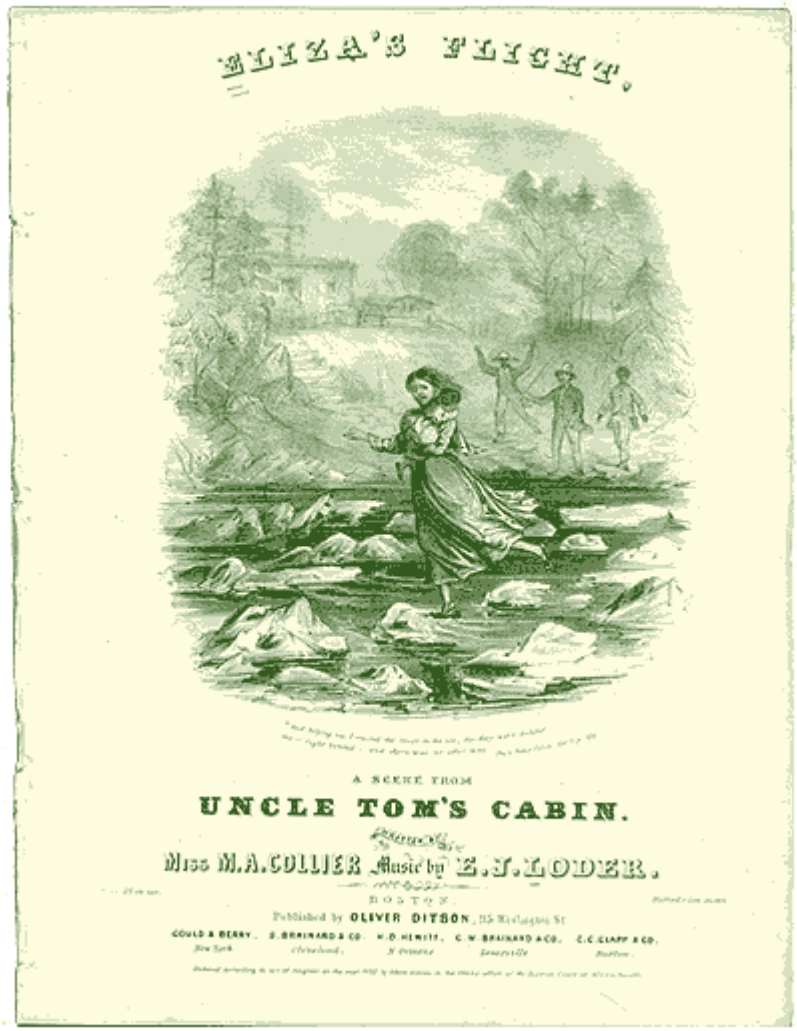
Uncle Tom’s Home Page



Far reaching in its range, “Uncle Tom’s Cabin and American Culture” amasses a rich archive of textual material in print, sheet music, song, illustration, and film, allowing viewers to encounter the many faces of Uncle Tom’s Cabin.

Electric Books of 1747



Instantly there is a strong spark and stroke, and the whole line of gold, which completes the communication, between the top and bottom of the bottle, [appears] a vivid flame, like the sharpest lightning

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Why a Common-place?



Common-place is a common place for exploring and exchanging ideas about early American history and culture. A bit friendlier than a scholarly journal, a bit more scholarly than a popular magazine, *Common-place* speaks—and listens—to scholars, museum curators, teachers, hobbyists, and just about anyone interested in American history before 1900. *Common-place* is a common place for all sorts of people to read about all sorts of things relating to early American life—from architecture to literature, from politics to parlor manners. And it's a place to find insightful analysis of early American history as it is discussed not only in scholarly literature but also on the evening news; in museums, big and small; in documentary and dramatic films; and in popular culture.

Common-place also aims to be a place for elegant prose and worthy ideas. Not perhaps, as elegant and worthy as the snippets of prose early Americans liked to jot down in their own commonplace books but more elegant, we hope, than much purely scholarly writing, particularly the kind that comes chock full of jargon. And, unlike much popular writing about history, which tends to focus on great men and great events, *Common-place* embraces the commonplace, or ordinary, in American life. Our features, reviews, and columns track the lives of

ordinary men and women, embracing new scholarship, teaching, and exhibits that explore all aspects of America's past and its many peoples.

Early American history might seem an odd subject for a web magazine. We have no film footage, no photographs, no videos or phonographs to load up with Real Audio or Real Player. But that's just why there's a place– if not an aching need–for *Common-place*. Early American history has already begun to be left behind in the media revolutions of the late twentieth century. A recently launched and very exciting on-line history journal, the Journal for Multimedia History , employs film, video, and photographs to study film, video and photographs–the documents of the late nineteenth and twentieth century. Other valuable history web sites, like the Library of Congress's American Memory Project also focus disproportionately on post-photography America. Meanwhile, wonderful audio programs, like NPR's Lost and Found Sound , are of course limited to twentieth-century subjects. And, unfortunately, very few good documentary films are ever made about early America because of the challenge of making an exciting film out of woodcuts and broadsides.

With the exception of a few daguerrotypes (invented in 1839) *Common-place* won't dazzle you with snazzy graphics. But it will take you on a tour of what's best in early American scholarship, teaching, and curatorship–and it will take advantage of the web's most important feature: bringing people together to discuss ideas. *Common-place* readers can join in the discussion of any of our features, reviews, and columns by visiting the Republic of Letters, an on-line messageboard.

Common-place is published quarterly, in October, January, April, and July.

This article originally appeared in issue 1.1 (September, 2000).

Disarming Early American History



Editors' note: as many readers may be aware, Professor Bellesiles's research methods and scholarly standards have become the subject of considerable debate since Common-place first published this essay in September 2000, the same month that Arming America appeared in print. In October 2002, Bellesiles resigned his faculty position at Emory University. Both the report of the independent

investigative committee whose findings led to his resignation, and Bellesiles's response are available online.

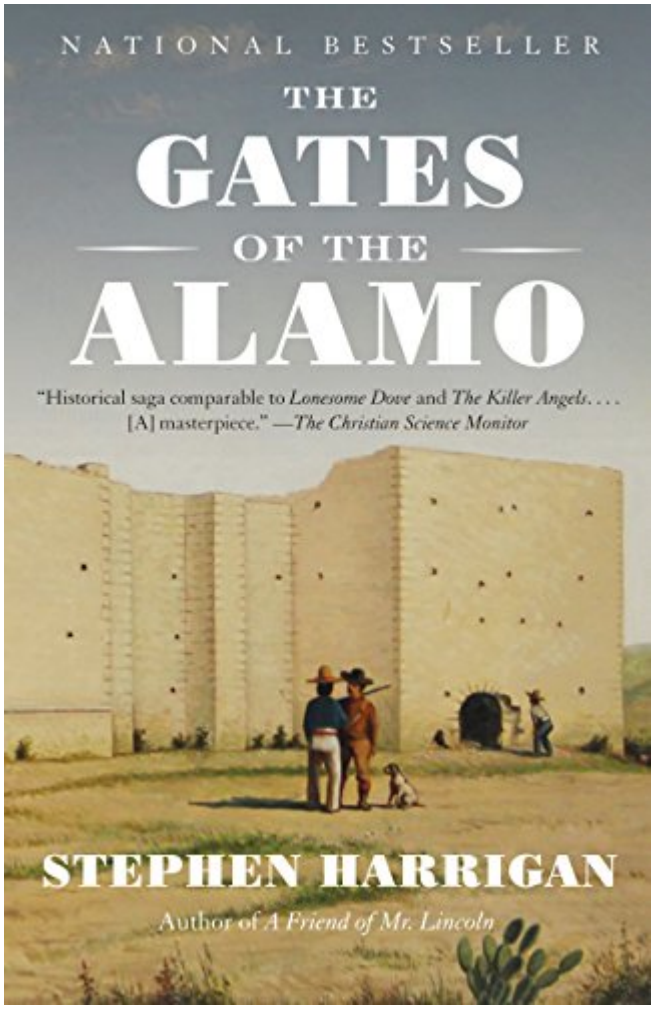
Going Dutch




THE
LIFE
AND
Memorable Actions
OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON
GENERAL and COMMANDER
of the
ARMIES
OF
AMERICA

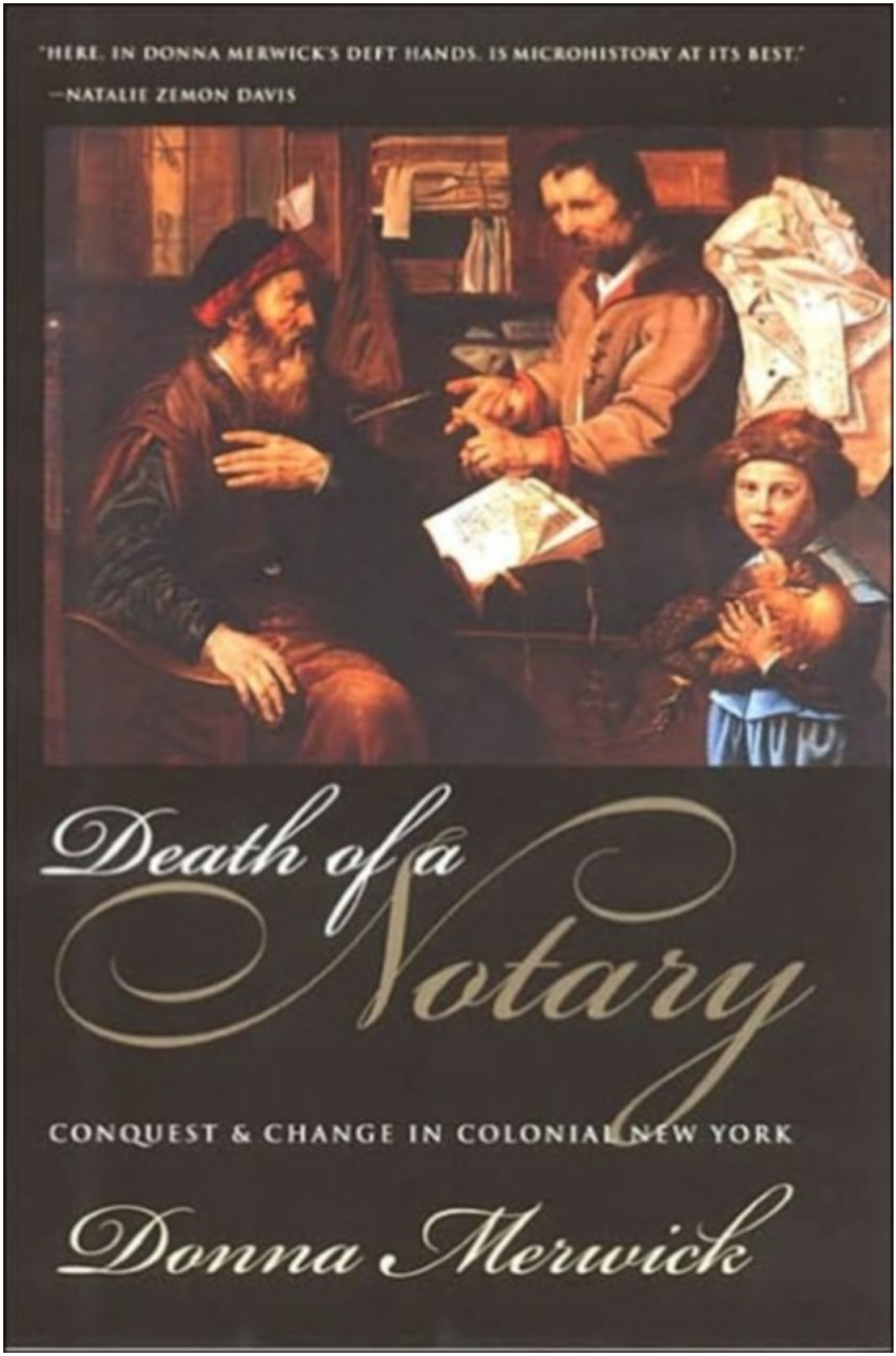
The reverend author of this book before us, which we are at a loss whether to denominate a biography, or a novel, founded on fact, has presented a specimen of writing, which for variety and oddity is almost an unique in the annals of literature.

Remembering—and Inventing—the Alamo



For historians, perhaps the bottom line is whether one learns well or badly from a novel. Is Harrigan's The Gates of the Alamo a good teacher about Texas in the mid-1830s?

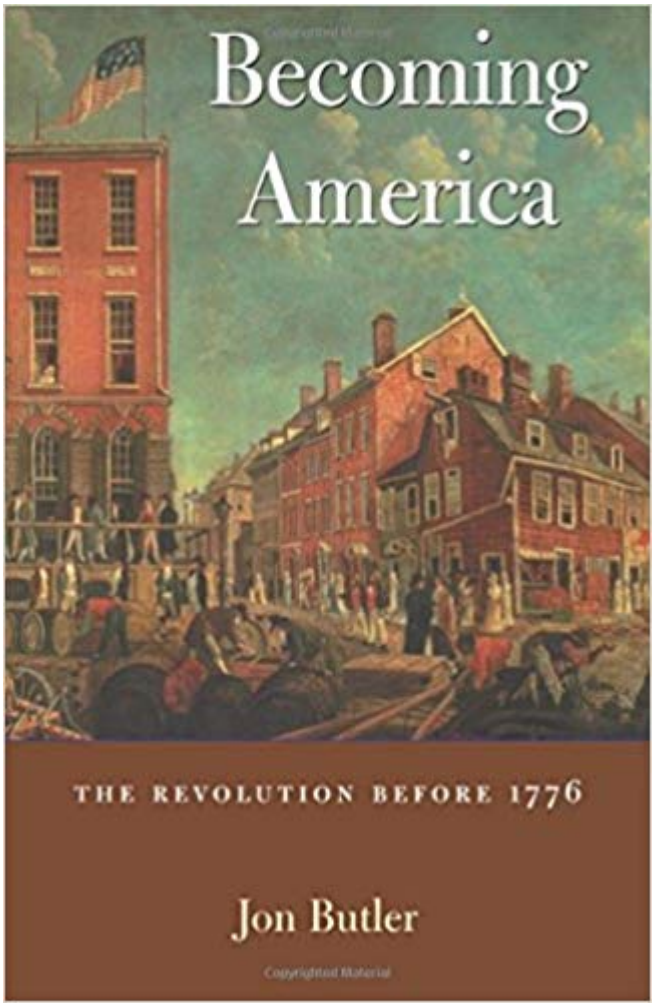
Donna Merwick's New World



Death of a Notary offers a particularly good example of the possibilities of microhistory, although Merwick never refers to her study in those terms. Merwick's careful reconstruction of Adriaen Janse van Ilpendam's life illustrates the rewards of microhistory's emphasis on rigorous interpretation

of small details and small subjects.

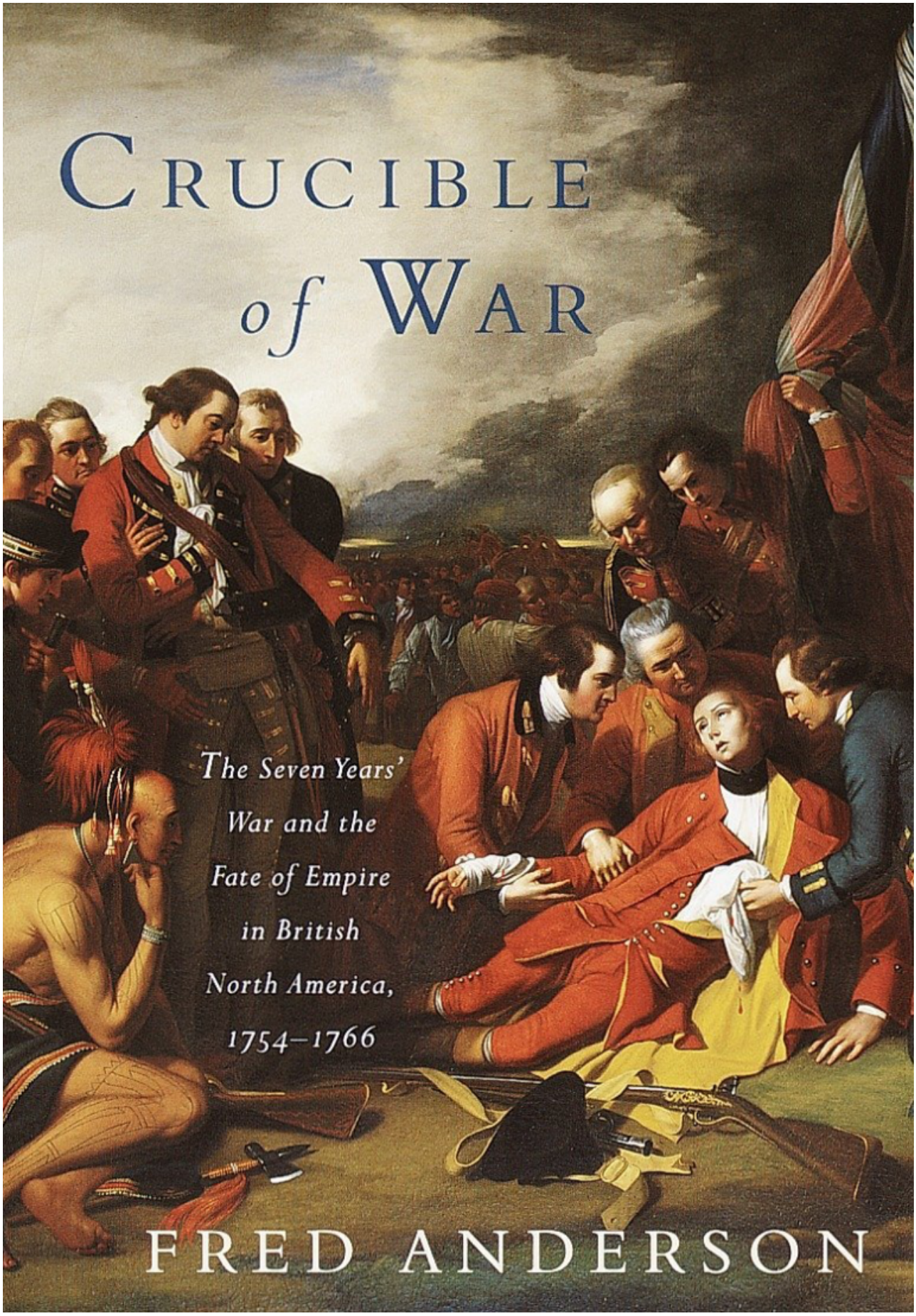
Describing America



Franklin figures prominently in Jon Butler’s Becoming America, a wide-ranging and spirited book that describes the emergence of the first modern culture in a way that will satisfy many readers and provoke others.

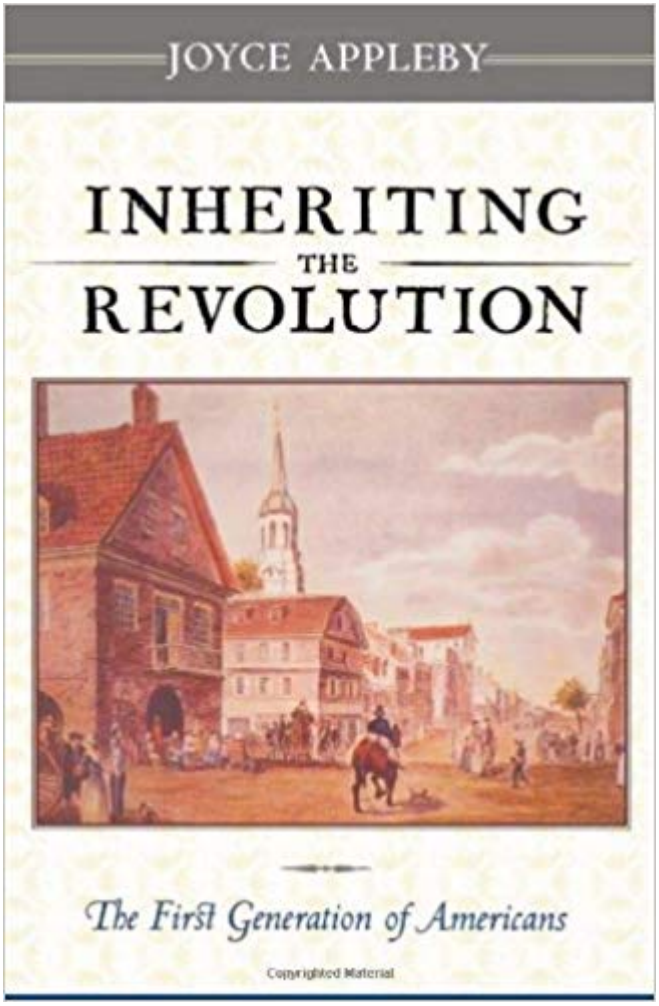
Crucible of War: Some Context, and a

Sketch of the Narrative


CRUCIBLE
of WAR
The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766
FRED ANDERSON

This issue Common-place holds a round table discussion of Fred Anderson's new history of the Seven Years' War, Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766. This forum expands on an earlier round table discussion of Fred Anderson's Crucible of War featuring the authors and moderator Pauline Maier, hosted by the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History at Harvard University.

Appleby's Liberal America



Appleby's Americans did not fight the Revolution, nor apparently remember it, nor even spend much time celebrating or thinking about what had happened to the previous generation. Rather, they took the Revolution's fruits—and ran toward a new future.