Local Safety, National Violence



Why do people perpetuate, by continuing to live within, societies in which violence, both threatened and actual, is a constant of life?

Americans in the Tropics



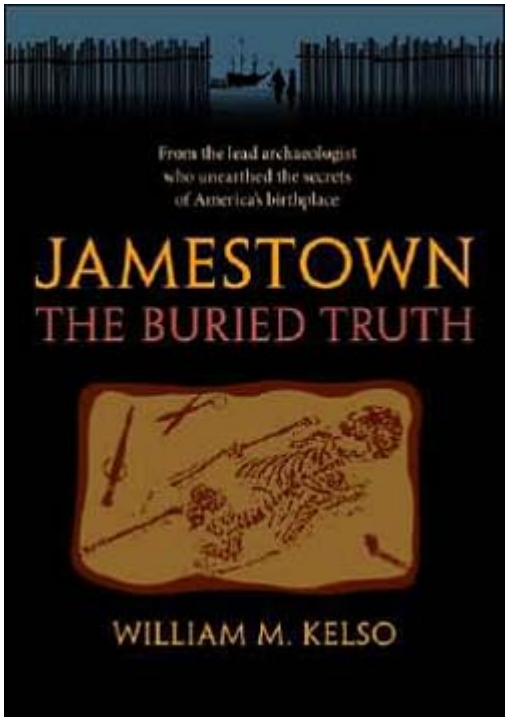
Why are the tropics so appealing to reality-TV producers and viewers?

Samuel Dodd



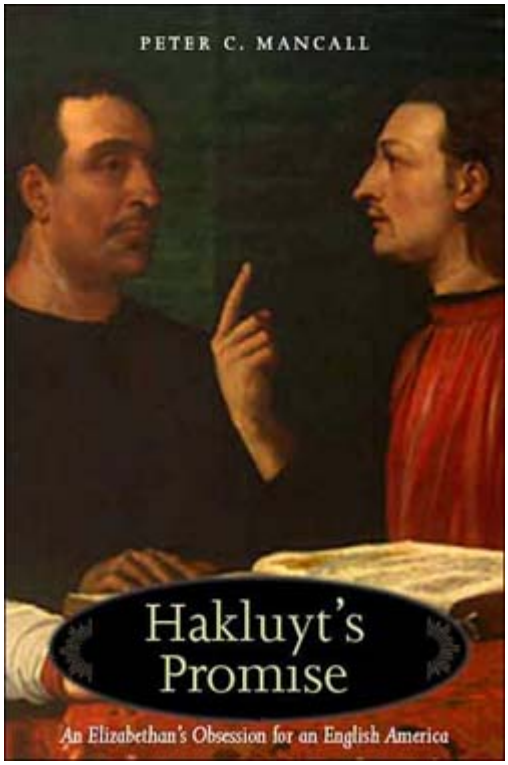
This stamp pattern book opens up a rare glimpse into a small nineteenth-century American business, revealing just how many designs one man produced in his lifetime.

Jamestown ®



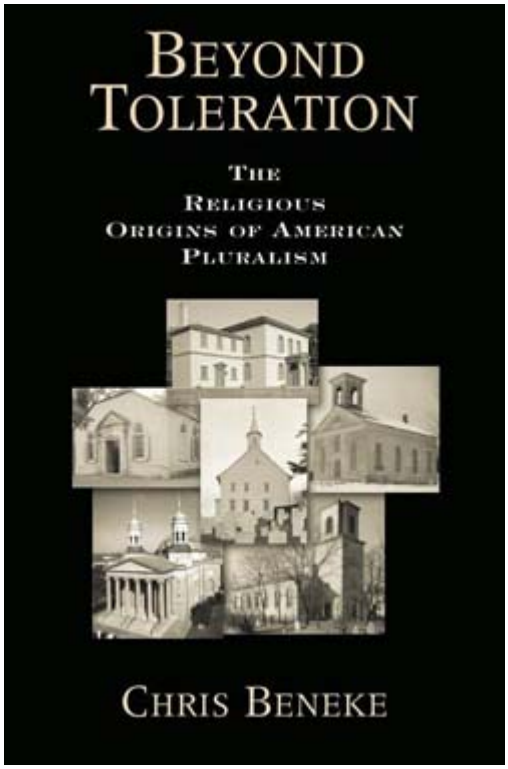
It is hard for Kelso to shake off a heritage that seems at once so romantic and so compellingly patriotic.

The Obsessive Richard Hakluyt



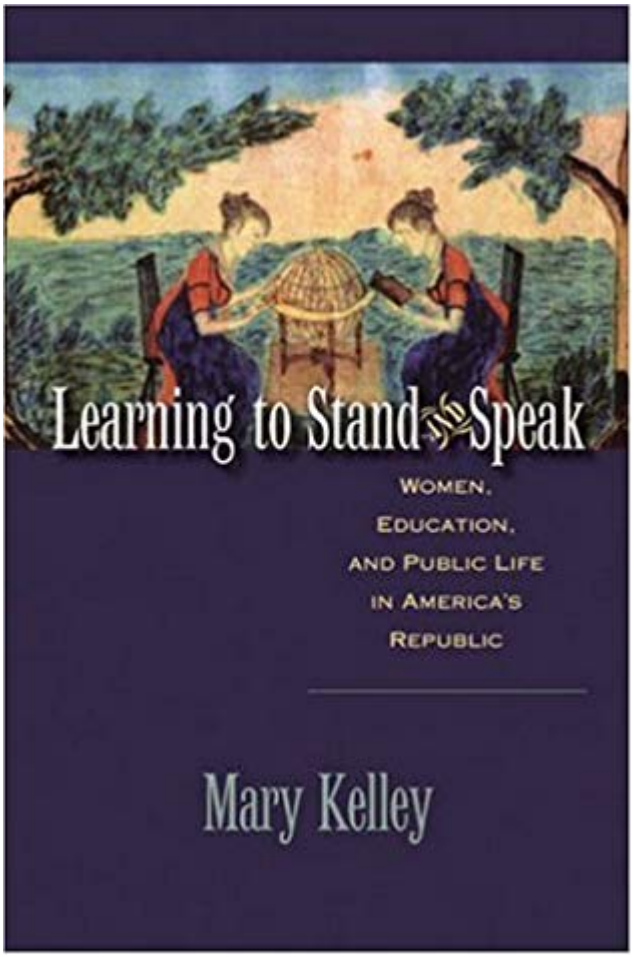
Hakluyt's life's work, to the extent that it is captured in his publications, takes center stage in this history.

"Can Two Walk Together, Except They Be Agreed?"



The achievement of the Great Awakening was the belief that religious experience is inherently subjective.

The Female Reader as Civic Actor



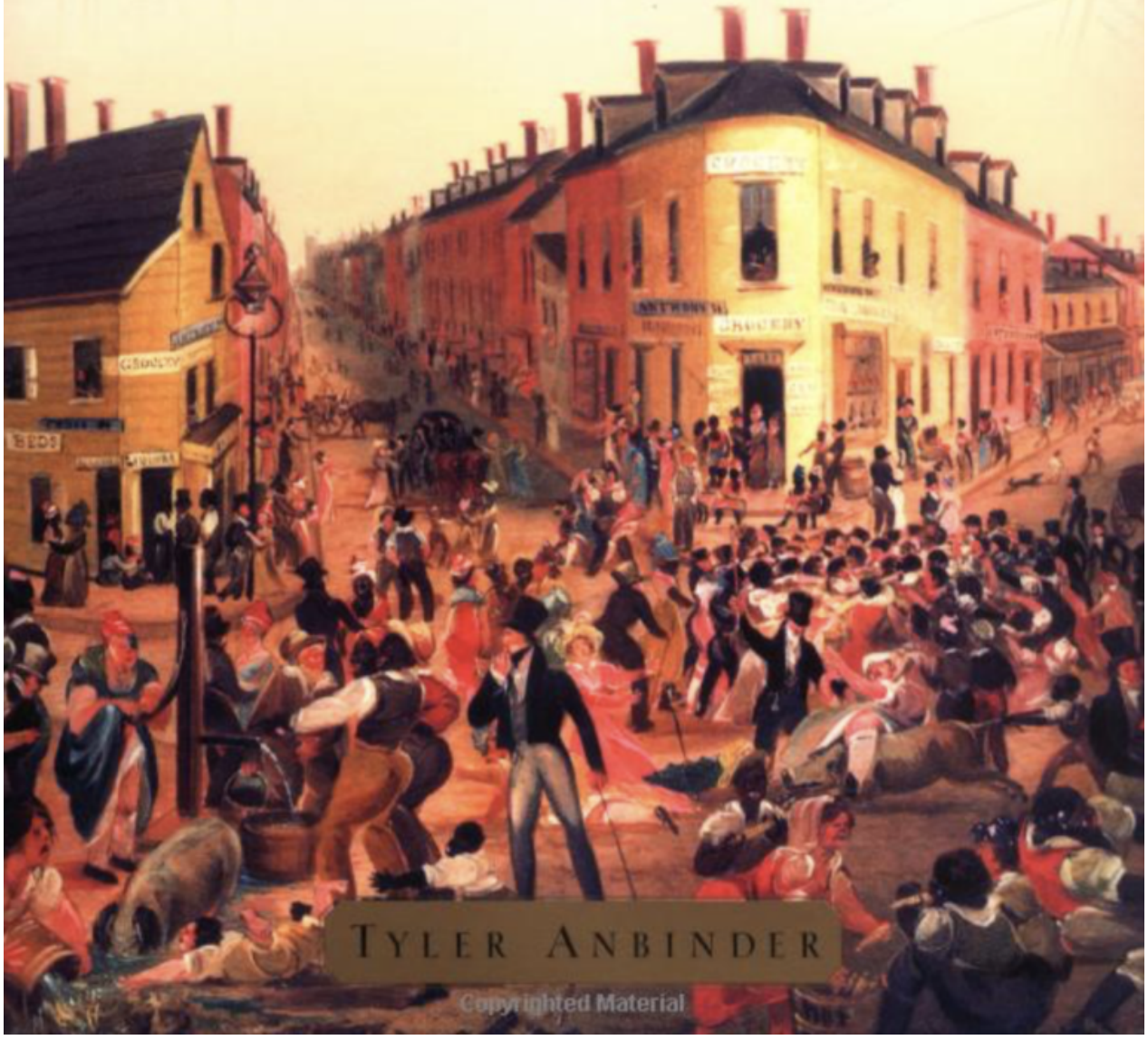
Kelley’s extensive research makes clear that the educated women of the early nineteenth century reveled in their learning…

Gangs, the Five Points, and the American Public

Copyrighted Material

The 19th-Century New York City Neighborhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum

FIVE POINTS



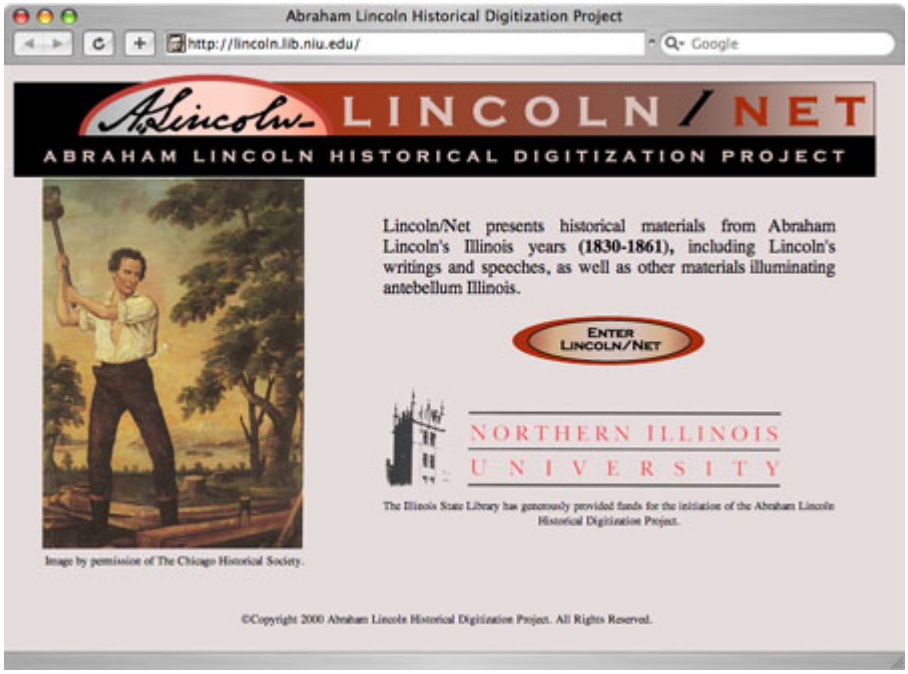
TYLER ANBINDER

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Presented as part of the special issue “Early Cities of the Americas.”

“Neither the movie nor Asbury’s books help historians in getting Americans to understand the true nature of nineteenth-century urban America.”

Lincoln/Net: Abraham Lincoln Historical Digitization Project



The Common-place Web Library reviews and lists online resources and Websites likely to be of interest to our viewers. Each quarterly issue will feature one or more brief site reviews. The library itself will be an ongoing enterprise with regular new additions and amendments. So we encourage you to check it frequently. At the moment, the library is small, but with your help we expect it to grow rapidly. If you have suggestions for the Web Library, or for site reviews, please forward them to the Administrative Editor.

Lincoln/Net: Abraham Lincoln Historical Digitization Project
http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/

With an emphasis on Abraham Lincoln’s years in Illinois, 1830-1861, and a wealth of material outside that period, “Lincoln/Net” is a multi-media, multi-

purpose Website. Created and maintained at Northern Illinois University, “Lincoln/Net” represents a collaborative effort by educational institutions, archives, and museums, including the Newberry Library, the Chicago Historical Society, the Illinois State Archives, and the University of Chicago. Designed to reach a general audience, which the site’s creators believe “historians have largely abandoned in recent decades,” this online archive guides visitors through the sources in a focused way by bringing the “findings and debates of American historians” to the Internet. The goal is to help users think historically and to ask questions that make full use of the site’s databases. Accordingly, the materials have been grouped into eight thematic sections: frontier settlement; Native American relations; economic development; women’s experience and gender roles; African-Americans’ experience and American racial attitudes; law and society; religion and culture; and political development. There is, of course, significant attention devoted to Lincoln’s biography.

For each of the major themes, there is a guide to accompanying primary sources, with image galleries, maps, and audio and video clips. Slide shows offer good visuals and helpful narration, and they succeed in providing overall background context for major historical developments of the period. In the “Lincoln’s Biography” section, there is a similar organization in place, with a summary, primary sources, and visual images. To help viewers through this material, the site provides video clips of historical commentary by prominent historians, including Eric Foner.

Educators especially may appreciate the contents and organization of the site. The “Teacher’s Parlor” link takes visitors to well designed and engaging lesson plans. For example, in a lesson on alcohol and temperance in the nineteenth century, the lyrics and downloadable rendition of “King Alcohol” lend immediacy to the subject. The “lesson plans” section is divided into materials for teaching the antebellum era, the Civil War era, and the Gilded Age. With detailed objectives, clear instructions for background reading, links to primary sources, and exercises based on the site, the lessons are ready to use and linked to state standards.

Much of the site is easily adaptable to classroom purposes. Indeed, a laudable feature of “Lincoln/Net” is how user-friendly it is. Easily downloadable audio and video links can be readily integrated into the lessons on the site or used for creating new ones. Thirteen video clips comprise the “women and gender” video section. For the history of the Black Hawk Indian War of 1832, in which Lincoln served as a member of the Illinois militia, the site documents his activities but more importantly provides the larger historical context, with maps, first-person battlefield accounts, and government records. In the section on “Native American Relations,” the selections break down a full video, “Lincoln and Black Hawk,” into many discreet and briefer subsections. Other video clips include eminent scholars such as John Mack Faragher and Kathryn Kish Sklar presenting brief overviews of topics such as “Singing on the Illinois Frontier” and “Education, Culture, and the Patterns of Frontier Settlement.”

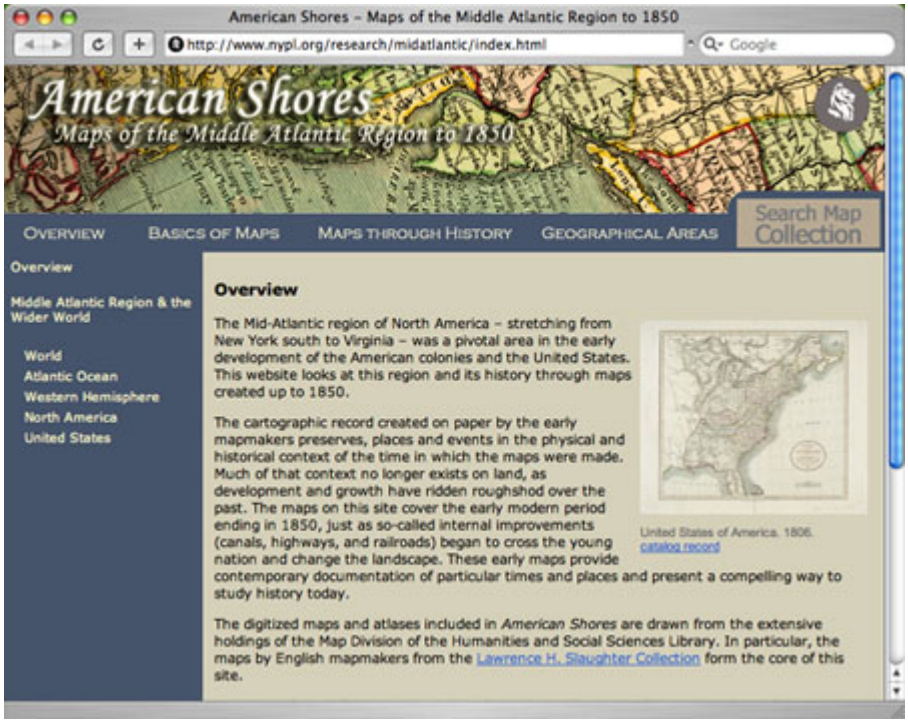
In the interactive resources section, visitors will find informative maps that can be manipulated to highlight topics of interest, such as the distribution of churches of different sects in 1850 and 1860; this distribution can then be explored to break the numbers down according to sect, for example. Other maps detail voting patterns in presidential elections from 1840 through 1864. Clicking on two interesting maps showing U.S. population distribution in 1850 and 1860 allows users to view the figures by state and by numbers of free blacks, slaves, and whites.

With links to other online archives, such as Mr. Lincoln's Virtual Library and From Slavery to Freedom: The African-American Pamphlet Collection, 1822-1909, both at the Library of Congress, and to The Valley of the Shadow project on two communities in the Civil War, the site's creators steer visitors to some of the best sites on the Web for those interested in the histories of slavery, race, and the Civil War.

"Lincoln/Net" seeks to foster deep historical understanding while reaching multiple audiences, including history buffs and educators. With a site that locates its central figure, Abraham Lincoln, within the context of numerous complex historical developments, "Lincoln/Net" promises to go a long way toward succeeding in its goals.

This article originally appeared in issue 8.2 (January, 2008).

American Shores: Maps of the Middle Atlantic Region to 1850



The Common-place Web Library reviews and lists online resources and Websites likely to be of interest to our viewers. Each quarterly issue will feature one or more brief site reviews. The library itself will be an ongoing enterprise with regular new additions and amendments. So we encourage you to check it frequently. At the moment, the library is small, but with your help we expect it to grow rapidly. If you have suggestions for the Web Library, or for site reviews, please forward them to the Administrative Editor.

American Shores: Maps of the Middle Atlantic Region to 1850
http://www.nypl.org/research/midatlantic/index.html
New York Public Library

Wayne Bodle, author of The Valley Forge Winter: Civilians and Soldiers in War *(2002), teaches history at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He is finishing a book on the Middle Colonies from first settlement until shortly after the American Revolution.*

The New York Public Library is one of the most distinguished research institutions in the world, and its renowned Map Room contributes to that reputation. American Shores is a searchable Website created by the library with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to bring a portion of its cartographic resources to your own reading room, no matter how far you are from the library's famed lions on Fifth Avenue. The site's focus, the Middle Atlantic, is a less-celebrated descriptor for a piece of the geographical pie that was first the Dutch commercial outpost of New Netherland, then colonial

British North America, and finally the early national United States.

Definitions of that region are legion. The project's choice—"from New York south to Virginia"—more closely follows the administrative usage of modern federal agencies than recent scholarly ones, which generally exclude Maryland and Virginia. Reflecting its title, the site's definition more problematically places the region "east of the Appalachian Mountains," without saying whether that includes their easternmost ridges, which parallel the Hudson, Delaware, and Susquehanna rivers and bisect the states in question. The project is not *about* definitions—its scope may reflect the contents of the maps in its constituent collections more than a definition of the region—but academic users should be aware of the implications of these organizational protocols.

The project itself seems designed to accomplish two objectives: to instruct visitors on the fundamentals and applications of cartographic scholarship and to let oriented users roam at will in search of early American spatial knowledge. This review takes the first objective on its own terms and the second one more literally, by testing it on an embryonic actual research project.

The iconic image of "American Shores," a colorful strip of Atlantic littoral running from south to north (and left to right) from the central Carolina coast to near Riverhead on Long Island, suggests this double objective. Four clickable headers across the top of the site—"Overview," "Basics of Maps," "Maps Through History," and "Geographical Areas"—summon a series of subheads running down the left side that preview the "Overview" section's stated design to "highlight and explain a few of the hundreds of maps that have been digitized, and offer suggestions for using them in the study of historical topics or geographic areas." With that opportunity either availed or declined, a large button—"Search Map Collection"—turns you loose into the database.

The clarity and utility of these preliminary elements varies considerably. The marginal subbars on the left border of the "Overview" section include the "Mid-Atlantic Region and [its] Wider World" and a group of narrower spatial frames from the "World" to the "Atlantic Ocean" to the "United States." Each of the latter brings up a map or two, with commentary and an interactive "catalogue record." Use of these maps provides a kind of tutorial on cartographic practice. The header "Basics of Maps" offers definitions used by specialists in the field and a "Note on the History of Cartography." "Maps Through History" is both intriguing and strange. When clicked, it lays out an asymmetrical and somewhat fragmentary categorical catalogue of the Website as a whole (one presumes), under the subheads "Nautical New York," "Coastal and Oceanic Nautical Charts," "Early Transportation," and, most oddly, "American Revolution Battle Sites." The specific rationale for the selection of these topics—or why other and potentially equally useful subjects, such as "Religious Denominations" or "Newspaper Circulation Zones"—are not included alongside these idiosyncratic headings is never articulated. "Geographical Areas" leads to a more predictable, conventional survey of largely political jurisdictions

into which the larger region has been divided, each with its selection of illustrated starter maps.

This arrangement serves as a noncoercive introduction to the map collection itself, with no requirement to linger, and an early opportunity to actually interact with the maps. Clicking on thumbnail sample maps enlarges them but also discloses that running the pan and zoom features "require[s] *MrSid plug-in*." A link takes you to a proprietary Website with free software downloads, but nothing clarifies what you are to do next. Once inside the larger map database, the efficacy of the interactive features, including pan and zoom, seems to vary considerably.

Rather than just browse randomly, I wanted to go into "Search Map Collection" with an actual research project. By chance, the invitation to do this review coincided with an embryonic project fit to the region: an inquiry into a migration and settlement salient in the 1720s and 1730s southwest from Esopus (Kingston), New York, on the Hudson River, to the Delaware Valley at Mahackamack (Port Jervis), and then down both sides of the Delaware through the "Minisink Country" to the famous Water Gap. The settlement process involved multiple jurisdictions, ordinary farmers, mysterious folkloric ancient miners, and alarmed royal and proprietary officials in Philadelphia and elsewhere wondering why it was happening. With mouse at hand, the possibility of discovery beckoned.

The resulting trip was both bumpy and intriguing. Under "Search Map Collection," the subhead "search maps" offered a clickable "New Search Page (Digital Gallery)," which led into an ambiguous new space. Titled the "NYPL Digital Gallery," it was not clear whether this was a *part* of "American Shores" itself or an auxiliary New York Public Library (NYPL) domain. The new page offered *two* search boxes, one of which seemed connected to the "Lawrence H. Slaughter Collection and Others" and the second of which linked to the "Digital Gallery." It presented some background information on the NYPL, the history of the Slaughter Collection, and a bibliography on cartographic history.

Wanting to get on the ground in the Minisink as quickly as possible, I tried keyword terms in both boxes. It was unclear if either was connected to a database defined by information in the maps in question or just to their titles, but trial and error suggested the latter. Queries directed to names on the ground in adjacent parts of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania mainly went nowhere. *Esopus* produced no entries and *Kingston* only a few. *Minisink*, *Wallkill*, *Shawangunk*, and *Mahackamack* all failed. Queries aimed at counties in the area did better. *Ulster* brought up some maps, but figuring out how to manage and control the pan and zoom features was difficult. I wasn't sure whether I was even in the "Digital Gallery" or was instead in the "Slaughter Collection," reminding me of the fact that early American regions were themselves layered and contested, with royal and proprietary holdings, overlays from New England's "sea-to-sea" charters, and other murky phenomena. Several queries into the "Digital Gallery" search box returned large numbers

of *photographs*, which suggested that I had wandered out of the Map Room. My sense of challenge intertwined with frustration.

Flailing about digitally for orientation did not help. A click on “Browse: Names A-Z” disclosed an “alphabetical list of 13,636 names [of] artists, authors, publishers, collectors, and others responsible for the creation of items found on the site.” “Browse: Subjects A-Z” brought an even more unwieldy list of “over 58,000 subject terms [which] includes people, places and topics . . . ,” along with the unsettling news that “many gallery records do not have subject descriptions.” It was starting to get dark, and I wanted to get back to “American Shores,” or to *any* shores, for that matter. This page at least had a tool, “Explore Subjects,” with an “Exact Match” and an “Expanded Search” option, which turned up intriguing items. It was at least the third search box I had encountered since leaving digital Manhattan. It bore the disclaiming title “BETA,” but it gave some sense of at least partial closure, albeit hardly one of real completion.

“BETA” sounds like an appropriate grade for the project as a whole at this early point. Any inquirer using this site will by definition learn some things about cartography, cartographic history, and cartographic approaches to historical interpretation. They may very well come away with useful insights into their own specific project or object of research. Whether the site, in its current configuration, is recommendable over a straight Google search—under “Images” and with the keyword “maps” and their topic—may be a matter of some debate. But, recalling my own first research expedition between the actual stone lions on Fifth Avenue, as a high schooler—when a foray for a paper on Mao Tse-Tung revealed thousands of interesting sources but *most of them in Chinese!*—I would suggest patience, resourcefulness, and regular return trips. The site will doubtless be fine-tuned, and your own instincts for virtual navigation will mature.

This article originally appeared in issue 8.3 (April, 2008).