

# SEAN

## The Society of Early Americanists Newsletter



THE SOCIETY OF EARLY  
AMERICANISTS

### *From the SEA President*

#### **“Apologies for Cross-Posting”: The 2021 SEA Conference and the Benefits of Inhabiting Different Scholarly Spaces**

You see this all the time on listservs, websites, and social media—someone apologizing for possibly inundating the scholarly community with announcements (especially CFPs) the audience may have already seen elsewhere, on different channels. Is this just a largely obsolete and maybe even annoying etiquette? Is it a way of admitting that we’re communicating our professional endeavors in all the same places, never breaking out of our spheres of comfort? Or rather, does it reveal a more deep-seated anxiety about the hazards of crossing into a scholarly territory in which one might be considered an intruder, novice, imposter, or even an unwanted presence? In looking back at the 2021 Biennial SEA conference, I don’t want to opine about the pandemic or compare the relative merits of an in-person vs. a virtual conference (most likely, we will meet again in person but with significant virtual components).

To me, the conference demonstrated how important it is for our scholarly society to cross into and invite participants from other fields, audiences, geographies, and places on the supposed academic ladder (an admittedly flawed metaphor). The highlights of the conference were the panels, events, and activities where/when people who have not always already been part of the SEA made some of the most exciting contributions. In organizing the conference, I unfortunately could not witness every panel or roundtable, so I also hope to remind everyone else of similar experiences.

The most stunning moments of cross-posting (in the sense of sending one’s messages into different terrains) were the events and panels associated with the Common Reading Initiative. Immediately after Honorée Fanonne Jeffers’s keynote poetry reading from *The Age of Phillis*, four undergraduate students read their own poetry interfacing with Jeffers’s work, with Phillis Wheatley (Peters), and with a host of professional early Americanists. Their work was insightful and passionate, and the student panel’s discussion with Jeffers, following the poetry, produced a whirlwind of academic, personal, and political revelations full of courage and curiosity that energized and hopefully stunned us all.

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“Magnolia,” Mark Catesby

No need to apologize for any “cross-posting” here. The Initiative privileged teaching/pedagogy and students over faculty research and thus brought more undergraduate students to our conference than ever before. The question of who is a student, who a teacher, and who can (or is allowed to) speak in academic spaces like the SEA was most powerfully tackled and challenged during the “Phillis in Prison” panel, with students from Spelman College’s Social Justice Program reading the writing on Wheatley (Peters) produced by students at Jackson College/Michigan Department of Corrections. When students from one of the nation’s foremost historically black colleges read work by imprisoned students writing and thinking about the enslaved Senegambian poet known by her assigned name, “Phillis,” the complicated intertwining of (dis)enfranchisement and mutual recognition (one of the Spelman students reflected on her own mother’s incarceration) in the work read at this panel transcended the limitations of traditional academic inquiry.

The Indigenous and Native American Studies stream created its own host of crossings: at the “Centering the Native South” roundtable, Native women historians Brooke Bauer, Malinda Maynard Lowery, and Julie Reed not only traversed Indigeneity, history, gender, and contemporary politics, but they showcased the SEA’s crossing into public humanities work; sponsored by Georgia Humanities, this virtual keynote roundtable broadcast the crucial need for and benefits of scholarship and critical inquiry in shaping, among a wider public, an understanding of American pasts, presents, and futures in which Indigenous stories and experiences are central.

Beyond the keynote, Laura Stevens brought together Native students on the panel “Finding the Native Students at the Presbyterian School for Indian Girls: A Public Scholarship Project at the University of Tulsa;” the panel highlighted Midge Dellinger, Oral Historian of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, who subsequently was nominated by the students and won the Linda J. Lacey mentoring award by TU’s Women’s and Gender Studies Program—the first community member to receive this honor. Throughout, participants noted the centrality of Native women and their perspectives in particular at this conference.

A range of other crossings into what often seems like unfamiliar territory for the SEA happened throughout the conference: as the headliner of the LatinX Panel Stream, Rodrigo Lazo searched for a variety of definitions for what marks the X in LatinX Studies. Joycelyn Moody’s African American Studies Panel Stream Keynote provocatively probed the transhistorical intersections of Black women’s autobiographies and lives in early America and throughout American history. Many participants of the 2020 Topical Conference in Exeter—cancelled by COVID—crossed the Atlantic, albeit virtually.

The Anti-Racism Panel Stream hosted several panels that asked and productively discussed the many ways in which the SEA could not just assume its welcoming nature but more intentionally and pro-actively create a scholarly home for underrepresented groups who just don’t see themselves, their work, or their experiences reflected among us. To this end, the SEA offered for the 2021 Virtual Biennial Conference free registration for all student and contingent faculty participants and all first-time SEA attendees.

At final count, the SEA granted free registration to exactly *half* of all conference participants—241 of the total of 482. We additionally granted complimentary one-year SEA membership to individuals from underrepresented groups (including, but not limited to, African American, Native American, LatinX, and LGBTQ individuals) participating in any function at the 2021 Biennial. As a result, a very significant portion of participants for the first time came to appreciate the SEA and its activities, and they will hopefully consider joining us for future conferences and become actively involved in our society.

All in all, the 2021 SEA Biennial Conference proved that we should do a lot more cross-posting—both literally in spreading the news of our work and metaphorically in reaching out beyond the comfortable spheres in which we have moved—truly with much success—throughout almost 30 years of the SEA’s existence.

Let’s stop apologizing for “cross-posting” what we do and who we are, and let’s see who would like to join us, enjoy the SEA’s scholarly rigor and comradery, yet also help make our work more compelling and usher us to a vision of what we need to do to take on the many challenges of the future—in scholarship, teaching, and in the broader culture. “Cross-posting” should be what we *do*. Let’s send out future messages about our work and organization with the line “Thank you for cross-posting!” and see who responds.

Patrick Erben  
University of West Georgia

**Note:**

*Here at the newsletter, we would like to thank Patrick for his commitment to hosting the first Society of Early Americanists’ Virtual Biennial Conference. Hopefully, it will be the last virtual conference for some time! Patrick’s enthusiasm, cheerfulness, and willingness to spend time learning new technologies made the experience a great one for the SEA membership. Thank you, Patrick, for leading the SEA through a difficult year.*

## *From the SEA Vice-President*

As we undergo another transition in the SEA Executive Committee (EC) this summer, I would, first, like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing president, Patrick Erben, for his leadership during the past two years and for his service as a member of the EC during the last six years. As president, he has steered our organization through some turbulent times with a steady and calm hand, even when unexpected turns threatened to derail months and even years of hard work. Such was the case with the 2021 Biennial Conference, which, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, had to be moved to a fully online platform on relative short notice and after more than a year of planning and negotiating contracts with hotels and conference venues in Atlanta. Although pivoting to a fully online conference was nobody's preference, the 2021 biennial will be remembered not only as a spectacular success in its own right but also as the first of its kind in the history of the SEA. The experience with online conferencing has necessarily taught us many new things, some of which will be worth keeping during more normal times. Thank you, Patrick, for all your hard work and your never-failing cheerfulness throughout!

Second, I would like to thank Ray Craig for almost thirty years of service as the founding moderator of the EARAM-Listserv. Ray has informed us that he plans to step down from his role as moderator this summer. By virtue of his role as listserv moderator, Ray has also been serving as a member of the SEA Advisory Committee, which makes him the longest continuously serving SEA officer by far. The "Early Americanists E-Discussion List EARAM-L" was first announced in the Fall 1992 issue of these pages. It quickly grew to ca. 80 subscribers by 1994 and has over 1000 subscribers today. Thank you, Ray, for the many years of invaluable service to the SEA! The Advisory Committee has been charged with initiating a search for a new listserv moderator. Meanwhile, Laura Stevens, who has been co-moderating the list-serv for several years with Ray, has agreed to continue as co-moderator through the transition.

Last but not least, I would like to welcome Kelly Wise-cup as our new Executive Coordinator. I could not be more pleased by her successful run for this office, and I am confident that the SEA will be in good hands under her leadership in years to come. I would also like to thank Matt Cohen and Jeff Glover for standing for election last year. There is no doubt that either one of them would also have been excellent additions to the EC, and I hope they will consider running again in the near future. The SEA is blessed to have such dedicated and

capable members who are willing to step up and take our organization into the new decade.

Looking ahead to the 2023 and 2025 biennials, we have had some discussions within the EC and consultations with the Advisory Committee about moving the conference to early June, at least for the next two iterations of the Biennial and possibly beyond. Several considerations have led to this decision to depart from our tradition of having the conference in March (except for those two years in which it was held jointly with the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture [OIEAHC]). One of them is the unpredictability of the weather in March, which can throw a monkey-wrench into the travel plans of participants (as we learned in 2019 during the Eugene conference).

Also, moving the conference to a date after the completion of Spring semester (for those of us who are on a semester schedule) may allow us to make use of classroom facilities on university campuses, which would reduce the overall costs of the conference. A date in early June for our conference should not present conflicts with the regular conference dates of the other organizations with whom we share a significant membership, such as ASECS (March/April), OIEAHC (mid-June), ALA (mid-May), or the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE; July). Hence, the next Biennial has tentatively been scheduled for 8-11 June 2023 at the University of Maryland, College Park, with keynote addresses at various locations in Washington DC, including the Library of Congress; and the 2025 Biennial will be held at the new conference center (currently still under construction) and the [Morris Inn](#) on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, June 5-8. The program committee for the 2023 Biennial is currently being constituted and will begin its work shortly. A call for panel and paper proposals will go out in due time, and we will continue the tradition, begun at the "Religion and Politics" conference in St. Louis in 2018, of hosting panel streams on various topics.

In response to some conversations during our biennial last March, the EC has decided to initiate a process that, if approved, will expand the SEA's Advisory Committee (AC) to include a new officer responsible for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This new officer will join the six members currently serving on the AC—the immediate past president, the editor of the SEA's Newsletter, the webmaster, the moderator of the EARAM-listserv, one of the two co-chairs of the Junior Scholars' Caucus, and an at-large member—for a new total of seven members.

While this addition will necessitate yet another amendment of our Constitution and Bylaws (the latest revision of which were just ratified last year), we decided that this new position should be appropriately anchored in our organizational documents. We will present the proposed revisions of the Constitution and the Bylaws, to the membership for a vote in the coming months.

Ralph Bauer  
University of Maryland

### *From the Executive Coordinator*

“Media Resources for SEA Members”

The Society of Early Americanists provides an array of media outlets and resources for its members. The purpose of this article is to review the many options that are available and to give some sense of their history and management. I wish to thank Mary Balkun, Raymond Craig, Joy Howard, Susan Imbarrato, Marion Rust, and Laura Stevens for their generous contributions to the article and, more importantly, to the organization.

All of the resources listed here are available to SEA members, in some cases with a password (portions of the website) or enrollment (EARAM-L, social media). Some of the options are also available to non-members, specifically the EARAM listserv and non-member portions of the website.

Contact information for the person currently in charge of each resource is provided at the head of the section.

### **SEA WEBSITE**

The entire website is available to current SEA members, while portions of it are open to the public. The members-only pages are password-protected. The site is currently updated by Professor Susan Imbarrato, Minnesota State University Moorhead ([simbarra@mnstate.edu](mailto:simbarra@mnstate.edu)). Questions about membership access can be directed to her or to the current SEA Executive Coordinator listed on the website.

### **Under-utilized area:**

We encourage SEA Members to add to their profiles and research areas to the SEA Member Directory. All of the resources listed here are available to SEA members, in some cases with a password (portions of the website) or enrollment (EARAM-L, social media). Some of the options are also available to non-members, specifically the EARAM listserv and non-member portions of the website.

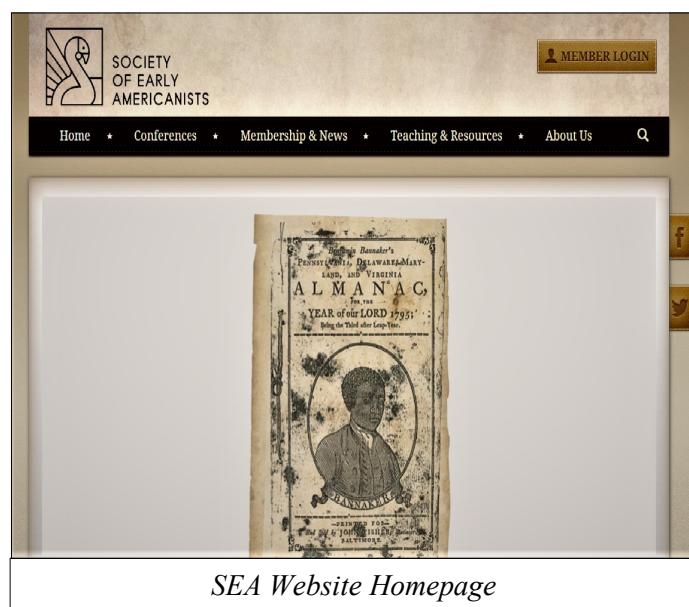
### **Origins:**

The Society of Early Americanists website was originally designed and created in 1994 by Professor Michael P. Clark, University of California, Irvine who launched the site in 1995 and served as Webmaster until 2006. In doing so, Michael Clark created a web home for early Americanists. The SEA website was indeed ahead of its time by providing a virtual community of scholars, even before we met in Charleston in 1999 for our first SEA conference. Over these years, Michael Clark gathered together a webteam to create and sustain associated pages on teaching and other resources that has included Edward J. Gallagher, Lehigh University; Hal Halbert, Valley Forge Military Academy and College; Tamara Harvey, George Mason University; Susan Imbarrato, Minnesota State University Moorhead; Mark Kamrath, University of Central Florida; Lisa Logan, University of Central Florida; Andrew Newman, State University of New York at Stony Brook, along with Raymond Craig, Bowling Green State University, who established and manages the SEA listserv.

The SEA website is a testament to Michael Clark’s generous leadership and creative vision. For more information on the Origins of the SEA and the SEA website, please see these pages:

“The Society of Early Americanists Website, a brief history” <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/about-us/archive/website-history>

“History of the Society of Early Americanists” <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/about-us/history>



### **Intended purpose:**

The SEA website serves our membership and the larger scholarly community by providing news and announcements about SEA conferences, society activities, and initiatives launched by the SEA Leadership.

The SEA website also includes our founding documents: “Mission,” “By-Laws,” and “Constitution” in the “About Us” section; records of SEA conferences from 1999 to the present on the “Conferences” page; and SEA Business Meeting Minutes in the “Archive” section.

In doing so, the SEA website is in keeping with the “SEA Bylaws, II. Media: The central platform of the Society of Early Americanists for disseminating information and providing other resources to the public and its members shall be the website at <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org>”

The current SEA website associated pages located on the “Teaching & Resources” page provide information about fellowships, teaching, and scholarly publications:

— The SEA “Early American Fellowships, Seminars, and Prizes” page, managed by Professor Tamara Harvey, George Mason University, includes information about seminars, fellowships, annual prizes, and publication opportunities related to Early American literature, history, and culture.

— The SEA “Teaching Early American Topics” page, originally created by Professor Edward J. Gallagher, Lehigh University, includes resources for teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in early American studies along with the “SEA Syllabus Exchange.” This page is currently managed by Professor Susan Imbarrato, Minnesota State University Moorhead.

The SEA “Recent Publications on Early American Topics” page, originally created by Professor Michael P. Clark, includes recent books and new releases in early American studies. This page is currently managed by Professor Susan Imbarrato, Minnesota State University Moorhead.

In 2017, SEA Vice President Gordon Sayre and Susan Imbarrato worked with the design firm Webstix to redesign the website in a WordPress format that includes a Members Only section, a SEA Member Directory, and documents related to the Society’s governance.

### **SEA NEWSLETTER:**

Edited by Professor Mary Balkun of Seton Hall University (Mary.Balkun@shu.edu), with the assistance of Kaitlin Tonti, also of Seton Hall University, the *Society*

of *Early Americanists Newsletter (SEAN)* is published biannually (fall and spring) and distributed to all active members of the Society. In addition to columns by the chief executive officers—the President, Vice-President, and Executive Coordinator—it contains regular feature columns, with content contributed by SEA members: “Teaching Early America,” “Early American Historical Sites,” and “Digital Early America.” It also includes announcements about forthcoming conferences, calls for papers, the “SEA Scholar of the Month” feature, awards and prizes, and other items of interest.

The primary goal of the newsletter is to keep the Society informed about the work of its members, about society activities, and about developments in the areas of scholarship and pedagogy. The *SEAN* can be found at the SEA website: <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/membership/newsletter>

A brief history of the newsletter can be found here: <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/membership/newsletter/newsletter-history>

Distributed to the membership as a PDF since the Spring 2015 issue, the electronic version of the newsletter has a number of advantages: it can include hyperlinks to additional resources, it is now much more cost effective for the organization, and it can be distributed more easily. Without the length restrictions of the paper edition, it is also possible to add material, such as this issue’s new feature, “Scholar’s Musings,” which focuses on little known figures/connections/intersections in early America. Members who are interested in contributing to *SEAN*—whether to one of the feature columns or with an original proposal—can contact Mary Balkun ([mary.balkun@shu.edu](mailto:mary.balkun@shu.edu)).

### **EARAM LISTSERV AND SEA MEMBER EMAIL LIST:**

The SEA listserv, EARAM-L, is a moderated electronic discussion list that is free and open to anyone who wants to sign up. A link to the listserv can be found at the SEA website: <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/membership/listserv>. Anyone with an interest in the literature and culture of America to approximately 1830 is welcome to sign up. Subscription is free of charge. While you need not be a member of the Society, SEA membership is encouraged. EARAM-L provides a means of communication about upcoming conferences, scholarly queries, course preparations, and recent publications. At present EARAM-L is moderated by Professor Raymond A. Craig of Bowling Green State University ([racraig@bgsu.edu](mailto:racraig@bgsu.edu)), with assistance from Professor Laura Stevens of the University of Tulsa ([laura-stevens@utulsa.edu](mailto:laura-stevens@utulsa.edu)).

The SEA Members-only email list is compiled with information provided by UNC Press upon purchase of a SEA membership. The email list should be distinguished from EARAM-L, described above. The members list is used by the SEA leadership to communicate with the membership on matters related to the organization. The current Executive Coordinator (as listed on the website) runs the list.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA:**

Information for this section was provided by SEA Executive Committee member Dr. Joy A. J. Howard (jajhoward@icloud.com).

The Society of Early Americanists currently uses two social media platforms, @theRealSEA on Twitter and @EarlyAmericanists on Facebook. Since 2012, numerous Executive Committee officers, advisory board members, and volunteers have given their time planning and managing these platforms. Past Executive Committee Members have been highly involved, especially Laura Stevens. Jonathan Beecher Field, Joy A. J. Howard, Kade Ivy, Casie Trotter, and Nick Miller have contributed in significant ways in the past as well. Most recently, Stacey Dearing and Kirsten Iden Lindmark have been behind our Twitter and Facebook feeds. Stacey Dearing has also done wonderful work to highlight scholars on Twitter, Facebook, and in *SEAN*. (Joy deeply apologizes if she has forgotten anyone.)

SEA has always been committed to using platforms that meet members needs and advance the reach of the Society to non-members. Meeting these goals has not always been easy because the social media landscape continues to rapidly evolve and because individual SEA officers bring with them strengths and interests that might not necessarily include social media engagement.

We know that many of our followers on Twitter and Facebook value social media interactions and we are grateful for the manner in which many of our members engage with each other, with non-members, with the media, and with the broader public about research in our field. We also acknowledge that our members and followers possess wildly different experiences on social media platforms, depending on areas of research, public visibility, and differing kinds of privilege inside and outside academia.

At present the Executive Committee is taking the time to analyze and consider user experiences, usability, member needs, and coordination with our other media presences including the listserv EARAM-L, the website, and *SEAN*. We want our activity across all our platforms to support our members and also to reach a

wider audience interested in the diverse study of the early Americas. We also want our activity and engagement to be sustainable for our all-volunteer laborers behind the scenes.

Moving forward, it is our goal to improve user experience and to design those experiences in effective ways that lend themselves to clearer evaluation and improvement. You can expect to hear more in the future from the Executive Committee about SEA's presence, goals, and plans on our social media platforms.

### **EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE AND RELATED RESOURCES:**

Edited by Professor Marion Rust of the University of Kentucky (marion.rust@uky.edu), *Early American Literature* is the official journal of the SEA and the MLA Forum on Early American Literature. Its province is American literature broadly conceived through the early national period (about 1830.) Along with work about the literatures of British America, *EAL* emphasizes: Indigenous studies, Black studies, environmental studies, gender and sexuality studies, post-humanist studies, and discussions of literatures from the Ibero-American to the Francophone and beyond. Within this range, everything published in *EAL* bears a primary relationship to language as a feature of, rather than a lens on, experience past and present. In addition to stand-alone articles, we feature creative writing ("Inventions"), polemics ("Provocations"), and archival work ("Archives"). Please see our website (<https://eal.uky.edu>) for more details.

*EAL* offers several media resources of potential benefit to SEA members. In addition to the print journal and online access through Project MUSE and other scholarly databases, the journal hosts accounts on Twitter (@Early\_Am\_Lit), Facebook (@earlyamericanliterature), and Instagram (earlyamericanliterature). *EAL* also sponsors a podcast series to coincide with each of our issues, available on Soundcloud and through our website, <https://eal.uky.edu>.

Sandra Gustafson  
University of Notre Dame



North America, 1650

### June 2021 Scholar of the Month Timothy Sweet



*Timothy Sweet*

Timothy Sweet is the Eberly Family Distinguished Professor of American Literature at West Virginia University. Currently, he is working on a book titled *Extinction and the Human*, an exploration of American exceptionalism, extinction and endangerment narratives. Sweet enjoys teaching Bradstreet, Wheatley, Apess, and Black Hawk, and novels from the 1790's. He notes that his inspirations include Michael Warner, Michael Clark, and Elizabeth Dillon. Many of his former students also serve as his inspiration, including Amy Green, Jim Greene, Mariah Crilley, and Tabitha Lowery.

### Changes to *Commonplace*

As part of our move to reimagine *Commonplace* with a fresh interface and new URL (<https://commonplace.online>), we have formed a new editorial board and have announced an ongoing call for submissions. We are seeking articles on an aspect of vast early American history, including material and visual culture, critical reviews of books, films, and digital humanities projects, poetic research and fiction, pedagogy, and the historian's craft.

We are especially interested in deep reads of individual objects, images, or documents (including in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society). Our contributor style sheet is available here: <https://commonplace.online/article/commonplace-style-sheet/>. If you have any questions about submitting to *Commonplace*, please contact Joshua Greenberg at [commonplacejournal@gmail.com](mailto:commonplacejournal@gmail.com).

Below is a list of the complete *Commonplace* Editorial Board:

- Karin Wulf (ex officio), Director of the Omohundro Institute and Professor of History, William and Mary.
- Scott Casper (ex officio), President of the American Antiquarian Society.
- Mary Balkun, Professor of English, Seton Hall University.
- Rebecca Brannon, Associate Professor of History, James Madison University.
- Shelby Balik, Associate Professor of History, Metropolitan State University of Denver.
- Tara Bynum, Assistant Professor of English & African American Studies, University of Iowa.
- Maggie Cao, David G. Frey Assistant Professor of Art History, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- Kenneth Cohen, Associate Professor of History and Director of Museum Studies, University of Delaware.
- Sara Damiano, Assistant Professor of History, Texas State University.
- Catherine Denial, Bright Distinguished Professor of American History, Knox College.
- Lindsay DiCuirci, Associate Professor of English, University of Maryland, Baltimore County.
- Francesca Gamber, Principal/Head of School and Faculty in History, Bard High School Early College Baltimore.
- John Garcia, Assistant Professor of English, Florida State University.

- Christopher Hodson, Associate Professor of History, Brigham Young University.
- Sean Harvey, Associate Professor of History, Seton Hall University.
- Peter Mancall, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities, Professor of History and Anthropology, and Linda and Harlan Martens Director of the USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute.
- Kariann Akemi Yokota, Associate Professor of History, University of Colorado Denver
- Joshua Greenberg, Editor of *Commonplace*.
- Jordan Taylor, Production Editor of *Commonplace*.

Joshua Greenberg  
Editor of *Commonplace*



### SEA Junior Scholar Presents at The Center for Digital History at the Washington Library

On May 13th, Kaitlin Tonti presented on little known eighteenth-century Quaker poet, Hannah Lawrence Schieffelin. In her talk, titled “At the Cost of Truth: Hannah Lawrence Schieffelin and the Gradual Abolition Debate,” Tonti discussed Schieffelin’s published poetry and the role that she played in a poetic debate that considered gradual abolition and Washington’s role as both President and enslaver.

Through the funds awarded by the Omohundro Institute’s Mount Vernon Digital Collection’s Award, Tonti had Schieffelin’s poetry digitized and made available at the New York Public Library.



Kaitlin Tonti

### 2023 Biennial Conference Committee Announced

The next SEA Biennial Conference will be held at the University of Maryland in early June of 2023. The conference committee has been selected and includes:

- Ralph Bauer; University of Maryland
- Gordon Sayre; University of Oregon
- Cassander Smith; The University of Alabama
- Lisa Brooks; Amherst College
- Kelly Wisecup; Northwestern University
- Sandra Gustafson; University of Notre Dame
- Joshua Piker; William and Mary
- Allison Margaret Bigelow; University of Virginia
- Abram Van Engen; Washington University St. Louis
- Marion Rust; University of Kentucky
- Alex Mazzaferro; University of California
- Anna Brickhouse; University of Virginia
- Kaitlin Tonti; Seton Hall University
- April Langley; University of Missouri



### “Early American Sources”

Early American Sources was launched in 2021 as a response to both the COVID-19 Pandemic and the academic job crisis. The indefinite closure of archives and research libraries due to the pandemic helped reveal the importance of adopting new research methods for the digital age. At the same time, the increasingly competitive nature of the historical profession necessitates easier access to primary sources for those who cannot secure traditional funding methods. Finding archives, digital sources, published collections, and funding opportunities is hard to do alone. We welcome suggestions from the public on where to find early American sources. You can always email us at [earlyamericansources@gmail.com](mailto:earlyamericansources@gmail.com) or tweet at us on [Twitter](#)!

Early American Sources was created by Joseph Thomas Ross, an independent scholar who specializes on the early American state and Anglo-American imperialisms in North America. You can follow him on [Twitter](#) and email him at [joeross1800@outlook.com](mailto:joeross1800@outlook.com). (From <http://www.earlyamericansources.org/about>)

## *Scholar's Musings* "Philip Quaque"

With the exception of Olaudah Equiano, Philip Quaque (pronounced Kwah-koo) was the most prolific writer of African descent in the eighteenth century. Quaque was known in Britain, North America, and West Africa during his lifetime because accounts of his activities and a very tiny portion of his surviving 50,000-word manuscript correspondence were published on both sides of the Atlantic. Accounts of his missionary work in Africa appeared in popular venues such as *The Gentleman's Magazine* throughout the last half of the eighteenth century. He was known to contemporaneous writers of African descent: Equiano and Phillis Wheatley both mention him. Wheatley was known to Quaque through a shared North American correspondent who published brief parts of letters from each of them in New England. But unlike other eighteenth-century authors of African descent, Quaque never experienced the Middle Passage, enslavement, or life in the Americas. Extraordinarily, he interacted far more closely with the African producers and European consumers of enslaved Africans than with the enslaved themselves. In evidence given in Parliament during the debate in the 1780s and 1790s over abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, abolitionists cited Quaque as an authority on West Africa. He is recognized as a pioneer in the Christian missionary project in Africa, as well as being the founding father of the modern, and westernized, Ghanaian educational system. His correspondence offers an unparalleled perspective on the effects in Africa of the slave trade, its abolition, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, indigenous African slavery, and the culture in and around Cape Coast Castle.

Quaque was born around 1741 at Cape Coast, on the Gold Coast of Africa (present-day Ghana). He was a member of the extended family of the dominant local African ruler, who agreed to have him go to England in 1754 to be educated and trained as a Christian missionary. London-based Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (hereafter SPG) affiliated with the Anglican Church of England. Examined by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishops of Lincoln and Winchester on 17 May 1765 at the General Meeting of the SPG, Quaque was appointed "Missionary, Catechist and Schoolmaster to the Negroes on the Gold Coast in Africa with a salary of £50 per annum with effect from 25<sup>th</sup> March (Lady Day last), 1765." Quaque, his English wife, and her maid left England for Africa in November 1765, arriving at Cape Coast Castle on 5 February 1766. Cape Coast Castle was his missionary base for nearly fifty years.

One of Quaque's duties was to report regularly to the SPG on his (lack of) progress in converting his fellow native Africans to Christianity. The SPG rarely reciprocated his correspondence. Despite Quaque's geographical isolation in Africa, and his relative lack of communication from the SPG, he and his mission on the Gold Coast were known throughout the British Atlantic world. The SPG annually published in London and distributed on both sides of the Atlantic *Abstracts* of its missionaries' progress, along with copies of the Anniversary Sermons delivered in the third week of February. Transatlantically circulated newspapers and magazines mentioned Quaque and his activities. And transatlantic slave-trading captains and crewmembers enabled him to communicate with correspondents in North America. Before the end of 1767, Quaque responded to a letter brought to him by a slave-ship captain from the Reverend Samuel Johnson in Stratford, Connecticut, asking about his progress as a missionary and teacher. During their correspondence between 1766 and Johnson's death in 1772, Johnson, also an SPG-sponsored missionary, sent Quaque grammar books for his school and encouraged him to re-marry. In exchange, Quaque sent Johnson discouraging reports of his lack of missionary success.

In 1771, another American slave-ship captain brought him a letter from the Reverend Edward Bass, an SPG missionary in Newburyport, Massachusetts, inquiring "whether there is any seeming prospect of establishing Christianity [in Africa] or whether that cursed Slave Trade was not the chief Obstruction." The following year, another captain brought Quaque a letter from a third SPG-sponsored missionary, the Reverend Samuel Fayerweather in North Kingston, Rhode Island, asking similar questions. Quaque's subsequent correspondence with Fayerweather brought Quaque in 1773 to the attention of the Congregationalist minister Reverend Samuel Hopkins of Newport, Rhode Island, "who earnestly Petitions to be informed of the Manner and Customs of the People of Africa, the way of Life, and method of the Slave Trade, and whether the Introduction of two Natives belonging to Annamaboe (Anomabu) could be happily affected, without the Danger of loosing their Lives, either from their Tribe or Town's People, or from the more Unchristian, the more Savage, Traders."

Comments made on both sides of Quaque's transatlantic correspondence with the New England ministers suggest that they may have prompted him to consider his attitude toward the slave trade and slavery for the first time. Determining where Quaque stood is difficult, if not impossible, given the limited and conflicting evidence. His position, like those of many of his contemporaries, appears to have evolved during the last half of the eighteenth century. When he first returned to Africa in 1766, the economic rationale for the transatlantic slave trade went largely unquestioned.

Cultural justifications for the transatlantic slave trade also went generally unquestioned before the last decades of the century. For example, Quaque mentions the curse of slavery allegedly placed on "the supposed Race of Ham" (19 May 1773) and "the supposed Race of Cain" (19 March 1774) to, respectively, Hopkins and the SPG. But Quaque's repeated use of "supposed" indicates that he knew that no Biblical authority for such alleged curses exists. Quaque mentions in his 5 April 1769 letter to Reverend Johnson "that just remark of yours with respect to that cursed slave trade is the only obstruction to the ministering in these desolate parts," as if to say that Johnson first brought to his attention the possibility of a causal relationship between the trade and Quaque's difficult mission. But the idea soon became his own. On 19 May 1773, Quaque refers to the trade as "that horrid, Barbarious and Inhuman Practice" in a letter to Reverend Hopkins. Quaque also offers in the same letter a response to the apology for the transatlantic slave trade frequently made by its proponents, the claim that Europeans began buying enslaved African prisoners of war to save them from being otherwise killed by their fellow African captors. Quaque argues that by creating a market for slaves, Europeans have encouraged Africans to kidnap and falsely condemn their countrymen into slavery, as well as to start more wars to produce prisoners to sell. And in his 31 July 1775 letter to Reverend Bass, Quaque upbraids him for the hypocrisy of Americans who complain of political oppression while condoning slavery: "In your Epistle You seem to lament bitterly of your Mother Country for Universal Liberty. You, upon whom the light of the Gospel flourishes and abounds, and if I may be allowed the Expression, as it were advancing daily towards the seat of Bliss, find the Hardships of Bondage and Oppression! Good God, can this be possible! when I behold with Sorrowful sighing my poor abject Countryman over whom You, without the Bowels of Christian Love and Pity, hold in cruel Bondage. This Iniquitous Practice, methinks, seems to set Religion aside, and only making Room for the height of Ambition and Grandeur, the pride of Monarchs &c. to enter."

Quaque became part of the eighteenth-century transatlantic conversation about slavery, religion, repatriation to Africa of former slaves, and the conversion of Africans to Christianity. Reverend Hopkins brought Quaque to the attention of Phillis Wheatley, the first African American to publish a book, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (London, 1773). Hopkins made Wheatley known to Quaque by sending him a copy of her proposal for her book on 10 December 1773. And in 1776 Hopkins, along with Ezra Stiles, published pieces of Hopkins's correspondences with, respectively, Wheatley and Quaque in *To the Public* (Newport, Rhode Island), marking the first time Quaque's words found their way into print. Stiles and Hopkins were soliciting contributions to train and repatriate two formerly-enslaved native Africans, Bristol Yamma and John Quamine, back to Africa as Christian missionaries. Hopkins had enclosed an earlier version of the 1776 publication in his 10 December 1773 letter to Quaque, in which he sought Quaque's aid in locating Quamine's family. *To the Public* revealed that Quaque had successfully done so. When Matthias Macnamara, a former governor of Senegambia, wrote in 1779 in support of Equiano's unsuccessful application to the Bishop of London to be sent to Africa as an Anglican missionary, he cited Quaque as an exemplar, "a very respectable character, a black priest, at Cape Coast Castle." The American Revolution ended the proposed African missions of Quamine, Yamma, and Equiano, as well as Quaque's transatlantic correspondence, and with it his most direct extant objections to the slave trade.

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Vincent Carretta  
University of Maryland



*Prayer Meeting (this image does not depict Quaque)*

*Early American Historical Sites*  
**“Revolutionary Union County: The Caldwell Parsonage Tragedy”**

Sitting unassumingly on a side street off Caldwell Avenue and West Chestnut Street in Union Township, New Jersey, is a restored parsonage where an overlooked but major turning point of the Revolution occurred. The wooded, undeveloped land where British and Patriot forces fought is now replaced with summer noise pollution from the Garden State Parkway traffic, lawnmowers, and the occasional plane headed to Newark airport. The quiet and contemplation that one might associate with such a historical yet tragic spot is erased by modern invention. Life moves on without much recognition of the signs and stones that tell the story of a young pastor's wife cut down by a British bullet in her own home or the way that a young husband's grief motivated the continental army in their victory at the Battle of Springfield.

A half-hour trip to New York City by train, three separate historical sites reveal a story arc in the larger Revolutionary New Jersey legacy. Before the British and continental armies would clash, the land belonged to three Lenni Lenape tribes and was later taken by Connecticut farmers in the 1600s (Union Township Historical Society). In June of 1780, General Wilhelm von Knyphausen, a Hessian soldier, plotted an attack against Washington's sickly, tired, and frustrated troops near where the Connecticut Farm Presbyterian Church stood (Rajoppi). However, a stunned Knyphausen was unprepared for the pushback he received when arriving. It should have been simple for a 6,000-man army to take on 3500 of Washington's defeated soldiers.

Yet, Knyphausen's troops struggled to move through mountainous terrain, finding it impossible to navigate through the Hobart Gap in the Watchung Mountains. Many patriot soldiers lived because the woods provided them a necessary defense against Knyphausen's advances (Flemming 13). Eventually, the British and Hessian troops were forced to retreat, but not before burning down the Connecticut Farms church and surrounding areas (Rajoppi). Few soldiers were killed at the Battle of Connecticut Farms (Scammel), but a greater tragedy would spark the flame needed for the victory at the Battle of Springfield.

Not far from the Connecticut Farms church lived the Reverend James Caldwell, his wife Hannah, and their children. Caldwell, ordained in 1755 at what is now Princeton University, was the pastor at Connecticut Farms through the Revolutionary War years (UTHS). As noted by the Union Township Historical Society, it was not uncommon for pastors to preach openly about the cause for liberty.

Yet, Caldwell took his patriotism one step further and served as the “chaplain of the third New Jersey Brigade” (UTHS). In 1763, the Reverend and Hannah Caldwell were married, later taking residency with their children at what is now known as the Caldwell Parsonage. Hannah sided with her husband's fierce opposition to the British occupation and spoke openly about King George III's policies (UTHS). Hannah stayed behind at the parsonage when the British stormed Connecticut Farms, hoping to protect it from arson.



*Caldwell Parsonage in Union Township, New Jersey*

From this point on, the story gets complicated; what can be agreed upon is that Hannah, her maid, and children retreated to a room that only had one window and was farthest from the fighting (Rajoppi). One account suggests that a “squat” British “soldier wearing a red coat” purposely crossed the road with the intent to shoot into the house. Hannah, pulling her son, Elias, away to safety from the window, was then hit and killed in an act of cold-blooded murder (UTHS).

Flemming doubts this theory, suggesting instead, “The soldier caught a glimpse of her as she moved away from the window. It was a bright, sunny day, and it seems doubtful that a man standing several feet from the window could see very far into a room” (161-162). As Hannah's body was removed from the home, it is reported that the British broke in, looted the house, and later set it on fire. The parsonage was rebuilt in 1782 and is now home to the Union Township Historical Society (Rajoppi).

Devasted, Pastor Caldwell and other soldiers used Hannah's death as a rallying cry at the Battle of Springfield, which occurred just days after the Battle of Connecticut Farms. Many soldiers commanded by Nathaniel Greene avenged Hannah's death on the battlefield and later viewed the Patriot's victory at Springfield as a turning point in the war (UTHS). The Battle of Springfield is more acknowledged by historians than the Battle of Connecticut Farms, but Springfield would not have been possible without Connecticut Farms and Hannah Caldwell's death.

Like the Battle of Connecticut Farms, the Battle of Springfield has maintained its own legacy in Union County, New Jersey. Only a five-minute drive from the Caldwell Parsonage stands the Cannonball House. It, too, is an unassuming structure, its history engulfed by corporate buildings and a new Walgreens recently built across the street. During the battle, the Cannonball House was struck by a cannonball that remained stuck in the side of the home until the 1920's when it naturally fell out (Cantwell).

Flemming notes that Knyphausen viewed the Battle of Springfield as a second chance to regain ground after his failure at the Battle of Connecticut Farms (232). The British were again thwarted by mountainous terrain and the unexpected arrival of more than 2,000 of the Continental army. Despite it having been burned and later restored, many believe that the Caldwell Parsonage is haunted. According to Barbara La Mort, a member of the UTHS, "over the past few years, individual UTHS members—working alone or in pairs— have heard inexplicable noises." At the same time, electronic voice phenomenon recordings suggest the presence of spirits (Knopp).



Connecticut Farms Presbyterian Church in Union Township, New Jersey



Cannonball House in Union Township, New Jersey

Unable to take an inside tour, this author cannot verify La Mort's claims. However, on an unusually cold, rainy July day, there is an unsettling harbinger that the 1780 tragedy is relived in the tarnished rock commemorating the spot where Hannah was shot and the mass grave of Hessian and Patriot soldier alike.

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Seton Hall University

*Teaching Early America*  
**“Pairing Cotton Mather with Elizabeth Gaskell: Teaching the Salem Witch Trials During the Spring 2021 Pandemic Semester”**

In an English undergraduate class titled *Early American Outlaws*, I teach a unit that centers on the Salem Witch Trials. We read short selections from Cotton Mather’s *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693), but we focus our time together reading all of Mather’s *Brand Pluck’d Out of the Burning* (1693) about the possession of 15-year-old Mercy Short. I find this piece to be one of the more readable accounts about the trials for students and one they have not encountered prior to the class. It’s readable because it focuses on one girl’s narrative and arguably provides a more easily analogical literary lens to read Mather’s relationship with the trials and those within it. Alongside these Mather pieces, I assign Victorian writer Elizabeth Gaskell’s 1861 novella, *Lois the Witch*. Gaskell’s brief text relays a fictitious account of a girl the same age as Mercy Short who travels from England to America after being orphaned to live with U.S. relatives. Lois is ultimately accused of witchcraft and is killed because of the differences she has from her relatives.

A primary goal in all of my early American literature courses is to have students encounter the literature they read on its own merits, to decipher and contemplate the language when they can and to treat what they’re reading, including historical documents, as literature. When it comes to the Salem Witch Trials, students have often already decided the relevance of the trials in U.S. culture and history, though, so getting them to encounter and engage with the readings in my classes has proven more difficult than I imagined it would be. Often, they’ve been taught about the trials’ relevance in history classes or they’ve been taught Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* (1953). While this prior knowledge can be useful, it has often taken precedence in students’ class discussions and understanding of the literature, even as they read Mather’s writing firsthand. Mather’s older, formal style can make his writing feel inaccessible, while the content may be of interest.

Gaskell’s *Lois the Witch* provides students with a new imaginative, historical, and transatlantic frame of reference for the students. Through *Lois the Witch* students learn that the trials have been considered a litmus test for British Victorian culture, which garners fruitful discussion about the trials’ longstanding socio-political interpretations. Moreover, having two very differently depicted girls—both a “true” account and a “fictional” one—has helped students spend time sifting through Mather’s narrative in a more nuanced, thoughtful way than they have without this comparative framework.



*Student Example of an “Unessay” Project*

During the spring 2021 semester, my students were completely online because of the pandemic and I assigned an “unessay,” with the key instruction for this assignment being to craft a digital argument about a text (or comparing two texts) from the unit on Mather and Gaskell. Students had to display their close reading skills and cite any sources they used, but otherwise, the project’s scope was up to them. Again, my hope here was that students would open up to new avenues of thought about the Salem Witch Trials’ readings we were encountering. I was not disappointed. Students imagined feminist Twitter threads between Mather and Gaskell, narrated contemporary ghost stories mimicking Mather’s style and language patterns, wrote poetry inspired by both authors’ competing visions of girlhood, and created a tapestry made of old papers they’d written symbolic of Mather and Gaskell’s different ideas about faith, in addition to myriad other creative projects. With the student’s permission, a photo of the tapestry project is included. Along with the tapestry project was a discussion of the student’s choices. A short portion of that part reads as follows: “In the tapestry, Lois hangs by the vices of society—things like ‘abuse of authority,’ ‘heartless treatment,’ etc.” (Tapestry).

These are what kill her. The center black portion tells what happened to Lois, tells her truth. It reads: “society with a common fear / acts with violent, self-seeking intentions. // a young girl decides to die / refusing to repent of their lie.” After they turned in their Mather/Gaskell unessays, students completed a discussion board reflection about their experience and met with me synchronously via Zoom to debrief. One theme that consistently came up in their written and conversational class reflections that I found significant was that students stated they had originally believed that Puritans and those in the past were, quite simply, unintelligent.

In other words, the students could not fathom a scenario like the Salem Witch Trials happening today because society and humankind has obviously evolved to be more discerning. Reading Mather and Gaskell together—realizing the authors’ perspectives on the trials were different based on time period and historical moment, and then asking students to find ways to be creative with the authors’ disparate writing by making that writing contemporary to the students’ current experiences through the unessay project—helped students realize that earlier writers do have contemporary resonance without my having to tell them.

Nor did the students rely on prior knowledge of others telling them this concept, which, as aforementioned, has often seemed a performative act when discussing the Salem Witch Trials rather than a deep contemplation of literature actually written about the trials. That students came to this conclusion, and others from their experiences of reading and discovering Mather and Gaskell on their own accord, means that this author pairing and unessay assignment is one I will continue to use and one that I would hope would provide similar results for other literature professors teaching about the Salem Witch Trials.

LuElla D’Amico  
University of the Incarnate Word



Examination of a Witch by Thompkins H. Matteson

## Digital Early America “Reflections on Digital Scholarship Presented at the SEA Biennial Conference”

Digital Early America  
*The SEA conference session on “Digital Early America” highlighted seven projects that exemplified the range of work being done on digital early America. Those projects are presented in brief here.*

The digitalization and publishing of early American materials online is changing the face of scholarship and teaching in our field, making materials available that had not been before, or making them available in new forms and with new supporting structures (annotation capability, maps, images, and so on). The seven projects described below, treating a range of years and geographical regions, illustrate the kind of work that is taking place in digital early America.

**Early Visions of Florida** (<https://earlyfloridalit.net>) offers a gateway for those seeking to explore the region’s still untapped literary history, particularly its circulation and translation within the realm of the imaginary. Student contributors to this site prepare the texts and headnotes, using these individual recovery projects to launch original research.



Home page for Early Visions of Florida

**Crèvecoeur’s Letters from an American Farmer** (<https://scalar.usc.edu/works/crevecoeur--letters-from-an-american-farmer/index>), created in Scalar, incorporates the apparatus of a print critical edition—annotations, contextual information, and critical commentary—while also allowing readers to engage with the text through comments and live links.

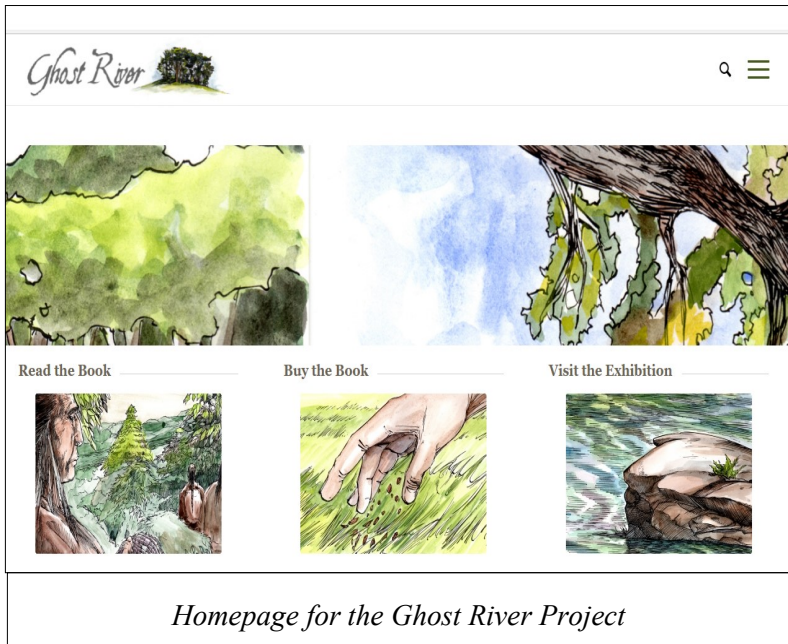
**Musical Passage: A Voyage to 1688** (<https://musicalpassage.org>) was designed to make it possible for scholars, musicians, and students to interpret a fascinating record of early African Atlantic performance.

**The Multepal Project** (<https://multepal.github.io/popolwuj/>) is a Mesoamerican Studies research initiative at the University of Virginia whose current focus is on preparing digital critical editions of the Maya K'iche' narrative *Popol Wuj*.

**Ben Franklin's World** (<https://benfranklinworld.com/>) is a podcast about the early American past hosted by Liz Covart for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture.

**Ghost River** (<https://ghostriver.org/>), which developed from another digital humanities project ([Digital Paxton](#)), is an educational graphic novel that introduces new interpreters and new bodies of evidence to highlight the Indigenous victims and their kin.

**The Makandal Text Network** (<https://ecda.northeastern.edu/makandal-text-network-2/>) is a digital exhibit with the *Early Caribbean Digital Archive* (ECDA) mapping, curating, and contextualizing materials about the life and legacy of Francois Makandal.



***Interested in Writing a Column for SEAN?***

We are always looking for SEA members to contribute to our regular columns:

- Early American Historical Sites: Early American Historical Sites features stories both popular and little known preserved historical sites.
- Digital Early America: Digital Early America accepts columns about new and insightful digital projects that advance the study of early American in the digital age.
- Teaching Early America: Members are asked to contribute columns on their unique and interdisciplinary approaches on teaching early American material.

**\*\*NEW SEAN FEATURE\*\***

- Scholarly Musings: Scholar's Musings" is a new SEAN feature that addresses little known figures/connections/intersections in early America.

If you or someone you know is interested, please send a brief inquiry, including your name, institution, and topic idea—for these columns or another submission—to the SEA newsletter editor, Mary Balkun ([mary.balkun@shu.edu](mailto:mary.balkun@shu.edu)).

*The deadline for the fall newsletter is January 15.  
The deadline for the spring newsletter is June 15.*

MULTEPAL EDITION OF THE *POPOL WUJ*

A digital critical edition of the K'iche' Mayan book of creation

This site presents a digital critical edition of the K'iche' Mayan book of creation produced by Multepal Project at the University of Virginia. We expect to develop several versions of text, each presenting the text from a particular editorial or critical perspective.

PARAGRAPHS AND TOPICS VERSION

This version presents the TEI-encoded text prepared by the Multepal team with line breaks removed, manuscript page breaks represented as milestones, and inferred paragraph breaks added. It is intended to represent the text in so-called logical form, that is, as a discursive structure independent of its documentary vehicle. This has two advantages. First, it presents the text as it was meant to be read. Second, it allows for the natural representation of annotations of the text that cross line and page boundaries. Other editions of the text will emphasize its material structure. The edition contains highlighted segments of the text that correspond to topics on the Multepal database; these are links that launch pop-up menus describing the topic, along with a link back to the Multepal database for more information.

[View the text](#)

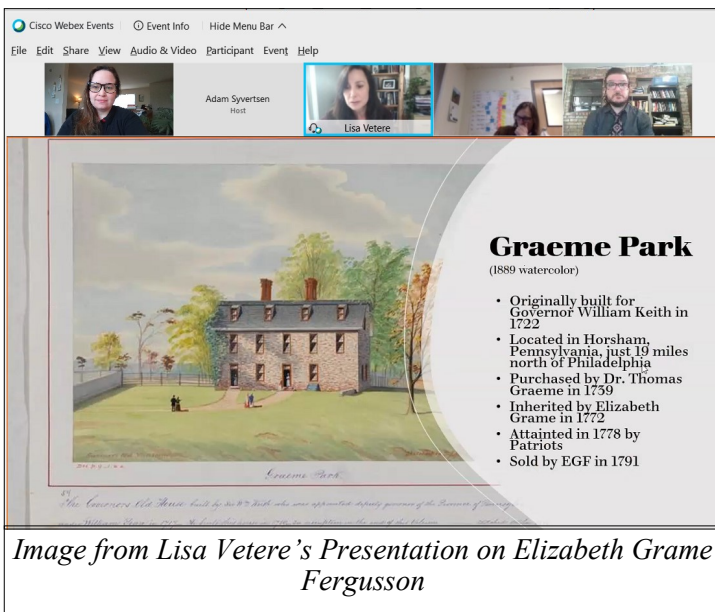
Facsimile of the *Popol Wuj*, Folio 1, recto. Courtesy of the Newberry Library and the Ohio State University Libraries.

Homepage for The Multepal Project

Scholarship at its most thrilling is like a sucker punch—startling, toe-curling, spine-vibrating: the body kicked out of time, the mind moving very quickly without a path. My first SEA was a string of such moments. Rose Library's close look at the Phillis Wheatley (Peters') copybooks turned into a treasure hunt around the letter H. In "Unheard Verse: Finding American Women's Poetry," Lisa Vetere and Kaitlin Tonti explored the politics and entanglements of underappreciated poets, Hannah Lawrence Schieffelin and Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson.

Dr. Tara Bynum's compassionate laughter greeted us at the "Publishing, Professionalism and the Junior Scholar" panel. In separate events, Cathy Kelly and Ana Schwartz spoke boldly of the nuances of being in scholarly community. At the Q&A of "Remembering Black Writers of the American Revolution." Drs. Bynum, Derrick Spires, Kacy Tillman and Adam Xavier McNeil spoke of confidence networks, the desire of some things to be inscrutable or forgotten, then asked whether we "can consider flight as a type of political declaration."

The sheer multi-generationality of the panels around the common reading initiative culminated in Honorée Fanone Jeffers' reading on Friday night, a perfect lead-up to the last stop, "Race, Gender, Homosocial Spaces, and the Bonds of Motherhood"—a unique collection of Wheatley papers by students with Cassander Smith; the weekend's perfect period.



*Image from Lisa Vetere's Presentation on Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson*

I've found myself thinking back to the cocktail gathering, where Lisa Gordis and Brigitte Fielder told stories of their own first conferences. Patrick Erben's warmth for all things SEA and community could be felt even through a screen.

Please, send me an email, reach out any time. Your words cracked my world open.

Jenny Factor  
Caltech HSS



Academic professional conferences were not the only area of our lives impacted by the Covid-19 virus. Covid changed the way we teach, take classes, research, and upended every aspect of our personal and professional lives. Our professional academic organizations were also impacted by the virus. During the end of the Spring 2020 semester, professional organizations that had conferences scheduled began postponing or rescheduling them for Summer 2020.

While some academic organizations resisted alternate formats to professional conferences, others began to explore virtual options as the world shut down amid the Covid pandemic in an effort to reduce exposure and stop the spread of the virus. As Summer turned into Fall, most universities continued teaching remotely with closed campuses. Academic professional organizations had tough decisions to make about the modality of conferences scheduled for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. The SEA was not excluded from this quandary for our Twelfth Biennial Conference.

Professionalization, attending academic conferences in our specialty areas, is a highly desired activity expected of junior scholars. For those of us who are graduate students working towards our PhD, attending and participating in professional conferences is not just an expectation by our home institutional department but also adds a desirable entry on our CV as we prepare to enter the job market.

Personally, attending academic conferences allows me the opportunity to gain valuable feedback and experience presenting my scholarship. Attendance at professional conferences is not only valuable experience for junior scholars but it also allows for an opportunity to network and get to know many experienced academics in our specific area as well; at least, this was the case prior to Covid. Covid changed so much in our daily lives and even changed the way our professional conferences were planned and conducted.

For the SEA, our Twelfth Biennial Conference was scheduled to take place in person at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, March 2021, and due to the pandemic was ultimately changed to an online format. For many of us, attending an online conference was a first, not to mention that for many organizations this was also a first: planning a fully functioning online conference. Granted, social opportunities like mixers and casual conversations took place on Zoom, and while they still fostered some sense of community, it was overshadowed by distance.

Junior Scholars can find attendance at professional conferences like the SEA beneficial in many ways, but often have to limit attendance at conferences due to the expense. As a result of the pandemic, virtual conferences afforded many Junior Scholars a rare opportunity to attend more conferences with the only cost being registration fees. Since the 2021 Biennial Conference was virtual, the SEA was able to waive the attendance fee for Junior Scholars in need this year, as a result making accessibility to the virtual conference easily attainable.

The SEA 2021 Biennial Conference was my first attendance at a conference that aligned with my area of specialization. It was highly informative to attend and listen to the wide breadth of scholarship that represents the state of our field. I have been a member of the SEA for about four years and was not able to attend the 2019 conference in Eugene, Oregon for lack of funding opportunities at my home institution. It meant a lot to me to finally be able to attend a SEA conference. The virtual format meant audience members could access one panel after another, even if they were running a bit behind, without fear of interrupting speakers.

Presenters also had flexibility to present their scholarship in a modality that best suited their needs, live presentation with Q&A or prerecorded presentation with live Q&A. The flexibility of presentation modality was especially useful for those in faraway time zones. The drawback to a virtual conference format was the lack of spontaneous casual interaction with society members and informal follow-up discussions among panelists during lunch or dinner.

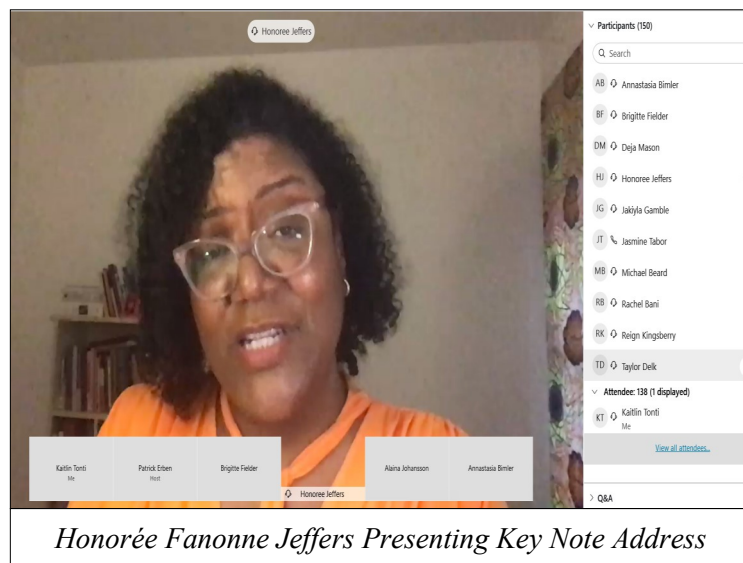
Our fearless leader and organizer, Patrick Erben, scheduled virtual mixers and conference Slack Channels to help foster some of the same personal interactions of an in-person conference. Still, I miss those face-to-face interactions; I think we all do.

The Junior Scholars Caucus hosted a live roundtable panel on “Publishing, Professionalism, and the Junior Scholar” with editors and well published scholars. The roundtable discussion was useful, no matter what career stage attendees were at. Marion Rust, Joshua Piker, Laura Stevens, Tara Bynum, and Catherine Kelly offered sage advice from editing, publishing, and personal experience.

As a PhD candidate I found their candor and useful advice eased some of my writing and publishing anxieties, which was a recurring theme among attendees during the panel discussion. I do not think it is possible to attend too many professionalization discussions and workshops no matter what stage of my academic career I am in.

Despite the challenges during this Biennial Conference Patrick Erben and the SEA planning committee did an excellent job putting together a virtual conference. It makes me wonder if the pandemic will change the format of academic conferences in the future. Now that technology is in place to host virtual formats, will organizations like SEA add on-demand, pre-recorded presentations to provide accessibility for those who may not be able to afford or are too far away to attend the face-to-face conference? I would rather attend a face-to-face conference, but there is also an advantage to being able to watch prerecorded presentations at my leisure.

Kristy Cherry-Randle  
Florida State University



## Upcoming Conferences

### Study for the Society of American Women Writers Triennial Conference

November 4-7, 2021

**Theme: American Women Writers: Ecologies, Survival and Change**

This year's SSAWW conference will focus on "ecologies" as a term that draws connections between race, gender, families, and environment. Topics such as environmental exploitation as it relates to conflicting ethics and values will be discussed.

The registration deadline is September 1, 2021. SSAWW conference information can be found here: <https://ssawwnew.wordpress.com/2021-ssaww-triennial-conference/>.



### Calls for Papers

#### Thirteenth International Melville Society Conference, 2022

Paris, France,  
June 27 –30

The conference will explore Melville's life, work, and legacies through a series of papers and conversations devoted to the theme of "Melville's Energies" broadly conceived.

We invite proposals for individual papers or panels organized around Melville's Energies as it relates to historicist, theoretical, textual, biographical, and pedagogical approaches to Melville's writings and to the history of their reception in criticism, adaptation, the digital world, popular culture, politics, environmentalism, aesthetics, or the fine arts. As situated in Paris, the conference will also foreground the energies that flow outward from Melville's deep engagement with French/francophone literature, history, art, philosophy, science, and culture.

We invite papers that explore Melville's work in light of the relation between **energy and aesthetics**. Melville's energies are poetic, fictional, textual, and their currents flow throughout his oeuvre. Can reading his opus as "a being at work" (*energeia*) prompt us to reconsider his experiments with literary forms and genres? How is his aesthetic expression realized as representations of the energies of bodies in motion: the swiftness of the whale or the ship borne by the breeze; the stasis of *Bartleby*; the strike of *Billy Budd*? How might his words or phrases be thought of passages of energies, or, in turn, energize interpretations?

Papers could deploy "energies" as a key term for current **theoretical approaches to Melville's works**, including how French writers, critics, philosophers, artists, and filmmakers have drawn on his writing, or translated it into French. How has Melville's writing energized French writers and philosophers: Camus, Giono, Sartre, Blanchot, Bachelard, Derrida, Deleuze, Cixous, Szendy, or Rancière? **A Parisian Melville is a French Melville, but a French Melville is also a global Melville.** We welcome papers that explore his work in the context of world Francophone culture and histories of colonialism, revolution, and war, the French Atlantic and the French Pacific.

The full CFP is also available on the new Melville Society website: <https://www.melvillesociety.org/news/cfp-for-paris-2022-gzpr4>. Please submit proposals by **September 15, 2021** to [melvillesenergies2022@gmail.com](mailto:melvillesenergies2022@gmail.com). Paper proposals should not exceed 300 words, and panel proposals should not exceed 1000 words. Please include brief bios of 100 words. In the subject line please use the format ["proposal type, surname," e.g. "Paper, Smith"] and name the file using the format ["surname, first name," e.g. "Smith, John"]. Please direct any questions to [melvillesenergies2022@gmail.com](mailto:melvillesenergies2022@gmail.com).

#### "Pandemic Adaptation"

NeMLA 2022

Baltimore, MD, March 10-13

This panel explores what adaptation studies, which focus on the ways texts change to suit new languages, new media, and new historical and cultural situations, can learn from fiction that focuses on epidemics, infections, viral mutations, and other plagues, and what studies of biological adaptation and evolution can learn from examples, analyses, or theories of textual adaptation. Please send suggestions and questions to Thomas Leitch ([tleitch@udel.edu](mailto:tleitch@udel.edu)) and submit completed 250-word abstracts and A/V requirements by 30 September 2021. All abstracts must be submitted through the NeMLA website: <http://www.buffalo.edu/nemla/convention/callforpapers.html>.

#### "Women Writing About Houses"

NeMLA 2022

Baltimore, MD, March 10-13

How does women's writing about houses open these physical constructs into psychic spaces, creating lenses through which to view self, relationships, and time? Submit proposals by Sept. 30. All abstracts must be submitted through the NeMLA website: <http://www.buffalo.edu/nemla/convention/callforpapers.html>.

**Animal Studies in Nineteenth Century  
Literature  
NeMLA 2022  
Baltimore, MD, March 10-13**

In the nineteenth century, human-animal relations in the West were transformed by urbanization, industrialization, and developments in political liberties, agriculture, natural history, and genetics, among others. Concurrent with the human exploitation of animals were human activities in evolutionary science and natural history that disrupted justifications of those practices. This panel will feature papers that bring animal studies to bear on works of western literature in the nineteenth century, with some attention to elements of broader change in politics, ideology, society, and human attitudes toward animals. Special consideration will be given to proposals that focus on teaching animal studies in nineteenth century literature and those that figure the cultural work and critical agency of animals in the midst of change.

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Paper proposals should run between 200 and 300 words and are due by September 20, 2021. All abstracts must be submitted through the NeMLA website:  
<http://www.buffalo.edu/nemla/convention/callforpapers.html>.

***Scripting the Past in the Present: Early America and Contemporary Culture***

Editors: Patrick M. Erben and Rebecca L. Harrison  
**Proposal Deadline: September 3, 2021**

The editors seek critical and pedagogical essays for a book collection that critically examines the reverberations and re-scripting of early America (its literature, history, art, politics, religion, material culture, public spectacle, monuments, etc.) in contemporary culture.

As recent controversies about Critical Race Theory, the 1619 Project, and colonial and confederate monuments demonstrate, contemporary conversations about the early American past are quite often uninformed about the texts, histories, stories, and sensibilities of the colonial, early-national, and pre-Civil War periods. At the same time, themes and figures from early American literature and history pervade present-day culture.

Beyond well-known examples like Disney's *Pocahontas* and Lin-Manuel Miranda's blockbuster *Hamilton*, contemporary writers and artists in literary and popular venues take up and rework early American materials in both explicit and implicit ways. These texts translate the unfamiliar language and sensibilities of early America as a usable past to find common denominators that address historic and ever-present concerns with social justice and definitions of democracy for the general public.

These links reveal present-day echoes of early America that make visible intricate transhistorical nexuses that scholars and teachers alike must grapple with both in and out of the classroom. The editors welcome critical and pedagogical contributions across fields that explore the intersection of contemporary and early American imaginaries in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century works, including but not limited to film, TV, graphic novels, literature, music, video games, etc.

Interested contributors should send the following to Dr. Patrick Erben ([perben@westga.edu](mailto:perben@westga.edu)) and Dr. Rebecca Harrison ([rharriso@westga.edu](mailto:rharriso@westga.edu)) by **September 3, 2021**:

- proposal of no more than 1000 words,
- brief professional author bio,
- and curriculum vitae.

**Selected contributors will be notified by September 24, 2021 with essays due January 4, 2022.**

**Society for American Music  
Tucson, Arizona  
March 9-13, 2022**

The Society for American Music invites proposals for (a) individual papers, (b) organized panels of 2–4 papers, (c) lecture-recitals, (d) alternative-format sessions, (e) scholarly posters, and (f) interest groups for its 48th Annual Conference in Tucson, Arizona, to be held March 9-13, 2022. All proposals must be submitted via the SAM website: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdXPASre0xiJJ3-iFLIWzN9oF4hMN6Akvbear3GWfW392HAIg/closedform> by **11:59 pm PDT on 12 July 2021**. We welcome proposals involving all facets of musical life throughout the Americas and about American music and aspects of its cultures anywhere in the world.

To celebrate the musical heritage of the conference site, we solicit proposals that emphasize any aspect of music and musical cultures (especially Indigenous and ethnic traditions) in Tucson and the surrounding region during any part of its history. Topics might include the musical cultures and traditions of Native American and Indigenous populations or the musical practices along the U.S.-Mexico border. Members are also encouraged to submit proposals relating to the career of SAM 2022 honorary member, Mariachi Cobre; the music industries located in Tucson such as Zoom Records; explorations in music, mobility, and border crossing; the musical scenes of Arizona including punk rock, jazz, folk, underground hip hop, country, and experimental/noise music; and performers and musicians associated with the Southwest such as Linda Ronstadt, Selena Quintanilla, Bob Nolan, Lalo Guerrero, Gu-Achi Fiddlers, Mariachi Luz de Luna, and Gertie Lopez. The full cfp can be found here: <https://www.american-music.org/page/SAM2022CFP>



*Arbor Jasmine*

**Mobile Archive Project  
Nov. 1, 2021**

The Mobile Archive Project is an ongoing, flexible inquiry into the status of the archive in colonial and early American studies for our present day. In light of the global pandemic, plus economic fallout for universities and research communities sure to continue, the organizers take an open-ended approach to this project. We will convene in a series of online forums, hopefully with face to face meetings, towards the end goal of a published volume of essays.

We seek participants for a **November 10, 2021** one-day webinar, hosted by the University of Siegen, Germany. Contributors will make short, five-minute presentations on any aspect of (or object from) the archive. For suggested topics and approaches, see the rationale below. Short presentations will be followed by responses from project team/section leaders. These are currently proposed, but not definitively set as: Archives of the Western Hemisphere, Teaching the Archive, Gendering the Archive, Minding the Gaps, Scholarly-Creative approaches.

The purpose of the opening webinar is to serve as a mutual introduction, and we hope, future trajectory for a continued collaboration. As the project evolves, we look forward to dedicated (and complementary conference projects), as well as continued online engagement. As we reflect upon the archive's role in past early Americanist scholarship, our goal also is to provide a forum for the mentoring of emerging scholars. Contributors should welcome this opportunity for collaboration across a broad geographic range and stages of professional development.

For participation in the November seminar, please send **proposals by September 1** to [mobilearchiveproject@gmail.com](mailto:mobilearchiveproject@gmail.com).

Conference organizers: Markus Heide (Stiftung Universität Hildesheim, Germany), Thomas Hallock (University of South Florida St. Petersburg, USA), Marcel Hartwig (University of Siegen, Germany), Lenin Martell Gámez (Autonomous University of the State of Mexico, Mexico). Sponsors: Society of Early Americanists, Stiftung Universität Hildesheim, University of Siegen.

Topics to be considered include, but are not limited to:

- Intersections of Nationalism and the Archive
- Hemispheric and transatlantic interventions on colonial archives
- Presentism and the colonial past

- Translation and circulation of scholarly traditions
- Digital v. on-site scholarship
- Archives and material culture
- Access and scholarly privilege
- Space and time in archival projects
- Futures of archival scholarship

Because of travel restrictions, and the uncertain economic future of humanities scholarship worldwide, conference plans must remain flexible. The Mobile Archives Project is organized to build from the core goals of an academic gathering (making connections, sharing knowledge) without being dependent on participants traveling to one central gathering place. A culminating, face-to-face meeting is, in fact, the ideal scenario; we simply cannot proceed toward that one single end.

**Teaching Native American Histories and Cultures  
NeMLA 2022  
Baltimore, MD, March 10-13**

The 2021 NeMLA convention featured an excellent roundtable on teaching Native American literature beyond the Renaissance. We're hoping to continue those conversations at NeMLA 2022, but also to respond to the bigoted erasures exemplified by Rick Santorum's recent comments on Native American histories and cultures. Proposals welcome for any and all strategies for, experiences with, and ideas about teaching Native American histories and cultures (including but not at all limited to literature), in all areas and disciplines. Abstracts due by **Sept. 30, 2021**.

All abstracts must be submitted through the NeMLA website:

<http://www.buffalo.edu/nemla/convention/callforpapers.html>.

**The Ethics of Care in Native American and Indigenous Literatures  
NeMLA 2022**

**Baltimore, MD, March 10-13**

This panel examines the ethics of care that shape Native American cultural and literary texts. It considers practices, experiences, and traditions that give meaning to Indigenous cultural expression, and explores how ethics of care work as a research paradigm.

Abstracts due by **Sept. 30, 2021**.

All abstracts must be submitted through the NeMLA website:

<http://www.buffalo.edu/nemla/convention/callforpapers.html>.



Florida Guava

**SEA Junior Scholars' Caucus Mentoring Program**

The Junior Scholars' Caucus invites scholars of all levels to contribute to our mentoring program. Mentoring relationships enhance junior scholars' access to professional opportunities, integrate junior scholars into the SEA community of researchers, and facilitate excellent intellectual work. We pair mentors and mentees based on a discrete task, like providing advice on a specific career stage, reading the work in progress of a mentee, writing recommendation letters upon familiarity with a mentee's work, or providing feedback on teaching and syllabi.

In recognition of the importance of diverse perspectives and influences on intellectual life, the JSC encourages junior scholars to seek multiple mentors, advisors, and sponsors throughout their early careers.

To get involved, contact Kaitlin Tonti at [KTonti2@gmail.com](mailto:KTonti2@gmail.com). Or, you can email the SEA Jr. Caucus gmail page directly at [seajurcaucus@gmail.com](mailto:seajurcaucus@gmail.com)



**SEA Council of Officers**

**Executive Officers, 2021-2023**

Ralph Bauer, President (University of Maryland)  
[bauerr@umd.edu](mailto:bauerr@umd.edu)

Sandra Gustafson, Vice-President (University of Notre-Dame)  
[gustafson.6@nd.edu](mailto:gustafson.6@nd.edu)

Kelly Wisecup, Executive Coordinator (Northwestern University)

**Advisory Officers:**

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[perben@westga.edu](mailto:perben@westga.edu)

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**Website:** <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, Kelly Wisecup. ([seacoord@gmail.com](mailto:seacoord@gmail.com)).

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

### 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 1830. 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 here: <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/>

### Opportunities for Giving

In addition to keeping your SEA membership active, you can contribute to the Fund to Honor Excellence in Teaching: [https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/honored\\_teachers.html](https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/honored_teachers.html)

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18. "Florida Guava," Thomas Nuttall. Image courtesy of Harvard University Herbaria; [http://botlib.huh.harvard.edu/libraries/nuttall\\_drawings.htm](http://botlib.huh.harvard.edu/libraries/nuttall_drawings.htm).