Black Shakespeareans in Old New York



STORIES OF FREEDOM IN BLACK NEW YORK

SHANE WHITE

“As white fascination with black actors imitating white theatrical performances began to give way to the more racy thrills of minstrelsy, Hewlett found diminishing interest in his act as ‘Shakespeare’s proud representative.'”

Genesis



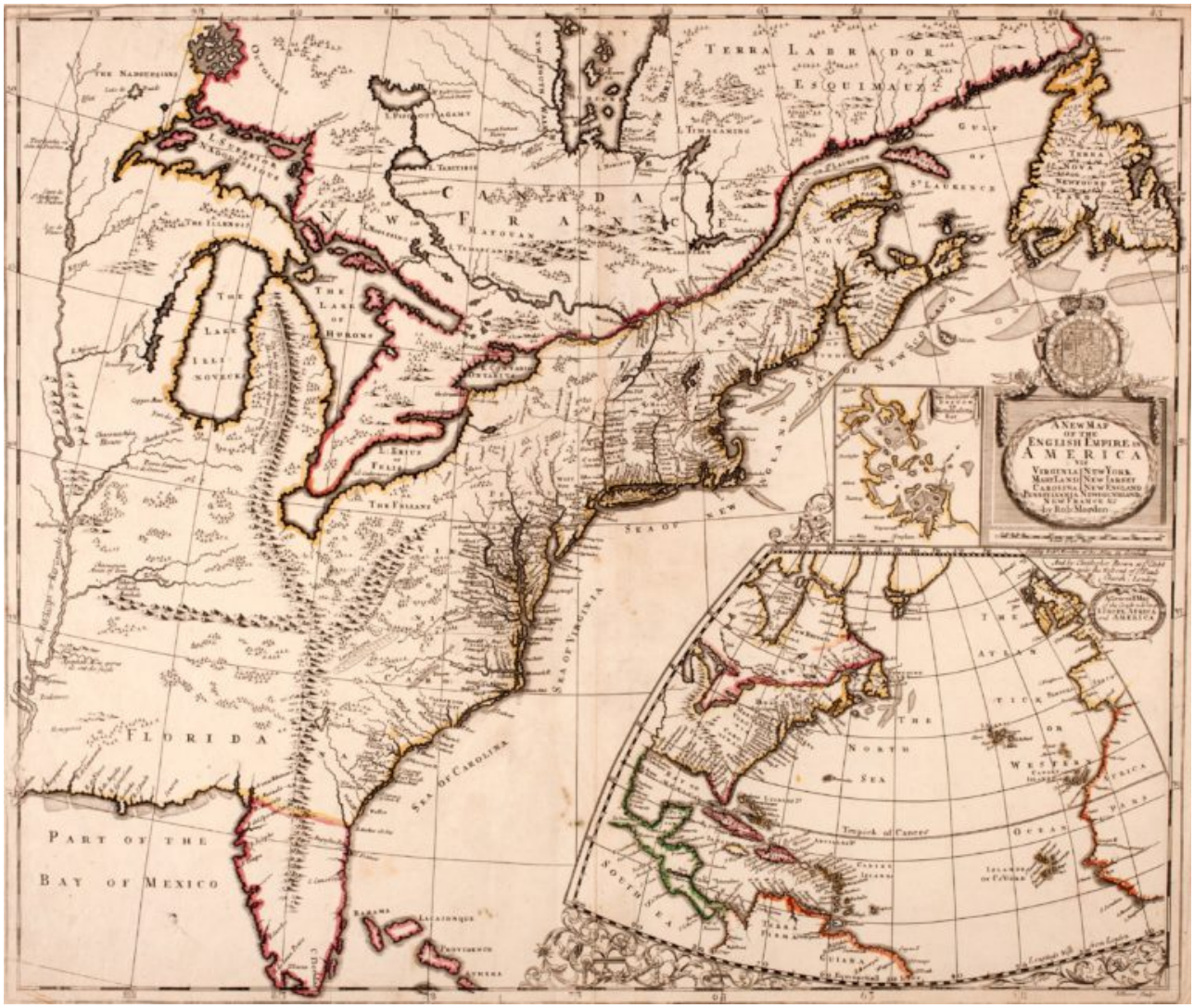
Much made of little. Little made of knowledge. Knowledge made of scholarship. Scholarship made of textbooks. Textbooks made of terms. Terms made of semesters. Semesters made of weeks. Weeks made of days. Days made of decisions. Decisions made of mistakes. Mistakes made of love. Love made of mistakes. Mistakes made of blindness. Blindness made of darkness. Darkness made of curtains. Curtains made of dresses. Dresses made of flags. Flags made of nations. Nations made of wars. Wars made of beliefs. Beliefs made of Bibles. Bibles made of envelopes. Envelopes made of dust jackets. Dust jackets made of manuscripts. Manuscripts made of skin. Skin made of genetics. Genetics made of chromosomes. Chromosomes made of DNA. DNA made of nucleotides. Nucleotides made of adenine. Adenine made of C5H5N5. C5H5N5 made of molecules. Molecules made of atoms. Atoms made of protons, neutrons and electrons. Protons and neutrons made of quarks and gluons. Quarks and gluons made of guesses. Guesses made of uncertainty. Uncertainty made of humanity. Humanity made of God. God made of Bibles. Bibles made of paper. Paper made of trees. Trees made of wood. Wood

made of rings. Rings made of silver. Silver made of moonlight. Moonlight made of fantasy. Fantasy made of cleverness. Cleverness made of ridicule. Ridicule made of Hondas. Hondas made of steel. Steel made of Superman. Superman made of Marvel. Marvel made of DC. DC made of politicians. Politicians made of turkey. Turkey made of banks. Banks made of efficacy. Efficacy made of ink. Ink made of blood. Blood made of candy. Candy made of chocolate. Chocolate made of God. God made of Bibles. Bibles made of laws. Laws made of men. Men made of women. Women made of women. Women made of women. Women made of women. Women made of women. Women made of women. Women made of women. Women made of women.

This article originally appeared in issue 15.3.5 (July, 2015).

A graduate of Harvard Law School and the Iowa Writers' Workshop, Seth Abramson is the author of five collections of poetry, including *DATA*(BookThug, forthcoming 2016), *Metamericana* (2015), and *Thievery* (2013), winner of the 2012 Akron Poetry Prize. He is also series co-editor for *Best American Experimental Writing* (2015) and an assistant professor of English at the University of New Hampshire.

Expanded Column: The Digital Evans



Beginning in July 2002, the Readex Corporation, in cooperation with the American Antiquarian Society, began releasing the first installments of "Evans Digital," a full-text-searchable version of Charles Evans's *American Bibliography*, first published on microfiche by Readex and the AAS in the 1950s. When complete, the Evans Digital will include more than thirty-six thousand items: virtually all books, pamphlets, and broadsides published in British North America from 1639-1800. The publication of the microfiche collection made astonishingly rare books available at small colleges and large universities across the country and even around the globe. The digital edition, with full-text searching, may well revolutionize the study of early American life. *Common-place* asked two prominent scholars of early America, whose work has relied extensively on printed materials, to review the Evans Digital.

Cathy N. Davidson **From Movable Type to Searchable Text**

Jay Fliegelman **An MRI of Early America**

This article originally appeared in issue 3.3 (April, 2003).

The American Jeremiad at 35



The State of the Americanist Field

The remarks collected here were offered on a roundtable at the 2013 Modern Language Association conference in Boston held to mark the thirty-fifth anniversary of the publication of Sacvan Bercovitch's influential 1978 study, *The American Jeremiad*. The charismatic power of Bercovitch's scholarship in the late 1970s and '80s is hard to overstate, although more recently (in the wake of the various turns in Americanist criticism toward multiculturalism, post-nationalism, transnationalism, post-exceptionalism, and so forth) it has been as often contested as not, faulted for its alleged focus on a narrow canon of American literature, for its national frame, and for what some see as its embrace of American exceptionalism, a term that has taken an unexpectedly prominent role in political discussion in the U.S. over the past two years.

The contributors to the roundtable were asked to address both the specific case

of Bercovitch's *American Jeremiad* and, more generally, the state of the field of Americanist literary scholarship 35 years after the appearance of this influential and powerful interpretation of the "meaning of America," and in the wake of its 2012 reissue (with a new preface by the author) by the University of Wisconsin Press. The 35-year mark is not the only reason for a timely reconsideration of Bercovitch's scholarship and its legacy: his earlier book, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (originally published in 1975) was also recently republished with a new preface by the author (Yale, 2011). Another occasion for this discussion was the 2011 publication of a rich collection of essays, gathered in Bercovitch's honor, *The Turn Around Religion in America: Literature, Culture, and the Work of Sacvan Bercovitch*, co-edited by two of the contributors here, Nan Goodman and Michael Kramer.

The contributors all brought to the roundtable an affiliation with Bercovitch of one kind or another. Along with their history of affiliation with Bercovitch, however, none of these scholars works in what might be called a specifically Bercovitchian mode. Some of them work on non-canonical literature, on ethnic literatures, on educational theory and practice, on queer cultural production, on popular or mass literature, in legal theory, feminism, and so forth. They bring to bear perspectives that are, while not diametrically at odds with Bercovitch's focus, nevertheless situated in an at once intimate and orthogonal relationship to it, and thus liable to provoke sympathetic yet critical reconsiderations of the place of *American Jeremiad* and of ambitiously synthesizing critical scholarship in our discipline today.

This article originally appeared in issue 14.4 (Summer, 2014).

Christopher Looby is professor of English at UCLA where he also directs the Americanist Research Colloquium. He is the author of *Voicing America*, the co-editor (with Cindy Weinstein) of a collection of essays called *American Literature's Aesthetic Dimensions* (2012), and the general editor of "Q19: The Queer American Nineteenth Century," a forthcoming series from the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Invitation

YOU'RE INVITED

Nat Fuller

04.19.2015

The commemorative **Nat Fuller's Feast** marks the 150th anniversary of the original event, a hopeful act of racial reconciliation that took place at the close of the Civil War in 1865.

Nat Fuller, the culinary genius of Charleston in his time, was famous for his food and hospitality.

Chefs Kevin Mitchell, BJ Dennis, and Sean Brock will recreate his dishes and cocktails for the feast.

COCKTAIL RECEPTION : 6PM

With passed hors d'oeuvres. 103 Church St.

FEAST : 7:30PM

McCrady's Long Room. 2 Unity Alley

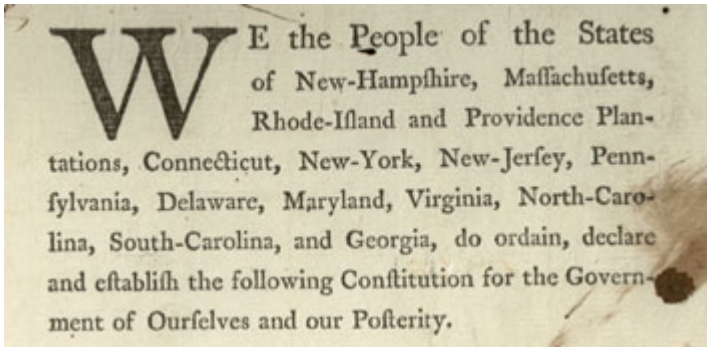
RSVP REQUIRED TO ATTEND

email stephanie@hometeampr.com or call (843) 209-3736
reply by March 23

CHARLESTON, SC

An invitation to Common-place readers to create their own events dedicated to reconciliation.

Electoral College: Bush v. Gore


WE the People of the States of New-Hampſhire, Maſſachuſetts, Rhode-Iſland and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jerſey, Pennſylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, South-Carolina, and Georgia, do ordain, declare and eſtabliſh the following Conſtitution for the Government of Ourſelves and our Poſterity.

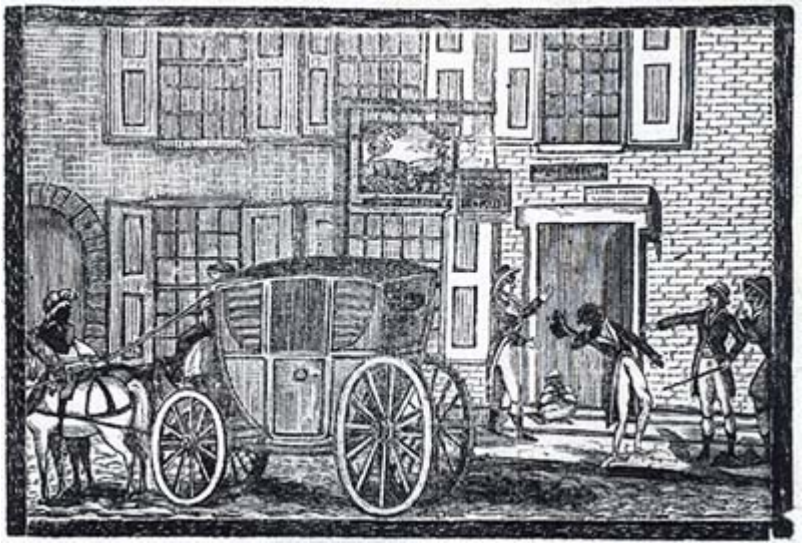
“Is the American constitutional system meaningfully democratic, or is it a system that confines its democratic elements within such elaborate systems of indirect representation and checks and balances that it effectively preserves domination by established elites?”

Welcome to the New Common-place



Our new design is a result of a year-long process of community outreach and research, design thinking, web development, and editorial decision making, and we hope you will be pleased with the results.

Do Not Despair: Suicide in the archives



Pamphlets, plays, poetry, and periodicals overflowed with news and opinion about bloody tragedies, both real and imagined.

Misimoa: An American on the Beach



Presented as part of the Special Issue: Pacific Routes

Many thought Moors a sharp trader, and at times people suspected that he was crooked. This was hardly unusual during these years in Samoa. More than once Moors or one of his traders was accused of using doctored weights when measuring coconuts for purchase, and at least once this endangered the life of one of his traders. Even Robert Louis Stevenson, who relied heavily on Moors in his early years, worried that he might be a huckster.

Doing History



What do I want students to get out of this particular hour and fifteen minutes we will spend together—and, more importantly, what do I want them to get out of the study of history?