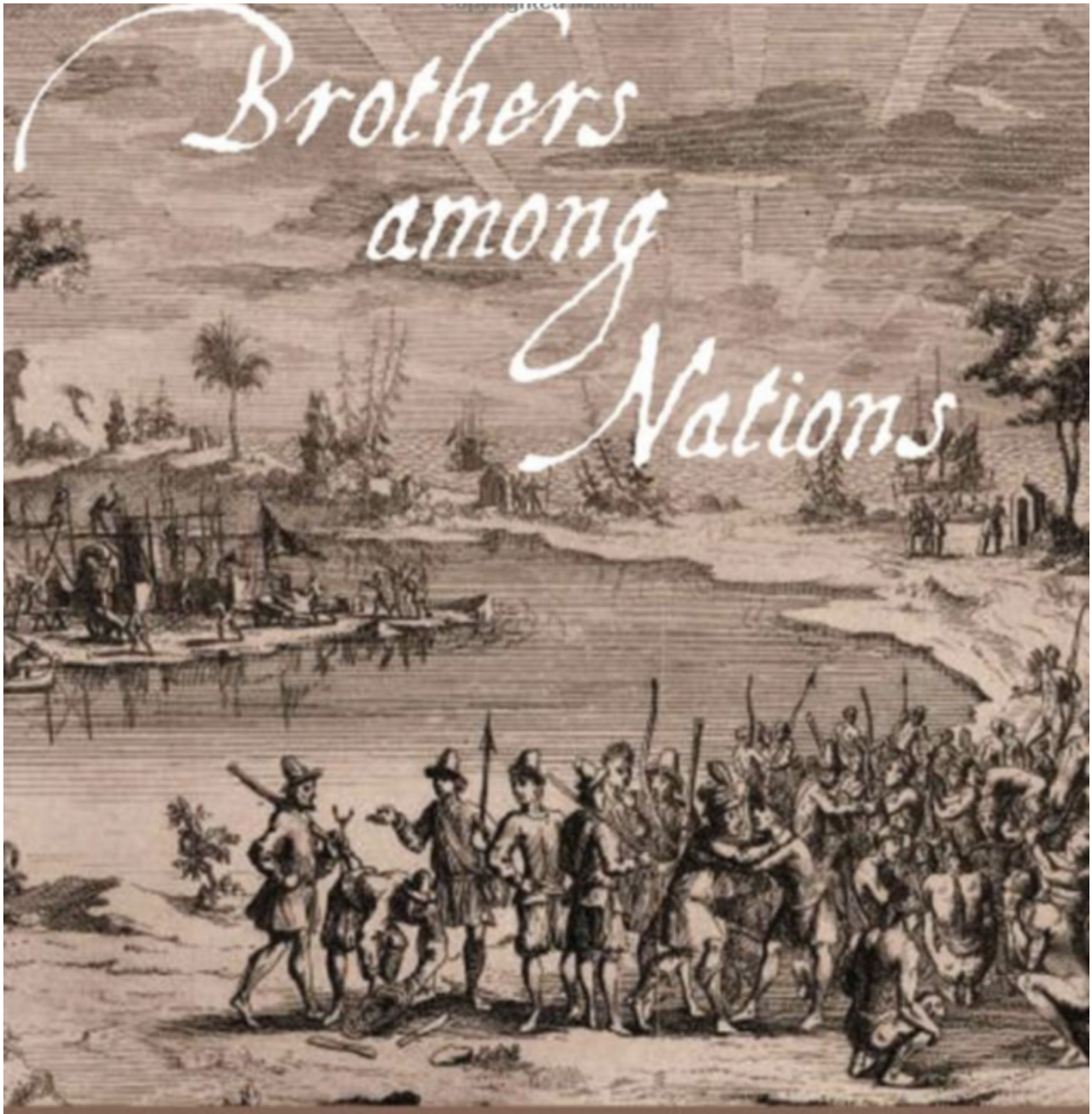
Connecting the Dots: Mapping, Mediating Figures, and Intercultural Relationships in Early America

Brothers among Nations



THE PURSUIT OF
INTERCULTURAL ALLIANCES IN EARLY AMERICA
1580–1660

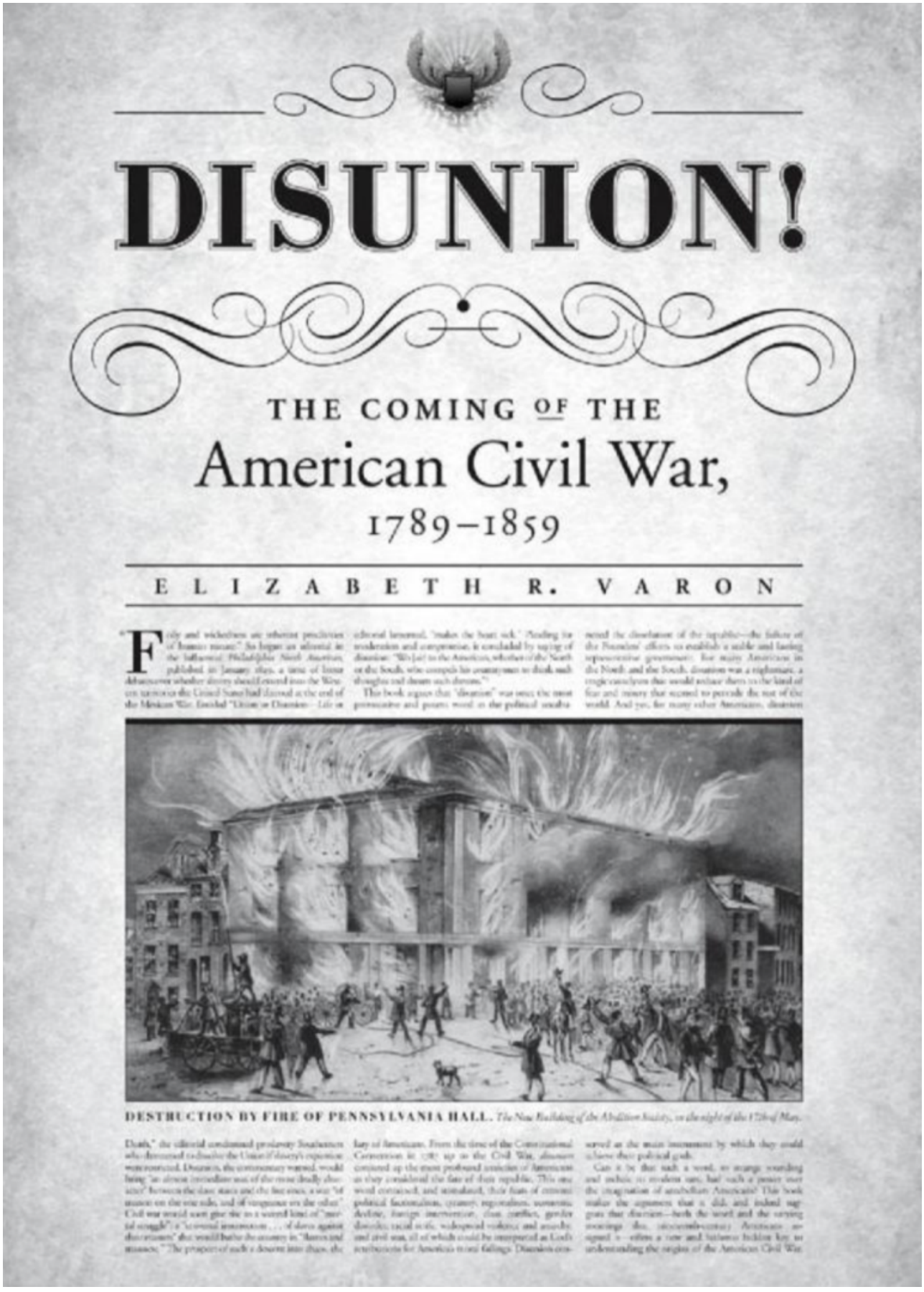
CYNTHIA J. VAN ZANDT

In the early years both Native Americans and Europeans were proud, suspicious, and ill-informed.

Food History on the Web

That is not to say that the Web offers no substantive food history sites. Hidden between the layers of fat on the Web are some juicy morsels that serious researchers will find worthwhile.

War of Words



DISUNION!

THE COMING OF THE American Civil War, 1789–1859

ELIZABETH R. VARON

DESTRUCTION BY FIRE OF PENNSYLVANIA HALL. *The New Building of the Abolition Society, on the night of the 17th of May.*

As “disunion threats materialized into a regional program, and as images of

revolution and invasion swirled in the political atmosphere," Republicans grew increasingly antagonistic towards Southern ultimatums.

Winchester Poems

Ammunition,
Or Sarah Winchester, 23 Years Dead, and My Grandmother, Newly Widowed, Speak

The men were paid extra: danger money.
No metal buttons on their clothes, no cigarettes,

In his letters from the South Pacific, he always
called me Honey, made me promise not to forget

no matches. No hairpins for the women—
So many precautions: fire brigades waiting,

to smile for him in the beveled mirror
he'd bought that Christmas—home on leave—

deep wells, until there were hydrants.
Around the factories, even the horses wore

bells everywhere like the sound of ice cracking
when he drove the lake. I'd hold my door open—

brass instead of steel underfoot. Less chance
of sparks. The men worked overtime—

frightened. The months he was gone were
like that. The children in the back of the car,

gearing up for each new war, or maybe
war. Their shirts couldn't have pockets.

holding the shells he'd sent them: speckled around
a tiny curve of breath. Until the telegram,

No stray bits of metal. And still—each year—
explosions, fires spreading until

I kept my promise: smiled as if he could see
my reflection in the bevel of the South Pacific.

they couldn't count the bodies.

Before his ship was only splinters, smoke

As a child, I thought guncotton sounded

soft—like the cloth for a veil.

Sarah Winchester Remembers: Artizan Street, New Haven, 1850s

There was always something being built
in my father's shop and sawdust tracked
onto our floors: a shimmer like the boards
were becoming mist, like on the Quinnipiac
where my parents met. You could walk into
rivers then and come out with new beliefs.

In the clock shops, time divided, shifting
us forward notch by tiny notch. People
crowded the Public Bathhouse—vapors
and lye and seawater. Small salvations.

    From my French tutor: *pere* and *bois.*
    What paid for my lessons: fine houses
    ornamented by my father’s careful hands.

Carriage works, mills, the boarding houses
spilling into the streets. We lived comfortably
then. My sister, the only one buried. I carried
her name, like the rail tracks carrying Hartford
outside its skins: the elm-lined, sooty Green,
the custom house. Factories for shirts and guns.

In their rooms, new girls from Ireland
cut stacks of pieces—collar and breast, left
right, back—then stitch by stitch, created
a more perfect wholeness. The country
was coming apart. Rumors. Repeating
guns. But also beauty. New planed maple.

Everyone wanted spindles and tracery,
moldings copied from Queen Victoria
and The Crystal Palace. History turned against
its lathe, shaving us loose. On my father’s
floor: pedals for organs waiting for the music
to be built around them. No one told me
to want a more solid world.

Stereoscope: Annie Oakley and Sarah Winchester

It began with necessity:
hunting rabbits behind
that mortgaged house, then word spread out:
snow on the fields, glinting off
sky, and everything
narrowed to hard wood and steel,
and me the small miracle
at the trigger men bet against:

How can I explain
windows designed from guns:
levers and latches aimed at
the gazing ball in the garden,
not for safety but because that’s how I
knew to build. Not a spider,
silking out her body’s web,
but a woman standing

cards riddled like windows
on a train that will take you

over oceans if you want it to;
the prince of Senegal sending
offers of tigers, and the German
kaiser sitting rigid as a portrait: ash
of his cigarette streaking the bullet
as it crumbled that one speck

where the wind's eye watches
without sleeping—*safe as houses*
they say, but what is safe about
this world with holes shot through,
with empty safes and chairs—this
dust and light on the piano, the smoke
and no one else to warm at the hearth
now: only my own body

of fire. Such trust in common
stranger's (woman's) hands;
the legends made them safe
the way they do: *the little sure*
shot, dressed to kill, meaning
dressed to shoot at nothing
alive now. I became
something to be braved, boasted

glass—between me and the day:
not ghosts, but not the living either.
The legends grew like hedges
tangled and vined around me; words,
the spirits I started to believe in
because what else is a house but
something that holds time,
something to forgive us,

as any woman should—
holding her gun naturally as a baby
slung from her body. Love
has nothing to do with that
or it does, but also
wanting to trust something—
also our bodies bare as skinned
rabbits, and the floor cold

sleepless walks through rooms
held in some other world
we've built board by board; the window
open or closed and us still standing
waiting

wanting someone to see us
wanting—something soft as
silk, so maybe we are spiders

where the bed isn't, and all
the pretty ways later we sell
to the world what began
with necessity

after all—this web around us,
plums in the orchards, morning
filling up the glass: something beautiful
in every corner. How can I explain it?

Sarah Winchester Visits The California Midwinter Exposition,
Golden Gate Park, 1894

Surely you did not see the woman dancing
nude at the new aquarium—a thin black veil over
her face, not so unlike your own. The cracking

of chairs as the police came to carry her off—
like a spider in a cup—to somewhere proper.
Were there even fish yet? Were there seals caught

beneath Cliff House—so thick, the papers wrote,
you could shoot them from the veranda if it weren't illegal.
They wrote everything then: back at your farm

you named a hill *Strawberry* for here—invited
the neighborhood girls to its slope to eat
real French ice cream. That woman, surely,

nude by those glass walls, danced tarantella,
trying to survive the bite of her own skin:
just that veil between the gawkers and

grief. At the grand Egyptian revival pavilions,
a ferris wheel of oranges turned by electric
motor. You could stand underneath—watch

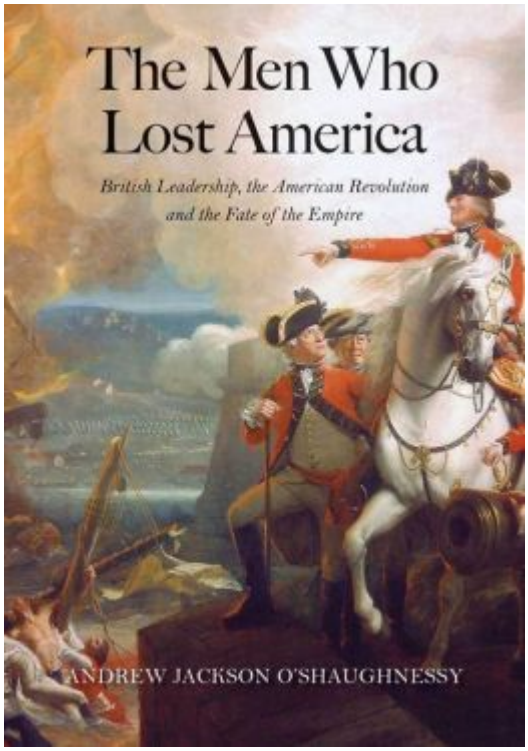
a hundred suns revolve at once: an eccentric
belief that the world stood still here, one room
could hold everywhere. The Court of Honor.

The Prune Knight with his armor: a bloom
of produce bristling from his chest. Sphinxes

with soft plaster noses. Germans—painted

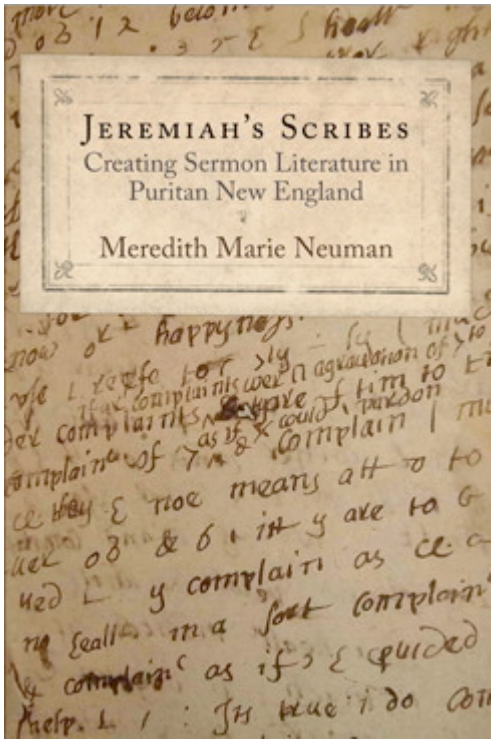
and dressed like Japanese (who refused to be servants)—running with rickshaws by *Dante's Inferno, House of Horrors,* where you could pay—for a short forever—for your past.

The Art of Losing



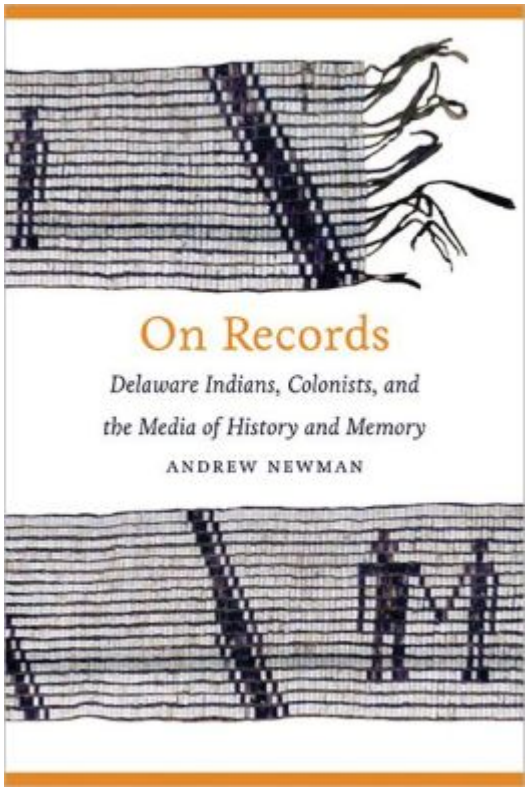
While O'Shaughnessy is always willing to criticize the men he profiles and to highlight the ways in which their personalities shaped their choices for better and worse, his treatments are consistently generous.

Sermon-Ridden



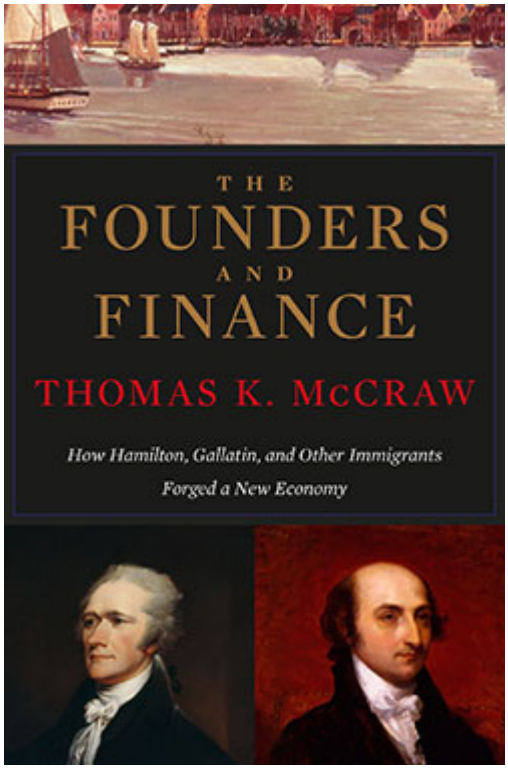
It is this messy interplay between the words of the minister and the experience of the hearer that produces the lived truth or application of the sermon.

The Matter of Records



Native oral traditions tell us not only about Native histories but also about global imperial conquest and can be interpreted as literal accounts of colonial interaction.

Aliens



He [Hamilton] did not trust ordinary American voters.

British Virginia

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.

British Virginia blog: http://wp.vcu.edu/britishvirginia/

British Virginia digital editions: https://digarchive.library.vcu.edu/handle/10156/3585

In 1775, on the eve of the American War of Independence, Patrick Henry delivered his famous "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech at St. John's Church in Richmond, Virginia. Henry's speech, reenacted at St. John's every Sunday afternoon in the summer months, has long been remembered as a central event in the narrative of Virginia's role in the founding of a new nation. However, at Virginia Commonwealth University, a scant two and a half miles from St. John's Church, the *British Virginia* series seeks to complicate this history by drawing renewed attention to the literary connections which bound Virginia to Great Britain before, during, and even after the transition from colony to state in an independent nation.


British Virginia website

Launched this past spring by general editors Joshua Eckhardt and Sarah Hand Meacham, both of Virginia Commonwealth University, *British Virginia* is an open-access, digital, academic publisher dedicated to documents relating to the colony. As a "born-digital" press, *British Virginia* is able to publish smaller texts which would not otherwise be issued as traditional, paper-bound scholarly editions. In this respect, the project of *British Virginia* is similar to initiatives such as *Scholarly Editing*'s series of "small-scale" digital editions. In both cases, the editors use digital publication platforms to draw attention to important texts which were heretofore available only in archival collections or on microfilm.

Although *British Virginia* is a digital resource, it has chosen to follow a traditional textual model in terms of how it presents its editions. Where *Scholarly Editing* focuses on publishing online editions which provide access to multiple versions and editions of a single text, *British Virginia* provides its users with free, downloadable scholarly editions of its texts complete with ISBN numbers. While the former, and many current digital humanities publishing projects, is meant to be viewed online, *British Virginia*'s editions are intended to be downloaded to the user's computer and read offline, or even printed—a welcome feature for those of us who compulsively annotate, underline, and highlight our texts as we read.

There are two parts to the *British Virginia* project. The "front door" of the project, as it were, is the British Virginia blog. Authored by Joshua Eckhardt, the blog is fashioned as a source of information broadly related to the project. So, in addition to the expected information on the series editors and forthcoming publications, the blog contains notices of upcoming conferences ("Place and Preaching, 6-7 September 2013) and contemporary art installations (Xu Bing's Tobacco Project) related to the series. The project blog also contains a prominent link soliciting proposals for future contributions to the *British Virginia* series. As this is a young series, it is to be assumed that the project editors are eager to expand their offerings, and the proposal page casts a wide net by encouraging proposals "for scholarly editions related to colonial Virginia."

As the project just launched, there are still some rough edges to the *British Virginia* blog. While the "People" link lists the editor and advisors of the series, it provides no information about who these people are, a curious omission in a digital publishing enterprise. Also, while the blog seems to feature some interesting images of colonial Virginia documents (hosted by Flickr), the site lacks an easy way for users to navigate to the images as the link for the photo stream is at the bottom of the page next to the ubiquitous "like" button for Facebook. These tiny glitches seem to be natural hiccups in the launching of any major academic or institutional blog and will, no doubt, be addressed in the weeks to come.

Once past the front door, the home of the documents published in the series is the *British Virginia* collection in the Virginia Commonwealth University Digital Archive. Here, you can find the initial editions published by *British Virginia*. As *British Virginia* launched only this past spring, right now this consists of William Symonds's 1609 text *Virginia*, "a sermon preached at White-Chappel in the presence of many, Honorable and Worshipful, the Adventurers and Planters for Virginia." The Symonds sermon, edited by Joshua Eckhardt, is the first in the *British Virginia*'s sub-series "Virginia Company Sermons," a collection of sermons preached to and printed for the Virginia Company of London during the initial years of the colony.

1. Comparison of digital type and photo facsimiles of the Symonds sermon. British Virginia, "Pictorial Glossary," accessed July 8, 2013. http://wp.vcu.edu/britishvirginia/2013/05/10/pictorial-glossary/

While I initially thought that there were currently two Symonds sermons in the *British Virginia* collection, the VCU Digital Archive contains separate entries for two versions of the same sermon: a digital type facsimile and a searchable, photographic facsimile. The type facsimiles, while using a modern type (no long s, greater readability), reproduce original spelling, line breaks, page numbers, signatures, and overall page layout. While the digital type facsimile will meet the needs of the vast majority of the edition's users, specialists and highly motivated readers can consult the photographic facsimile to verify

the accuracy of the type edition (fig 1).

As you can see in figure 1, the type facsimile does an excellent job of reproducing the look and feel of the original sermon, even including the idiosyncratic spacing surrounding punctuation marks in the original text. While both versions are keyword searchable, in practice I think even specialist users will spend most of their time with the type facsimiles due to their greater readability (and, in particular, the heightened contrast provided by black text on a white background).

The use of PDF format as opposed to some sort of embedded viewer may rankle some due to file sizes (the photographic facsimile clocked in at 58 MB) and the limitations of the format (no comparing versions of a text as would be the case with a dynamic web site). But the reliance on PDF documents seems appropriate given that the texts contained in *British Virginia* are presented as digital *editions* of these works, and the PDF files here mimic the finiteness of traditional paper editions. Moreover, the choice to present these documents in PDF format eliminates the need to install browser plug-ins and ensures that the editions in *British Virginia* can be read on a wide variety of platforms including iPads and tablet PCs.

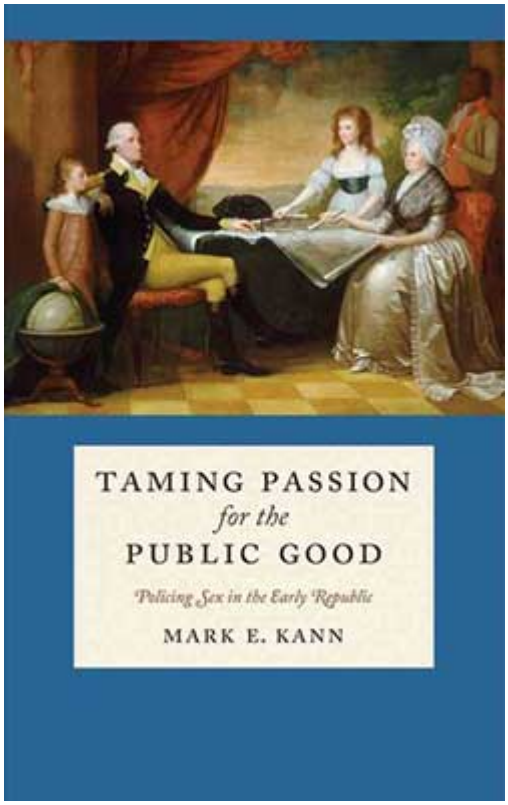
A very welcome feature of the project is the decision to copyright *British Virginia* editions under a Creative Commons (CC) “Attribution-ShareAlike” license. As opposed to the “all rights reserved” model of traditional copyright, CC licenses are “some rights reserved.” In the case of *British Virginia*, users are free to republish and even to modify the texts in the series as long as they attribute the source text to *British Virginia* and license the results under the same CC “Attribution-ShareAlike” license. Moreover, in the introduction, the editors explicitly encourage libraries to catalogue and to download their editions: “[We] simply ask that you help us widen and preserve access to these important sources by re-producing and storing them, whether on hard drives, other discs, or acid-free paper.” This is open-access scholarship at its best and is a model that will hopefully be adopted by more university presses and scholarly journals in the future.

As the documents in *British Virginia* are at their core scholarly editions, each is prefaced by an editor’s introduction. In the case of the Symonds sermon, both the type and the facsimile editions contain Joshua Eckhardt’s thorough introduction to the *British Virginia* project as a whole, the “Virginia Company Sermons” sub-series, and the Symonds sermon in particular. This is a traditional scholarly introduction: well-researched, heavily footnoted, and concluding with a technical bibliographic description of the documents consulted in the preparation of the edition.

The *British Virginia* series represents an ideal venue for re-examining the tangled ties between England and one of its most important colonies. In addition to the Virginia Company sermons, forthcoming editions will include the letters of Elizabeth Jacqueline Ambler (1765-1847), edited by Sarah Hand

Meacham, and a collection of Virginia slave narratives, edited by Katherine Clay Bassard. That this series of well-edited, scholarly editions is licensed under a Creative Commons license and made freely available to any and all users will serve, we can hope, as a model to future digital presses. *British Virginia* promises to be a useful resource for researchers and students of Virginia, colonial history, and transatlantic relations during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

Sex, Patriarchy, and the Liberal State



Why did authorities feel the need to apply police powers to sex?