



THE SOCIETY OF EARLY
AMERICANISTS

From the SEA President

I'd like to use my final newsletter column as the SEA's President to say something you may not want to hear: I hope you will attend our business meeting at the biennial conference this coming March.

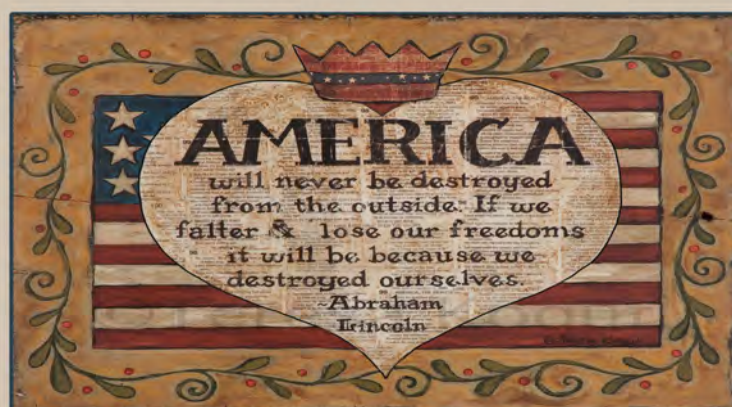
I can hear the groans already, but please hear me out. First, the meeting will not be at the bleary-eyed hour of 7:00 a.m., as these meetings so often are. It will rather be at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, March 3, with the Junior Scholar Caucus having a parallel meeting next door. There will be snacks, lemonade, and coffee, and you have the option of bringing your own drink in from the hotel bar. It will end at 6:45, in time for you to make dinner plans.

We have significant business to discuss, and the Executive Committee is eager for the membership's input. Most of all, the Committee seeks to convene discussion on two proposed amendments to our constitution and one to our bylaws, and I would like to accelerate our discussion by offering some background here. The first will redefine the Society's stated purpose as "further[ing] the exchange of ideas and information among scholars of various disciplines who study the literature and culture of America to approximately 1830," rather than 1800, as the constitution currently states. Our sense is that this change will reconcile our self-description with the actual scope of our members' scholarly interests. This change also will bring the SEA's intellectual purview into alignment with that of *Early American Literature*, the journal that now is bundled with SEA membership.

The second amendment pertains to the governing structure of our organization. Since its founding the SEA has been governed by an Executive Committee and an Advisory Committee. The Executive Committee has three positions, with one individual elected every two years to the position of Executive Coordinator, moving automatically to the role of Vice-President and then President in two-year intervals, for a total commitment of six years. Members of the Advisory Committee, with exception of the Immediate Past President, are appointed by the Executive Committee. They include the editor of this newsletter, the listserv administrator, and one other member-at-large. We are proposing that the constitution and by-laws be revised to add to the Advisory Officers one more position: A Treasurer who will serve a five-year term.

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Why propose such a change? Since the Society's founding the Executive Coordinator has overseen the SEA's finances, and so the home of our business operations changes every two years with the election of a new Executive Coordinator. Alterations to banking laws have made it increasingly difficult for us to change our business address and the primary signatories to our bank accounts so often. Additional problems can arise with vendors because our checks do not have a permanent address on them. The SEA also is required to be registered in one state as a business, even as a 501c3 non-profit, and the itinerant nature of our operations has made it difficult to be in compliance with this rule.

Larger scholarly societies meet these challenges by establishing offices with paid staff. While the SEA is financially healthy, we are not large or wealthy enough to fund a paid staff member. We therefore propose having a Treasurer become the primary signatory for the SEA's bank account and file the taxes. The Treasurer will register the SEA as a business in her or his state, and his or her address will become the Society's official address. As with all the other positions on our Executive and Advisory Committees, the Treasurer presumably would be a full-time academic doing this work as service to the field. The SEA would, however, offer some small compensation by covering his or her travel and housing costs for the biennial conference. (The other officers do not routinely receive this benefit).

With the addition of a Treasurer, the position of Executive Coordinator also would be revised. He or she would continue to focus on membership and be our liaison to the UNC press, but would also be freed up a bit to help with some other duties of the EC, such as managing our social media presence. The Executive Officers would continue to be co-signatories on the Society's bank account. Additional oversight would be provided through an audit committee comprised of three longstanding SEA members, who would review our bank statements and financial records at the time of transition between Executive Coordinators.

This would be a significant change for the Society. I think we should make this change, but not unless a large portion of the membership has been able to ponder it and discuss its implications before voting. Vibrant societies draw much of their vitality from the active engagement of their members in decision-making. That is true of scholarly organizations as well as of countries. I therefore hope to see you at our next business meeting.

I am glad to say that the business meeting is hardly the only reason to attend the biennial. It is, however, a reason linked to the theme I suggested for this particular conference: Early America and the Public. I am truly excited by

the array of topics and speakers on our program, and I hope you are too.

So many individuals within the SEA are addressing important questions in their research and teaching about the treatment of early America in contemporary texts and phenomena including heritage tourism, historical novels, Broadway musicals, and video games. One impact of this conference, I hope, will be to prompt us to participate as a group in a long-term and wide-ranging discussion about what early America means — how it looks and feels — to the contemporary publics of the United States and other countries. How does early America inform current understandings of nations and peoples? How does it shape our individual senses of self?

To contemplate Early America and the Public also entails examining how early America informs our current understandings of the public: that is, of public spaces, public institutions, public discussions and debates, even the public good. In the United States we find ourselves in a moment when the expectations so many of us have tended to have of the public are undergoing dramatic change and sometimes vitriolic conflict. This is especially true on the heels of an exceptionally toxic presidential campaign season, when public spaces and arenas not only contain debate, even conflict; they also themselves are the subject of debate, conflict, and occasional violence.

What do we expect of our politicians in this day and age, and what of the press? What do we expect of ourselves? Many Americans who have thought of themselves as apolitical now suddenly feel called to political protest along with other forms of public engagement. Asking you to attend a business meeting seems almost insultingly banal alongside these momentous questions of what citizens owe and are owed by their countries. But my request speaks in a small way to the pull so many humans, in the United States and beyond, feel right now to engage, to plunge in, rather than to withdraw and let others take care of things. I am asking you to be actively involved in this Society, even as I hope we will spend much of the Tulsa meeting asking how early America does and can inform the public's sense of what it means to be part of, participating in, the public.

It has been my honor and keen pleasure to serve on the SEA's Executive Committee these past six years and to work with my fellow officers: Hillary Wyss, Kristina Bross, Gordon Sayre, and Patrick Erben on the Executive Committee, and Raymond Craig, Mary Balkun, and Susan Imbarrato on the Council of Advisory Officers.

From the SEA President con't...

I welcome Ralph Bauer as our newest Executive Coordinator and know that the Society will be in excellent hands. I also look forward to transitioning to the far less taxing role of Past President! Most of all, I feel fortunate to have as my intellectual home an organization filled with such generosity, mental sharpness, and shared pleasure in scholarly endeavor. I will see you very soon in Tulsa.

Laura Stevens
SEA President
University of Tulsa



From the SEA Vice-President

The SEA was founded in the early 1990s, near the beginning of the internet era. As I remember that time, early in my career, I used email and library databases frequently, and listservs such as our own EARAM were the first forms of what we now know as social media. Since 2007, social media platforms have arisen and spread to near ubiquity, and for my teenaged children new ones emerge yearly. As early Americanists, we study older forms of media, such as print periodicals and manuscript circulation, and not always the newer forms. We have tried to maintain an SEA presence on Facebook and Twitter, and recently announced new social media specialists. Kirsten Iden of Auburn and Stacey Dearing of Purdue have agreed to complete 2-year terms, with Kirsten focused on Facebook and Stacey on Twitter; they succeed Nick Miller and Joy Howard in these roles.

In a world where computer screens mediate so many of our social interactions, I think other SEA members value as much as I do the face-to-face meetings we can cultivate with one another at conferences, and the ongoing collaborations and collegial relationships that emerge from these meetings. But we can attend such conferences only a few times a year. The website, societyofearlyamericanists.org, remains the most common way that members and non-members connect with and learn about our organization. The original SEA website was designed by Michael P. Clark, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Professor of English, University of California Irvine, and went online in 1995. Michael continued as webmaster until 2006, when Susan Imbarrato began in that position.

The site has continued to be hosted on the University of California, Irvine, School of Humanities server, a courtesy for which we are very grateful.

Susan Imbarrato's diligent and accurate work has been essential to the society. She sees to it that updates and news are posted to the site, and her consistent service as webmaster has been all the more important for a society that has no home office or staff, and where executive positions turn over every two years.

Some members have been noticing that our website could benefit from a refreshed design and needs to be able to include new features and capabilities. Because many people use their smartphones more often than their desktops and laptops, it is now important that all our features be accessible that way. The SEA newsletter has been distributed in pdf form for the past two years, but current and past issues of the newsletter could be available on our website as well. It might be possible in the future to offer video of some conference presentations on the website, or streaming of our business meetings. Some features available through societyofearlyamericanists.org were initiated by members and have been hosted and managed independently. The "Teaching Early American Topics" page was created by Edward Gallagher at Lehigh University, and the "Early American Fellowships, Seminars, and Prizes" listings by Tamara Harvey of George Mason University. Susan Imbarrato herself has collected the "Recent Publications in Early American Topics" listings. Each of these features might be brought into a new design, or might remain as links to an outside source.

To prepare for a comprehensive redesign of societyofearlyamericanists.org, I have been soliciting bids from web design firms and speaking with Susan about how we might proceed with the transition. I have also been examining the websites of some of our peers, smallish scholarly societies in the humanities who also publish or sponsor journals.

As part of a redesigned website, the SEA could create its own password-protected member's area, where the society's directory, newsletters, syllabus exchange, and other features could be shared with current members without being available to the world at large. Because of SEA's affiliation with *Early American Literature*, the University of North Carolina Press maintains a database of members, dues and subscription payments, and addresses to which the journal is mailed three times a year. I am working on ways to share this database with our own membership, so that one might be able to log in and submit change-of-address orders or check when one's membership expires. To do this would require integrating our website with the database maintained by UNC Press of all the dues payments and journal subscriptions. This is a complex challenge. The same problem exists with the biennial

From the SEA Vice-President Con't...

conference registration. Conference presenters are required to be SEA members. But merging the two payment platforms for conferences and society memberships may be possible only with a sophisticated, and expensive, e-commerce platform beyond what UNC currently provides.

In response to this column I would be delighted to hear from SEA members about what features you use most, and what you feel needs improvement. We hope to have mock-up pages of the redesigned website available at the Tulsa conference. Thanks to Susan Imbaratto, Jason Peyton, Kirsten Iden, and others who have helped with this project.

Gordon Sayre,
Vice-President
University of Oregon

From the Executive Coordinator

Most of you know that the *Oxford English Dictionary* declared “post-truth” the word of the year for 2016, defining it as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” For me, this “word” is unsettling not just because of the political climate it denotes but, more importantly, for its semantic vacuity. “Post-truth” seems as shifty as the situation it describes. Yet early Americanists have always theorized and investigated concepts of truth, fact, and authenticity in their historical, generic, and discursive contexts. When Susanna Rowson published her *Tale of Truth*, she emphasized the fundamental moral and social truths underlying her fictional tale, but she also signaled that young women experienced similar fates all across the Atlantic world. In facing the facts Rowson asked, do we understand the truth?

Even more than debates about fiction, religious claims to truth created an early American landscape riddled with epistemological landmines. Quakers stumbled across such a minefield in the 1690s, when George Keith, one of their foremost theologians, hoped to make the Quakers’ intuitive and inwardly perceived faith square with Scriptural knowledge and Christian dogma, initiating more than ten years of acerbic debates and schism. As Keith lambasted fellow Quakers for supposedly losing their grip on fundamental truths of Christianity—such as the divinity of Christ—and demanded a written confession of faith, he quickly earned a reputation for his “Unbounded Ambition” and “Towering Thoughts” (Jennings, *The State of the Case*, 1694). Whereas Quakers championed communal love and unity mediated by oral testimony, Keith felt that his truth claims entitled him to name-calling and vitriol. He even admitted calling his opponents “Fools, ignorant Heathens, Infidels, silly Souls, Lyars, Hereticks, Rotten Ranters, Muggletonians,” while arguing that “he never

gave such Names to any of them, but to such as he can prove did deserve them” (Keith & Budd, *Account of the Great Divisions*, 1692).

At first, Quakers on both sides hoped that written records and print publications could eliminate the uncertainty of orality, perhaps even trapping the opposing side in the web of their alleged falsehoods. Yet, readers and writers across the spectrum soon noticed that opponents twisted their words, cited their statements out of context, and generally manipulated language for sheer demagoguery. Pamphleteers such as Caleb Pusey (for the “orthodox” Quakers) and Daniel Leeds (for the Keithians) got bogged down in a pedantic meta-discourse over the misrepresentation of each other’s statements. Pusey blamed Leeds for “miscitations, Clipping of sentences, and perverting of our friends writings” (*The Bomb Searched* 1705). Leeds rebutted Pusey’s accusation by making his sources physically accessible to the reader.

In his pamphlet *The great mystery of Fox-craft discovered* (1705), Leeds encouraged his readers to inspect “two letter[s] written by G. Fox to Coll. Lewis Morris, deceased, exactly spell’d and pointed as in the originals, which are now to be seen in the library at Burlington in New Jersey, and will be proved (by the likeness of the hand, &c.) to be the hand-writing of the Quakers learned Fox, if denied.” Pusey one-upped Leeds’s archival impulse by assembling a whole library of texts in which readers could verify the alleged falsehoods promulgated by Keithians: “We have procured the books out of which their quotations are pretended to be taken to be lodged one whole year, commencing the first of the ninth month 1705 at the house of Robert Burrow in Chesnut Street in Philadelphia, where any person may seasonably and soberly come and view any of the said passages in order to satisfy himself, whether what we have here transcribed out of their books, and our observations on them be not genuine.”

Pusey and Leeds’s pamphlet war represents the absurd conclusion of a shift from oral testimony sanctioned by communal trust to the deployment of print to determine the ultimate perpetrator in a game of deception. Pennsylvania Quakers even disowned Keith and shipped him back to England, only to find him returning as an Anglican minister (the ultimate flip-flop). A religious denomination fundamentally predicated upon the ability of intuitive faith granting access to religious Truth, Quakers found themselves in a profoundly post-truth moment.

My point here is not to abandon an insistence on facts driving public discourse, sound scholarship, and ethical teaching. Rather, I don’t want “post-truth” to become normalized, leading to the demise of the free pursuit of knowledge. In a time when digital video-

raphy produced by anyone disseminates “evidence” across vast yet increasingly biased social media networks, we are getting bogged down in absurd debates over the truth-status of information rather than the underlying issues. In the eighteenth century, none of the seemingly unassailable evidence Quakers assembled was able to restore communal trust. Friends at last found a social and spiritual purpose when their fledgling anti-slavery and anti-war movements gained momentum in the mid to late eighteenth century.

What facts will @TheRealSEA enlist to find and communicate truths about early America? A growing misconception among the public is that academics pursue knowledge for the sake of intellectual and cultural dominance. How can we use our ideas and work to gain relevance and understanding among a wider population? Endeavors like the public engagement projects at our next biennial conference in Tulsa are steps in the right direction. While we need to communicate that everyone’s voice matters, we must also insist on truths gained from careful historical and literary research.

Even in a democratic society, we should accept the fact that some positions or claims are still simply wrong. Advanced study and learning can bring us closer to a better understanding of our past and ourselves. I dedicate my next four years as an SEA officer to promoting early American studies as part of a thriving humanities field—the sine qua non of a civilized society.

Patrick Erben
Executive Coordinator
University of West Georgia



Announcements

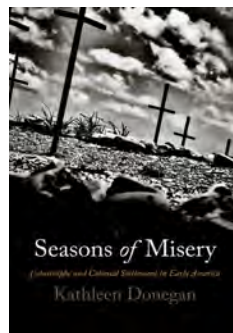
Proposed SEA Amendments

The Executive Committee has received proposals for two different amendments to the Mission, Constitution, and By-Laws of the Society: 1) to add the office of Treasurer to the SEA Advisory Officers, and 2) to extend the Society’s temporal frame from 1800 to 1830. The Executive Coordinator will circulate the detailed text of the amendments to all current members, and both amendments will be discussed at the SEA Business Meeting at the 2017 Biennial Conference in Tulsa, OK.

Early American Literature 2016 Book Prize



Dr. Robert Gunn, Assoc. Professor of English, University of Texas at El-Paso, has been awarded the 2016 *Early American Literature* Book Prize for *Ethnology and Empire: Languages, Literature, and the Making of North American Borderlands*, New York University Press, 2015.



Dr. Kathleen Donegan, Assoc. Professor of English, University of California at Berkeley, has received honorable mention from *Early American Literature* for *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

New SEA Executive Coordinator



Ralph Bauer, Assoc. Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Maryland, College Park, has been elected to the position of SEA Executive Coordinator. Professor Bauer will serve a two- year term, 2017-19, as Executive Coordinator, then as Vice President, 2019-21, and as President, 2021-23.

SEA Annual Essay Prize



The winner of the 2016 SEA Essay Contest is Mairin Odle, Asst. Professor of American Studies at The University of Alabama, for her essay, “‘Powned, Pricked, or Paynted’: Tattoos and Indigenous Literacies.”



The SEAN Interview: Duncan Faherty and Ed White, Founders and Editors of the Just Teach One Project

Just Teach One is a project of *Common-Place*, *The Journal of Early American Life*

SEAN: How did Just Teach One come about? What was the aha! moment and the thinking behind it?

Faherty and White: For several years we were both teaching a lot of early US fiction in graduate and undergraduate courses, and had many conversations about our teaching, specifically about the very limited canon of texts. We were beginning to see some of the texts recovered in the 1990s by feminist scholars begin to fall out of print, and even with some of the wonderful newer editions of little-known works we were feeling the challenges of text cost. We were also talking with our students about canon formation and change, and we were discussing problems like the status of anonymous texts, fluctuations based on time period, the marginality of prevalent forms like the novella, and uneven canonization. These discussions always had a practical focus, and we were regularly trying to hobble together classroom-friendly versions of works, swapping them, and talking about what worked and what didn't. We both became more and more convinced that there might be some potential for recovery work and canon critique with some practices connected with teaching communities. This really coalesced for us at the April, 2012 "Speculations" conference in New York of the Charles Brockden Brown Society. The CBB conferences tend to be very small and unusually collegial and engaged; the Just Teach One idea was more or less hashed out in some group conversations at that conference, and the encouragement we received before we even started was crucial in nurturing and animating our project.

Since we had some texts already put together, we settled on some basic practices for our editions: simple transcription and annotation; very basic introductions to give guidance without imposing strong readings; the recruitment of volunteers so each text would have a community of teachers and students; and the sharing of teaching reflections for others to build on. We produced an edition of the anonymous novella *Amelia, or the Faithless Briton* (1789) during the summer, and had a community of teachers for the fall of 2013. Another critically important factor was the willingness of the American Antiquarian Society to host the project through the website of their on-line periodical *Common-Place*. Paul Erickson was enthusiastic and thoughtful about how we might use the site, and he was a crucial early advocate in making the project a reality. We are very lucky to have had wonderful and continued institutional support, now from Paul's successor, Molly O'Hagan Hardy, the Digital Humanities Curator at the AAS.

SEAN: What challenges did you face?

Faherty and White: Well, we wondered if it would be difficult to find volunteers, and that has not been the case. People had signed on to teach and write about their experiences before we had produced an edition and before we had settled on a platform. Our first solicitation email received affirmative replies within minutes of being sent, which was a magical manifestation of the collegiality and generosity of early Americanists.

We've always had great groups of participants, and we've seen amazing creativity and dedication in the many people who have contributed. Probably the biggest challenge has been finding the time, twice a year, to put materials together, maintain the website, keep track of participants and their blogposts, and so on. Collaborative work--between the two of us, and with JTO's volunteer teachers--is also a challenge in itself. We have had to take the time to regularly reassess the project, to think about what we want to do, what's working, where we want it to go. We fortunately have had some good opportunities to hear feedback, and the rewards of collaborative work have easily outweighed the challenges.



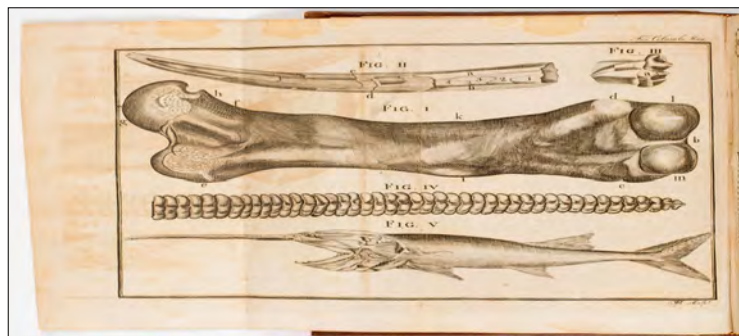
Cover of *The Factory Girl*, 1815

One such occasion, thanks to the support of Kris Bross and Laura Stevens, was a workshop at the 2015 SEA conference in Chicago on "Rethinking Pedagogy, Canonicity, & Early US Print Culture." Over twenty of our colleagues, some of whom had used a JTO text and others who were just curious, shared their thoughtful reflections and hopes for the project. Two things emerged from that conversation, which we are still trying to find ways to address. The first was a desire for our site to feature more reproductions of the original print materials alongside our editions since so many people do not have access to original materials like this to use in their classrooms. (This was a prime motivation for reproducing a full issue of the Boston Weekly Magazine to accompany our edition of Rowson's *Sincerity*; the AAS provided images for the first issue in which *Sincerity* began its run.) The second, which some teachers using JTO texts have undertaken on their own, is for the project to serve as a conduit for instructors from around the country to link their classes in some way.

SEAN: What prompted your decision to include responses?

Faherty and White: We were both frustrated with the very limited canon of texts that were in print and shaping most critical discussions, and we were also beginning to see some texts recovered in the 1990s fall back out of print. So we regularly talked about how foreclosed the recovery of the 1980s and 90s turned out to be. The case of Susanna Rowson loomed large for us, particularly the stunning discrepancy between the importance of *Charlotte Temple* and the relative lack of scholarship about Rowson's many other works. (This was before the amazing collection of essays, *Beyond Rowson*, constellated by Jennifer Desiderio and Desiree Henderson, had found its way into print). In many ways, our initial thinking about the project was profoundly shaped by the provocative arguments of Theresa Strouth Gaul's essay "Recovering Recovery: Early American Women and *Legacy's* Future." Within this essay (which everyone should go read if you haven't already), Theresa advocates for linking recovery efforts to the classroom in order to insure their viability, and she does so in part by tracing how some earlier recovery efforts had stalled because so few people used those texts in their classrooms. The challenge, as we understood Theresa to be framing it, was to find a way to make sure that recovered texts found their way into classrooms and into ongoing critical conversations.

In some ways, she clarified the problem as a kind of chicken and egg puzzle: recovered texts which do not inspire a sustained critical conversation seldom manage to achieve regularized course adoption, yet texts which are not often taught seldom receive any sustained critical attention. Somehow both issues come first. As we talked about the skewed teaching canon, it was clear that the availability of texts was less the problem than the critical mass of scholarly and pedagogical discussion. Our approach has really been premised on the idea that much scholarship has its origins in teaching, and that pedagogical community is a necessary (even if not sufficient) condition for canonical recovery.



From the *Columbian Magazine*, 1786

We hoped that the teaching posts would be part of a pedagogical and scholarly discussion, while also making it easier for the next group of teachers to approach the text.

Certainly there's no need to reinvent the wheel each time, and there is perhaps no greater signal of this than the brief citations we amass for each edition as suggestions for further reading. On the surface it seems like a JTO text might be an utterly neglected one, but as that section of our headnotes makes clear, each of the texts we have "recovered" has had a rich history of critical engagement. Part of the project, in other words, is trying to surface and highlight for teachers and students the long standing critical engagement of each of these texts.

SEAN: How do you decide on a time range for the works you feature?

Faherty and White: Our first JTO text was posted for the fall of 2012, *Amelia, or the Faithless Briton*, an anonymous 1789 periodical novel. We chose it in part as a complement to works like *Charlotte*, because it disrupted a common narrative of seduction: Amelia is seduced but crosses the Atlantic to Europe to pursue her seducer. Many of our earliest selections were in this vein, to give an expanded sense of narrative types and modes. Many of our earliest texts were also anonymous, and we've wanted to think about how the field might be understood differently freed from the focus on the author figure. That means in part more attention to the culture of reprinting and periodicals, so we've increasingly focused on foregrounding reprinting, both in our reproduction of the *Columbian Magazine* issue and in our preparation of the Makandal texts. We are also conscious of length, bearing in mind that part of our original pitch was that *Amelia* might be taught in a single class meeting, although as we have moved forward some of our editions have been longer pieces. We've increasingly tried to develop texts in collaboration with other scholars' research projects: Jared Gardner, Jodi Schorb, and Toni Wall Jaudon have all contributed introductory essays to texts, and we hope to keep moving in that direction. The possibilities are really limitless and the open-ended seriality of the project remains one of its central pleasures.

SEAN: What texts do you plan on featuring in the future? Do you plan on extending the timeline?

Faherty and White: At the moment we've set the parameters from about 1780 to 1820, and we're particularly interested in the 1800-1820 period, which seems one of the most pronounced gaps in scholarly work and anthologizing, really filled by Washington Irving and not much else. We've prepared four texts from that period, and will likely focus a bit more, in part to encourage more discussion with 19C scholars.

We're talking about a more generic range as well, possibly a volume of poetry, possibly a play, or more quasi-fictional political writing, for example. And if people have ideas for potential collaborations we are always open to them.

SEAN: How does the teaching of rare/op texts help students better understand early American culture or the significance of early American literature?

Faherty and White: It seems that many if not most of our collaborators are teaching works to foreground scholarly discussions and specifically how scholarly assumptions are shaped by textual focus. Unusual or unfamiliar texts have a great power to foreground interpretive puzzles and therefore address some fundamental questions about print culture and the development of different modes of writing. In the fall of 2015, our text was *Sincerity*, a serialized Susanna Rowson novel from 1803-04. The novel is sentimental in some respects, but also very different from *Charlotte*. We had some fantastic insightful posts from contributors, several of which will appear shortly in a *Legacy* roundtable. Teachers were having students think about the transatlantic development of the novel, questions of genre, the experience of reading serially, the dynamics of sentimentalism, and so on--all ways of getting at the fluidity and messiness and experimentation of much early US writing. On another level, the slightly more "do-it-together" nature of our texts, compared to more traditional print formats, also lends itself more directly to questions of canonicity and field formation. Our sense is that the format authorizes a different kind of engagement with these issues, one that allows students to be involved in those conversations in more immediate and material ways.



Cover from the NY Weekly Magazine, 1796

SEAN: How would you suggest instructors use JTO?

Faherty and White: We are happy to help people think about texts that might fit with a syllabus plan, but potential instructors should use the resources provided by their peers --reading the posts for any given text will give anyone a good range of ideas (and warnings) about how texts might be used. We keep hoping (even as we roll out new texts) that people will use the "older" editions and write about their experiences of them in the classroom, perhaps by debating and referencing some of the earlier teaching posts. This might be our biggest as yet unrealized hope for the project, that it becomes an ongoing palimpsestic space to think about teaching, canonization, and field representation.

SEAN: What do you think has been the impact of this project?

Faherty and White: We're only concluding our fifth year, so it is difficult to assess impact. There are a few texts--the bizarre story "Constantius and Pulchra," Rowson's *Sincerity*--that seem to have aroused particular interest and excitement, but it's also difficult to assess interest until seeing discussions of works starting to appear in published scholarship. It does seem that discussion of recovery is now an integral part of much teaching in a more public way than it has perhaps been since the recovery efforts of the 1980s, but it also seems that JTO texts are reinforcing and inflecting long-standing concerns. Hopefully we are also helping scholarly interest in reprint culture and periodicals find practical expression in the classroom. More people seem to be giving conference papers on some of the texts we have recovered, although whether there is a direct correlation between our edition and that trend is hard to measure. Perhaps the most gratifying measure of the project's impact is when someone emails us or introduces themselves at a conference and talks about their experiences using a JTO edition or "lurking" on the site. We have been consistently surprised and sustained by how other scholars have been making the project part of how they think about teaching and mapping the field.



Focus on Early American Historical Sites

The Gibson-Todd House on Samuel Street, Charles Town, West Virginia

Here's a side-story to John Brown's famous raid on Harpers Ferry. The commander of the Virginia Militia who led the first counterattack on Brown's raiders was named John Thomas Gibson. After Brown was captured and tried in the nearby county seat of Charles Town, Gibson organized and directed security for Brown's hanging. Among the witnesses that day, kept at great distance by Gibson's men, was John Wilkes Booth. During the Civil War, Gibson rose to the rank of colonel in the Confederate Army. He also served in the Confederate Congress. Gibson was with Robert E. Lee when the general surrendered to Union forces at Appomattox Court House. After the war, Gibson married into a plantation owning family; the Davenports owned 60 slaves before Emancipation. Colonel Gibson's influence grew when he was elected mayor of Charles Town and later County justice. He retired and traveled to Ireland, writing posts for the local newspaper.



The Gibson-Todd House

In 1890, Gibson did something astonishing and, as far as I can tell, unprecedented. When the jail that had once imprisoned John Brown was torn down, Colonel Gibson bought the property, which included the very spot where the scaffold once stood. He then hired an architect and built a substantial mansion on the property. It's an uncommon home. In the successful application to have the home listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the home is described as "an 18-room, 2-story red brick structure that follows design precedents of late-19th-century eclecticism. Dominant in the irregular massing and projecting above the complex slate-covered roof of hips and multiple gables is a colossal 3-story round tower in the Norman style." Gibson erected a small monument on the property to commemorate the death of Brown. The house may be considered a trophy to Gibson's proudest accomplishment.

Perhaps equally astonishing was the architect who Gibson chose to design the home, Thomas Mullet, son of Alfred B. Mullet, the chief architect of the United States during the era of Reconstruction. Alfred Mullet built many impressive post offices, the U.S. Mint in San Francisco, and townhouses in Georgetown, but he is most notorious for building what is now the Old Executive Office Building in DC, the oddity in a city modeled on Greek and Roman antiquity. Its mansard roof is its most distinguishing feature and for decades it was the largest office building in the world and the first to be fireproofed. It is tempting to speculate that the elder Mullet is who Gibson intended to build his home, a gesture perhaps of federal reconciliation. As of yet, I haven't found evidence that this is so, but to add to the mystery, I'll note that Alfred Mullet shot himself in the head in 1890, so he would not have been able to complete the structure. A hanging, a gruesome trophy, a dramatic suicide: if this sounds like the stuff of fiction—I'm working on the novel.

Michael Drexler
Bucknell University



Portrait of John Brown



**SEA and Early America at the ASA Conference, November 17-20, 2016
and the MLA Convention, January 5-8, 2017**

Sessions from ALA:

Early American Matters Caucus: The Anatomy of Home: Early American Bodies

“At Home in U.S. Literary History? Native Women’s Presence and Absence in Antebellum Historical Fiction,” Melissa Adams-Campbell, North Illinois University

“Unruly Appetites: Food, War, and Peace in New England’s Borderlands, 1675-1750,” Carla Cevasco, Harvard University

“Sounding and Silencing the Body: Interrogating Autoptic Inquiry in Early America,” Rebecca M. Rosen, Princeton University

“The Womb of Futurity: Reproducing Creoles in Early Republican Print Culture,” Amanda Stuckey, College of William and Mary

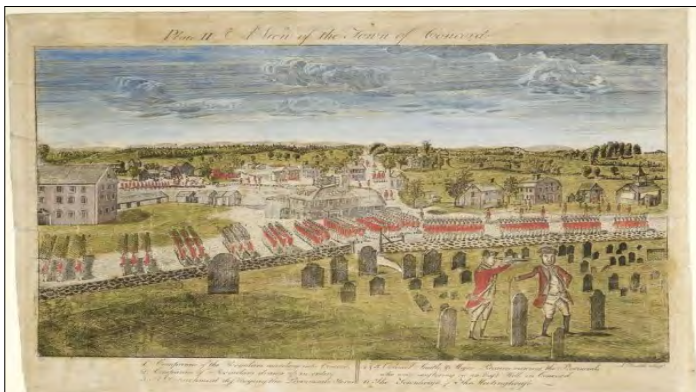
Chair: Cristobal Silva, Columbia University

Early American Matters Caucus: Colloquy with Elizabeth Maddock Dillon on *New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World, 1649-1849*

Roundtable Participants:

Corey Capers, Independent Scholar
Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, Northeastern University
Duncan Faherty, CUNY, Queens College
Daniel Hutchins, Texas Tech University
Peter Reed, University of Mississippi
Shirley R. Samuels, Cornell University
Robert Fanuzzi, St. John’s University

Chair: Dennis D. Moore



A View of the Town of Concord

Sessions from MLA:

Politics of Invocation

“‘That Very Jim Crow of a Melodramatic Wind-Bag’: Humor and the Racialized Aaron Burr,” Michael Drexler, Bucknell University

“Hamilton’s Cabinet: The Politics of Brinksmanship,” Martha Elena Rojas, University of Rhode Island

“Locating the American Revolution’s Shadow Sites,” Maria O’Malley, University of Nebraska, Kearney

“Commemorating *The Rights of Man*: Revolution or Inheritance?” Gretchen Murphy, University of Texas, Austin

Presiding: Ean High, Northwestern University

Puritanisms

Session Participants:

Michael Jonik, University of Sussex
Ana Schwartz, University of Pennsylvania
Rachel Trocchio, University of California, Berkeley

Presiding: Rebecca Rosen, Princeton Univ.

Resident/Alien

“Alien Acts: Entertaining Difference during the Haitian Revolution,” Peter Reed, University of Mississippi

“Historicizing Statelessness: The Further Adventures of Stephen Burroughs,” John Garcia, American Antiquarian Society

“Caribbean-Atlantic Routes of Slave Writings: ‘Resident/Alien’ Circumnavigated in *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself* and *Autobiografía de un esclavo*,” Natalie Aikens, University of Mississippi

“‘Upon Original Grounds’: Righting the Inverted Contract in Apeess’s Indian Nullification,” Carrie Hyde, University of California, Los Angeles

Presiding: Duncan F. Faherty, Queens College, CUNY



SEA 10th Biennial Conference: Early America and the Public
March 2-4, 2017
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Following are some select events planned for the 2017 conference:

PLENARY

Thursday, March 2, 5:00—6:15 p.m.

Event Chair: Kristina Bross, Purdue University

Chief John Baker of the Cherokee Nation and Chief Geoffrey M. Standing Bear of the Osage Nation will deliver brief opening comments and a welcome to the Society.

Plenary Speakers:

Chadwick Allen, University of Washington

“Walking the Mounds: Reactivating America’s Indigenous Earthworks Cities”

William Warner, University of California Santa Barbara
“Reality and the Novel”

WORKSHOPS

The 2017 conference will also offer three optional workshops for attendees; registration is required:

“Mississippian Contexts for Early American Studies: An Introduction to Artifacts from the Gilcrease Collections” by Philip Round, University of Iowa, and Laura Bryant, Anthropology Collections Manager, Gilcrease Museum. **Thursday, March 2, 10:45 - 12:15 a.m.**

“Reading Seventeenth Century Handwriting” by Meredith Neuman, Clark University, and Ashley Cataldo, Assistant Curator of Manuscripts at the American Antiquarian Society. **Friday, March 3, 8:00 - 9:30 a.m.**

“Reading and Teaching Indigenous Mexican Literature, from Painted Text to Verse” by Stephanie Schmidt, University of Buffalo at SUNY, and Angela Rajagopalan, University of North Carolina. **Friday, March 3, 9:45 - 11:5 a.m.**



Statue at the Gilcrease Museum

Field Trips

Thursday March 2, 2:30 PM: Trip to the Gilcrease Museum. Laura Fry, a senior curator for the Gilcrease Museum will lead a tour titled “Early American Painting at the Gilcrease Museum.”

Friday March 3, 1:30-5:30: Tour of the Cherokee Heritage Center in Tahlequa.

Saturday March 4, 9:45-12:00: Bus tour of John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park in the Greenwood District, area of the Tulsa Race Riot, 1921.



Statue in Franklin Reconciliation Park

Public Outreach

In keeping with the conference theme, “Early America and the Public,” the organizers have arranged for three related pre-conference sessions/activities on Wednesday, March 1:

Public Outreach Project: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Pre-conference Plenary: “The Public and Our Past: Finding and Connecting with Early America”: 5:00—6:15 p.m.

Chair: Zabelle Stodolla, Independent Scholar
Kristina Bross, Purdue University, English
Lorrayne Carroll, University of Southern Maine, English
Catherine Kelly, University of Oklahoma, History
Henry Clark Maddux, Appalachian State University, Director of Watauga Residential College

Reception for attendees of pre-conference panel and service project: 6:00—7:00 p.m.

SEA Business

SEA Business Meeting, March 3, 5:30—6:45 p.m.

SEA Junior Scholar Caucus Business Meeting, March 3, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Upcoming Conferences/Seminars

2017 CHAViC Summer Seminar

“In Black and White: Race and American Visual Culture”

American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA

June 9-13, 2017

Deadline: March 15, 2017

The 2017 Center for Historic American Visual Culture (CHAViC) Summer Seminar will explore how American visual culture expressed ideas about race, specifically blackness and whiteness, across the long nineteenth century. Through lectures, readings, hands-on workshops, and group research, participants will learn how popular forms of visual culture have constructed racial identities in the United States and how looking can function as a racialized practice. The seminar leader will be Tanya Sheehan, associate professor and chair of the Art Department at Colby College and editor of the Archives of American Art Journal at the Smithsonian Institution. Guest faculty will include Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor, assistant professor in the History Department at Smith College and Jasmine Nichole Cobb, assistant professor in the Department of African & American Studies at Duke University.

Participants will have the opportunity to learn from the extraordinary collections at AAS, including popular prints, political cartoons, photographs, illustrated books and periodicals, sheet music, and ephemera such as trade cards. Case studies may include: caricatures of African Americans in Edward Clay's lithographic series *Life in Philadelphia* (1828-1830), the visual culture of blackface minstrelsy and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), graphics from popular periodicals like *Harper's Weekly* that picture racial politics at key moments in U.S. history, efforts to recreate the “image of the black” by African American writer Phillis Wheatley and abolitionist Frederick Douglass, fantasies of racial difference in illustrated children's books and commercial trade cards, and efforts to visualize raced bodies in early photographic portraiture.

The seminar will be held from Friday, June 9, through Tuesday, June 13, 2017, at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. Participation is intended for college and university faculty as well as graduate students and museum professionals.

For further information and application materials, please consult the AAS website:

www.americanantiquarian.org/2017-chavic-summer-seminar

The syllabus will be posted on the website by the end of February 2017.

48th Annual ASECS Annual Meeting

March 30-April 2, 2017

Minneapolis, MN

The ASECS Annual Meeting will be held at The Hyatt Regency, Minneapolis. Workshops include “Digital Data-mining Workshop” hosted by Texas A&M University and “The Doctor Is In,” a workshop devoted to several aspects of publishing.

American Literature Association

28th Annual Conference

May 25-28, 2017

Boston, MA

This year's ALA conference will be held at the Westin Copley Place. The convenient location easily allows visits to the major historical sites throughout the city. This year's conference is hosted by Georgia Southern University.

Calls for Papers

Spaces Of Confrontation: III International Conference In Transatlantic Studies

May 12-13, 2017

Real Colegio Comptense at Harvard, Cambridge, MA

Deadline: February 27, 2017

Transatlantic culture often presents itself as a narrative of encounter and dialogue that transcend the limits of the local. However, the trace of colonialism, the living memory of exile, and an uneven distribution of economic, political, and symbolic power haunts transatlantic imagination. This conference aims to explore the many ways in which antagonisms, uneasy pluralism, and tense negotiations of difference overdetermine sites of Transatlantic cultural practices. We encourage contributions from all across the humanities and social sciences disciplines including, but not restricted to literary and cultural studies, sociolinguistics and cognitive sociolinguistics, communications, race studies, gender studies, visual and environmental studies, social studies, philosophy and intellectual history. Abstracts must be submitted to transatlanticstudies2017@gmail.com before February 27th, 2017, at midnight – United States EST.

Historical Poetics in the 18th and 19th Centuries: A Symposium at Connecticut College, New London, CT

November 3-4, 2017

Deadline: April 15, 2017

We invite proposals for presentations engaging with historical poetics across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some papers might pursue inquiries into particular poems, techniques, trends; others might consider historical poetics itself, contextualizing the phenomenon, raising methodological problems, or imagining new critical histories. We welcome proposals for either traditional twenty-minute papers (meant for panels) or shorter methodological position papers (for roundtables). We also welcome expressions of interest from scholars who would like to

participate in seminar discussions. All proposals should include a title, a brief (200-word) description of your argument and approach, and an indication of your preferred format. Proposals should be sent to historicalpoeticsC18C19@gmail.com. Questions can be addressed to Jeff Strabone at jeff.strabone@conncoll.edu. For more information, please see the symposium website: <http://www.conncoll.edu/poetics/>

Latinx Lives in Hemispheric Contexts: A Special Edition of *English Language Notes*

Deadline: August 1, 2017

ELN is seeking submissions that consider the following:

- The lives of writers, texts, or print cultures that circulate across the Americas
- How Latinx lives reshape Transamerican, US, or Western Spaces, literatures, or cultures
- The impact of the recovering the US Hispanic Literary Project.

All submissions must be 20-25 pages and sent to:

Jesse Alemán: JMAN@unm.edu

Maria A. Windell: maria.windell@colorado.edu

The Room Where It Happens: On the Agency of Interior Spaces: A symposium hosted by the Harvard Art Museums

October 13-14, 2017

Deadline: April 15, 2017

This symposium, held in conjunction with the Harvard Art Museum's forthcoming exhibition, *The Philosophy Chamber: Art and Science in Harvard's Teaching Cabinet, 1766-1820*, seeks papers that investigate spaces of artistic, artisanal and intellectual production throughout global history. From artist's studios to experimental laboratories, from offices to political chambers, rooms and their contents have long impacted history and transformed their inhabitants. We invite case studies that address questions like the following: How might an assemblage of objects within a given space intersect or clash with ideological narratives? How have secret or privileged rooms, or rooms to which access is limited, served to obfuscate and facilitate the generation and dissemination of ideas? As historians and critics, how should we interpret and recreate such spaces—many of which no longer exist? To apply, please submit a 300-word abstract and 2-page CV to laura_igoe@harvard.edu.

American Literature Association Symposium

September 7-9, 2017

Hotel Monteleone, New Orleans, Louisiana

Regionalism and Place in American Literature

Deadline: May 15, 2017

This symposium seeks to deepen our understanding of the importance of regionalism and place in past and present American literature by continuing to question spatial boundaries and definitions. Are regions confined to big patches of landscape or can cities and neighborhoods be regional? How do we address or define more recent

regional concepts like the "Postsouthern" or "Post-western"? What does regionalism look like in the 21st century and how does it define (or fail to define) our sense of place? What is it to publish or write "regionally"? We welcome paper proposals, panels and roundtable discussions on all aspects of regionalism and place within American literature and particularly encourage interdisciplinary papers and projects.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Michael Steiner, Emeritus Professor of American Studies, California State University, Fullerton.

One page proposals or panel suggestions can be sent to program director Dr. Sara Kosiba at skosiba@troy.edu.

Call for Reviewers

The *Journal of Early American History* is looking for book reviewers. Generally, the journal seeks to publish reviews around 700-1000 words (longer for review essays dealing with multiple books). Those interested should contact the book review editor with a list of their specialties and the list of subjects they would be willing to review. We are seeking authors who could write on a wide range of topics including: intellectual and cultural history; economic and labor history; religious history; Native American history; African American history; and gender history.

John Smolenski

Book Review Editor, *Journal of Early American History*
jsmolenski@ucdavis.edu



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Society of

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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@gmail.com

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: <https://www.uncpress.org/society-early-americanists-membership/>

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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