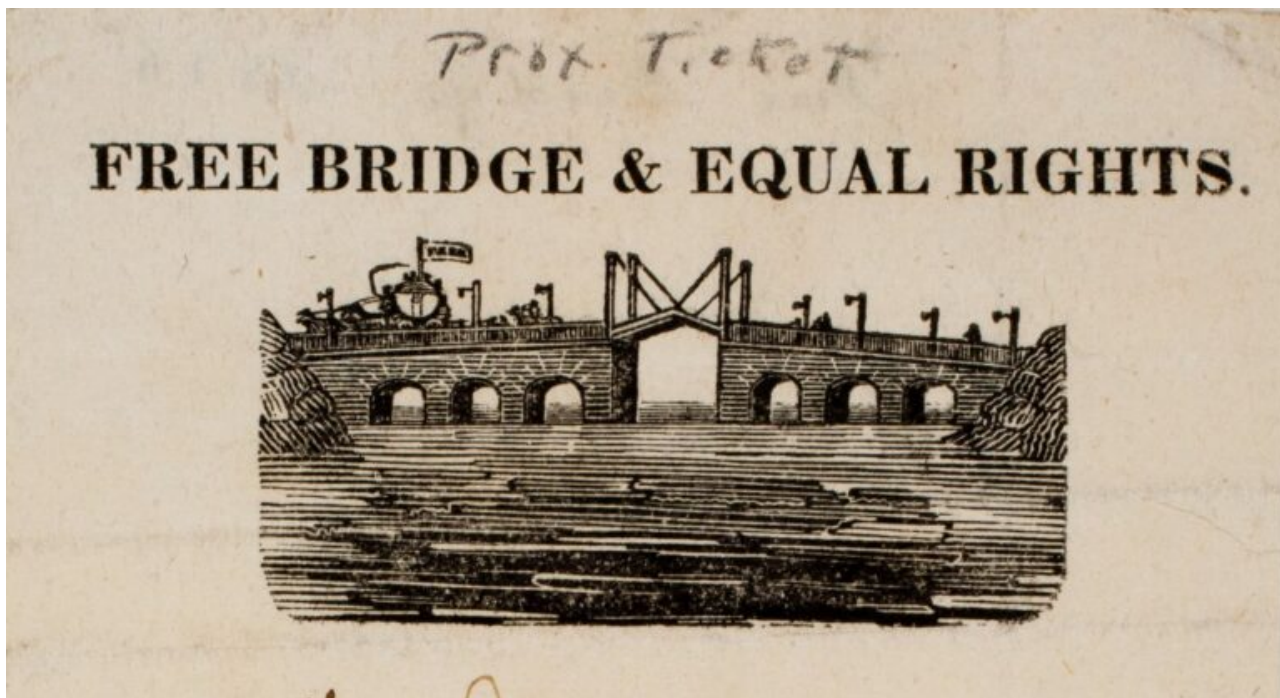


## Editor's Note – Submission Going Down, Down, Dragging me Down\*



It is that time of year again when I point you to Leon Jackson's [excellent article](#) on the newspaper carrier's New Year's address and give you an update on what is going on at *Commonplace* while hitting you up for contributions (no money is necessary, just submissions). In my last [editor's note about social media](#), I mentioned the tough decisions individuals and organizations need to make about where to engage the public and peers at a time when so many platforms are helmed by billionaires whose statements do not align with our own. As I write this for example, several large corporations from Disney to Comcast are deciding whether to temporarily pause or completely cut advertisements on Twitter in the wake of yet another round of extreme statements by Elon Musk as well as his decision to reinstate the accounts of individuals such as Alex Jones.

Personally, I have recently stopped posting on Twitter and have moved over to an account on Bluesky, while cross-posting historical and *Commonplace*-related material on the [historians.social](#) instance on Mastodon. This is working for me for now, but navigating multiple sites both as a reader and a poster hoping to find engagement for my posts is difficult. The official *Commonplace* account still posts occasionally on Twitter and discussions are ongoing about whether and how to change this in the future. One of the issues for a small publication like *Commonplace* is how to communicate with the public if no single shared social media space exists in the way that Twitter did just a couple of years ago. Erin Bartram, an editor at *Contingent Magazine* and the president of the magazine's board of directors explained on Bluesky that a series that they run

that usually has a great response was now having trouble getting traction. She noted that she “could not express to you how much Twitter’s collapse combined with no clear alternative site for sharing and engaging with print pieces crushed readership for what is usually one of our best-read set of pieces each year.” Will Twitter finally collapse, forcing a more clear-cut successor or will things continue to fracture? With the news that Bluesky is moving to open access from its current invitation-only model early this year, it may become a more important destination for people looking for an alternative to Twitter, but that is far from clear. I will try to keep you posted (literally).

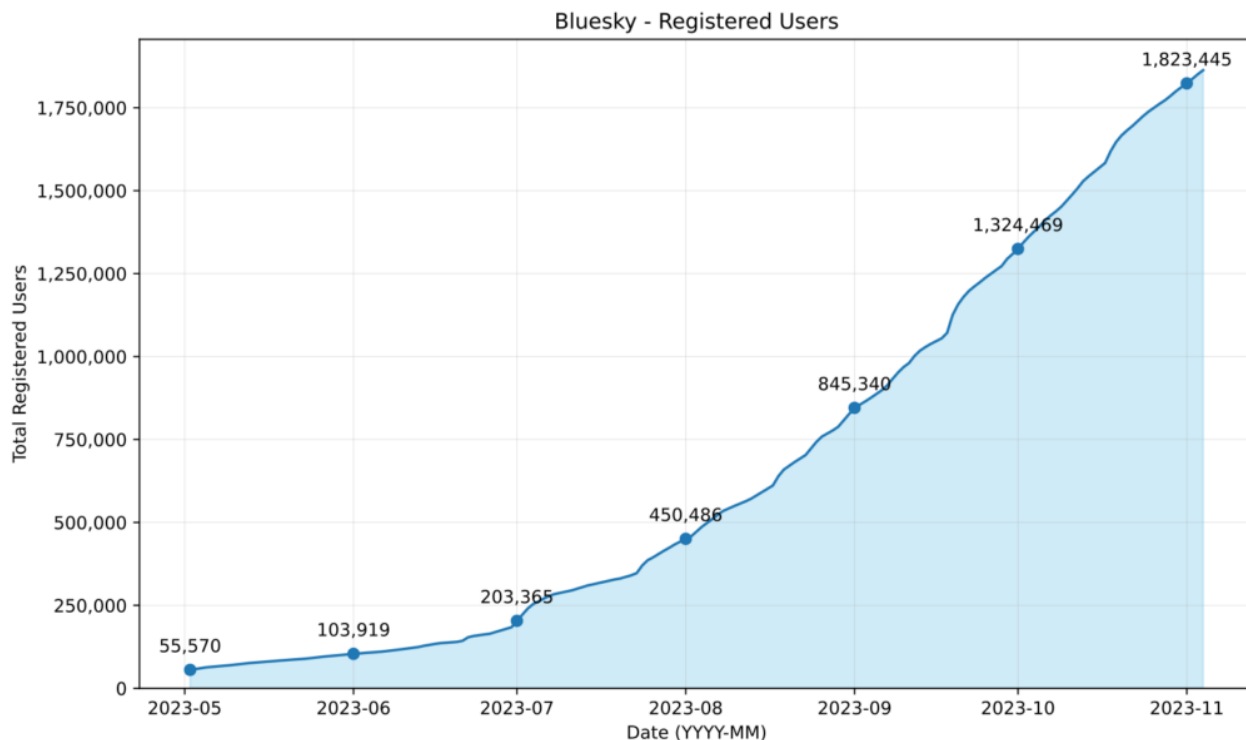


Figure 1: This chart depicts the growth of Bluesky registered users from May to November, 2023. m3ta.uk (Pedro), vqv.app (Eddie), VintageNebula, Public domain, via [Wikimedia Commons](#).

In addition to this editor’s note, we are posting two other pieces to *Commonplace* today. These are previously unavailable selections from October 2008 that we could not locate when we moved the back catalog from the old site to our new URL. As I detailed in my first [editor’s note](#), it was quite an effort to migrate twenty years of material that existed across several platforms to our new site. A very small number of pieces which had been missing from the old site for years were not able to be recovered during the process. I have now managed to recover two of those. The first posting today captures a month of Jeff Pasley’s [Publick Occurrences 2.0](#), an occasional blog that he ran from 2008 to 2015. Posts from [October 2008](#) seemed to have eluded the process we used to capture blog entries from the old site and it took a little while to track them down. While these posts are short (some of them are only a couple of hundred words long), it has been important to us to provide the most complete possible

archive of everything that we have published on *Commonplace*.

The second back catalog piece posted today came out of something called [Myths of Lost Atlantis](#), a short-lived blog series put together by Jeff Pasley in dedication to American Antiquarian Society scholar Philip Lampi and his work on [A New Nation Votes: American Election Returns 1787-1825](#). The site has amazing election returns data from a wide variety of early republic contests at various levels of office. For example, with a little poking around, I can see that A. Greenberg (no relation) picked up 2 votes in the [1814 Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor's](#) race. He only finished 55,503 votes behind Federalist William Phillips, but I'm sure he will get him next time.

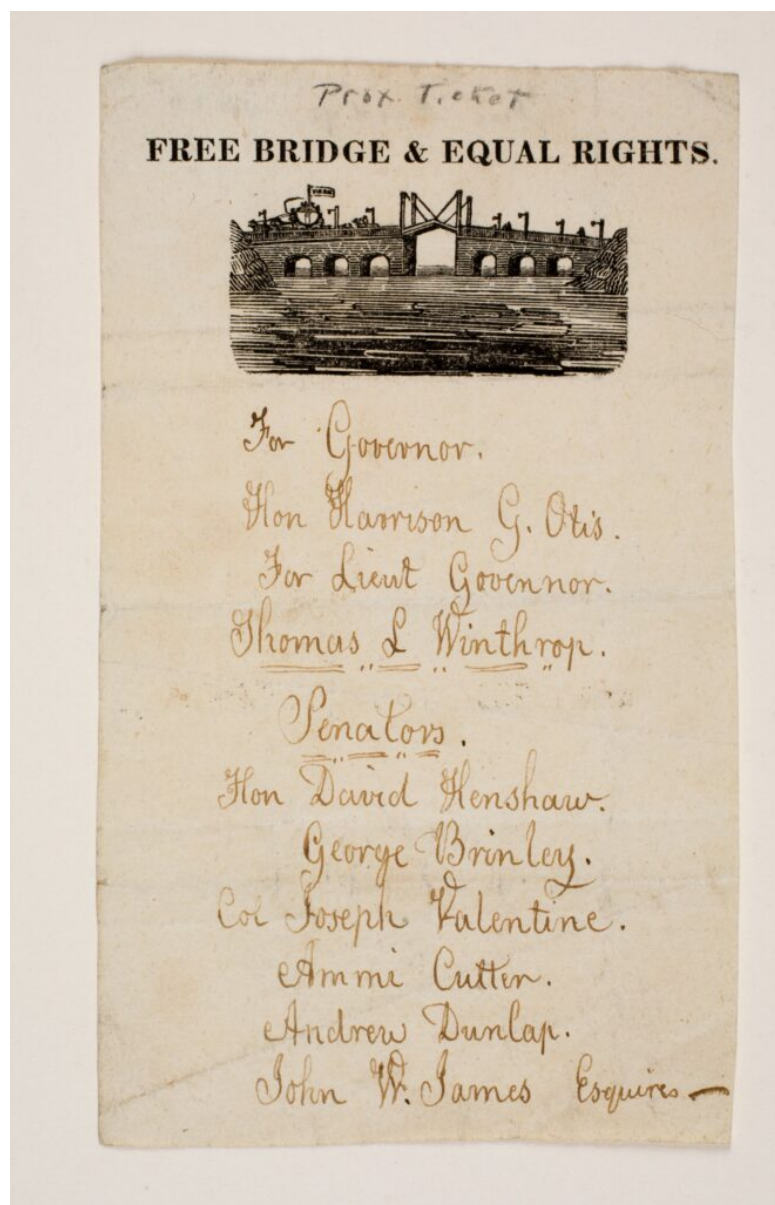


Figure 2: Ticket for the Free Bridge Party from the 1827 Massachusetts Gubernatorial Election, Collection of Election Ballots, 1827-1889. Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.

The idea behind the Lost Atlantis series was to supplement a [politics-themed issue](#) of *Commonplace* that we published in the runup to the election of 2008. In addition to smart, short pieces by scholars [Rosemarie Zagarri](#), [Donald Ratcliffe](#), [Andrew Shankman](#), [Catherine O'Donnell Kaplan](#), and [Andrew Robertson](#) that sought to address some myths about politics in the early republic, one of the posts by Matthew Mason had gone missing. It had taken up the question: “Was Slavery Really Not a Major Issue in American Politics Before the Missouri Crisis?” It has now been recovered and is [available here](#).

One purpose of the New Year’s address is to let our readers know what we have been up to at *Commonplace* over the last year. While it often goes unnoticed, we have been hard at work to enhance the reader experience by adding new features to the website and making some vital backend improvements. Readers and especially teachers have reached out to ask for a more convenient way to access our materials offline, so we added new options to save and print articles while preserving their original formatting. For those who want to stay digital, but distribute and post articles, we have added new share buttons for Mastodon and link copying in addition to the existing options. Backend changes also included moving from http to an https standard so [Commonplace.online](#) is more secure to access from a variety of browsers and devices.

Share Article:     



Figure 3: Look for these buttons on the top of each page for saving, printing, and sharing articles.

Now we come to the portion of the piece where I ask you to contribute something to help us keep *Commonplace* going. As I sat down to write this appeal, I was reminded of something I came across many years ago while working on a book about organized labor and masculinity in early republic New York City. On March 7, 1834, a prolabor newspaper called *The Man* ran its daily “Marriages” column, but instead of a list of newly married couples, it declared: “If the people

won't marry, we can't help it."

---

### MARRIAGES.

If the people won't marry, we can't help it.

---

Figure 4: "Marriages," *The Man*, March 7, 1834.

We are amazingly proud of the articles, reviews, and historical creative writing pieces that we publish and we believe that they offer our readers smart, interesting open access scholarship. This model only works if we receive submissions from our readers. I am thrilled that the quality of our submissions is so high. It makes the editorial process easier from initial review to final publication, but like many journals in the wake of Covid, budget cuts, and worsening academic job markets, we have seen a downturn in submissions. So, I am asking that if you have an idea for an article or review and would like to pitch it, please reach out. If you had to cut something from a larger project and think your darlings might find a home in a short piece for a wider audience, please reach out. If you found something fascinating in the archive and are not sure what to do with it, please reach out. Any other thoughts or questions about *Commonplace*, please reach out. We can be reached at [commonplacejournal@gmail.com](mailto:commonplacejournal@gmail.com).

Happy New Year!

\* This lyric originally comes from the Sex Pistol's "Submission," but I prefer the Peel Sessions version by my favorite band, [Galaxie 500](#).

This article originally appeared in January 2024.

---

Joshua R. Greenberg is the editor of *Commonplace: The Journal of Early American Life*. He is the author of [Bank Notes and Shiplasters: The Rage for Paper Money in the Early Republic](#) (2020) and [Advocating the Man: Masculinity, Organized Labor, and the Household in New York, 1800-1840](#) (2008).