does textual availability shape our teaching practices and what students believe about a particular era or genre? What's in print, and how do we keep texts in print? What texts should be available? What's affordable for our students? To which databases do our individual institutions have access? How do market forces shape the modern reprint business? Etc. A special seminar on Thursday, dedicated to the Just Teach One project (<http://www.common-place.org/justteachone/>), originated this conversation, but it carried over to multiple sessions over the course of the conference. This particular session offered attendees an opportunity for extended conversation about pedagogy, and I came away enthused about new ways of engaging students with early American writing. I hope to see this session format reappear at future SEA meetings.

Karen Weyler
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

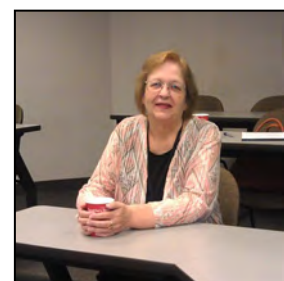
Conferences should always work this way. In Savannah two years ago, I bumped into Tom Shields, who several years back, had tinkered with a poem about the founding of St. Augustine that I was also in the process of translating. The next summer in London, we met Jonathan (or Joby) DeCoster, an historian who had recently completed a dissertation about Florida's role in early British imperialism. The three of us realized our shared interests, and for the joint OIEAHC/SEA in Chicago, we proposed a roundtable. Alejandra Dubcovsky, Michele Navakas, Anna Brickhouse, Lisa Voigt and Amy Turner Bushnell agreed to join the roundtable. We presented in order of first presentation—Joby went first, Amy last. And something wonderful happened. The short talks, all smart, shifted in tone as the panel progressed. By the time Amy spoke, it became clear that we were listening to current thought, filtered through the perspective of a senior researcher. We realized that scholarship on early Florida, while generations underway, was ripe for reinvention. We all realized that the conversations should continue ... at another conference.

Thomas Hallock
University of South Florida St. Petersburg



SHARON M. HARRIS HONORED

At the recent SEA-OIEAHC conference, Sharon M. Harris, one of the three founding members of the Society of Early Americanists (along with Carla Mulford and Rosemary Guruswamy), was recognized on the occasion of her retirement from the University of Connecticut. "‘An ample field would be opened’: A Roundtable Honoring Sharon M. Harris," featured reflections on Professor Harris's career as a scholar, mentor, and colleague provided by Theresa Strouth Gaul, Texas Christian University; Rosemary Fithian Guruswamy, Radford University; Mark Kamrath, University of Central Florida; Zabelle Stodola, Independent Scholar; and Maureen Tuthill, Westminster College. The SEA also presented Professor Harris with a copy of *Silhouettes of American Life*, a story collection by Rebecca Harding Davis, published in 1892. The panelists' remarks have been posted on the SEA website. They reveal much about the values of collaboration and mentorship Professor Harris has modeled throughout her career. http://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/harris_roundtable.html



Sharon M. Harris



Sandra Gustafson, Editor, Early American Literature



*SEA Presidents Past, Present, and Future:
Top Row: Patrick Erben, Dennis Moore, Susan Imbarrato, Zabelle Stodola, Hilary Wyss, Rosemary Guruswamy
Bottom Row: Laura Stevens, Kristina Bross, Gordon Sayre, Sharon M. Harris*



*Plenary Session
“‘The European Question’: Indigenous Scholars Interrogate Early American Scholars”
Michael Witgen, Alyssa Mt. Pleasant, Scott Manning Stevens, and Phil Round (moderator).*



*Frederika J. Teute
OIEAHC Editor of Publications, 1989-2015*

SEA ESSAY CONTEST

The Society of Early Americanists is pleased to announce our Seventeenth Annual Essay Competition. If you have presented a paper on an Americanist topic, broadly conceived, during the academic year 2014-2015 at the Society of Early Americanists Ninth Biennial Conference, Chicago, June 18-21, 2015; or at an American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies conference 2014-2015, or that of any of its affiliates, including the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Los Angeles, CA, March 19-22, 2015, we invite you to enter. By "Americanist topic, broadly conceived" we mean that the competition is open to papers that address America in terms of both the long and the wide (i.e., circumatlantic) eighteenth century.

Our panel of judges will see each entry through a simple system of blind reviewing; your name goes only on a separate cover sheet, and we recommend that you rework any self-citation, either in the body or in notes, to the third person. Note that we accept revised papers and that the maximum length for an entry is 6,000 words. Papers should be double-spaced, 6,000 words maximum, with the following information appearing only on the cover sheet: your name; institutional mailing address and e-mail address; panel title; chair's name; date of presentation; and name of conference.

Please send your essay as an email attachment to Professor Kelly Wisecup at SEAEssayContest@gmail.com

Deadline: Friday, October 9, 2015

PAST WINNERS INCLUDE:

Steven W. Thomas
Wagner College
"The Circum-Atlantic Surrogation of Ethiopia in the London Public Sphere"

Sari Altschuler
University of South Florida
"Ain't One Limb Enough? Historicizing Disability in the American Novel"

Glenda Goodman
New York University
"The Economy of Accomplishment: Aesthetics and Labor in Women's Musical Lives"

Jennifer Heil
Emory University
"Imperial Pedagogy: Susanna Rowson's Columbus for Young Ladies"

Kelly Wisecup
University of North Texas
"Invisible Bullets and the Literary Forms of Colonial Promotion"

Duncan Faherty
Queens College & the CUNY Graduate Center
"'Daily and nightly disgorged upon our shores': Revolution, Rumor, & Serial Unrest in the Early Republic"

SEA 10th BIENNIAL CONFERENCE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA: MARCH 2-4, 2017

The 2017 SEA Biennial will be anchored in downtown Tulsa, with special events at the University of Tulsa and the Helmerich Center for American Research at the Gilcrease Museum of the Americas. There will be an optional field trip to the Cherokee Heritage Center in Tahlequah and a tour of the Tulsa Race Riot Memorial & Greenwood District (site of the 1921 race riot). Proposals for traditional or experimental format sessions on all aspects of early America are welcome, but we will be especially attentive to the question of the public in early America as well as the public place of early American studies today.

Optional public outreach activities, especially involving local schools and teachers, will be available to interested attendees. There will be travel fellowships for graduate students & adjunct faculty, schoolteachers, tribal historians and curators.

Plenary speakers will include Prof. William Warner of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Session Proposals Deadline: May 1, 2016
Individual Paper Proposals Deadline: August 15, 2016



Downtown Tulsa, Oklahoma

In celebration of its fiftieth anniversary, the journal *Early American Literature* launched an annual book prize this year to call attention to inventive and substantial scholarship about American literature in the colonial period through the early republic (roughly 1830). This first *EAL* book prize goes to a book by an established scholar, that is, to an author who has previously published at least one book. As the journal ends its first half century, it seems fitting to pay tribute to established scholars. Next year's prize will be awarded to a first book, looking ahead to the future; first monographs published in 2014 and 2015 are eligible. The prize will then alternate between books by established scholars and first books. Watch the journal's website for announcements.

This year the *EAL* book prize goes to two nominees: Anna Brickhouse for *The Unsettlement of America: Translation, Interpretation, and the Story of Don Luis de Velasco, 1560-1945* (Oxford); and Wil Verhoeven for *Americomania and the French Revolution Debate in Britain, 1789-1802* (Cambridge). Each of these books merits our attention and admiration, and each has notable strengths. They rose to the top of an impressive field, and in some important ways they complement one another.

Brickhouse's *The Unsettlement of America* explores the phenomenon of motivated mistranslation to construct a speculative history of indigenous resistance to European colonization. Spanning Spanish colonial writings from the sixteenth century through their reception in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Brickhouse offers a fascinating account of indigenous net-



Anna Brickhouse

works of resistance, conceptualized as a form of authorship. This book does two things exceptionally well: it makes a creative argument about the motivated nature of translation, and it summons a treasure trove of research to its aid. *Unsettlement* is both a speculative biography of one man and his legacy across four centuries and a challenge to the field of hemispheric American studies in its entirety. It counters "the scholarly tendency to apprehend translation in the early modern era largely as a tool of empire" by suggesting that an Algonquian Indian captured by the Spanish in 1561 and christened Don Luis de Velasco deliberately unsettled the attempted Spanish colonization of his native Ajacán (now known as the Chesapeake Bay

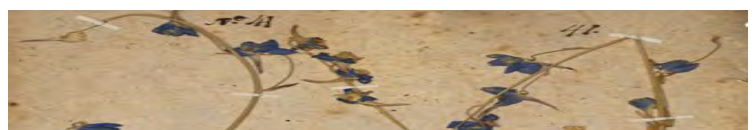
region) through his role as a translator. In the process translation became authorship, and settlement unsettlement. In the centuries that followed, others found opportunity to create an "afterlife" for Don Luis de Velasco that featured mistranslations of equal consequence, such as mid-nineteenth-century U.S. State Department official Robert Greenhow's suppression of the documentation of the Ajacán settlement in order to do away with unhelpful challenges to the use of the doctrine of "First Discovery" and bolster American expansionism following the Mexican War.

Verhoeven's *Americomania* looks at the flip side of the settler colonial scene – that is, he explores the construction of an ideology of available land and shows how it affected political writing and imaginative literature in the age of revolution. The fruit of research that is at once capacious and meticulous, each to a rare degree, this literary history of the revolutionary Atlantic world shows how Jacobin and anti-Jacobin fiction of the late eighteenth century responded to a utopian discourse about America. *Americomania* is truly a transatlantic book that illuminates the



Wil Verhoeven

transit of radicals from Europe to America; the representation of America in various promotional tracts and fictions as a space of re-formation; and the European context for the emigration boom in the late eighteenth century. Framed within a triangle of relations between Britain, France, and North America, the history sketches the print culture of utopian fantasy, from novel to real estate prospectus, showing the particular density with which post-revolutionary America became the flash point between Britons fearing depopulation and radicalization, and those dreaming of new orders of various sorts. Familiar names appear—Imlay, Crèvecoeur, Jefferson—while in sections such as "The Americanization of the British Novel" we are introduced to a series of fiction writers who become indices of cultural anxiety. Encompassing political philosophy, political and legal history, literature, economic history, print history, visual culture, popular culture, migration, demography, and more, Verhoeven traces how the fact and figure of American land – both as a material commodity and as a utopic ideal – operated at the center of a British debate over political identity ignited by the French Revolution.



Upcoming Conferences

American Literature Association Symposium on The City and American Literature New Orleans, LA September 10-12, 2015

ALA symposia provide opportunities for scholars to meet in pleasant settings, present papers, and share ideas and resources. The September 2015 symposium will focus on representations of the city in American literature. We welcome proposals for individual papers, complete panels, and roundtable discussions on any aspect of this important subject.

Please plan to stay in the conference hotel as this helps us meet our commitment to the hotel and keeps our rates low. The Hotel Monteleone is an historic hotel in the French Quarter that has hosted many distinguished American writers.

Keynote Speaker:
Ed Folsom, University of Iowa
Conference Director: Leslie Petty, Rhodes College

Society of Early Americanists Special Topics Conference: Translation and Transmission in the Early Americas: The Fourth Early Americanist Summit University of Maryland; Washington D.C. Metro Area May 19-22, 2016

Continuing in the tradition of the First (Tucson, AZ, 2002), Second (Providence, RI, 2004), and Third (St. Augustine, FL, 2010) Early Ibero/Anglo Americanist Summits, the conference will bring together scholars working in various languages and disciplines to exchange questions, ideas, research and teaching methods, and to promote comparative perspectives and cross-disciplinary dialogue in the study of the early Americas. The event will be co-sponsored by the SEA, Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture (OIEAHC), Kislak Family Foundation, and University of Maryland.

For more information, please visit the conference webpage, <http://oieahc.wm.edu/conferences/supported/translation/index.html>, or contact Ralph Bauer (bauerr@umd.edu) or Allison Bigelow (amb8fk@virginia.edu).



Conference Calls for Papers

While every effort has been made to present information accurately, interested persons should always verify submission dates and criteria in conference announcements.

C19: THE SOCIETY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICANISTS

**“Unsettling”
State College, Pennsylvania
March 17-20, 2016
Hosted by Penn State University**

The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists seeks paper and panel submissions for its fourth biennial conference, which will take place March 17-20, 2016 at the Nittany Lion Inn at Penn State University in State College. We invite individual paper or group proposals on U.S. literary culture—broadly conceived—during the long nineteenth century. Our conference theme is “Unsettling,” which takes its inspiration from recent revisionist approaches to the methodologies, geographies, languages, and texts that disturb, divert, and reconstitute American literary, historical, and cultural studies. Leaving open ended what is being unsettled, the theme challenges the notion of a defined field focusing on a specific set of texts. In contrast to the assumption of a shared practice or single canon, “unsettling” recognizes the fragmented and contradictory condition of US and American literary studies.

The Program Committee is particularly interested in challenging the belief that questions of race and racism are settled. If anything, recent events from Ferguson to the immigration debates point to the unfinished business of race, ethnicity, and nationalism and the ongoing relevance of the nineteenth century and its antecedents. “Unsettling” also points to the effects of a historical period when the United States sought new settlements and sometimes took territory by force. How did the effects of political organization, economic conditions, and social hierarchies in the nineteenth century leave unsettled today’s socio-political challenges? How has the field responded to a transformation in what is studied as part of literary culture? How have new approaches, methodologies, and archives opened the field of study?

Topics and approaches might include but are not limited to transnational, hemispheric, and oceanic studies; the impact of new media and digital technologies on research and teaching practices in the field; critical race, ethnicity, indigeneity, border and diaspora studies; historicism, surface reading and theory; history of the book and print culture; critical geography and global approaches; gender, sexuality, and queer studies; religion, belief, and secularization;

democracy and citizenship; the body, age, affect, and disability studies; science and technology studies; spectatorship, collecting, and museum studies; migration, multilingualism, and translation; theories of the archive and the canon. Proposals will be due on Sept. 1, 2015. Information about submitting is forthcoming.

AMERICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION

**Frontiers and Borders in American Literature,
February 25-27, 2016**

Proposals are welcome on a range of topics related to varied conceptions of the frontier and American borderlands, including but not limited to nineteenth and twentieth-century narratives of the frontier, Western literature, the literature of nature and the environment, the literature of cultural contact, and science fiction. We welcome proposals for individual papers, complete panels, and roundtable discussions on any aspect of this important subject.

Due date for proposals is October 1, 2015. The symposium will be held at the Sheraton Gunter Hotel in downtown San Antonio, TX.

Contact Steven Frye: sfrye@csub.edu

NORTHEASTERN MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

Hartford, CT; March 17-20, 2016

Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Transmission of Ideas in Colonial America (Panel)

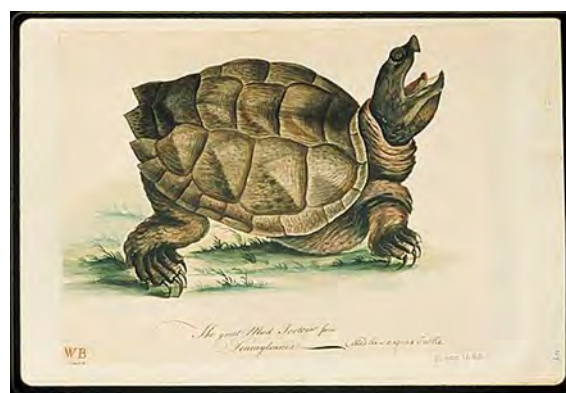
Scholarship regarding the creation and transmission of ideas in colonial British America often falls under the methodology of one discipline or another. Literary scholars, historians, philosophers, musicologists, archaeologists, anthropologists, and others research and discuss the same areas of inquiry, but seldom work in close proximity and dialogue with one another. This panel is an opportunity for scholars across the disciplines to share their own ideas about the movement of knowledge and ideologies in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century colonial British America.

The joining of these disciplinary forces will open up new possibilities for the future of this field helping move scholarship beyond a traditional (yet important) focus on newspapers, for instance, toward a more progressive view that encapsulates the multifarious modes of knowledge transmission. Areas of focus for presenters may include, but are not limited to: itinerant preaching, folk tales, hymns, music, philosophy, literature, commerce, rebellions, slavery,

womanhood and women's rights, Native American relations, witch trials, geography, agriculture, urban life, superstition, colonialism, provincialism, or revolution. This panel seeks to address questions of where, when, how, and with whom ideas and ideologies formed and spread. How did the movement and transmission of these ideas affect society and the ideas themselves? Did differing forms of media have unique influences on the knowledge and ideas they transmitted? How does a study of the transmission of ideas change one's perspective on the colonial American identity?

See <https://www.cfplist.com/nemla/Home/S/15678> for more information.

Submit by September 30, 2015.



SEA Council of Officers

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laura-stevens@utulsa.edu

Gordon Sayre, Vice President (University of Oregon)
gsayre@uoregon.edu

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Website: [http:// www.societyofearlyamericanists.org](http://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org)

Society of

Early Americanists

To Our Members

The SEA thanks its new and renewing members for their invaluable support of our Society. Your contributions make early American studies thrive. Please remember to keep your membership current and direct any membership inquiries to the Executive Coordinator, Patrick Erben (seacoord@uoregon.edu).

You can also help build our membership by referring colleagues in the field to the Society's homepage: <http://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/index.html>

Society Information/Membership

The Society of Early Americanists provides a forum for scholarly and pedagogical exchange and professional support among scholars of various disciplines who study the literature and culture of America to approximately 1800. Our membership of over 350 individuals enjoys a bi-yearly newsletter detailing activities in our field, a website that links to many documents of interest to early American scholars and teachers, and a listserv. We also offer opportunities for networking and dissemination of professional work. If you are interested in joining the Society, please see the membership information on our homepage: <http://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/membership.html>

Opportunities for Giving

In addition to keeping your SEA membership active, you can contribute to the Fund to Honor Excellence in Teaching:

http://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/honored_teachers.html

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