

# SEAN

## The Society of Early Americanists Newsletter



THE SOCIETY OF EARLY  
AMERICANISTS

### *From the SEA President*

Planning is well underway for the 2025 SEA biennial conference, scheduled for June 5-8 on the campus of the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Proposal submissions were accepted until December 13, the committee completed its review by mid-January, and decisions were released on January 24. Panelists have been asked to RSVP through the Ex Ordo system by March 3.

Once we hear from everyone, the committee will finalize panel assignments for individual submissions and arrange the schedule of panels and activities. We hope to have a preliminary program available for review by early April at the latest. Updates will be posted at the [conference page on the SEA website](#) and circulated on the [EARAM](#) listserv.

If you're not on EARAM, please sign up by sending a message to [listserv@listserv.kent.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.kent.edu) with the following in the body of the message: SUBSCRIBE EARAM-L YOUR NAME.

*The featured conference events include:*

### Two Keynote Presentations by:

- **Sara E. Johnson** (Literature, UC San Diego; author of the multiple prize-winning *Encyclopédie Noire: The Making of Moreau de Saint-Méry's Intellectual World*); and
- **Zada Ballew** (History, UW-Madison; historical consultant for Native American and Indigenous Initiatives at U of Notre Dame; citizen of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians).

### Common Read Events

- *As Sacred to Us: Simon Pokagon's Birch Bark Stories in Their Contexts*, organized by Blaire Morseau (Religious Studies and American Indian and Indigenous Studies, Michigan State U; citizen of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians) and Kelly Wisecup (English, Northwestern U).

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**There are four Common Read events planned, including:**

- “We Learn on Sacred Ground”: An Indigenous Walking Tour of Notre Dame
- A panel titled "Aside from Pokagon: Teaching Other Nineteenth-Century Anishnaabeg Writers"
- A workshop, "Teaching and Learning with Simon Pokagon's Birch Bark Stories: Engaging Students through Arts and Discussion"
- "Demonstration of an Antique Printing Machine and the Production of Simon Pokagon's Birch Bark Stories."

**Plenary Panels** (linked to themed panel streams) on:

- **“1776 and the Age of Revolutions,”** chaired by Sandra M. Gustafson (English, U of Notre Dame), with Eliga Gould (History, U of New Hampshire), Philip Gould (English, Brown U), Steve Sarson (English, U Jean Moulin, Lyon), and Lenora Warren (English, Cornell U); and
- **“Religious Poetry and Biblical Interpretation”** chaired by Jan Stieverman (American Studies, U of Heidelberg), with Catalina Andrango-Walker (Modern & Classical Languages and Literatures, Virginia Tech), April Langley (African American Studies and English, U of South Carolina), Wendy Roberts (English, U of Albany) and Abram Van Engen (English, Washington U).

**A Field Trip** led by environmental historian [Jon Coleman](#) to sites on the Kankakee River. A prize-winning historian of early America, Coleman is writing a history of the wetlands area, since drained, that fed “the Mighty Kankakee.”

**Conference Venues and Accommodations:**

As noted in the previous newsletter, the main conference venue will be Notre Dame's new [McKenna Hall conference center](#), which has rooms of varying sizes for panels and keynotes. Across the street from McKenna Hall, a block of rooms has been set aside at the [Morris Inn](#), which has additional meeting rooms as well as the popular Rohr's restaurant, Café J for coffee and breakfast, and an outdoor seating area. There is an additional block of rooms available at Fairfield Inn and Suites, and for those who prefer dormitory accommodations, they will be available to book shortly.

**Food:**

In addition to the food offerings at the Morris Inn, the campus has a [variety of eateries](#), including the sports-themed [Legends Restaurant and Pub](#), along with such national chains as Starbucks and Au Bon Pain, and the food-truck-inspired Street Fare. Additional restaurants and a Trader Joe's are an easy walk from campus at [Eddy Street Commons](#). There are spacious green areas, a circuit for running or walking around the lakes, and the famous Golden Dome,

the football stadium, and “Touchdown Jesus” to view. [The Raclin Murphy Museum of Art](#) opened last year, with notable collections in European and American Art from 1700-1900, a Sculpture Park, and an especially fine exhibit of Indigenous Art of the Americas.

**Travel:**

South Bend has its own international airport about 15 minutes from the Notre Dame campus. Notre Dame is also within striking distance of Chicago's O'Hare and Midway Airports, with bus and train transportation to campus. Additional details will be provided with the registration information.

**Travel Support:** Some travel funding will be available, especially for graduate students, contingent faculty, and those lacking institutional support. Information about this funding, including application procedures, will be forthcoming.

**Membership and Registration:**

Attendees will be required to update their SEA membership and register for the conference. Registration will open in early April. In the meantime, you may join the organization now, and no later than the start of the conference. See the SEA website for detailed [membership information](#). Among the **benefits of SEA membership** are:

- receiving the journal [Early American Literature](#) three times a year (in print or print + digital);
- receiving the [SEA Newsletter](#) in PDF form twice a year;
- participating in SEA biennial and special topics conferences (after conference registration payment);
- voting in biennial elections and participating in business meetings at the biennial and topical conferences;
- receiving periodic email messages from the SEA Executive Coordinator about the society's activities; and,
- participating in the Junior Scholars Caucus where appropriate.

More [information about membership](#) is available on the SEA website. Please direct membership-related inquiries to Duke University Press Journal Services via this email address: [orders@dukeupress.edu](mailto:orders@dukeupress.edu).

Additional details about the conference will be posted on [the SEA website](#) and circulated on EARAM. I look forward to welcoming you to Notre Dame in June!

Sandra Gustafson  
SEA President

## *From the SEA Vice-President*

For this newsletter issue, SEA vice president Kelly Wisecup conducted an interview with Zada Ballew, who is one of the keynote speakers at the June 2025 SEA conference. This interview foregrounds some of the ongoing work at Notre Dame to research the university's Indigenous history and to share the findings with the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians.

Zada Ballew is an enrolled citizen of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and a Ph.D. candidate in U.S. History at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Her dissertation examines the business history of her tribe from the fur trade to casinos. During the 2023-2024 academic year, she served as the Historical Consultant and Cultural Liaison for the Native American Initiative of Notre Dame.

**Kelly Wisecup (KW):** Would you tell us about your work at Notre Dame over the last few years? What were some of your hopes or goals for the work?

**Zada Ballew (ZB):** Absolutely! During the 2023-2024 academic year, I served as the Historical Consultant and Cultural Liaison for the Native American Initiative (NAI) of Notre Dame. My job was to research the Native American history of ND and share the findings with the community. As part of this work, we partnered with tribal historians, ND archivists, and current students, faculty, staff, and alumni to better understand the past, present, and future of Notre Dame from the perspectives of Indigenous peoples.

We also created opportunities for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, the tribe most local to ND, to come to campus and see the stories we had uncovered for themselves. As part of our work, we organized an event that we, originally and half-jokingly, called “Superday,” but had, in fact, become just that.

On that day, fifteen representatives from the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians came to campus, toured the archives, participated in an NAI focus group, visited a Pokagon artist's on-campus studio, and attended a keynote lecture delivered by Dr. Blaire Morseau, a citizen of the Pokagon Band and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Michigan State University. (She is also leading the SEA Conference's 2025 Common Read!)

It has always been the goal of the Native American Initiative that the work we do lasts longer than a day or an academic year. It's our hope that our research, writing, teaching, and outreach brings communities together as we work to better understand how our past has shaped

our lived present as we prepare for our shared future. We also want to go about this work in a good way – the process matters just as much to us as the outcome. In that way, our work will never be done because it is, and always will be, a work in progress.

**KW:** Are there places or buildings on campus you'd recommend conference attendees try to see while at the conference? What framings might be helpful for understanding what we're seeing?

**ZD:** It's so difficult to choose! If you look carefully during your visit, you'll see glimpses of Potawatomi history throughout campus and in the broader South Bend community. For example, one of the gyms on campus has a statue of Leopold Pokagon, the founder and namesake of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, above its door. The log chapel located near the two lakes was once called the “Indian Chapel” and it's where some of the first recorded masses and baptisms between Potawatomi and Holy Cross priests were celebrated.

If you arrive to the conference a day or two early, or stay a day or two later, the ND archives on the sixth floor of Hesburgh Library have Father Stephen Badin's baptismal register from the 1830s. In it, you'll see hundreds of Potawatomi people and their kinship networks as they were before Removal.

To end on a happier note, if you find yourself craving a chicken sandwich, you'll see a portrait of Simon Pokagon, son of the tribe's founder, Leopold Pokagon, overlooking the campus Chick-Fil-A. There's so much to see!

As a plug – Cecil Wilson, Jr., the Tribal Historic Research Specialist for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, and I will be leading a walking tour around campus for conference attendees. The dates and times are TBD but, if you're interested in hearing these stories and more, please join us on the tour!

**KW:** How does your work at ND intersect with your dissertation research?

**ZB:** Through the work I did at Notre Dame, I learned that the history of the college cannot be told without the Potawatomi and the history of the Potawatomi cannot be told without the University of Notre Dame. If nothing else, I hope that's what audiences will take away from the talk and from the work the Native American Initiative has done so far. This project has shown me just how intertwined the two stories are and it's my hope that others will begin to tell them together.

**KW:** Can you tell us a bit about the keynote talk you'll give in June?

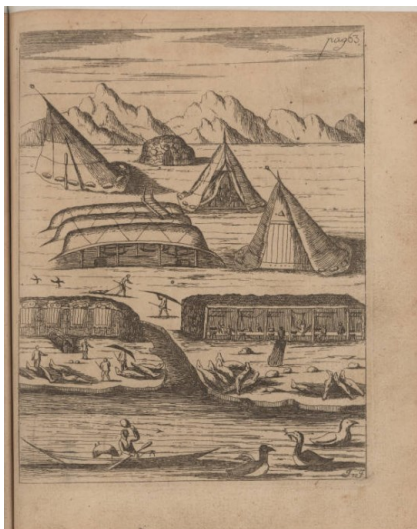
**ZB:** I'm still workshopping possible titles, but I'm leaning towards "'The Centre of the *Indian Mission*': The Potawatomi and the University of Notre Dame." This title is inspired by a letter Notre Dame's founder, Father Edward Sorin, wrote to his Superior less than two weeks after he arrived to the land that became the university.

Though we tend to tell the story of Notre Dame and the story of the Potawatomi separately from each other, the founder of Notre Dame saw the local Potawatomi as central to the school and to the mission he was leading.

Kelly Wisecup  
SEA Vice-President



Zada Ballew



**From the SEA Executive Coordinator**

It's bare-branch winter as I write this. A search for winter-themed poems turned up this one from a source I generally trust—the Poetry Foundation—listing Benjamin Franklin as its author:

*This World's an Inn, all Travellers are we;  
And this World's Goods th'Accommodations be.  
Our Life is nothing but a Winter's Day;  
Some only break their Fast, and so away.  
Others stay Dinner, and depart full fed.  
The deepest Age but sups and goes to bed.  
He's most in Debt that lingers out the Day;  
Who dies betimes has less and less to pay.*

Google's AI assistant then begged to chime in: "Benjamin Franklin wrote very few poems, but among them is a poem that could be considered a 'winter poem,' titled 'This World's an Inn,' which includes lines like 'Our Life is nothing but a Winter's Day,' reflecting on the fleeting nature of life compared to a winter day." Flicking off the pablum of the AI's interpretive comment—which fails even to accurately describe, much less explain, the poem's central conceit—I got curious (and a little concerned) about whether anyone was fact-checking the Poetry Foundation's website.

As you might guess, just because the poem appeared in *Poor Richard's Almanack* (in the entry for December 10, 1744 Old Style) doesn't mean Franklin himself wrote it. All but the first two lines were copied verbatim from the seventeenth-century epigrammist Francis Quarles, whose short poems and emblems were quite popular across the Atlantic and made their way into many a fireside collection, scrapbook, and graveyard epitaph. In a classroom setting, this textual history of the poem could open up a discussion about the history of popular genres and evolving publication formats, the author-function, the ethics of literary borrowing in that period versus our own.

Certainly we'd talk about the first two lines in the context of Franklin's other writing about worldly goods, and we'd underscore how very familiar the theme of life's transience was for readers in the eighteenth century, when so many children died just after breakfast, as it were. Maybe our conversation would even arrive at the problems raised by our extended lifespans ("the deepest Age"): the notion that one's rooming costs climb with the years will strike a chord with anyone who's recently paid the bill for an assisted living facility.

Franklin didn't really author the poem: so what? An attribution error such as this is infinitesimally minor in the big scheme of things, and anyway the point of the class conversation would be to get beyond simply labeling it as such (though I wish the Poetry Foundation would take a little more care).

As many techno-skeptics have been warning us, though, the chaotic vitality of the early Internet has given way to a far more authoritative presentation of information, as a search engine owned by a profit-seeking company hands the user a purportedly true answer on the top line and discourages actual *searching*.

Even when the AI-generated answer is not a hallucination resulting from an algorithmic guess at what's most probable (in this case, a human made the original misattribution), the whole tendency of language in our time is tipping toward reduction, simplification, and the elimination of alternative interpretations so that there can be only one right answer.

Couple these technological developments with the rise of authoritarianism in the world's governments—which thrive by installing simplistic binary judgments about Right and Wrong, Us and Them, Good and Evil—and we are in trouble.

At the moment, it's not only cold outside. It's a chilly climate for democracy, and especially for those essentials of democracy that involve language: clear communication of information, transparent disclosure from government, the implicit agreement among the governed to seek truth through reasoned argument.

The big news in this issue of the Newsletter concerns the biennial conference that many SEA members are looking forward to attending on the first weekend of June: "All Travellers are we." I can confidently state, based on the planet's inevitable rotation, that South Bend and the rest of the hemisphere will be in leaf and warmed by then. What's much harder to predict is the political and cultural temperature of the nation six months from now. Unless my bill at life's Inn comes due before then, I look forward to gathering, learning, and debating with you all in those longer days of summer.

Kirsten Silva Gruesz  
SEA Executive Coordinator



**Announcements**

***The MLA James Russell Lowell Prize***

SEA member Matt Cohen (Professor of English, U of Nebraska, Lincoln) has been awarded the MLA James Russell Lowell Prize for his Book, *The Silence of the Miskito Prince: How Cultural Dialogue Was Colonized*, published by the U of Minnesota Press (2022). This honor was conferred by a committee of people from a broad range of fields, signaling the vital importance of early American literary studies to the larger community of scholars represented by the MLA.



*Matt Cohen*



***2nd Annual Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for African Studies***

The SEA Executive Committee is delighted to share the news that Sara E. Johnson's *Encyclopédie Noire: The Making of Moreau de Saint-Méry's Intellectual World* (2023) has been awarded the 2nd Annual Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for African Studies from the Modern Language Association.

For a description of the book (and a full list of the distinguished awards the book has received), see:

<https://uncpress.org/book/9781469676913/encyclopedie-noire/>.



*Sara E. Johnson*

**MLA Richard Beale Davis Prize**



*Lloyd Alimboyao Sy*

Each year the MLA Forum on Early American Literature selects a recipient for the Richard Beale Davis Prize. For the essays published in 2023, the committee is pleased to share that [Lloyd Alimboyao Sy's "Stopping by Woods in Mashpee Territory: Belonging in William Apess's \*Indian Nullification\*"](#) has impressed us with its engaging storytelling and sense of critical occasion.



*Andrea Knutson*

We also wish to commend [Andrea Knutson's "The True Temper of It": Combustibility and Emblematic Representation in Richard Ligon's \*True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados\*](#) with Honorable Mention. While the committee thoughtfully considered the many contributions to the journal, these essays were distinguished for their scope and potential to shape our field of study.

**2024 Early American Literature Book Prize**

The 2024 Early American Literature (EAL) Book Prize has been awarded to Miles P. Grier for his book *Inkface: Othello and White Authority in the Era of Atlantic Slavery*. The book was published by UVA Press in 2023.

The EAL Book Prize is awarded every two years to a first monograph published in the previous two years. The prize includes a cash award of \$2,000. The 2024 EAL Book Prize was open to monographs published in 2022 or 2023. The EAL Book Prize is awarded in collaboration with the University of North Carolina Press, the Society of Early Americanists, and the MLA's Forum on Early American Literature.

**2024 SEA Essay Contest Prize**

The selection committee is pleased to announce the winner of the 2024 SEA Essay Contest, "Trees and Texts: Indigenous History, Material Media, and the Logan Elm" by Dr. Mark Mattes of the University of Louisville. This essay was delivered at the 2023 SEA Biennial conference in College Park, Maryland. The committee admired the author's work in thinking about Soyeghtowa and the cultural history of the Logan Elm by centering Native voices and practices, an approach that illuminates not only new facets of a complex material history but also the promise of decolonial methods in extending our scholarly attention beyond settler concepts of writing and the book.



*Miles P. Grier*



*Mark Mattes*

## Early American Literature Call for Exhibit Reviews

*Early American Literature* seeks reviewers for exhibits. Exhibit reviews cover curated expressions relevant to *EAL*'s readership—whether in person or virtual—encompassing the overall range of the exhibit and addressing key themes of particular interest to the reviewer. Exhibit reviews are generally 1500-2000 words in length, but they can be longer or shorter depending on the scope of the exhibit.

We welcome reviewers at all ranks who study early American literature and encourage recommendations for other exhibits with an early American literature presence and expansive view of texts and textuality. We particularly welcome graduate student reviewers. If you are interested in participating, please send an email to [eaalbookreviews@gmail.com](mailto:eaalbookreviews@gmail.com). Please include the exhibit you'd like to review, a brief description (50 words) of your scholarly interests, and why the exhibit you select is important to these and/or to early American literature broadly defined. A few exhibits include:

*April 19, 1775*. Ongoing, Concord Museum.

*Thomas Jefferson's Library*. Ongoing, Library of Congress.

*Substance of Stars*. Heard Museum.

*Furniture in Maryland Life: A History of the Industry in Maryland*. Ongoing, Maryland Center for History and Culture (formerly, Maryland Historical Society).

*OKLA HOMMA*. Ongoing, First Americans Museum.

*Natural Curiosity: University of South Carolina and the Evolution of Scientific Inquiry in the Natural World*. Ongoing, McKissick Museum, USC.

*Expressions of Life: Native Art in North America*. Ongoing, Eiteljorg Museum.

*Kernels of Culture: Maize around the World*. May 3, 2024-Mar 31, 2025, The Stephen and Peter Sachs Museum, Missouri Botanical Garden.

*Bark! Indigenous Cultural Expression*. May 4, 2024-May 11, 2025, New Jersey State Museum.

*Manifest: Thirteen Colonies*. May 18, 2024-Apr 13, 2025, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

*Here, Now and Always*. July 2, 2024-July 2, 2028, Museum of Indian Arts and Culture.

## Junior Scholars Host Publishing Panel

On October 15, 2024, the Junior Scholars' Caucus hosted a panel titled "Journal Publishing: A Candid Conversation with *Early American Literature* Editors Cassander Smith and Katy Chiles." The editors answered questions about the state of higher education publishing and best practices for finding a pathway into getting academic articles published.

The Junior Scholars will be hosting events at this year's SEA conference and look forward to seeing all junior scholars there!

The Junior Scholars Caucus  
of the  
Society of Early Americanists

Cassander Smith—  
University of Alabama

Tuesday, October 15, 2024  
3-4pm Central time via Zoom  
RSVP through the QR Code

Katy Chiles—  
University of Tennessee

Questions? Contact  
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"Journal Publishing: A Candid Conversation with *Early American Literature* Editors Cassander Smith and Katy Chiles"

## The Society of Early Americanists Junior Scholars' Caucus

### JSC 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, such as providing advice on a specific career stage, reading the work in progress of a mentee, writing recommendation letters based on familiarity with a mentee's work, or providing feedback on teaching and syllabi. We will also provide opportunities for mentors and mentees to network at conferences.

For more information please visit: <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/membership/sea-junior-scholars-caucus>

*SEA Featured Scholar: September 2024*  
*Joseph Rezek*

*Joseph Rezek is Associate Professor of English at Boston University.*

**What is something you are reading right now (EAL related or otherwise) that inspires you, either personally or professionally?**

This summer I read Percival Everett's novel *James*, his re-writing of *Huck Finn* from the perspective of Jim. I re-read *Huck Finn* first to maximize the experience of *James*, and the whole thing was just incredible. Everett's novel is a stunning rebuke and homage to Twain's. It's a thriller in itself: the farther you get into *James*, the more uncertain you are about what he will do with *Huck Finn*. I loved reading it and I hope to teach it someday.

**Is there a scholar in the field who inspires you, and why?**

I am inspired more and more by people who are amazing scholars while also being upstanding, generous, trustworthy academic citizens. People who mentor others, who serve as editors or in administrative roles, who keep scholarly organizations going, who try to improve labor conditions for graduate students and NTT scholars, who make their fields more equitable. These are the folks who give me hope in academia.

Read the full interview at <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/whats-new-announcements/sea-featured-scholar-september-2024-joseph-rezek>



*Joseph Rezek*

*SEA Featured Scholar: December 2024*  
*Travis Foster*

*Travis Foster is academic Director of Gender and Women's Studies and Associate Professor of English, Villanova University.*

**Who is your favorite early American writer, or what is your favorite early American text, and why?**

I don't have an overall favorite, but the early American writers I most enjoy discussing with students are Anne Bradstreet and Phillis Wheatley Peters. Both have sparked some of the most engaging class discussions I've experienced and have helped students learn by doing the lesson that literary interpretation produces new knowledge. As for a favorite scholarly text, I love assigning Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* because it consistently generates more "aha" moments in a 75-minute class than almost any other work I've taught.

**Is there a scholar in the field who inspires you, and why?**

Mostly, I'm inspired by scholars who model generosity and work to make opportunities for others' ideas and work. I just finished two years serving on the C19 Executive Committee, and I was frequently in awe of my fellow committee members, who provided many models for doing right by the field and by other scholars. I'm also inspired by scholars doing work on trans history in the early and nineteenth-century Americas, who are developing new methods of historiography and reading.

Read the full interview at <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/whats-new-announcements/sea-featured-scholar-december-2024-travis-foster>



*Travis Foster*

*Miles P. Grier is currently an Associate Professor in the English Department at Queens College, CUNY.*

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

*Inkface* is the culmination of my engagement with texts that vexed me since my undergraduate days: Shakespeare's *Othello* (1604), Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688), and Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno* (1855). I was fascinated with these writers' obsessive figuration of black skin as inked—and their subsequent staging of literacy as a capacity available to whites alone.

*Inkface* allowed me to test whether these anchors of early modern, eighteenth-century, and early American literary canons could speak to each other across the geographic and temporal barricades of our profession. Were there recurring wishes and fears about the legibility of inner character that *Othello* harnessed and propagated, as evident through productions and literary revisions across 250 years of British Atlantic slavery? In this project, I dropped in on rich case studies of *Othello* across 250 years to see what changed and what persisted.

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

The threat of makeup transfer from *Othello* to Desdemona is central to my reading of the play and its iterations that focus on gender. Finding graphic evidence of that smearing before the twentieth century was nearly impossible. This difficulty sent me in search of textual evidence in theatre lore. Entries I have found dating back to the last quarter of the eighteenth century can now be a part of the discussion of the perceived tone of a play that famously teeters between pathos and farce.

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

In theatre history and performance studies: Joseph Roach, Lisa Freeman, Elizabeth Dillon; in Early American: Jason Shaffer and Laura Stevens; in Early Modern Kim F. Hall, Ian Smith, Bob Hornback; and in theory, Althusser and the Fields sisters.

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

I have two primary wishes--one local and one broader. On the smaller front, I hope that people reconsider the ten-

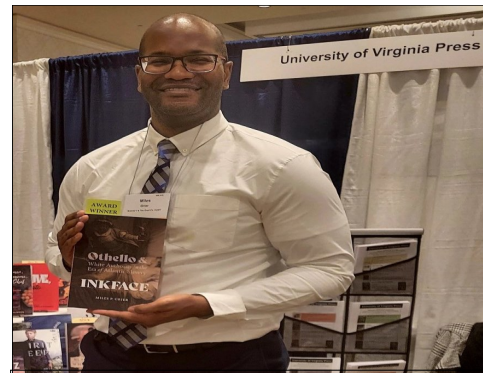
dency to imagine *Othello* as Shakespeare's exploration of the history and psychology of Black men.

My focus on his painted blackness allowed me to see the play as a nightmare driven by white patriarchal fears, which were served by the communicable black taint of racial and sexual dishonor. While theatergoers no longer expect to see that play, the transformation in *Othello* should be credited to subsequent performers, not to Shakespeare or the tradition he propagated.

My second is that early Americanists and early modernists consider de-centering law and science as the primary engines of racial construction. A theatre historical project allowed me to focus on the generation and spread of a folk racism that did not merely reflect legal fiat and scientific expertise but operated—and endured—with its own principles. Racial distinction could be presupposed in the very medium of expression (theatre or the book) and then enforced in the social process of adjudicating proper communication and interpretation. In that light, neither the Europe/Americas distinction nor the early modern/eighteenth century periodization gets to the heart of racial authority as founded in an attempt to control meaning-making.

**What project are you currently working on?**

I am working on an edition of *Othello* for Norton and (with that play finally set aside for a while) a new monograph tentatively entitled "Cisatlantic Words, Transatlantic Deeds." The premise of this project is that eighteenth-century studies relies too often on Old World terms that it presumes to be stable as a foil that helps foreground New World change. What if New World phenomena were latent in Old World practices but became newly disruptive and therefore spectacularly visible? As case studies, I look at trajectories that we might call transracial or transgender among enslaved Ibo, English Creole widows, and so-called white Indians.



*Miles P. Grier*

*Teaching Early America:  
Teaching Early American History in Canada*

I began my teaching career in graduate school at what became, at least for a time, the epicenter of the battle over early American history – Charlottesville, Virginia. My time teaching at the University of Virginia was fraught, even before the White nationalist attacks of August 2017. I spent a great deal of time trying to get my students to “unlearn” exceptionalist and White supremacist narratives. Unsurprisingly, getting students to think critically about America’s founding or concepts like the “Founding Fathers” at “Thomas Jefferson’s University” yielded mixed results.

But after I graduated, I moved back to my home country of Canada and taught at the University of Toronto, and now at Saint Mary’s University. My experiences could not be further removed from those I had in Virginia. I teach primarily Canadian and international students (most not from North America) and they arrive in my classroom as virtual blank slates when it comes to American history.

Most don’t know the difference between the American Revolution and the Civil War. They may have heard the names of people like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, but they couldn’t tell you much about them. Their familiarity with American slavery is usually confined to the Underground Railroad and enslaved fugitives escaping to Canada.

So, rather than confronting national narratives and having students “unlearn” certain ingrained myths, much of my teaching in Canada focuses on getting my students to understand *why* Americans fight so intensely over their history. This is somewhat of a foreign concept in Canada – most Canadians don’t know much of their history and, to be honest, even fewer care.

But while my Canadian students lack the foundation and familiarity that my American students had, they bring an outsider perspective and curiosity that can be supremely helpful. Their perspectives have shown me the value in stepping back and asking questions about why this history causes such a strong reaction from certain types of Americans. What is it about the American identity and concepts of citizenship, belonging, and exceptionalism that infuse certain founding narratives with such critical importance?

This framework forms the basis not just for my general teaching on the American founding, but for some entire courses. I teach a course on *Hamilton*, entitled “Hamilton: History and Musical,” that uses the show to have students think about historical memory and the cultural purchase of certain conservative narratives about the founding, even among “progressives.” In the course, we think deeply about the Revolution in popular culture and the purposes that simplified, triumphalist narratives serve.

Through teaching these courses, I have found that the more I can blend the teaching of history with teaching *about* history – of having students think about how we currently encounter history, how contemporary concerns shape popular historical narratives, and how and why people fight over the framing of history – the richer and more engaging my classes tend to be. And, in addition, the more we can focus on developing critical thinking skills, spotting misinformation tactics and far-Right tropes, and discussing exclusionary ideologies.

However, I recognize that I am in a very privileged position. There are things that I can do in Canada at my small, fairly unknown university from the relative safety of the tenure-track that others cannot. And that deserves equal, if not more, concern than anything any of us are individually doing in our classrooms.

When I taught in Virginia, I was concerned about how to discuss fraught topics in a safe way. For instance, how to create and maintain an inclusive classroom with zero tolerance for White supremacy when some of my students had Confederate flag stickers on their laptops. I still have those concerns, but they are dwarfed by the much bigger problem of the systemic attacks we currently face regarding curriculum, Critical Race Theory hysteria, shrinking programs, and evaporating tenure lines.

I believe any discussion of teaching Early America should focus on how we can and should be organizing as a field and a profession to counter these attacks and to act in solidarity with our embattled colleagues. To put it simply, the nuances of how I’m choosing to teach about Indigenous dispossession or American slavery don’t matter when there are people in certain states who can’t teach those topics at all. For so many reasons, we are living and teaching in difficult times – we need to come together and act collectively to meet the challenges of our moment.

Shira Lurie  
St. Mary’s University

*(This is a slightly edited version of my remarks at the Roundtable Session, “Teaching the American Revolution: 1619, 1776, and the Timelines of History,” at the 2023 Meeting of the Society of Early Americanists Meeting)*

When does the American Revolution end? In History 1501 (The American Revolution), which I have taught with my colleague Professor Seth Rockman at Brown University, the question of the timelines of Revolutionary history help to frame the semester. Thinking about beginnings and endings: it not only awakes students to how we tell stories—inside and outside of the academy—but also relates directly to the question of the Revolution’s winners and losers. Was the Revolution as radical as the students generally assume?

The course is offered through Brown’s History Department, and it familiarizes students with the major (and contentious) interpretations of the Revolution. Its method is interdisciplinary insofar as students read primary documents for their historical and literary significance. Close reading matters; historical texts are not simply transparent windows into “the past.”

The course puts this grand national event of US independence into transatlantic contexts, emphasizing the histories of slavery and the slave trade in building European, capitalist empires based on agrarian economies. We introduce the course by emphasizing that, from the imperial perspective, the British American colonies were meant to serve the more lucrative sugar colonies of the West Indies. Most students simply assume the central importance of the North American colonies—the future United States—and are surprised at this. Slave-based export economies put Boston and Barbados in a new historical perspective.

Our pedagogical style relishes debate, and Rockman interrupts my lectures with impunity. Arguments take center stage. Students join the fray. This is productive, I believe, especially for this current generation of students who do not experience open—and civil—debate on our campus as much as they should.

We begin the semester with an overview of the prominent historical interpretations of the American Revolution, and focus on 19<sup>th</sup>-century Whig interpretations as the context for the patriotic narratives that pervade popular culture today. George Bancroft and Whig interpretations of American history is a good place to start, since they allow us to think about which myths of

American independence still have currency (or, alternatively, are debunked).

The question of the causes of the Revolution segues to the issue of how one might imagine a “timeline” for Revolutionary history. When does it “begin”? How and why does one assign such a beginning? As we urge in our considerations of timelines, if Ralph Waldo Emerson looked to Lexington and Concord in April, 1775, as the moment of true beginnings—his commemorative poem’s iconic phrasing of the “short heard ‘round the world”—so too did the American militia and white supremacist movements that idolized the nation’s supposed beginning. Patriot’s Day points to Oklahoma City as readily as it does the outskirts of Boston.

The purpose of discussing beginnings also locates the English Glorious Revolution in 1688 as an important transatlantic political episode that was also deeply felt in the British colonies. Indeed, by connecting 1688 and 1776, we see how colonial subjects misinterpreted the meaning and scope of a metropolitan political event that championed the English liberties” and “the rights of Englishmen.” Students begin to engage the processes by which historical subjects themselves fictionalize origins stories—and mobilize them later (in the Stamp Act riots, for example) to leverage their own political positions and desires.

Such stories about the origins of English liberties, moreover, provide further context to the contemporary revisionist narrative that replaces 1688 with 1619, and reroutes a history of political ideas into one about chattel slavery and imperial-capitalist economies. In this regard, the 1619 Project dismantles a powerful interpretation of the causes of the Revolution that is grounded in English politics and, later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, picked up and transformed nationalist historians offering an idealized version of an American Revolution rooted pristinely in higher principles.

The timelines of the end of the Revolution are perhaps a more pressing issue for us in light of US politics today. We spend ample time considering the political transition from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitutional settlement of 1787-88. Rockman’s lectures focus on the financial issues dominating state politics in the 1780s, which involve debtors, bills of credit, speculators in government bonds, and debates over repaying those bond values (with interest!). The story focuses on the plight of small farmers and debtors who have made sacrifices during the war and now find themselves victims of financial proposals that further paralyze the disempowered.

He demystifies the ways in which the new US Constitution, coupled with Alexander Hamilton's plans to finance the national debt, skewered debtors, who were now being asked to pay new taxes to establish the federal government's "credit" (in both financial and political meanings). My lectures subsequently broaden the lens to consider the chaotic dysfunctionality of the central government under the Articles of Association, its inability to regulate commerce, pass legislation, or provide for national defense.

This part of the course asks students to consider when—and how—a revolution "ends". Did the brief interregnum of what one historian has called the "Patriot Economy" of the 1780s represent fair dealings on a local level, only to be obliterated by new federal power? What do even mean by the "real" revolution (That John Adams would later claim was in the hearts and minds of the people)? Were more radical and egalitarian possibilities abandoned—or rather taken away by propertied interests?

But the question of when the Revolution ends also raises profound questions about the nature of political activism—and violence—in a republic. The protests by debtors in the 1780s—closing courthouses, for example, so debtor cases could not be settled—echo the course's earlier examination of violence during the 1760s and 1770s by colonists angry over British imperial policies. And taxes.

What, in other words, do the 1780s versions of popular politics look like next to our own today in the US? Which kinds of moral and political criteria do we use to judge "the rights of Englishmen" as opposed to, say, "stop the steal" on January 6, 2021? Studying the question of when a revolution ends (or never ends?) inevitably poses hard questions about the legitimate range and form of political dissent. Then and now. This has pedagogical value for engaging the two crucial concepts upon which a republic rests: sovereignty and representation.

And for unpacking the language of extra-legal violence. Who are the "people"? What are their "rights"? Perhaps Hannah Arendt's distinction between power and violence is useful for theorizing this. Our study of the Revolution aims to demystify not just why but how people take to the streets in protest. Revolutions are messy, and at the very least we need to acknowledge "big" events like the Stamp Act riots—or the quotidian forms of violence Loyalists suffered for years and years at the hands of the sons of Liberty—as moments of embodied violence where lives are lost or ruined.

If historians have moved off of categories like "mobs" and articulate instead "crowd action" (or in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century notion of the "people out of doors"), we urge our students to ask what those riots must have looked like to Loyalists who could not imagine breaking from the Empire but were coerced to remain silent or simply leave.

The question of when the Revolution ends provides a new way of seeing political violence today. Those who tried to stop the Congressional certification of the 2020 Presidential Election were operating under the assumption that the revolution is never over—that in the name of the people's liberties, any form of violence is justified. The political populism generating this extra-legal dissent shares assumptions about the federal government that were expressed by the proposed US Constitution's opponents in 1787-88: the Antifederalists.

Consider the similarities. During the ratification debates, Antifederalist writing and speeches expressed a foundational fear of a distant and consolidated federal government; it argued against the dangers of "elite" aristocratic powers that would hijack the national government; it saw the national government as already hopelessly out of touch, distant, and nefarious; it looked to the states as the true arbiters of the people's rights; and, most importantly, the Antifederalists believed that political representation ideally should be as transparent and unmediated as possible.

Whereas the *Federalist* theorized political representation as a filter, Antifederalist pamphleteers countered that Congress should represent the people-- in miniature. The people's elected representatives should look, act, think and feel like the people themselves. If this points to theoretical differences between democracies and republics, it also creates a striking parallel to today's populist discourse of distrust. Drain the swamp indeed.

Philip Gould  
Boston University



*Early American Historical Sites:  
Indigenous Erasure at Philadelphia's Welcome Park*

Philadelphia's Welcome Park; a brutalist space surrounded by apartments, a historic inn, and a parking garage; was created in 1985 to celebrate William Penn's founding of Pennsylvania. The blue and white signage, in addition to two statues, details Penn's biography and lionizes his legacy of religious freedom, tolerance, and peace. Unfortunately, these displays are incomplete, because they fail to tell visitors about the true owners of the land, the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy, and their connection to the space. During my 2024 archival research at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) and the City of Philadelphia's Department of Records, I tried to uncover the story of the park's Indigenous ownership and use.

The land under the park was first titled to Penn by English royal charter. In 1755, John Penn, William Penn's grandson, gifted part of his family's holdings, near his Slate Roof House, to Indigenous delegations so they could use it as a space to treat and engage in trade, diplomacy, and ceremonial gatherings. Records from the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania and Haudenosaunee oral histories confirm the gift. From Penn's perspective, having an Indigenous "ambassador's residence" in Philadelphia made perfect diplomatic and economic sense, and the Haudenosaunee conceivably interpreted the gift as an acknowledgment of their sovereignty, agency, and colonial influence. Penn's gift made "in perpetuity", did not last. By 1867, the Slate Roof House was demolished; subsequent decades saw development along the Delaware River engulf the space; and, by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Welcome Park was opened to celebrate the commonwealth's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Knowing that my time was limited, I set two goals for myself. The first was to understand how the space was used. (I knew I would only be able to investigate part of the story because the Indigenous side would not appear in the William Penn Family Papers.) And the second was to establish a chain of ownership from Penn to the Haudenosaunee. I started with the deeds because I thought that would be the easiest challenge to meet.

The City of Philadelphia's Department of Records holds city-related deeds dating back to 1683. Upon my arrival, the amazing staff gave me a tour of the facility, reminded me how to use the microfiche machines, and helped me access all the existing deeds between 1743 and the present that were related to the site. After a few days of work, I was able to build an unbroken chain of ownership, but I failed to connect the space to the Penn family or any Indigenous person or nation because their names

did not appear on any of the deeds I examined. So, what did this mean?

The gifting was probably made verbally and with the exchange of a Wampum Belt, which would explain why the Penn family never drafted a deed. Could a deed exist in another archive? Yes, it could, one possible location might be the State of Pennsylvania's Archives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Additionally, Penn may have either been lying about the gift or had no intention, despite it being made in "in perpetuity", of relinquishing control of the land. This is plausible because the deeds I reviewed from 1743 to 1864 show only non-Indigenous ownership. And, during my time at the HSP, I reviewed multiple maps and plans of the City of Philadelphia from 1741 forward and none of them reference Indigenous ownership.

My second task was to try to understand how the space was used. Anecdotal archival evidence suggests that the space was used for meetings. We should also recognize that the gifted ground was an acknowledgement of Indigenous sovereignty and the importance of the treaties and agreements that were made on that land. Unfortunately, historians do not know how long the space was used for those purposes or the actual dimensions of the land. My time at HSP with the Penn Papers revealed references to Indigenous meetings, arrivals, and diplomacy within the City of Philadelphia. Unfortunately, there were no specific references to the space that would become Welcome Park.



*Welcome Park, located near 2<sup>nd</sup> and Walnut Sts. in Philadelphia, was created in 1982 by The Friends of the National Park Service to celebrate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Pennsylvania. In 1755, John Penn, William Penn's grandson, gave land near the park to the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy for diplomatic and trade delegations. Today, there are no references to Haudenosaunee ownership in the park*

For example, a 1755 letter from John Penn to Richard Peters, he was a trusted member of the Penn family and their Land Office Secretary, includes these two sentences: “As there is no probability of the Indians coming back to the Indian Manor. I think if Tenants offer it should be let, this you will let me know your Sentiments upon.”

Could this be a reference to the space that would become the Welcome Park and is this why my deed research did not reveal Indigenous ownership? I do not yet know, so more work is needed.

Beyond my research, the Welcome Lot continues to be reexamined and questioned. For example, in 2015, Indigenous leaders and community members convened at the site to protest their ancestors’ erasure.

The gathering also called attention to the impact of the Doctrine of Discovery, the legal and ideological framework that justified European domination over Indigenous lands and peoples. The gathering was highlighted by speeches from Haudenosaunee leaders, along with representatives from Indigenous communities across the Americas, to reaffirm the park’s significance as a space of resistance and a reminder of the unbroken ties between Indigenous peoples and their ancestral lands.

My Welcome Park research answered some of my questions, but it also raised a number of new ones. How and where can I find more sources to answer my original research questions? How can I better understand omitted histories? And can my future work comprehensively reflect, explain, and effectively compare Indigenous and colonial power dynamics?

Understanding the story of Welcome Park is an opportunity for future scholarship to not only enrich the historical landscape of colonial Pennsylvania, but to develop a greater understanding of British colonial governance, explain the ongoing legacy of settler colonialism, and celebrate the resilience of Indigenous nations.

Cameron L. Kline  
Syracuse University



Great works stick with us, they keep us up at night, thinking about plot, characters, and setting, but it is not always the celebrated stories that infiltrate our minds. Other texts and narratives are problematic, sometimes in ways readers cannot understand or leave us wanting more. The narrative of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca is such a work for me. Over the last ten years, I’ve had many sleepless nights and long days of archival searches, Cabeza de Vaca’s 1542 *la Relación* is an important work that exemplifies the problematic nature of early first encounters between Europeans and Indigenous peoples. The single sided European discourse is the most challenging to readers and limits their ability to understand the duality of these early encounters. Additionally, it silences and often overlooks Indigenous experiences and perspectives. Furthermore, Cabeza de Vaca’s narrative was not written while he wandered aimlessly around the Southern Gulf Coast region of North America and Mexico.

Cabeza de Vaca wrote his narrative after his return to Spain and as many scholars argue his motivations to write his account was in defense of the entrada’s failure to establish a settlement and port on the Western Coast of *la Florida*. His motivation to write the account brings about questions of his reliability to accurately and objectively tell the story. Consequently, Cabeza de Vaca’s lack of knowledge about the environment around him causes his awareness of spatiality and temporality to become blurred and makes his narrative read chaotically. The ambiguousness in relation to space and time of *la Relación* creates a place for an interactive digital map of Cabeza de Vaca’s narrative.

Digital Humanities methodologies provide scholars with innovative approaches to analyze and gain new perspectives on texts of antiquity. My interactive mapping project *The Cabeza Matrix* focuses on creating continuity and clarity with visual representations to Cabeza de Vaca’s narrative. Additionally, it will attempt to convey previously silenced or erased Indigenous accounts and perspectives into the first encounters conversation. *The Cabeza Matrix* combines space, time, and place while blending and linking the contextual, geographic, and cultural of first encounter narratives to produce what David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, and Trevor M. Harris call deep mapping. Deep maps require praxis from the map user and in this engagement, readers experience a multifaceted view of first encounters.

I used Esri's free online version of ArcGIS as it provides the ability to layer numerous amounts of data onto the map with reliable stability.

Once on the project's "Home Page" (Figure 1) users see a zoomed-out map view of the interactive map. At the top of the page is "Project Abstract" and a tab about "Entering and Using the Cabeza Matrix Map." Under the tab "Entering and Using the Cabeza Matrix Map" users find a guide for interfacing with the interactive map (Figures 1-2). Cabeza de Vaca's narrative begins in Seville, Spain. Red map pins with the number zero denote the starting point of his story, from there readers follow his story sequentially across the Atlantic. Other map pins in orange, blue, purple, and yellow are interactive elements that assist readers with historical, contextual, and visual information about the narrative. Once in Florida, varying background colors indicate approximate locations of Indigenous chiefdoms ancestral and traditional homelands during the period that Cabeza de Vaca and the Pánfilo de Narváez entrada were traversing the area. Please note that Cabeza's locations in Florida are approximations, because of his lack of spatiality it is difficult for scholars to accurately determine his location. For the purposes of this project, I utilize locations based on previous scholars' speculations.



Figure 1: The Cabeza Matrix Homepage

Incorporating Indigenous perspectives to the map matrix during this period presented many challenges. However, there are two examples presented in Florida as models of what incorporating Indigenous perspectives would look like in the map matrix. One is a "Seminole Story from an Oral Interview" I found during an archival search and the other is account documented by Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *la Florida del Inca* in 1540 which recounts Timucua Cacique Acuera's response to Hernando de Soto's summons to meet. While Acuera's response does not directly speak to encounters with the Narváez entrada, it does establish some sentiments expressed by Florida's Indigenous peoples to-

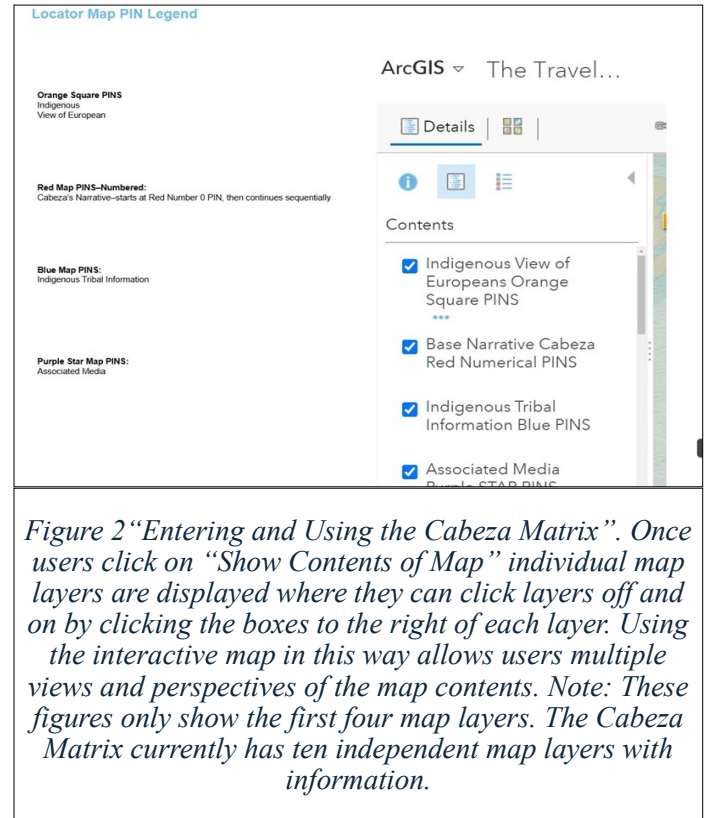


Figure 2 "Entering and Using the Cabeza Matrix". Once users click on "Show Contents of Map" individual map layers are displayed where they can click layers off and on by clicking the boxes to the right of each layer. Using the interactive map in this way allows users multiple views and perspectives of the map contents. Note: These figures only show the first four map layers. The Cabeza Matrix currently has ten independent map layers with information.

The Cabeza Matrix remains in iterative beta form and there is substantial work that must be completed. However, even in its experimental state this project demonstrates a unique way to read the first encounter period. The aim of *The Cabeza Matrix* includes mapping the entire narrative of Cabeza de Vaca and incorporating the perspectives of all Indigenous peoples he encountered. It is my belief that an interactive digital approach to first encounters will advance decolonization of European narratives while recovering Indigenous perspectives that have not previously been in conversation.

Visit [cabezamatrix.create.fsu.edu](http://cabezamatrix.create.fsu.edu).

1. See Adorno, Rolena, and Patrick Charles Pautz. *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: His Account, His Life, and the Expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez*. Vol. 1, University of Nebraska Press, 1999. (Establishment of settlement and port, p. 77 and apology and defense p. xx).
2. See also, *Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition*, Introduction by Ilan Stavans, Penguin Book, 2002, Notes 3, p. 111.
3. See *Deep Maps and Spatial Narratives* (2015) as well as *Making Deep Maps* (2022), both by David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, and Trevor M. Harris. <https://cabezamatrix.create.fsu.edu/>
4. For the purposes of this beta version of the Cabeza Matrix, Florida's Indigenous ancestral homelands were mapped using source materials from the University of South Florida and Florida History.org.

Kristy Cherry-Randle  
University of Alabama

### **Recent Methods and Objects in Queering Early America**

Presenter: Ben Bascom, Ball State U

“Third Space: Queering America in Early American Literature,” Leah Thomas, Virginia State University

“Of ‘Topeewallahs’ and the Zenana: Queering Narrative Subjectivity in Bartholomew Burges’s *A Series of Indostan Letters*,” Rajendur Kaur, William Patterson University

“Arrayed in a White Robe Devoid of Ornament’: Early American Virginity and Queer Theoretical Sex,” Nicholas Adler, Boston College

“Intimate Interruptions: Fragmentation, Withdrawal, and the Queerness of Privacy in Foster’s *The Coquette*,” Maggie Muheleman, University of Mississippi, Oxford

### **Queer Infrastructures of and in Early America**

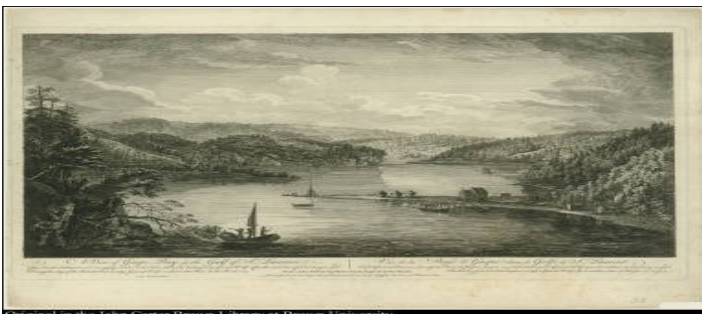
Presider and Respondent: Sam Sommers, University of Connecticut, Waterbury

“Stephen Calvert’s Queer Infrastructure,” Christopher Looby, University of California, Los Angeles

“Sex in the Post Office,” Christy Pottroff, Boston College

“All in the Family’: Infrastructures of Race and Sexuality,” Jordan Alexander Stein, Fordham University, Lincoln Center

“Studying Trans, Studying Gender: What Are the Ends and Objects of Trans Studies in Early America?” Eagan Dean, Stanford University



Original in the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University

### **Legal Fictions: Property, Persons, and the Imagination in the Long Nineteenth Century**

Presider: John Funchion, University of Miami

“Respectability, Horror, and History in the Early Black Atlantic,” Erin Forbes, University of Bristol and Cameron Seglias, Goethe University, Frankfurt

“A Modern Anecdote’: Enslavement, Capitalism, and Transgressive Circulation,” Duncan F. Faherty, Graduate Center, City University of New York

“Undoing Coverture in the Early Republic,” Daniel Couch, United States Air Force Academy

### **Vast Black Atlantics**

“Obour Tanner’s Grief,” Tara Bynum, University of Iowa

“Black Manhood as an Ethic of Care: Resisting Rape in Colonial Brazil,” Matthew Pettway, University of South Alabama

“The Transatlantic Slave Ad: Examining the Legibility of the Enslaved from Restoration England to Revolutionary America,” Alyssa Smith, University of Iowa

“Maria Stewart’s Prophetic Imagination’: The Emergence of a Heterodox Black Prophetic Tradition,” Jarvis Young, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

### **Health and the Environment in the Nineteenth-Century United States: Panel**

Presider and Speaker: Thomas Constantinesco, Sorbonne University

Speakers:

Jamie Fenton, Sorbonne University  
Edourd Marsoin, University of Paris Cité  
Stephen Rachman, Michigan State University  
Cecile Roudeau, University of Paris Cité

Respondent:  
Sari Altschuler, Northeastern University

## Upcoming Conferences

**Society for the Study of American Women Writers**  
**November 6-9, 2025**  
**Philadelphia, PA**

**“Understanding Histories, Imagining Futures: 25 Years of SSAWW”**

*From the SSAWW website:* “Understanding Histories, Imagining Futures” celebrates the first twenty-five years of SSAWW and its mission to promote and advance the study of American women writers through research, teaching, and publication, while also looking ahead to our plans for the future. As a community, we engage with the creative work of women across the Americas who foster change and build networks that sustain us through difficult times.”

For further information, see SSAWW’s new website at: <https://studyamericawomenwriters.org/>

**Northeastern Modern Language Association**  
**March 6-9, 2025**  
**Philadelphia, PA**

**“(R)EVOLUTION”**

*From the NeMLA website:* “This year’s theme, “(R)EVOLUTION,” asks how the Humanities—in all their infinite variations, genres, and productions—have changed (in) our world, or failed to do so, or have maybe offered more or less progressive and imaginative mappings for more or less radical change. What role can the Humanities play in society, to honor our cultural and global diversity in all its dimensions.

Featured Speaker: Julia Alvarez

For further information, see <https://www.nemla.org/convention.html>

**American Literature Association**  
**May 21-24, 2025**  
**Boston, MA**

This year’s conference will take place at The Westin Copley Place.

For further more information, see <https://americanliteratureassociation.org/ala-conferences/ala-annual-conference/>

**American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies**  
**March 28-29 and April 4-5 online**

Featured Speaker: Professor Maria Fuentes, 2025 Clifford Lecturer

For further information, see <https://asecs.org/meetings/asecs-2025-annual-meeting/>

## Calls for Papers

**2025 First Book Institute: Center for American Literary Studies (CALs) at Pennsylvania State University**  
**Due: February 19, 2025**

*From the CALS website:* “The stakes of successful publishing by early career professors in humanities fields are as urgent as ever given the many challenges confronting institutions of higher education and university presses. Responding to a glaring need in the field, the First Book Institute—now in its twelfth year—features workshops and presentations led by institute faculty aimed at assisting participants in transforming their book projects into ones that promise to make a significant impact on the field and thus land them a publishing contract with a top university press.

Eight successful applicants will be awarded stipends to defray the costs of travel and lodging for the institute, which is scheduled to be held in person at Penn State.

Applications to the First Book Institute are invited from scholars working in any area or time period of American literary studies who hold a PhD and are in the process of writing their first book (whether a revised and expanded dissertation or other project).

Applicants should not have negotiated a formal agreement of any kind with a press to publish their manuscript.

Please send all application materials in a single PDF file (and any queries) to [cals@psu.edu](mailto:cals@psu.edu)”

For further information, see <https://cals.la.psu.edu/programs-series/first-book-institute/>

**Science and Society in the Age of Revolutions," September 25-26, 2025  
Due: March 3, 2025**

*From H-Net:* "As the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence drives increased interest in the founding of the United States, this conference, co-hosted by the American Philosophical Society's Library & Museum and the Science History Institute aims to widen the scope of such conversations. Inspired in part by the APS's 2025 exhibition, *Philadelphia: The Revolutionary City* and "America's Scientific Revolutionaries," a multi-year project funded by the Lounsbery Foundation we invite proposals from scholars from all disciplines whose research illuminates the intersections of science and society in the Atlantic World between 1764 and 1804. Topics may include but are not limited to:

- Everyday scientific practices, especially those that shed light on less prominent individuals and their networks, social aspects of scientific societies
- Impacts of disease on society
- Timely innovations in sciences like astronomy, anatomy, electricity, evolution, botany, and others
- Intersections between medical interventions and political ideologies
- Advancements in medicine and technology, especially as they relate to war;

For further information, see <https://networks.h-net.org/group/announcements/20057255/science-and-society-age-revolutions-september-25-26-2025>

**SEA @ SSAWW  
Due: February 24**

From the SSAWW website: "Please consider submitting a proposal for the Society of Early Americanists (SEA) panel at the 2025 SSAWW Conference, to be held November 6-9 in Philadelphia.

Proposals are welcome on any aspect of women's cultural productions (broadly conceived) in the Americas before 1830. The theme of the conference is "Understanding Histories, Imagining Futures: 25 Years of SSAWW."

For more information, see <https://studyafricanamericanwriters.org/cfp/cfp-society-of-early-americanists-at-ssaww-2025/>

Consider submitting to one of our featured columns.

**Early American Historical Sites:** little-known or understudied/undervalued historical sites of interest to teachers and scholars of early America.

**Digital Early America:** descriptions/overviews of new and insightful digital projects that advance the study of early American in the digital age.

**Teaching Early America:** new and engaging approaches to teaching early American material.

**Scholar's Musings:** a new *SEAN* feature that focuses on little-known figures/connections/intersections in early America.

Contact Mary Balkun at [Mary.Balkun@shu.edu](mailto:Mary.Balkun@shu.edu) and Kaitlin Tonti at [ktonti2@gmail.com](mailto:ktonti2@gmail.com) for more information.



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# Society of Early Americanists

## Image Index

### 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, 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)

1. "A View of the City of Boston." Image courtesy of John Carter Brown Library. [https://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/detail/JCB~1~1~996~1110003:A-View-of-the-City-of-Boston-the-Ca?sort=image\\_date%2Csubject\\_groups&qvq=q:A%20View%20of%20the%20City%20of%20Boston;sort:image\\_date%2Csubject\\_groups;lc:JCBMAPS~2~2,JCB~3~3,JCBMAPS~1~1,JCBBOOKS~1~1,JCBMAPS~3~3,JCB~1~1&mi=0&trs=17](https://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/detail/JCB~1~1~996~1110003:A-View-of-the-City-of-Boston-the-Ca?sort=image_date%2Csubject_groups&qvq=q:A%20View%20of%20the%20City%20of%20Boston;sort:image_date%2Csubject_groups;lc:JCBMAPS~2~2,JCB~3~3,JCBMAPS~1~1,JCBBOOKS~1~1,JCBMAPS~3~3,JCB~1~1&mi=0&trs=17)
2. "Zada Ballew." Photo courtesy of University of Wisconsin-Madison. <https://history.wisc.edu/people/ballew-zada/>
3. "Rock Fort on the Illinois" <https://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/detail/JCB~1~1~6036~9440004:Rock-Fort,-on-the-Illinois?qvq=q:Potawatomi;lc:JCBBOOKS~1~1,JCBMAPS~1~1,JCBMAPS~3~3,JCB~1~1,JCB~3~3,JCBMAPS~2~2&mi=0&trs=1>
4. "Matt Cohen." Photo courtesy of University of Nebraska Lincoln. <https://engl.unl.edu/person/matt-cohen/>
5. "Sara E. Johnson." Photo courtesy of University of California-San Diego. <https://literature.ucsd.edu/people/faculty/sjohnson.html>
6. "Lloyd Alimboyao Sy." Photo courtesy of Yale University. <https://fas.yale.edu/news-announcements/new-faculty-announcements/new-ladder-faculty-and-professors-2024-25/lloyd-alimboyao-sy>
7. "Andrea Knutson." Photo courtesy of University of Colorado-Boulder. <https://www.colorado.edu/lalsc/3rd-annual-celebrating-indigenous-americas/program/roundtables/6-land-back-what-does-it-mean>
8. "Miles P. Grier." Photo courtesy of Queens College. <https://qenglish.commons.gc.cuny.edu/people/miles-parks-grier/>
9. "Mark Mattes." Photo courtesy of University of Louisville. <https://louisville.edu/english/news/mattes-wins-fellowship-and-publishes-2-essays>
10. "Junior Scholars Caucus." Photo courtesy of the Society of Early Americanists. <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/whats-new-announcements/junior-scholars-caucus-virtual-talk-journal-publishing-a-candid-conversation-15-october-2024>
11. "Joseph Rezek." Photo courtesy of Society of Early Americanists. <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/whats-new-announcements/sea-featured-scholar-september-2024-joseph-rezek>
12. "Travis Foster." Photo courtesy of Society of Early Americanists. <https://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/whats-new-announcements/sea-featured-scholar-december-2024-travis-foster>
13. "Miles. P Grier." Photo courtesy of Miles P. Grier.
14. "Neu Yorck." Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library. [https://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/detail/JCB~1~1~960~1140003:Vu%25C3%25AB-de-la-Nouvelle-Yorck--Neu-Yorck?sort=image\\_date%2Csubject\\_groups&qvq=q:Neu%20Yorck;sort:image\\_date%2Csubject\\_groups;lc:JCB~1~1,JCBMAPS~1~1,JCBMAPS~2~2,JCB~3~3,JCBMAPS~3~3,JCBBOOKS~1~1&mi=0&trs=4](https://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/detail/JCB~1~1~960~1140003:Vu%25C3%25AB-de-la-Nouvelle-Yorck--Neu-Yorck?sort=image_date%2Csubject_groups&qvq=q:Neu%20Yorck;sort:image_date%2Csubject_groups;lc:JCB~1~1,JCBMAPS~1~1,JCBMAPS~2~2,JCB~3~3,JCBMAPS~3~3,JCBBOOKS~1~1&mi=0&trs=4)
15. "Welcome Park." Photo courtesy of Cameron L. Kline.
16. "Cabeza Matrix: Figure 1." Photo courtesy of Kristy Cherry-Randle.
17. "Cabeza Matrix: Figure 2." Photo courtesy of Kristy Cherry-Randle.
18. "A View of Gaspe Bay." Image courtesy of John Carter Brown Library. [https://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/view/all/where/North+America/when/1751-1800?sort=image\\_date%2Csubject\\_groups&os=50](https://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/view/all/where/North+America/when/1751-1800?sort=image_date%2Csubject_groups&os=50)