

# SEAN

## The Society of Early Americanists Newsletter



THE SOCIETY OF EARLY  
AMERICANISTS

### *From the SEA President*

In this, my first column as president of the Society of Early Americanists, I want to offer a tribute to my predecessor, Ralph Bauer. Ralph tackled many challenges with thoughtfulness, efficiency, and integrity during his two-year term as president, from July 1, 2021 to July 1, 2023. As president he oversaw: a generational turn-over in a key role at the organization, the creation of two new offices, a shift in the format options for receiving *EAL*, and changes to SEA memberships. He also planned and executed the biennial conference that took place in June 2023 on the University of Maryland-College Park campus.

This catalog of Ralph’s achievements only hints at the effort involved in these acts of service to the SEA, and I’d like to say a bit about the specifics in each case. At the end of the column, you’ll find preliminary information about the next biennial conference, to be held on the University of Notre Dame campus from June 5-8, 2025.

In his first SEAN column as president, Ralph announced that longtime webmaster Susan Imbarrato was preparing to step down in order to focus on her work chairing her department. A call for (self)-nominations yielded two outstanding candidates, who were then interviewed by the SEA’s Executive Committee. Ralph made the arrangements and guided the process. The EC reached a unanimous decision to offer the webmaster position to Jeremy Dibble (Special Collections Librarian, Binghamton University), who has provided expert tech support on the website since assuming the post. Ralph’s work organizing the search and guiding the transition made everything very smooth.

Ralph also oversaw the creation of two new positions to serve the organization: the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion officer; and the Media and Communications Committee. The first stage of creating the new DEI officer position involved the drafting, vetting, and SEA member approval of the amendments to the Constitution and By-laws.

### Inside this Issue . . .

<b>From the SEA President</b>	<b>1-2</b>
<b>From the SEA Vice-President</b>	<b>2-4</b>
<b>From the SEA Executive Coordinator</b>	<b>4-5</b>
<b>Announcements</b>	<b>6-9</b>
<b>SEA at the MLA</b>	<b>10-11</b>
<b>Teaching Early America</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>Digital Early America</b>	<b>14-15</b>
<b>EAL Book Prize Interview</b>	<b>15-16</b>
<b>Upcoming Conferences and CFPs</b>	<b>17-18</b>
<b>Opportunities for Giving</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Membership Information</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Image Index</b>	<b>19</b>



Next, Ralph collected names of suitable candidates, identified those willing to be considered, and arranged Executive Committee interviews with them. Following the EC's deliberations, Ralph brought Professor April Langley (University of South Carolina) on board and launched the process of further defining the DEI officer's role.

The creation of the Media and Communications Committee involved additional steps, beginning with the formation of a ten-member working group to study the membership's needs and interests. After collecting information on these topics through a poll and consulting with representatives from similar organizations, the working group followed Ralph's recommendation to propose a new committee. Once again, Ralph supervised the drafting, vetting, and SEA member approval of the amendments to the Constitution and By-laws authorizing the creation of this committee, which is now in the process of refining its mission guided by the first Media and Communications chair, Professor James Greene (Indiana State University).

These years also saw a shift in the publication format of the SEA-affiliated journal *Early American Literature*. The University of North Carolina Press has moved from delivering *EAL* to SEA members in an exclusively print-based form and now offers the option of joint print and digital delivery. At the same time, SEA memberships have been extended to a two-year timeframe, allowing for greater continuity and stability in the organization. Ralph was the point person for discussions of all these matters with representatives of the press, *EAL* editors, and members of the SEA leadership.

Last but far from least, Ralph oversaw the planning and execution of the 2023 biennial conference at the University of Maryland-College Park, which attracted 316 registrants and featured three keynotes, one plenary, and roughly 80 panels, roundtables, and workshops in 13 sessions, with an optional excursion to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC. Though I had to leave the conference almost immediately due to a family emergency, by all accounts it was a great success.

At the time of writing, in consultation with the Executive Committee I am moving into active planning for the 2025 conference, to be held from June 5-8 on the University of Notre Dame campus. This spring will see the formation of a conference committee and the first steps of planning. Members can expect cfp postings at the end of the summer, with a deadline during the fall term. Decisions will likely be announced and travel information posted in early 2025. Watch this space for additional information.

Sandra Gustafson, University of Notre Dame  
SEA President

### *From the SEA Vice President*

In this edition, SEA Vice President Kelly Wisecup sat down (on zoom) with the new Co-Editors of *Early American Literature*, Katy Chiles (English, University of Tennessee) and Cassander Smith (English, University of Alabama) for an interview about their vision for the journal.

**Kelly Wisecup:** Could you tell us a little about your scholarly selves—what intellectual interests and expertise do you bring to your role as Co-Editors?

**Cassander Smith:** I'm bringing my scholarly expertise in early Black African studies and early Black Atlantic studies; I'm also bringing administrative expertise, working as an associate dean. That has helped me develop time management and communication skills. I think a lot these days about assessment, too, which will come into play as Katy and I make sure that *EAL* does what it needs to do for the community.

**Katy Chiles:** And I would just add that Cassie is the associate editor of Cambridge University Press's entire African American Literature in Transition Series. Not just the early period, but for the *entire* series. And so she brings a wealth of experience in editing and publishing to the role.

In terms of my expertise, my scholarship is on early American literary studies, African American and Native American literature, print cultures, and critical race theory. I also was lucky enough to have the opportunity to be the Book Review Editor for *EAL* for four years before Cassie and I became Co-Editors. And that has given me a really great overview of the expanse of our field.

**Cassander Smith:** We also have to point to how organized Katy is. Katy is very conscientious with record-keeping, and she is super organized. It is absolutely the case that she makes sure things stay on our radar, which is crucial because we can't attend to every issue immediately.

**Kelly Wisecup:** I think with this you're moving us into my question about the Co-Editor arrangement: the Co-Editor structure is a new one for *EAL*—could you talk about how collaboration shapes your approach to the journal?



Cassander Smith

Katy Chiles

**Cassander Smith:** I think, from where I'm sitting, we are still working out that collaborative relationship. There are certain strengths of each other that we have admired for a long time, which is part of what drew us together. In terms of how to do the day to day grind of editing a journal, I think we're still working that out. The way it looks, at least from my end, is a kind of checks and balances, where we're reading all of the material and then we come together to talk things through and come to a consensus. There's some instances in which I want to be more conservative. And you know, Katy really wants to push things forward, or vice versa. And so we always have interesting, informative and, importantly, collegial conversations that get us to where we need to go.

**Katy Chiles:** Yeah, I would agree. It has been so fantastic and so generative. I love discussing the essays, ideas, and the content. You know, sometimes, when we get in our own departments and into our professional lives, so much of our time is devoted to administrative work or teaching, and sometimes we forget to preserve the time to actually talk with our colleagues about the literature and the scholarship that brought us to this in the first place. And so that has been fantastic. And also it's been really, really good, because being in conversation with Cassie has helped me produce my own thinking, but also examine my own thinking, my assumptions, and push my thinking in new directions. And so that been really wonderful.

**Kelly Wisecup:** What challenges (in the sense of opportunities) do you see ahead for *Early American Literature*?

**Cassander Smith:** I think that the field is being challenged or contested in some really particular ways that we haven't seen, at least in our lifetimes. I'm thinking, in particular, about the culture wars. It has been the case traditionally that each moment when we've had some kind of iteration of a culture war, the more progressive agenda pushes things forward.

But this time we can't take that for granted, and thinking in terms of early American literature, this is a moment when people are challenging even what facts are or challenging what history is. This is happening while our legislatures are passing bills in various states, where it's becoming very difficult to even teach certain topics or to say certain words. It really affects what we think of as early American literature. And of course I'm thinking in particular about those issues related specifically to ethnic studies. And so I do think that the journal is in a really important position right now to guide us through all of this, and I don't think that it is incidental that we now have two Co-Editors with specialties and years of teaching experience in early ethnic studies. We are not shying away from the current moment but aggressively approaching the issues.

**Katy Chiles:** I am still learning and beginning to understand the role of the journal in sustaining the field. So in a moment when universities might be tempted to shrink the humanities, having *Early American Literature* as a journal is evidence that our field is really thriving. So it's important to us to publish the best, new, most exciting, invigorating scholarship that we can. It's crucial to us to help scholars—but particularly junior scholars—develop their work into the best that it can possibly be.

I think the Book Review section is really important for demonstrating not just to our readers but also to administrators, the vibrancy of the field and how vast it is! This may sound very utilitarian. But I think that the existence of *Early American Literature* as a thriving journal helps departments make arguments that we need to have hires in early American literature because it's such a clear marker of the importance of our field.

**Kelly Wisecup:** What do you want early American studies scholars to know about *Early American Literature*?

**Katy Chiles:** In our editorial vision, which we'll publish in full in the next journal issue, we've got a couple of cornerstones that articulate our vision. Those include implementing anti-racist and inclusive practices at all levels of the journal. So looking at practices and structures that might produce exclusion and changing those practices and structures as much as we can in order to eliminate that exclusion. In addition, they include increasing the footprint of the journal in terms of readership, enhancing engagement with complementary scholarly communities, and involving the community of early American scholars in shaping the continued development of the journal, which includes welcoming emerging scholars. We want to continue producing the best scholarship, as *EAL* has done in early American studies for over 50 years.

**Cassander Smith:** I think if I could boil my answer down into two things, it would be one, to contact us. We want to hear from readers from the early American studies community. We do understand that this journal is not ours; it is a journal of and for the field. So we welcome feedback at any point about anything related to the journal. The second thing is to encourage people to read the journal, to assign it to their students and ask those students to download it from Project Muse so we can know who's reading the journal.

**Katy Chiles:** We really want the collaboration to extend to all of the constituents of the journal. So the editorial board, the external readers, the subscribers, and the contributors, because the journal is both a record of what the scholarly conversation is and it also produces the scholarly conversation, and so we want to be in dialogue with people. We're going to do that formally, through a survey we're going to be sending out, and we also want to do it informally through conversations and electronic communication. Because the journal would not exist, as Cassie says, without this community. And so we want to be in constant conversation with that community.

**Kelly Wisecup:** Thanks for taking time to sit down with me and to talk about your plans for the journal—I'm looking forward to reading the next journal issue!

Kelly Wisecup, Northwestern University  
SEA Vice-President



*From the Executive Coordinator*

In a welcome thaw from pandemic-era restrictions, students are visiting my campus office again. Recently, one of my visitors did a double take at the old-school metal file cabinets that crowd along one wall. “Couldn’t you just store all that on the cloud?” she asked, and for a moment I felt like the Grandfather who tells Hawthorne’s New England stories from his antiquated chair: “Perhaps the younger of them supposed that he and the chair had come into the world together, and that both had always been as old as they were now.”

Unwittingly, the student had hit exactly the decluttering nerve that has had me wanting, for the past several years, to set aside some hours (weeks?) to leaf through every color-coded hanging file in every drawer where I’ve been organizing teaching materials since the 1990s. I say “since,” but to tell the truth, most of the classroom material I use regularly now resides on my laptop. Once in a while, though, I’ll pull something from those paper files—a clipping, a page of handwritten notes on a book that hasn’t been conveniently digitized, a dot-matrix printout from the MLA Bibliography—and feel a sense of triumph that the older system of information retrieval came through for me faster, or better, than the newer one.

Like a typical writer of the eighteenth century who might have circulated work both through manuscript coteries and communities of print, I feel equally at home using analog and digital recording technologies. As we often stress to our students when discussing the history of the book, innovations in communication methods don’t immediately replace one another; they overlap. Each has pros and cons and different affordances. Take, for instance, the technology of the listserv, which the Society of Early Americanists adopted early in its own institutional life and which it continues to support today.

Developed in the late 1980s, this electronic mailing list software is nearly as old as email itself: it both pre-dates, and is independent of, the internet (referred to on some support sites, quaintly, as “the World Wide Web”). Plain-text and devoid of fancy features, the listserv has long since dropped out of fashion as a marketing tool, but it continues to do the job it was designed for: to connect people who share a similar specialized interest by routing general messages into their email box.

Depending on how busy the moderator is and how frequently subscribers check email, it offers timely, if not instantaneous, conversations. To play Grandfather for a moment and explain this in terms Gen Z can understand, this is a very rudimentary version of the multi-channel community chat apps that now play such an important role in the workplace (Slack) and in social life (Discord). While the audio and video capabilities of those apps do offer exciting possibilities for extending intellectual communities like the ones that SEA intends to foster, the listserv has one important advantage: it's not corporately sponsored, and not for profit.

The advent of the academic listserv coincided with my earliest years in the profession, and I eagerly subscribed to many different lists as I scrambled to put together syllabi for a daunting set of new courses. Some have long since folded; others, like EARAM, are still active. Among the manila folders in my office is one labeled "Ideas: Early Am Survey," and I pulled it out recently to find a printout of a conversation on the EARAM listserv from 2011. (Talk about overlapping technologies: obviously I didn't trust my future self to retrieve it digitally!)

Inspired by the release of Toni Morrison's magnificent novel *A Mercy* in 2008, a bunch of smart folks on the list had offered their ideas for pairing an early American text in the classroom with a recent adaptation or historically-inspired work. That pedagogical approach is increasingly common, but I have yet to try some of the ideas on this terrific thread.

Wondering how a new teacher today would go about writing new syllabi, as an experiment I put the title of that thread, "contemporary adaptations of early American texts," into the Google search bar of my browser. The top results were disappointing: a few encyclopedia entries and open-source anthologies, a blog post focused on film adaptations twentieth-century history, and some screen rant-style rankings. Google did boost a few Library of Congress holdings in the image results, which is never a bad thing.

But even tailoring that search with terms like "syllabus," "college," and "university" produced many results irrelevant to my intentions, and it took several refinements to exclude works printed after 1850. It's not just me: as Google has amended its search algorithms to favor more commercially sponsored sites, and to weight search results according to what information is most commonly sought, the less likely it is that a search will bring back more than the lowest common denominator.

You have to search longer, and sift harder, to get more specialized information. (The collaborative *Making of America* digital library of mostly nineteenth-century materials, which was such a research boon in the early decades of this century, used to pop up on Page 1 of Google search results when I sent students on a primary-source treasure hunt; now I need to direct them specifically to that site.)

The EARAM thread on contemporary adaptations might eventually have surfaced, but I ran out of patience after page six or so. I went directly to the listserv archive (<https://listserv.kent.edu/>), and with a little bit of fiddling (made easier, perhaps, by my memory of what clunky turn-of-the-century user interfaces used to look like), I easily located the thread on adaptations.

In their glory days, the social media platforms that came of age in the 2010s, like Facebook and Twitter/X, also helped foster stimulating conversations within our field: with richer multimedia capabilities, they also fulfilled the listserv's function of connecting people to one another for mutual research and teaching aid. Increasingly, many of us find those platforms too encumbered by their own baggage of surveillance and monetization.

It's possible that younger scholars in our field are helping each other build syllabi and answer research questions through some private Discord channel dedicated to early American matters. (If so, I'd love an invite!) But my point is that there is still life in the homely technology of the text-based email list: it remains a powerful potential resource for harnessing collective knowledge. Over the past few years, the EARAM comms line has gone relatively quiet, with occasional posts about calls for papers or prize announcements. Is it time to pick up the fountain pen again, so to speak, and revive its once robust status as a site for conversation?

Kirsten Silva Gruesz, University of California Santa Cruz  
Executive Coordinator



## Announcements

### MLA James Russell Lowell Prize

SEA member Matt Cohen (Professor of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln) has been awarded the MLA's James Russell Lowell Prize for his book *The Silence of the Miskito Prince: How Cultural Dialogue Was Colonized*, published by the University of Minnesota Press. This honor has been conferred by a committee of people from a broad range of fields, signalling the vital importance of early American literary studies to the larger community of scholars represented by the MLA. Congratulations, Matt!

### Early American Literature Book Prize

**Kirsten Silva Gruesz**, *Cotton Mather's Spanish Lessons: A Story of Language, Race, and Belonging in the Early Americas* (Harvard UP, 2022)

**Kelly Wisecup**, *Assembled for Use: Indigenous Compilation and the Archives of Early Native American Literatures* (Yale UP, 2021)

Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Professor of English at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and Kelly Wisecup, Professor of English at Northwestern University, have been selected to receive the 2023 *Early American Literature* Book Prize.

Gruesz's *Cotton Mather's Spanish Lessons: A Story of Language, Race, and Belonging in the Early Americas* was published by Harvard University Press in 2022.

Kelly Wisecup's *Assembled for Use: Indigenous Compilation and the Archives of Early Native American Literatures* was published by Yale University Press in 2021.

The prize selection committee consisted of *Early American Literature's* Co-Editors, Cassander Smith and Katy Chiles; incoming Chair of the Modern Language Association's Early American Forum, Jeffrey Glover; and prior President of the Society of Early Americanists, Patrick Erben. We thank our publisher, the University of North Carolina Press, for continuing to support the award, which carries a \$2,000 cash prize.



*Cotton Mather's Spanish Lessons*, as the selection committee determined, is an unparalleled study of a major American writer at the nexus of languages, cultures, and migrations. It is a culmination of decades of the author's work in the field of multilinguistic early American literature, and it offers a transformative portrayal of a region, tradition, and history at the center of the field. The book is at once intimate—taking us inside the Mather household and reconstructing the sounds and imprint of the languages spoken and studied there—and also expansive, widening in scope to describe the very constitution of American racial identities through the medium of language. It's a deeply insightful portrait of a writer and his work and the world he helped to make.

This book provides a truly new look at a familiar figure in early American literary studies. It is the kind of monograph that doesn't just tell scholars a great deal about Cotton Mather; it is the kind of monograph that can reformulate the field of early American literary studies. Written with a great deal of verve, it connects early American literature with today's very pressing issues of migration and immigration. This book is an enormous accomplishment, a landmark study of profound reach and relevance, and a powerful justification of the importance of early American literary studies to the broader world.

*Assembled for Use* presents a method that enables scholars to approach colonial archives from Native perspectives to understand the significance of lists, recipes, scrapbooks and other non-narrative texts as literacy practices in early Native American cultures.

These compilations in many cases, Wisecup argues, were assembled for “particular uses within Indigenous communities, from recipes for medicinal treatments to scrapbooks,” (3) but they also were understood as textual objects, so that “reading and using are interrelated rather than opposing actions” (9). Non-narrative Indigenous texts are significant testaments to early Native literary histories. What is more, Wisecup maintains, many of these compilations survive today in archives as a result of intentional Indigenous practices to preserve the material texts; these intentional practices shape and critique colonial archives. Ultimately, Wisecup argues, “Indigenous compilations are essential to understanding the formation of colonial archives and the knowledge they produce, for compilations reframe the questions colonists posed about Indigenous pasts and futures and scholarly assumptions about compilation forms” (21).

Immensely readable and consequential, *Assembled for Use* enables scholars to understand more fully the capaciousness of literacy practices among early Native American cultures. Wisecup makes clear what Native compilations *are*, what they *do*, and how we might approach them. The reader will walk away from the text with a new way of thinking about what is or isn't considered text and also how and why people assemble and compile.

The book is extraordinarily lucid, concise, and powerful in the quality of its prose. Wisecup's reading of Indigenous compilations and assemblage practices helps scholars get an idea of Native American reading practices in the early American past—a huge feat to accomplish. Throughout her book, Wisecup always affords us an idea of the potential for future work she is opening up, rather than seeking to have the final word on the topic.

The *EAL* Book Prize is awarded in even calendar years to a first monograph published in the prior two years, and in odd years to a second or subsequent book published in the prior two years. Next year's 2024 prize will be awarded in the first monograph category, and books published in 2022 and 2023 are eligible. The prize carries a \$2000 award stipend. The deadline for submission is March 1, 2024.

See this newsletter for an interview with Kelly Wisecup and our next edition for an interview with Kirsten Silva Gruesz.

Please consult the journal's website at <https://earlyamericanliterature.org> or email [ealassistanteditor@gmail.com](mailto:ealassistanteditor@gmail.com) for additional information.

**Richard Beale Davis Prize for 2022  
Awarded by the Modern Language Association  
Forum on *Early American Literature***

Prize Committee: Tara Bynum, Ana Schwartz, and Michelle Sizemore

**Awarded to: Rebecca Rosen, “‘The Voice of the Innocent Blood Cries Aloud from the Ground to Heaven’: Speaking and Discovering Infanticide in the Early American Northeast.”**

**Honorable Mention: Camille Owens, “‘I, Young in Life’: Phillis Wheatley and the Invention of American Childhood.”**

From the magnificent volume of essays published in volume 57 of *Early American Literature*, the 2022 Richard Beale Davis Prize is awarded to Rebecca Rosen for “‘The Voice of the Innocent Blood Cries Aloud from the Ground to Heaven’: Speaking and Discovering Infanticide in the Early American Northeast.”

The prize committee gives the distinction of Honorable Mention to Camille Owens for “‘I, Young in Life’: Phillis Wheatley and the Invention of American Childhood.”

These essays are exemplary for their originality as well as their archival heft and acumen—most of all, for bringing to the fore underexamined topics now certain to have their due in the field owing to the remarkable groundwork of these investigations.



Rebecca Rosen



Camille Owens



In her riveting study, “The Voice of the Innocent Blood Cries Aloud from the Ground to Heaven,” Rebecca Rosen examines cruentation (the belief that a corpse bleeds in proximity of the murderer) as a form of testimony in late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century infanticide literature. Known as “the blood cry,” cruentation functions as a post-mortem method of investigation, joining the corporeal expressions of blood and speech. A sign from God, the blood cry becomes incontrovertible legal evidence that privileges the voices of deceased infants over and above the voices of accused mothers “in a move anticipating fetal personhood claims of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries” (86).

In effect, Rosen argues, infanticide sermons and their cultural narratives raise the status of dead infants to public speakers and citizens while relegating women suspects to non-entities. Among its many strengths, Rosen’s essay draws attention to the dead body as authoritative material evidence after the Salem Witch Trials, earning cruentation a place in Puritan judicial inquiry tantamount to the spectral evidence in the Witch Trials.

Rosen’s attentiveness to the archive of infanticide sermons and other execution literature, as well as her commitment to reading her sources against the louder words of the famous Mathers, demonstrate the force of the blood cry in stifling condemned women or else permitting their speech only in acts of self-condemnation.

Above all, the essay skillfully re-contextualizes and historicizes Christian investments in voice as a metonymy for subjectivity, tracing how those investments in future children have long come at the cost of care for the adults, usually women, responsible for bearing them. For the committee, this work could not have been more powerful or timely.

Camille Owens’ article, “I, Young in Life,” centers Phillis Wheatley in the social and political invention of early American childhood. Owens traces Wheatley’s formative role in shifting cultural perceptions of white children from the unsentimental figures of previous centuries to cherished beings imbued with innocence and dependent on maternal comfort and care.

Perhaps the most compelling feature of the essay is its exposure of “childhood’s foundational role in the Anglo-American racial order” and its illumination of Wheatley’s “strategic awareness of childhood’s emergent power” (729).

Through personal and poetic prowess, Owens argues, Wheatley challenges the racial hierarchy by commanding the racial politics of childhood, including her claim to the Lockean blank slate, a privileged state of impressionability both granted to white children but denied to Black children and to be nurtured by the education further denied to Black children.

Ultimately, Owens shows the political stakes of Wheatley’s efforts to revalue the Black child and to frame Black children and Black families as “key sites in the struggle between tyranny and freedom” (744). Even as the white supremacist politics of sentimentality could not countenance her subversive sentimental depictions of Black children, these depictions would become an important legacy for African American literature. In recovering Wheatley’s interventions in the culture of American childhood, Owens’ essay makes a fresh and dynamic contribution to both Wheatley Studies and Childhood Studies.



### **Library Company Mellon Scholars Program**

The Library Company of Philadelphia’s Program in African American History (PAAH), with the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, offers an annual Mellon Scholars Program of fellowships, internships, and a professional development workshop.

These competitive programs are designed to increase the participation of scholars from underrepresented backgrounds and others in the field of African American history prior to 1900.

The African Americana Collection (over 13,000 titles and almost 1,000 graphics, and growing) includes books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, broadsides, and graphics documenting the western discovery and exploitation of Africa, the rise of slavery in the new world along with the rise of movements against slavery, the development of racial thought and racism, descriptions of African American life, slave and free, throughout the Americas, slavery and race in fiction and drama, and the printed works of African American individuals and organizations.

Contact Jasmine Smith with additional questions:

[jsmith@LIBRARYCOMPANY.ORG](mailto:jsmith@LIBRARYCOMPANY.ORG)

<https://librarycompany.org/academic-programs/paah/fellowships-2/#/>

### Changes to Recognizing SEA Scholars

For several years, the SEA has awarded Scholars and Junior Scholars of the Month. After some thoughtful conversation, it has been decided that the SEA will no longer continue with the Scholar of the Month program. Moving forward, the SEA will award two Featured Scholars for the Fall and Spring semesters rather than for every month.

Thank you to Kade Ivy, for all the time he put into running the Scholar of the Month Series.

In this newsletter edition, we have included the last Scholar of the Month and have included the first Featured Scholar for the Spring semester.

### SEA Scholar of the Month: Wendy Roberts September 2023



Wendy Roberts is an Associate Professor of English and the Director of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Albany, SUNY. She has been doing archival research on the manuscript networks and poetic coteries of Phillis Wheatley-Peters

### SEA Featured Scholar: Aaron Brown Spring 2024

Aaron Brown is an Assistant Professor of Ethnic Studies at California State University, San Bernadino. His newest project is *Yonder: Decorative Arts and Material Economies in Black South Carolinian Deathways, 1850-1950*, which analyzes death through the lens of crafting materials and writing obituaries.



### Junior Scholars Host Panel

On November 11, 2023, the Junior Scholars' Caucus hosted a virtual panel on "The 'Ins and Outs' of Job Documents." Three early career scholars, Shelby Johnson (Oklahoma State University), Kimberly Takhata (Villanova University), and Rodney Taylor (Ball State University), provided practical and detailed advice for junior scholars entering the job market.

**Society of Early Americanists, Junior Scholar's Caucus**  
**"THE 'INS AND OUTS' OF JOB DOCUMENTS"**  
 Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at Noon EST via Zoom. Please RSVP [http://bit.ly/SEAJSC\\_jobtalkpanel](http://bit.ly/SEAJSC_jobtalkpanel)

Shelby Johnson, Assistant Professor—Oklahoma State University

Rod Taylor, Assistant Professor—Ball State University

Kimberly Takahata, Assistant Professor—Villanova University

### SEA Junior Scholars' Caucus Mentoring

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

See <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/membership/sea-junior-scholars-caucus> for more information.

## SEA at the MLA

The Modern Language Association's 2024 conference took place in Philadelphia, where the SEA made a big presence with three panels. In addition, SEA members had the opportunity to get together at a reception at the Library Company of Philadelphia.

### MLA Sessions

#### **"Alternative Chronologies: Early America, Today"**

**President:** Michelle Sizemore, U of Kentucky

#### **Presenters:**

"From Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's Failed Journey to Hurricane Harvey," José F. Aranda Jr., Rice U

"Cotton Mather in California," Kirsten Silva Gruesz, U of California, Santa Cruz

"Beginning the Early American Survey with President Obama; or, Providence in the Twenty-First-Century," Sam Sommers, U of Connecticut, Waterbury



#### **"Facing the Past, Facing the Public: A Roundtable"**

Though early American studies has moved away from some of its inaugural protagonists and settings, the pull of memorialization and hagiography, even as a counterpoint or foil, endures. Recognizing that memorialization requires a narrative to be memorialized, and that narrative is the purview of literary studies just as much as historiography, panelists survey some ways of representing the past that engage with the pull to memorialize in transformative ways.

#### **Speakers:**

Mary Grace Albanese, Binghamton U, State U of New York

Angela Calcaterra, U of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Ittai Orr, U of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Elizabeth Polcha, Drexel U

Kari Winter, U at Buffalo, State U of New York



**“Reading #BlackJoy before 1800”**

**Presenters:**

“Belinda’s Ecology of Spicy Forests and Complete Felicity,” Elizabeth Polcha, Drexel U

“The Winning Rhetoric of Elizabeth Key Grinstead,” Donald Holmes II, U of Pittsburgh

“John Tyley and the Pleasures of Botanical Illustration,” Julie Chun Kim, Fordham U

“Textual Performance: Locating Embodied Practice and Scripting Black Colonial America,” Alyssa Smith, U of Iowa



## Teaching Early America “Hannah Arendt and 1776”

With the American Revolution’s semiquincentennial on the horizon in 2026, I proposed a graduate readings course to work up some background and assess the canon. My department wanted a seminar, which required not only a topic and a reading list, but also a clearly articulated theoretical frame. I considered framing the course in terms of sovereignty, from Hobbes through Carl Schmitt to Giorgio Agamben. Some of this did ultimately get into the syllabus by way of book chapters by Paul Downes and Jim Greene. But I wanted to face the Revolution’s political questions more directly. One way to do that was to return to classic theorizations: C. L. R. James’s *The Black Jacobins*, Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, and Hannah Arendt’s *On Revolution*. These three works emphasize respectively the socioeconomic, psychological, and political dimensions of revolution.

For the sake of space, I’ll focus on what we did with Arendt, who is the only one of the three to discuss the 1776 Revolution explicitly. We investigated the presence of Arendt’s two revolutionary phases—the establishment of negative and positive freedoms—in the Revolution’s literary canon from the 1770s through the present. In differentiating the two phases, Arendt distinguishes between the negative freedom that secures “private welfare” and the positive production of “public happiness.” She argues that the potential for this second phase was evident in local self-government, in participatory bodies that “enjoyed power and [were] entitled to claim rights without possessing or claiming sovereignty.”

Such bodies, in the words of John Adams, accomplished “a revolution even before the war commenced.” Yet Arendt doesn’t say much about how their deliberations actually worked. Rather, she asserts that after the conclusion of peace, America lost the “revolutionary spirit” of “public freedom [and] public happiness” as governments settled into the mundane business of securing private property and civil liberties for only some Americans. Finally, Arendt calls on “the poets” to “find an approximate articulation of the actual content” of this “revolutionary spirit.”

With this call, Arendt invites a move from political theory to literary study. From this invitation emerges a question: where did “the poets” link the war’s memory to the Revolution’s first phase, the establishment of negative freedom, and where did they evoke the elusive second phase, the establishment of positive freedom?

One way to think about these questions was to map the second phase onto practices of deliberative democracy, which Sandra Gustafson, in *Imagining Deliberative Democracy*, has argued did not disappear after the Revolution but even enjoyed a resurgence from 1815 to the late 1830s before collapsing under the weight of slavery. Gustafson’s examples, however, are not especially associated with the Revolution’s canon.

We got the inquiry up and running during the first class meeting by examining the account of the Boston Massacre published in *Boston Gazette* (March 12, 1770). We looked for the predominant historiographical categories identified in William Warner’s *Protocols of Liberty*: founders’ history, peoples’ history, and intellectual history. We concluded, however, that much of the reportage did not fit any of these modes. For example, the *Gazette* reported that “the Town was intending an Enquiry & full Representation” of the events of March 5, 1770 and went on to observe that these events could soon be “a Matter of Enquiry by the Representative Body of this People,” the Massachusetts Provincial Assembly.

The central actors in the latter part of the story are the lieutenant governor and the Town meeting. The Town’s meeting’s message ultimately resulted in the lieutenant governor’s advising the King’s Council to remove the soldiers. Thus the *Gazette* linked a proto-revolutionary result (the removal of British troops) to the actions of a deliberative body (the Town meeting) and appealed further to another deliberative body (the legislature). This reportage, which didn’t fit the common historiographical modes, pointed us toward Arendt’s second revolutionary phase, the establishment of positive freedom.

As we proceeded more or less chronologically through the Revolution’s canon, we found that the actions of deliberative bodies have no place in wartime propaganda, nor in songs and ballads, nor in Phillis Wheatley Peters’ tribute to George Washington. William Dunlap’s 1798 play *André* is about fathers and sons, filial rebellion and reconciliation. Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle” satirizes democratic practice. Hawthorne’s “My Kinsman Major Molyneux” insists that we confront the violent result of a local body’s deliberations, but hides those deliberations from us. Sedgwick’s historical novel *The Linwoods* locates politics within the family, privatizing deliberation and relegating governance to “nature’s aristocracy.” Longfellow’s “Paul Revere’s Ride” does not mention the extensive Whig communication network of which Revere was only one small part.

Yet we found positive instances at the margins of the canon. Many texts that address the aftermath of the 1776 war in Indian country foreground the actions of deliberative bodies. Joseph Brant's 1786 "Speech of the United Indian Nations," for example, is the product of months of deliberation among representatives of many nations gathered at the mouth of the Detroit River. Hendrick Aupaumut's *A Short Narration of My Journey to the Western Country* (1794) reports the deliberations of numerous Algonquian town councils and a Grand Council of Algonquians and Haudenosaunees.

Although, as Lisa Brooks has demonstrated, Brant and Aupaumut took different sides in the 1776 war and had different visions for peace and for Native space, both worked within a public, deliberative frame. Condolence always came first, clearing the way for deliberation. These texts contrast with the approach of white authors, who were interested in specimens of Indian oratory, but not in the deliberative process. For example, Francis Parkman concludes his version of Pontiac's 1763 speech at Detroit—the source for the *Norton Anthology's* text—by dismissively noting that "Many other speeches were doubtless made in the council but no record of them has been preserved."

A remarkable example from the canon's margins was Lydia Maria Child's short story "The Black Saxons," which was first published as a pamphlet in 1841 and reprinted several times, including in William C. Nell's *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution* (1855). In this story, as a British gunship anchors off the South Carolina coast, Mr. Duncan, a plantation owner, spends his evenings reading about how the Norman conquest enslaved his Anglo-Saxon ancestors.

Meanwhile the people whom Duncan enslaves, under the guise of attending a camp meeting, meet deep in the swamp to plan to gain their freedom. Eventually Duncan catches wind of this and follows, disguised in blackface. He witnesses the workings of an organized, deliberative body whose hope of freedom, formulated in various proposals and finally brought to a vote, depends on the British landing. But the British do not land. While Duncan is impressed enough by the deliberations to keep them secret, thus sparing everyone's life, he does not grant anyone their freedom and he forbids all meetings whatsoever until the conclusion of the war. He returns to reading Anglo-Saxon history.

Two concluding points. Today, the Revolution's rhetoric of negative freedom has been captured by the Right, as for example in Donald Trump's campaign rallies [or the NRA's claim, voiced by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis,

that the right to bear arms is "the foundation on which all our other rights rest" (E. J. Dionne Jr., *Washington Post*, April 17, 2023). One of my students argued in his final paper that such rhetoric of negative freedom provides more common ground for today's alt-right organizations than does the neo-Confederate program of states' rights and white supremacy.



"Trump or Death" by Joe Raedle

Second, by explicitly foregrounding Arendt's theorization of two revolutionary phases when we teach the 1776 Revolution, we can ask what the Declaration's "the pursuit of happiness" entails. To what extent is "public happiness" a Revolutionary legacy at all? To conclude where our seminar concluded: Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical *Hamilton* is historically consistent in not articulating a space of positive freedom. We may revel in the rap battles between Hamilton and Jefferson, but Miranda's treatment of post-war politics leaves us where it left the envious Aaron Burr, excluded from "The Room Where It Happens."

Tim Sweet  
West Virginia University



The following is an interview with Joshua Greenberg, editor of *Commonplace: The Journal of Early American Life*. *Commonplace* is an online journal and can be found at <https://commonplace.online/>. For information on submissions, please see <https://commonplace.online/about/>.

**How long have you been the editor of *Commonplace* and why did you decide to accept the challenge of editing an online journal?**

I became the editor of *Commonplace* in 2019 after serving as the book review editor since 2011. I was excited about the opportunity to become editor because I was specifically brought on board as part of an initiative to revitalize the journal and move it from a quarterly issue-based publication to a more flexible, feed-based site. Much of the back catalog in 2019 was inaccessible or riddled with broken links and other problems. We made the decision to move to a new URL and Wordpress platform and my first job was to ensure that we could create a new, engaging site while not losing almost 20 years of content. The success of this project has allowed me to embrace the fun part of the job, working with authors and publishing new articles for our readers.

**What gaps/needs does the journal fill for scholars of early and 19th-century American literature, history, and culture?**

*Commonplace* occupies an important space for early American scholars trying to engage with a broad audience. We try to publish pieces that are more scholarly than a popular magazine or newspaper essay and less formal than most scholarly journal articles. We are also open to anything pre-1900 and use a vast definition of what counts as early American. This wide focus and periodization makes *Commonplace* a unique digital publication, especially given that it is a free, open access journal.

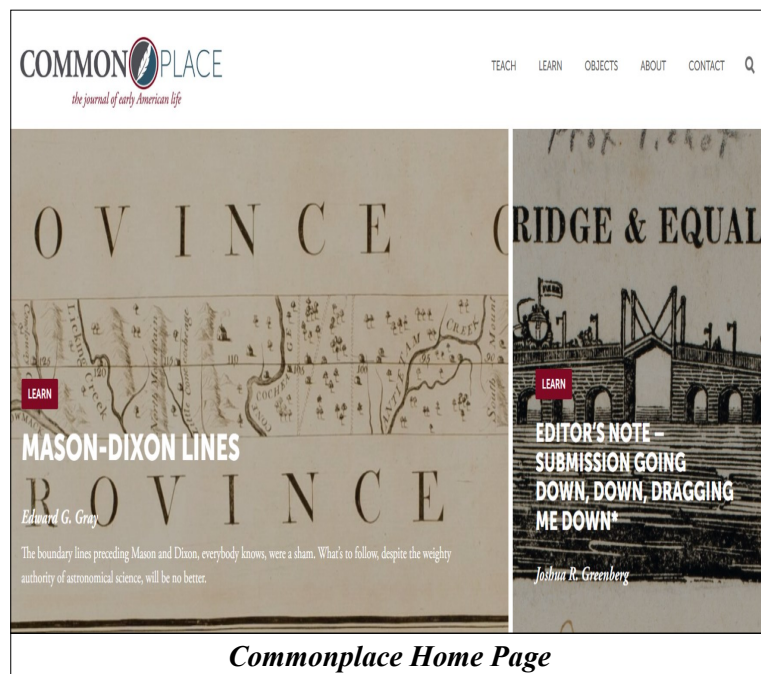
**Is there a “typical” *Commonplace* piece?**

Not really. Our main feed includes articles about diverse aspects of early America (labeled Learn); those focused on material and visual culture (labeled Objects); and those on pedagogy, the historian’s craft, and the writing of literary scholarship (labeled Teach).

We also have sections for Reviews and Creative Writing. Within these different categories, there is a ton of diversity in how authors approach early America. So, for example Shikha Malviya wrote nine original poems and statement of poetic research based on the life of Anandi Gopal Joshee, an Indian woman who moved to the United States in 1883 to pursue a medical degree, while a recent essay by Zachary Turpin meditated on some strategies and ground rules for tracking down some of the most noteworthy missing works of 19<sup>th</sup> century American literature.

**How has *Commonplace* changed since it was started in 2000?**

I think *Commonplace*’s mission to occupy the space between a scholarly audience and the general public has remained constant, but the way we have organized the publication has changed a lot in terms of the interface and on the backend. The original plan for *Commonplace* was a text heavy site in the form of an 18<sup>th</sup> century broadsheet without the snazzy audio and video that websites circa 2000 were using (the mission statement specifically mentioned Real Audio and Real Player). Likewise, articles appeared as part of set columns and each webpage was built individually. That approach has obviously changed over the years as we have moved to feature more visual material and organize the site in a more fluid and less rigid manner. This has also translated into a wider view of what we publish and an embrace of a more expansive view of vast early America before 1900.



**What are the advantages of a fully digital journal?  
What are some of the challenges?**

The advantages are certainly speed and flexibility. Since we are not publishing print issues of a quarterly or semi-annual journal, we don't have to wait to compile 150 or 200 pages of articles, go through several rounds of laborious copy editing, and then still have our authors kicking themselves because there is a single typo that was missed in the process and can't be fixed. We have a more streamlined process that allows us to quickly turn around articles that have been accepted by the editorial board for publication and get them up on our site. We add a couple of pieces to the feed every month and in the unlikely event that we all missed a typo, we have the ability to quickly fix it. As a digital publication, *Commonplace* can also include extra media or inserted features in our articles. For example, a recent piece by Rachel Tamar Van about developing a teachable version of a 19<sup>th</sup> century board game called *Ye Peculiar Game of Ye Yankee Peddler* included downloadable game cards and handouts so that a reader could bring the game into their own classroom.

The biggest challenge for a digital journal is making the right decisions about frontend and backend technology to ensure that the journal can last and remain accessible over time. It is hard to know how readers will access digital articles 10 or 20 years in the future (we did not have smartphones or tablets when *Commonplace* began), so maintaining a flexible and scalable platform is vital. These decisions are particularly important for small operations without large budgets that they can use to easily move platforms or overhaul their sites on a whim.

**Do you have plans for changes/additions to the journal?**

Changes to the social media landscape over the last couple of years have made it more difficult to connect with authors and readers for smaller publications like *Commonplace*. We are working on trying to make it easier for potential authors to learn about *Commonplace* and discuss their submission ideas as well as ways to better broadcast information about our new articles, so that they can find interested readers.



**Interview with Kelly Wisecup  
Winner of the *Early American Literature Book Prize*:  
*Assembled for Use: Indigenous Compilation and the  
Archives of Early Native American Literatures***

**What was the inspiration for your study?**

In 2013, I was fortunate to be a student in the American Antiquarian Society's Seminar in the History of the Book on "Indigenous Cultures of Print in Early America" taught by Phillip Round, and that seminar, along with a 2018 Rare Book School class on Native American Books and Indigenous Sovereignty, taught by Kiara Vigil and Mike Kelly, provided a grounding in histories of Indigenous books.

I returned to the AAS as a short-term fellow in summer 2014, where I tried to grapple with how to make sense of the many Indigenous compilations in that collection. I didn't have answers by the end of my month at the AAS, but I did have a better sense of my questions: how did Indigenous compilations get to the settler archival institutions where they reside today? Why did Indigenous peoples make compilations (composite texts that I define as technologies of relation making, both on and off the page)?

**What were some of the challenges you encountered while working on the book?**

I finished the book during fall 2020, when I was teaching remotely and obsessively checking election news and when options for socially distanced socializing got significantly narrower as the Chicago winter approached. I think my dog got a lot of commentary about whether the book was any good, and that isolating time was a vivid reminder of how important scholarly communities are to research and writing.

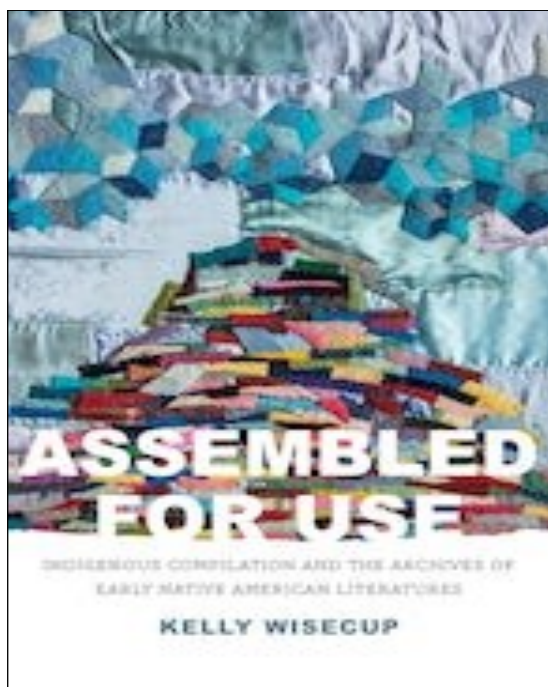
**What would you like to be one or two key takeaways for readers?**

For early American studies readers, I hope the book helps to defamiliarize our traditional objects of study by asking about their genealogies as scholarly objects. In tracing the routes that Indigenous compilations took into archives—sometimes because of settler extraction and at other times through Indigenous peoples' own acts of archival intervention—the book thinks through how Indigenous texts ended up in archives, how those archives shaped the catalog descriptions, approaches, and assumptions scholars applied to those texts, and how early American studies scholars might address those histories in our own scholarship.

I ask these questions on page 17, and they're questions I'm still taking into archives: What are the responsibilities, for contemporary, non-Native scholars, of working within the archives assembled to justify settler boundaries placed onto Native nations? How might scholars, and especially early American studies scholars, make our research responsive to texts and histories that, if often marked as foreign by disciplinary structures, might nonetheless ground alternate relations to the past and ways of producing knowledge from and about the archives of early Native American literatures?

**What scholars have had the greatest influence on your work?**

It's impossible to narrow answer this question, but I feel so fortunate to have been in conversation with amazing scholars at the two book history seminars I mention above and to follow their work beyond the seminars. What follows is a non-exhaustive list! Kimberly Toney's wonderful work in archives and her digital exhibit on the many early books printed in Massachuset, Narraganset, and Wampanoag languages (which I often teach: <https://www.americanantiquarian.org/EnglishtoAlgonquian/>), Kailani Polzak's work on visual culture in Oceania narratives of "discovery," Dan Radus's work on birchbark bindings, Nikki Hessel's work on Indigenous uses of Romantic poetry, to name just a few.



Cover of Wisecup's Book

**What advice would you give other scholars who want to engage in similar projects?**

Read widely in Native American and Indigenous Studies research, even and especially when it comes to scholarship on topics that seem far afield from early American studies research topics and literary histories. Following the conversations in the field of NAIS was crucial to framing my own research questions and being able to consider the long term consequences of the archival interventions Indigenous people were making in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**What are you currently working on?**

I'm in the midst of an intense teaching quarter, so my work these days is mostly oriented there: I'm teaching an undergraduate seminar called "What is an Indigenous Book?" inspired by those seminars at the AAS and Amherst and by my research at the Newberry Library in Chicago.

We are remaking our received notions of books by reading scholarship by Louise Erdrich, Megan Peiser, Leanne Howe, Alice Te Punga Somerville, and others, and we're also learning how we might approach printed books from type to page to bindings. And I'm continuing research on a project called *Archive Chicago*, which I work on with my undergraduate students: we take the city of Chicago as an archive of Indigenous literature and art in ways that build from my research on libraries in *Assembled for Use*.

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

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

- Early American Historical Sites
- Digital Early America
- Teaching 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 at [mary.balkun@shu.edu](mailto:mary.balkun@shu.edu).



**American Literature Association  
35th Annual Conference  
May 23-26, 2024  
The Palmer House Hilton  
Chicago, IL**

The Society of Early Americanists will host two sponsored sessions at the May 25-28, 2024 American Literature Association in Chicago.

**Teaching Colonial and Early US Latinx Literatures**

In recent years early Americanists have seen exciting new literary scholarship on pre-1830 US Latinx literature that recovered previously neglected texts and communities, imagined alternate futures, and re-envisioned nationalist and monolingual approaches to colonial and early US literary studies. How are instructors approaching the category of U.S. Latino literature in the early American classroom? What theoretical approaches and/or experiential pedagogies best enable students to grapple with the complexities of “latinidad” in the earliest period of American literary study?

**Early American Environments**

How do early American settlers and/or Indigenous peoples describe their own or others’ environmental impact in writing produced before 1830? What connections or tensions do they observe in settler colonial projects and the environment?

**CFP’s**

**International Review of Literary Studies  
Special Issue on Literature and Artificial Intelligence**

The International Review of Literary Studies, an open access with no APC, invites scholars, researchers, and practitioners in the fields of literature, language, and AI to submit their original contributions for a special issue focused on the intersection of Literature and Artificial Intelligence.

Due Date: February 29, 2024

For more information, visit: <https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/cfp/2024/01/17/cfp-special-issue-on-literature-and-ai-vol-6-1>

**Early American Literature Book Prize**

The editors of *Early American Literature* are pleased to announce the annual *Early American Literature* Book Prize, which will be given in 2024 for an author’s first academic monograph about American literature in the colonial period through the early republic (roughly 1830). The prize is offered in collaboration with the University of North Carolina Press, the Society of Early Americanists, and the MLA’s Forum on Early American Literature.

Monographs published in 2022 or 2023 are eligible for the 2024 prize, which carries a cash award of \$2000.

Due Date: March 31, 2024. Please send the name of the book, author, year published, and the book’s press website URL to: [calassistanteditor@gmail.com](mailto:calassistanteditor@gmail.com).

Hard copies of books that make the short list will be requested from the publisher. The book prize selection committee consists of the journal’s editors, as well as one representative from the SEA executive committee and one representative from the executive committee for the MLA’s Forum on Early American literature.

Inquiries may be directed to Professors Katy Chiles at [kchiles1@utk.edu](mailto:kchiles1@utk.edu) and Cassander Smith at [clsmith17@ua.edu](mailto:clsmith17@ua.edu).

**New Directions in Quaker Literary History**

While Quaker literary history is far from absent in early American studies, scholarship has yet to move significantly beyond early work that typecasted Quakers into a variety of (not completely inaccurate) roles: counterpoints to New England puritanism, radical women writers, prophetic antislavery activists, practical mystics, and friends to Indigenous peoples. More nuanced work, such as Brycchan Carey’s *From Peace to Freedom: Quaker Rhetoric and the Birth of American Antislavery, 1675-1761* (2012), illustrates the contest of opinion and slow pace of change among the Friends, complicating simplistic notions of Quakers as uniformly ardent moral forerunners. *From Peace to Freedom* also stretches temporal and geographic parameters for Quaker literary history by following the development of antislavery rhetoric across the Atlantic world from the mid seventeenth century to the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Other scholars have begun to more rigorously assess Quaker relations with Indigenous peoples and their role in settler colonialism in America, and some have used

Native American and Indigenous studies methods to read Quaker writings as sources for better understanding the perspectives of Indigenous peoples. This special issue of *Early American Literature* seeks to move this research agenda forward by gathering new work in Quaker literary history that uses a wide range of methodological approaches. The goal is to resituate Quaker writing both at the level of individual texts and broader literary histories of early America, from Quakerism's Atlantic expansion alongside English imperialism in the mid seventeenth century through the early US national period and the splintering of American Quakerism in the 1820s. Submissions might address questions, such as the following:

- How have narratives of Quaker exceptionalism potentially hindered our understanding of Quaker literary history? Moving beyond stereotypes of Quaker benevolence, how do we assess the role of Quakers in enslavement, settler colonialism and Indigenous relations, and the politics of colonial America more broadly? To what extent, if any, is Quaker literary history distinctive during this period?
- How does our understanding of Quaker literary history change by foregrounding texts produced outside Philadelphia and the mid-Atlantic colonies? Are there neglected archives or texts that alter our understanding of Quaker print and manuscript literary production in early America? What influences on or by Quaker literature have gone unstudied?

- What are the key genres of Quaker writing and how do they interact within the Society of Friends as well as broader networks? Are there unique stylistic features that mark Quaker writing? Does Quaker theology lend itself to a particular type of writing style? How does Quaker church history, including its historic schisms, influence the content and production of Quaker writing?

**Due Date: May 15, 2024**

Inquiries and submissions from 8,000 to 10,000 word essays should be sent to Jay David Miller (jaym@georgefox.edu) and Kaitlin Tonti (ktonti2@gmail.com).



**Mellon Scholars Program**

The Library Company of Philadelphia's Program in African American History (PAAH), with the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, offers an annual Mellon Scholars Program of fellowships, internships, and a professional development workshop.

These competitive programs are designed to increase the participation of scholars from underrepresented backgrounds and others in the field of African American history prior to 1900.

The African Americana Collection (over 13,000 titles and almost 1,000 graphics, and growing) includes books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, broadsides, and graphics documenting the western discovery and exploitation of Africa, the rise of slavery in the new world along with the rise of movements against slavery, the development of racial thought and racism, descriptions of African American life, slave and free, throughout the Americas, slavery and race in fiction and drama, and the printed works of African American individuals and organizations.

<https://librarycompany.org/academic-programs/paah/fellowships-2/#/>

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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, Sandra Gustafson ([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/membership.html>

### 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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