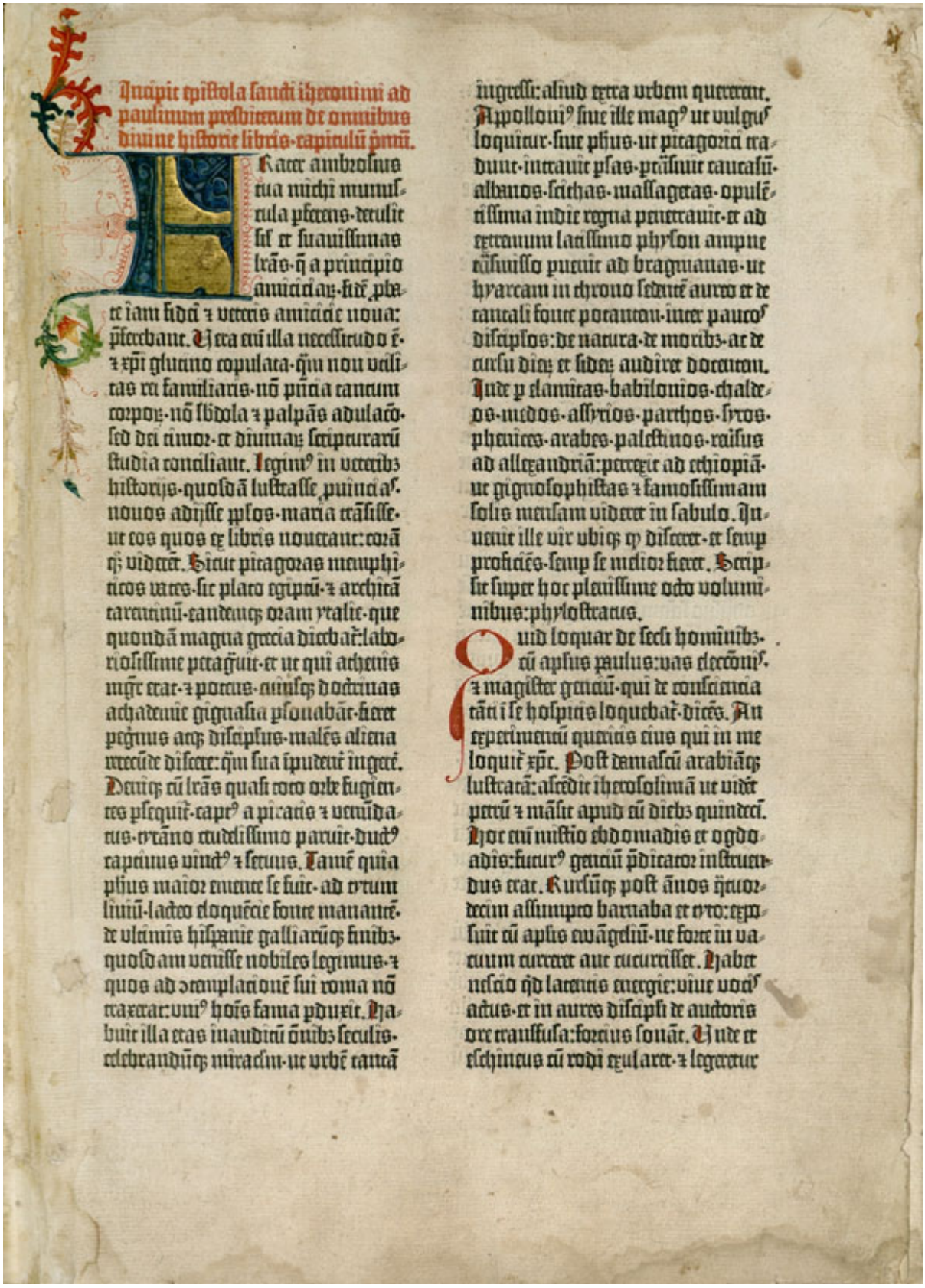
Our Mayflower Bible



Incipit epistola sancti ihesonimi ad paulinum presbiterum de omnibus diuine historie libris-capitulū primū.

Karor ambrosius tua michi munuscula plerasq; detulit sil et suauissimas lras-q; a principio amicicie-fidē plas et iam fidā et veteris amicicie noua: plectebant. Ita cū illa necessitudo ē. et xpi glutino copulata-q; non solū tas et familiaris-nō pūica tantum corpoz-nō ydola et palpas adulacō. sed dei amoz-et diuinaz scripturaz studia conciliant. Legim⁹ in veteribz historijs-quosdā lustrasse pūncia. nouos adisse plos-maria trāsisse. ut eos quos ex libris nouerant: corā q; viderēt. Sicut pitagoras memphiticos vates-sic plato egipti-et archita tarentinū-eudoxus oram ytalie-que quondā magna grecia dicebat: laboriosissime peragrauit-et ut qui ad hēnis mgr erat-et poterat-omnes doctrinas ad hauserit gignalia plonabāt-fuerit pegrinus atq; discipulus-malēs aliena vtcūq; discere: q̄m sua ipudenter ingerē. Denicq; cū trās quasi toto orbe fugientes plequit-capt⁹ a piratis et venūdatus-tyrānō crudelissimo paruit-dux⁹ captiuus vinct⁹ et seruus. Tamē quia plus maior eminere se fuit-ad ytum linguā-facto eloquēcie fonte manauit. de vtamis hispanie galliarūq; finibz. quosdam venisse nobiles legimus-et quos ad exemplaria suā roma nō recepit: unū hoīs fama protulit. Habuit illa etas inaudita ōnibz seculis celebrandūq; miracla-ut urbē tantā ingressi: aliud extra urbem quererent. Appollon⁹ fuit ille mag⁹ ut vulgus loquitur-sine plus-ut pitagorica tradunt-intrauit plas-pālsuit caucasū albanos-scithas-massagetas-opulētissima indie regna penetrauit-et ad extremum lacūsimo phyrson amne trānsisso pueuit ad bragmanas-ut hyarcam in throno sedentē aureo et de tantali fonte potantem-inter pauc⁹ discipulos: de natura-de moribz-ac de cursu diez et sideꝝ audiret docentem. Inde p elamitas-babilonios-chaldeos-medos-assyrios-parthos-syros. phenices-arabes-palestinos-egiptū ad alexandriā: pceptor ad ethiopiā. ut gimnosophistas et famosissimam solis mensam videret in sabulo. Inuenit ille vir ubiq; q̄ discere-et semp profectus-semp se melior fieret. Scripsit super hoc plenissime octo voluminibus: phylostratus.

Quid loquar de secli hominibz. cū aplus paulus: vas electōnis. et magister gentiū-qui de conscientia tāntū se hospitis loquebat-dicēs. An experimentū quereris eius qui in me loquit xp̄c. Post damascū arabiāq; lustratā: adiit ihersolimā ut videret petrū et mānsit apud eū diebz quindecim. Per cui nutū octomadis et octo adis: futur⁹ gentiū p̄dicator instruendus erat. Rursūq; post ānos quatordecim assumpto barnaba et tyto: egressus est cū aplis euāgeliū-ne forte in vacuum curreret aut cucurrisset. Habet ecclia q̄d lacerans energie: viue vocis actus-et in aures discipli de auctoris ore transfusa: foecundus sonat. Unde et eschines cū rodi legisset et legeretur

Here was a Bible that had not only come over on the Mayflower in 1620, but had

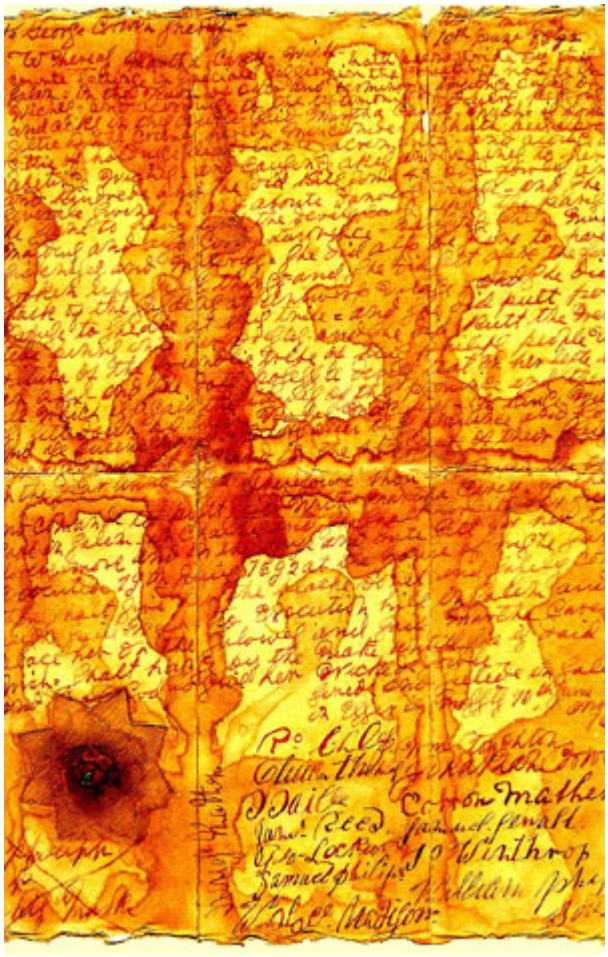
belonged to some of the most prominent early settlers, according to annotations on its pages . . . Could it be true?

Accept No Imitations: The campaign against counterfeits, past and present



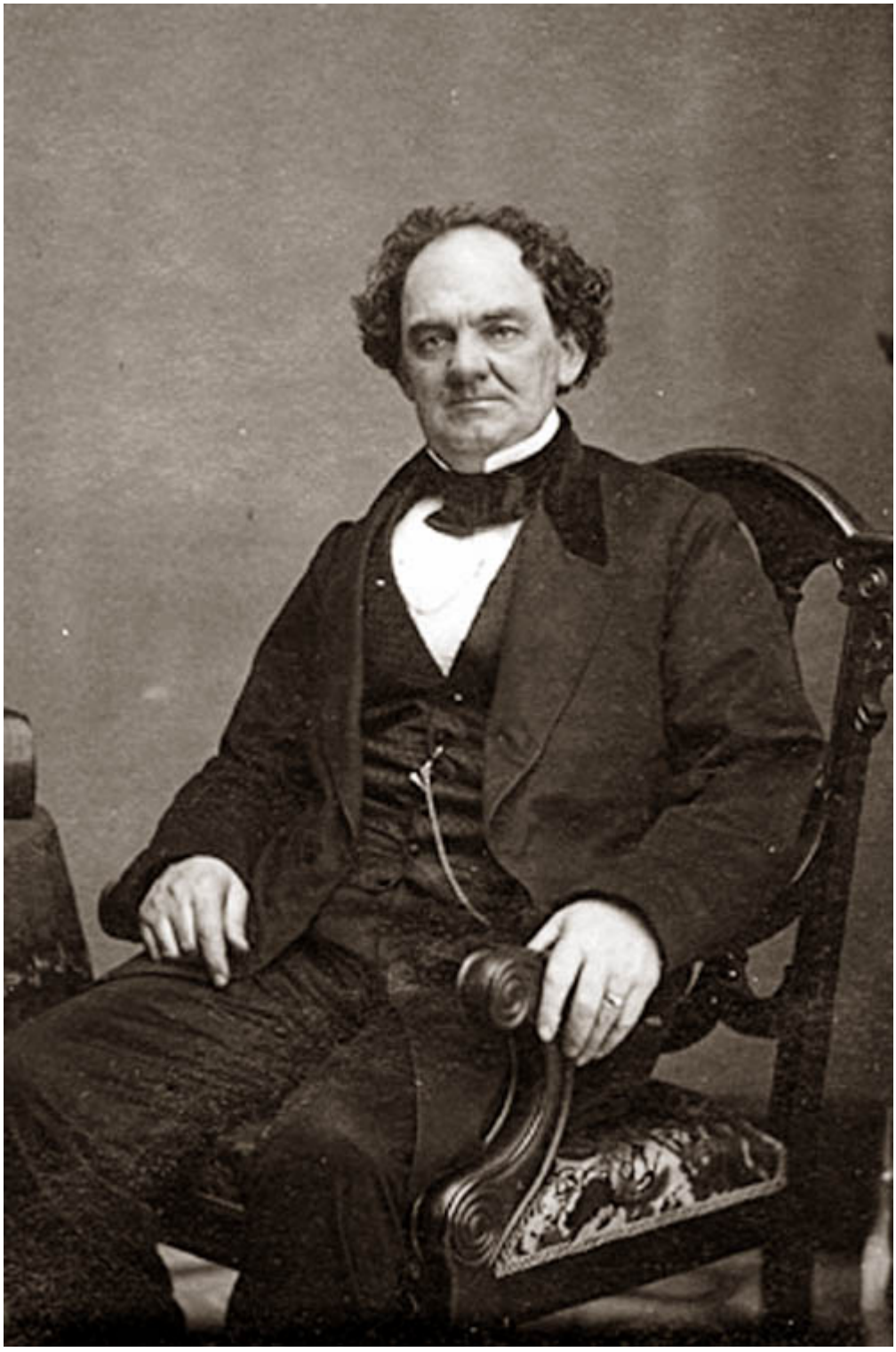
If history is any guide, the Treasury Department has an uphill fight ahead of it; counterfeiters have a knack for circumventing almost any obstacle put in their way.

Brother, Can You Buy a Salem Witch Death Warrant?: A story of forgery in the Great Depression



“The thing is a fake from beginning to end,” Corning replied.

Finding Barnum on the Internet



More than a historical resource, “The Lost Museum” invites us, then, to ponder the narratives with which we stage authenticity, the material objects and practices with which every generation reimagines the kinship of truth and fiction.

Deceiving and Undeceiving in Early American Art and Culture



Highly anticipated among scholars of American art and American cultural history alike, Wendy Bellion's *Citizen Spectator* is among the most significant book-length studies of early American art to appear in print during the past decade. Derived from Bellion's 2001 Northwestern University dissertation, it is indispensable, as ambitious and important as Margaretta M. Lovell's *Art in a Season of Revolution: Painters, Artisans, and Patrons in Early America* (2005) and Michael Gaudio's *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (2008).

Wendy Bellion, *Citizen Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2011. 351 pp., $45.

Philadelphia was at once a “thriving intellectual, social, and commercial hub,” a “hothouse of political inquiry,” and a “laboratory for looking, a place where the visual ideologies of the early republic could be put to the test of objects and experiences”

As the dust jacket indicates, *Citizen Spectator* is the “first book-length exploration of illusionistic art in the early United States.” Unlike the much-studied optical devices, hoaxes, and trompe l’oeil paintings of the later nineteenth century, Bellion’s world of illusion has received only passing mention or fragmentary treatment. She makes a case for its importance by underlining the relations between “early national cultures of art and politics” (11). *Citizen Spectator* “contends that illusions functioned to exercise and hone skills of looking” (5). “During an era in which the senses were politicized as agents of knowledge and action,” Bellion writes, “public exhibitions of illusions challenged Americans to demonstrate their perceptual aptitude. Thresholds for the practice and performance of discernment, deceptions made exhibition rooms into spaces of citizen formation” (ibid.). To see clearly, to live “undeceived,” Bellion argues, were primary concerns for Americans in the earliest years of the United States. Although she occasionally ventures north to Boston, south to Washington, D.C., and across the Atlantic, she focuses on early national Philadelphia and the well-known Peale family of artists, scientists, and entrepreneurs. As the “second-largest city in the British Atlantic world,” the “site of the Revolutionary and Continental congresses of the 1770s and 1780s [and] the seat of the federal government during the 1790s,” Philadelphia was at once a “thriving intellectual, social, and commercial hub,” a “hothouse of political inquiry,” and a “laboratory for looking, a place where the visual ideologies of the early republic could be put to the test of objects and experiences” (8).

Bellion builds her argument about the interdependency of deception and discernment in early national America by attending to objects as diverse as optical instruments, public exhibits and museum displays, paintings both large and small, printed matter of many different sorts, drawings, maps, as well as the built environment, which she has in many cases painstakingly re-imagined or reconstructed. Obviously, much of the documentation is visual, and the book is generously and appropriately illustrated with 12 color plates and more than 80 black-and-white illustrations. Although the black-and-white illustrations are very good, the color plates, grouped near the center of the volume, are too dark in tonality. Of the works I have seen in person that Bellion is describing and analyzing, virtually all are impressive, indeed wonderfully subtle. In the main the color plates do not do the original objects justice.

Chapter 1, “Theaters of Visuality,” introduces the “late-eighteenth-century culture of visual curiosity” in Philadelphia that preceded and primed the populace for later trompe l’oeil paintings (17). Perpetual motion machines, an anamorphic print of a horse, solar microscopes, and phantasmagorias, for

example, fostered the capacious perceptual capacity that was the cornerstone of a discerning citizenry. In the second chapter, “The Politics of Discernment,” Bellion offers a dense and impressive reading of Charles Willson Peale’s *Staircase Group (Portrait of Raphaelle and Titian Ramsay Peale)* of 1795, contextualizing the work in relation to its production for and siting in the Columbianum exhibition in the Pennsylvania State House. As Bellion points out, “[T]he Columbianum exhibition transformed a chamber designed for political deliberation into a space for looking” (65). A virtuosic display of illusionism, the painting takes the shape of a doorway and pictures two of Charles Willson Peale’s sons at the threshold of a sharply turning and upwardly winding staircase. Period debates about representation and transparency in government between Federalists and Antifederalists are as critical for Bellion’s case here as is the contemporaneous development in Philadelphia of the nation’s first art academy, museum, and then current aesthetics and art theory. Whereas Federalists favored a big government led by a “natural aristocracy,” which inevitably led to accusations of monarchism, Antifederalists argued for more radical, democratic values, and they were particularly mistrustful of representation (73). During 1795, at the very moment when the *Staircase Group* was first publicly displayed, Antifederalists vigilantly attacked governmental secrecy at the State House, epitomized by closed-door deliberations in the Senate concerning the controversial Jay’s Treaty.

In Chapter 3, “Sight and the City,” Bellion deals with a group of twenty-eight engravings by William and Thomas Birch. Dating to 1798-1800, the prints picture sites around the city of Philadelphia. Bellion reads the engravings’ formal peculiarities, including their imperfect perspective, not as flawed draftsmanship but as signs of the Birches’ complex engagement with Enlightenment values in their lived experience of the urban environment. While “[t]o a certain extent,” she writes, “the prints reproduce [the] crucial paradigms of order” that are “the grid and the market,” “the views undermine the presumed logic and transparency of these systems through their distortions of scale, their fracturing of perspectival space, and their fixation on certain types of material objects” (122). The engravings, she suggests, “help illuminate the dialectical nature of perception—its capacity for judgment and susceptibility to deception—that was a central political and cultural concern of the early republic” (ibid.). “Imitations and Originals” focuses on the paired display in early nineteenth-century Philadelphia of trompe l’oeil rack pictures and corresponding originals by one Samuel Lewis. This chapter functions as a brilliant extension of the analysis of the Birches’ engravings. Bellion shows us how Lewis’s trompe l’oeil pictures relate to his work not only as a writing master, but also as a cartographer. Depicting motley collections of paper—from pieces of newspaper and tickets for the theater and exhibitions, to small books and pamphlets, playing cards and business cards—tacked between diagonally organized ribbons in a shallow picture plane, Lewis’s pictures are themselves works on paper, composed in graphite, ink, and watercolor. If, to this point in the volume, there were any doubt in the reader’s mind as to the intelligence of early American trompe l’oeil representation, here it is

dispelled. Lewis is as witty as he is technically proficient. Ultimately, the display together of Lewis's trompe l'oeil renderings and their models encouraged the development of "judgment" in the early national populace—it showed viewers how "to distinguish image from object, copy from original" (210).

In Chapter 5 Bellion considers an amusement popular in the early nineteenth century—the "Invisible Lady." This "rational recreation" challenged audiences to explain the source of a woman's voice in a room possessed of various displays of speaking trumpets, but no visible human body. As Bellion notes, "[P]rint helped generate an audience for aural illusion outside the actual space of the exhibition hall," thus broadening access to this and other similar amusements (239). These amusements also mark a transition toward Romanticism. Although "sensory discernment was still critical to maintaining civic order," as time went on a cultural fascination with irrationality became hitched to late Enlightenment cultural practices (245). At the peak of its popularity (during Jefferson's presidency) the Invisible Lady prompted audience experiences that resonated with renewed criticism of governmental secrecy. The chapter closes with ruminations on the Invisible Lady and debates circa 1800 about women's voices. In the "reactionary" environment of the turn of the century—following the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792)—"the Invisible Lady put female orality on display…function[ing] to reflect the emerging limits on female speech" (275). "Even as it modeled the range of female vision and voice," writes Bellion, "the exhibition occasioned a symbolic containment of female authority" (280). "[A]ttempts to bring the Invisible Lady into visibility reveal the extent to which discernment itself was a gendered construction" (ibid.). The final chapter, Chapter 6, deals with a new type of illusionistic painting that developed in the United States in the 1820s. Modeled on François-Marius Granet's *The Choir of the Capuchin Church in Rome* (1814-1815), first displayed in a Philadelphia gallery in 1820, such pictures were all about absorption in art over and against discernment. Rembrandt Peale's *Patriae Pater* (ca. 1824)—the so-called "porthole" portrait of George Washington—is Bellion's central example of this new kind of painting. Explicated in light of the waxing culture of Romanticism, including phantasmagoria shows, as well as the Second Great Awakening, such images celebrated visual fantasy, memory, and escapism, placing them at odds with the earlier culture of discernment.

The contributions of *Citizen Spectator* are manifold. Bellion shows the merits of careful study and contextualization of topics in a period of the history of American art that is still very much overlooked, if not demonized, for its seeming lack of aesthetic and intellectual value. By looking with patience at a type of painting that has been disparaged historically by critics and aesthetic theorists (i.e. trompe l'oeil), Bellion demonstrates why we ought to take this sort of representation more seriously than we often have: if such pictures are playful, their play is a form of considerable pictorial intelligence. The creativity and skill with which Bellion analyzes the interrelatedness of art and politics offer a model for anyone interested in expansive thinking about

the interactions of these two topics. Throughout I admired the ways in which she thought long and hard about contingencies of display, whether working out in detail the locations for which specific trompe l'oeil paintings were designed, or considering how idiosyncrasies of period exhibition practices contributed to surprising juxtapositions of art objects and spaces with what we have come to think of as non-art objects and spaces. For anyone who holds out hope that the history of early American art can be productively separated from the history of early American culture more generally, this book sounds a death knell. And against those who would oppose cultural spectacle and the cultivation of self-awareness, Bellion tenders this provocation.

Race, gender, and class are mentioned here and there throughout the volume, though it is only in the fifth chapter that Bellion addresses one of these categories of difference—gender—at length. Given the limited access many people had to the artworks and exhibits she describes, Bellion emphasizes that the "citizen spectator" of her book is, generally speaking, raced (white), gendered (male), and classed (not very poor). Although there are additional ways in which Bellion could have dealt with difference in the book—I was surprised, for instance, that she did not talk more in Chapter 6 about the forcefully marginalized black servant figures around which Henry Sargent's dinner and tea party paintings of the 1820s are organized—she is overall quite self-conscious in explaining how forms of social and cultural bias informed ideas about and access to technologies for the development of discernment or judgment in the early United States. Her claim at the end of Chapter 5 that "[a]gainst the rhetorics of discernment and judgment that pervaded cultural constructions of citizenship, the [Invisible Lady] demonstrated that not all Americans had equal access to visuality" made me wonder what it means to cultivate self-awareness in the absence of an egalitarian society or citizenry (280). Bellion suggests that the culture of illusionism functioned ideologically to naturalize the bonds between white male privilege, seeing, and self-awareness. In this sense, the objects and displays she analyzes deceived even in undeceiving.

Despite the many bold moves one finds throughout *Citizen Spectator*, the book's conclusion focuses rather predictably on the later history of trompe l'oeil in the nineteenth-century United States. I would have preferred to read here about how the subject of Bellion's book resonates today. Indeed, I was struck by how much early American illusionistic artworks could resemble contemporary illusionistic artworks. Consider the "trompe l'oeil grotto" in the Peale Museum, which calls to mind the *Space Division Pieces* (beginning 1976) of the Light and Space artist James Turrell. Like Peale's grotto, Turrell's installations confront the viewer with a heightened sense of perceptual self-awareness; Turrell achieves this by presenting what appears at first to be a large-scale abstract canvas hanging in a dimly lit gallery, but which upon further inspection turns out to be a rectangular recess cut into the gallery wall.

The closest parallels in contemporary art for Bellion's politically engaged works promoting discernment or judgment are what the art historian Carrie

Lambert-Beatty has called “parafictions.” A global phenomenon, exemplified in the production of Michael Blum, 01.ORG, The Yes Men, and The Atlas Group, such works constitute spectacular ruses that conflate fact and fiction; they are characterized by “purposeful deception.” Whether what Lambert-Beatty writes of this art could be said of the artworks and exhibitions Bellion describes in *Citizen Spectator* is an open question: “Parafictions train us in skepticism and doubt, but also, oddly, in belief.” Parafictions help to “work facts alive.” For Lambert-Beatty what separates the contemporary culture of parafictional art from earlier cultures of trompe l’oeil is the work it does to resuscitate conceptions of truth, knowledge, and factuality, all laid low in postmodernity. We might say that in the early United States no such resuscitation was yet necessary. Whatever the differences between illusionistic art in the early republic and illusionistic art today, the continued aesthetic and political importance of deceiving and discerning suggests that *Citizen Spectator* should enjoy a wide readership. We will want to think more about its relevance to and implications for art and life in the present.

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“Morbid curiosity”: The Decline and Fall of the Popular Anatomical Museum



Presented as part of the special issue: “A Cabinet of Curiosities”

“The anatomical museum was not just a transgressor of public morality, it was a notorious, flagrant transgressor, a public institution devoted to the display of things that should not be displayed.”

Our Antinomians, Ourselves: Or, Anne Hutchinson’s Monstrous Birth & The Pathologies of Obstetrics



Reading a 1959 article about a 1639 miscarriage in 2011 reveals how little the discourse about women’s bodies evolves over three hundred and twenty years.

Mapping a Demon Malady: Cholera Maps and Affect in 1832



Cholera maps chart the movement of the disease, and the terror that accompanied it.

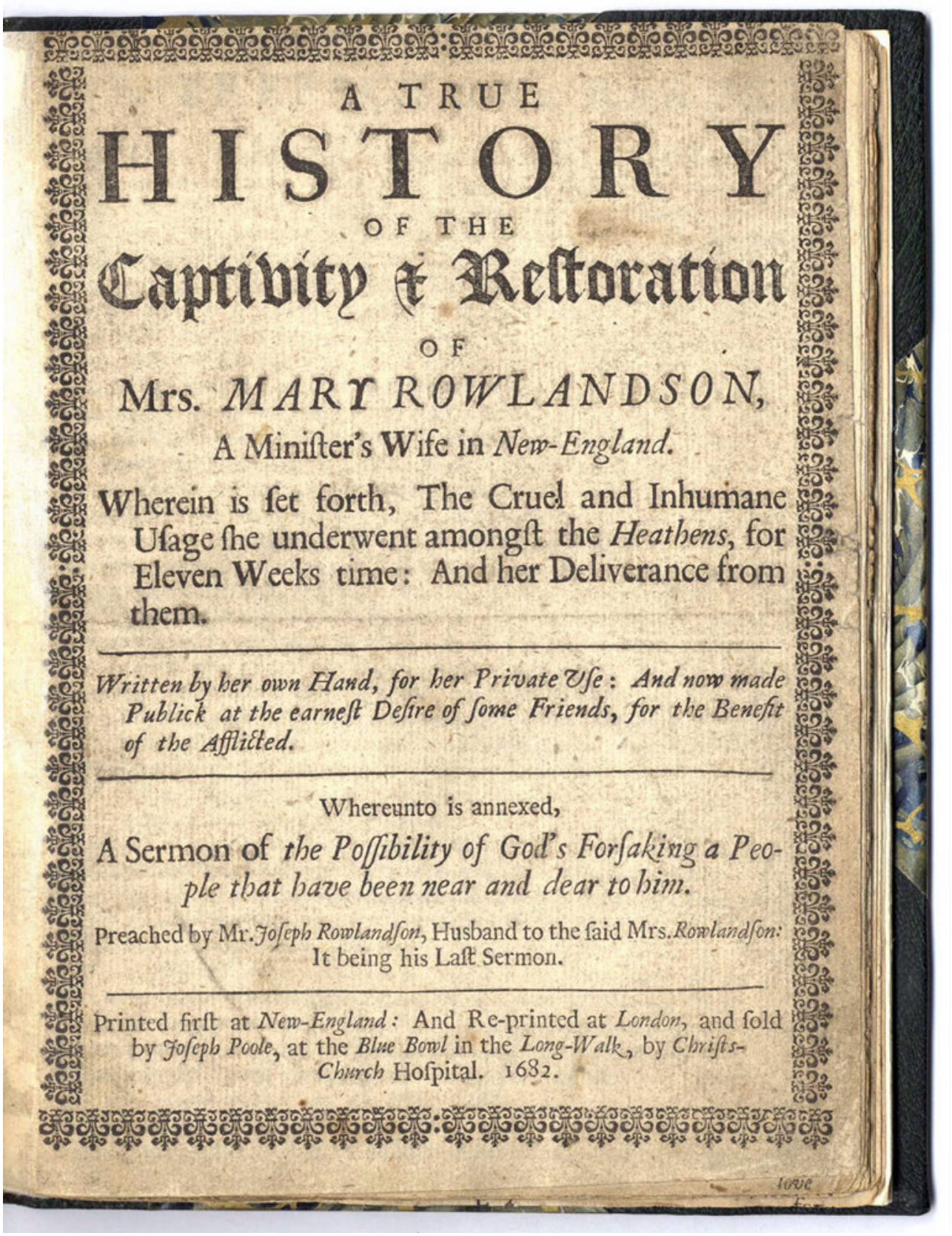
Sailors’ Health and National Wealth



Presented as part of the special Politics Issue

That the federal government created this health care system for merchant mariners in the early American republic will surprise many.

Cancer and Captivity: Reflections on Affliction in Puritan and Modern Times



A TRUE
HISTORY
OF THE
Captivity & Reſtoration
OF
Mrs. *MARY ROWLANDSON*,
A Miniſter's Wife in *New-England.*

Wherein is ſet forth, The Cruel and Inhumane Uſage ſhe underwent amongſt the *Heathens*, for Eleven Weeks time: And her Deliverance from them.

Written by her own Hand, for her Private Uſe: And now made Publick at the earneſt Deſire of ſome Friends, for the Benefit of the Afflicted.

Whereunto is annexed,

A Sermon of *the Poſſibility of God's Forſaking a People that have been near and dear to him.*

Preached by Mr. *Joſeph Rowlandſon*, Husband to the ſaid Mrs. *Rowlandſon*: It being his Laſt Sermon.

Printed firſt at *New-England*: And Re-printed at *London*, and ſold by *Joſeph Poole*, at the *Blue Bowl* in the *Long-Walk*, by *Chriſts-Church* Hoſpital. 1682.

It seemed to me that the conditions of cancer and captivity shared physical, emotional, and spiritual correspondences.