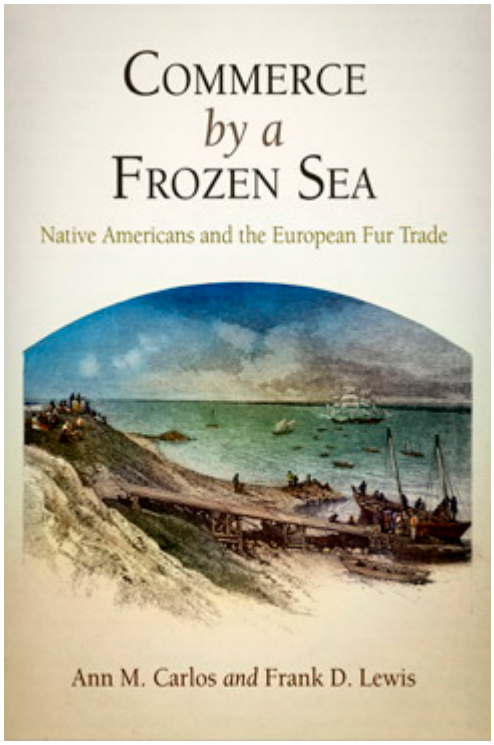
For the Want of a Good Hat



At the heart of *Commerce by a Frozen Sea* is the beaver hat, which by the seventeenth century had become an essential part of European men's fashion. With a high content of beaver "wool," a wet hat would hold its shape. Wet or dry, it was stronger, warmer and more lightweight than its cloth counterpart. Initially, all beaver hats available on the European market were made from European beaver by Russian hatters who had created the complicated felting technique to separate the wool hair from the longer guard hairs on the pelt. When England and France finally developed their own hatters by the early seventeenth century, they relied heavily on North American beaver, which came initially in two types: parchment (sundried skins) and coat (which had been used as clothing by Indians for about a year before being traded). The latter was preferred by hatters since the normal wear process caused the guard hairs to fall out naturally, requiring less work to harvest the wool. When combined, parchment and coat beaver created a high-end hat. (Hudson Bay region beavers produced particularly exceptional pelts due to the subarctic winters.) The ensuing demand for beaver motivated both the French and the English to devote considerable resources to trading with Indians for the pelt.

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, Indians had neither the tools nor the desire to overhunt beaver, which only served as a food source during times of hardship or feasts.

Economists Ann Carlos and Frank Lewis use this demand for beaver to examine trade between the Cree and Assiniboin Indians who resided in what is now Canada and Britain's Hudson Bay Company (which covers much of present-day Manitoba,

Saskatchewan, and Alberta). Focusing on the Hudson Bay region reveals a different fur trade than the one described by other scholars. As Carlos and Lewis observe, due to the "great distance involved, France, England, and Indian peoples in the Bay region interacted to a large extent outside the political forces that played out in the lower thirteen colonies and New France" (3). Because Indians were the sole purveyors of pelts in Hudson Bay, trading beaver for a host of consumer goods, Carlos and Lewis illuminate natives not just as producers but also as consumers.

The authors draw their evidence from the rich collection of letters, post journals, and account books between the post managers on the Hudson Bay and the firm's head office in London. Post managers exchanged directly with Indians, set prices, and made copious notes on Indian consumption preferences of European goods which they reported in turn to London. Carlos and Lewis found ten to twenty types of furs provided by Indians and sixty to seventy types of consumer goods sold by the company in these records. Company employees worked from the "official standard," which was the company price list with all goods valued by the region's monetary unit: "made beaver." This facilitated trade during the busy season and gave post employees a base value to work from. There was some leeway as company trading posts closer to French posts had to keep their prices competitive, although any deviation had to be explained to London in the post manager's yearly report.

Like earlier scholars, including Calvin Martin (*Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade*) and Shepard Krech III (*The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*), Carlos and Lewis ask why Indians, who were in sole control of the beaver population, chose to overhunt beaver despite the fact that this limited their access to consumer goods in the long run. Carlos and Lewis conclude that prior to the arrival of the Europeans, Indians had neither the tools (such as ice chisels and twine) nor the desire to overhunt beaver, which only served as a food source during times of hardship or feasts (the tail was a delicacy). But once they had access to luxury goods such as tobacco, beads, lace, jewelry and vermillion, the Indians took advantage of high fur prices to purchase these items, which raised their standard of living. This self-defeating desire to consume was one major reason for the decline in the beaver population.

Nonetheless, as long as there were beaver pelts to trade, Indians had a significant degree of leverage as consumers. With both France and England in the region, Indians could play the two powers off one another, and trade goods had to be satisfactory. Post managers tried with various levels of success to make officials in London understand what goods met Indian demands. For example, knives and guns turned brittle and broke in the subarctic climate if the metal was even slightly flawed. Post correspondence shows that Indians were so attuned to the quality of the metal goods they traded for, rather than what color the handles were, that London company officials eventually sent gunsmiths to the posts to repair faulty guns rather than shipping the broken ones back.

Consumer goods fell into distinct categories. “Guns were the highest-priced item,” report Carlos and Lewis, and “accounted for seventy to eighty percent of [Indian] expenditure on producer goods” (86). Household goods such as kettles, blankets, knives and awls accounted for ten percent (falling to just over five percent over the course of their study). Luxury goods, which Carson and Lewis divide into three categories, made up the rest: “tobacco and related goods; alcohol and related goods; and other luxuries, including beads, cloth, lace, jewelry, and vermillion among many others” (87). By far the most frequently purchased luxury item was tobacco, which Carlos and Lewis note has been grossly overlooked by other scholars. In contrast, the primary product Indians consumed was never alcohol. At the height of alcohol consumption, around 1760, Bay records show that Indians were still drinking far less than European colonists and Continentals: “at most four two-ounce drinks per person for the entire year” at a time when colonists were drinking 279 two-ounce drinks (93). As fur prices rose, household and producer goods remained steady but Indian purchases of luxury goods increased.

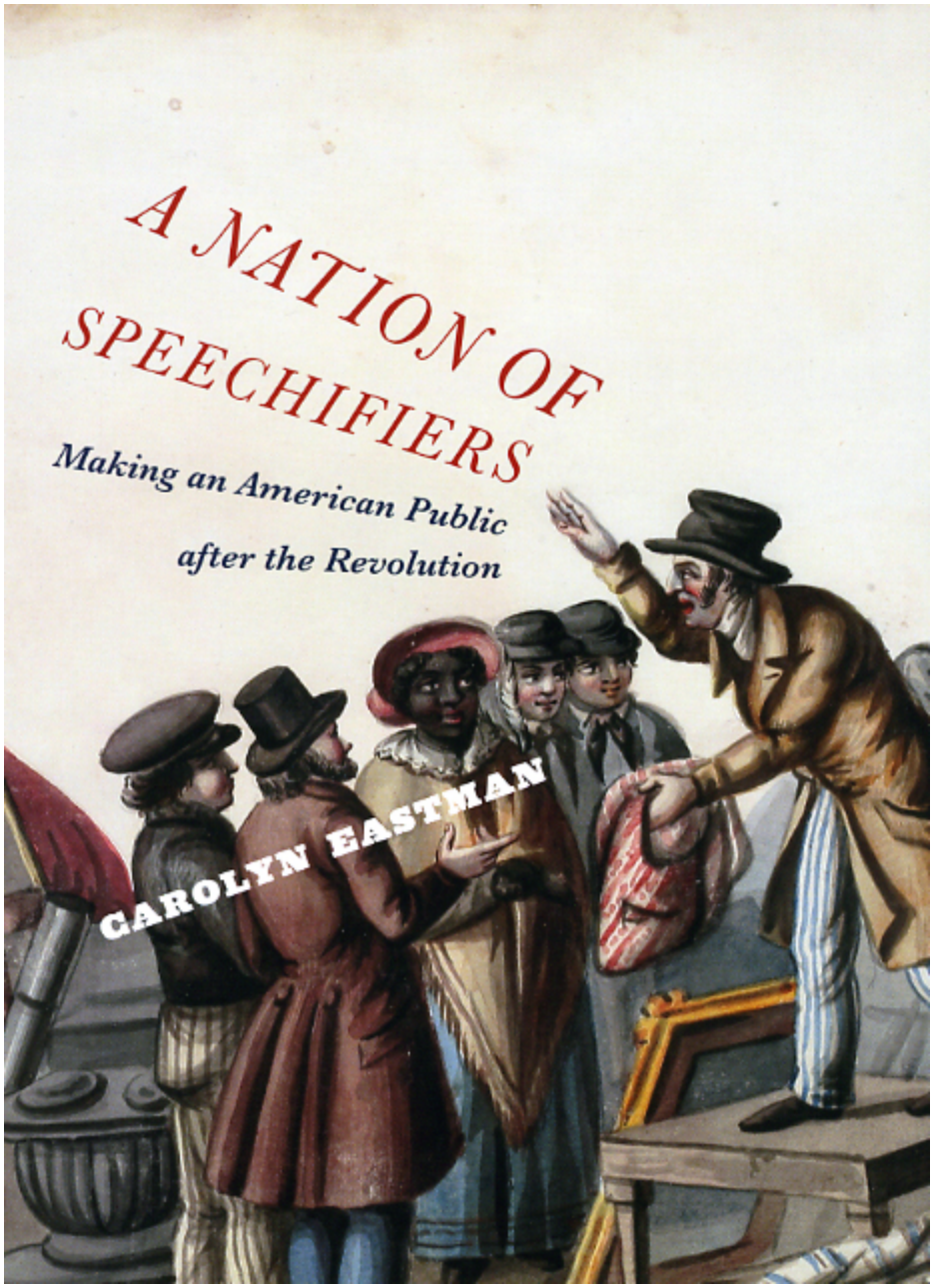
But the penchant for luxury goods cannot entirely explain the decline of the beaver population. Overhunting, Carlos and Lewis argue, was also a function of the fact that beaver were a “common-pool resource,” meaning that it was impossible to prevent others from trapping the beaver. Tribes did not control the beaver population. Moreover, in hard times, Indians would hunt the beaver for food because of their desire to feed those in need. Still, most ended up being traded to the Europeans, and between 1700 and 1763, 2.75 million beaver pelts were received at Hudson Bay Company posts alone—in addition to those received at other British colonial or French posts.

An examination of the consumer goods in Indian homes allows Carson and Lewis to compare Indian and European standards of living and consumption practices. Their findings are striking: “The commodities—beads, combs, magnifying glasses, looking glasses or mirrors, sashes, scissors, thimbles, and shoes—mirror the inventories of both European and colonial households” (105). The authors conclude that mid-eighteenth century Indians were materially equal to low-income English households, although their comparison shows that Indians had better diet and clothing than Europeans, but that Europeans had better housing (due in large part to its durability) and consumed more luxury goods, especially alcohol. In their behavior as consumers and laborers they were not that unlike industrious workers in Europe—ultimately enticed to work harder to purchase luxury goods.

The economic focus of this work is at once its greatest strength and greatest weakness. On the one hand, *Commerce by a Frozen Sea* allows us to see the fur trade in a new light with Indians as active and vocal consumers at its center. By making use of the company’s account books and extrapolating data based on those figures, it provides a detailed look at the fur trade that is absent from social and cultural views of the fur trade (such as Jennifer Brown’s *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* and Sylvia Van Kirk’s *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870*). It provides

new explanations for overhunting beaver which challenge the notion of Indians as better ecological managers than Europeans, and gives concrete figures to prove alcohol was not the dominant European good Indians consumed. The detailed look at the types of commodities and their values, and the comparisons to European households, make this a valuable resource as historians continue to make sense of this period. However, it is also truly an economic history, which can make for a cumbersome read. While the authors usually explain jargon, the many formulas and charts scattered throughout the chapters would probably daunt undergraduates. The lack of narrative tends to make the people disappear, which is odd given that this work is fundamentally about human agency. The authors are right that the isolation of the Hudson Bay region allows us to see Euro-Indian interaction in a way that is normally hidden by politics, violence and middlemen. However, such isolation also means that the Bay is likely the exception to the rule rather than representative of the fur trade as a whole. They leave it to the reader to do additional reading to compare the experiences in the Bay to posts elsewhere. However, since this work joins a rich literature on the fur trade, such a comparison is not difficult.

Speaking and Listening



The Marquis de Lafayette visited Lexington, Kentucky, in May 1825 as part of his triumphal tour of the United States, during which the American people expressed a massive outpouring of love and gratitude for the old hero and his sacrifices in the American Revolution. While in Lexington, Lafayette paid a visit to the Lafayette Female Academy, recently renamed in his honor, where a committee of the academy's pupils greeted him in front of a large crowd. Mary McIntosh and Maria Brown Duncan each delivered an oration to the crowd and to Lafayette to welcome him on behalf of "Kentucky's band of PATRIOT DAUGHTERS." Brown Duncan assured the crowd that, even though young women were "incapacitated from engaging in the active concerns of the government," they were more than able to perform the civic duty of paying tribute to the visiting hero. After the ceremony, the girls gave Lafayette beautifully hand-written copies of their speeches, which were later published as a pamphlet.

Eastman brings new attention to the role of oratory, and the interaction between speechmaking and print culture, in the building of the American public between the 1790s and the 1830s.

This extraordinary occasion highlights important points about oratory and speech-making in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. McIntosh and Brown Duncan were exceptional in being chosen to deliver speeches to the distinguished hero, Lafayette. But their speeches also followed in an established tradition of young women speaking at academic exhibitions in the early republic. The number of girls who spoke at public occasions was declining by the 1820s, but McIntosh and Brown Duncan's presentations to Lafayette illustrate that his traveling companion, the British author Frances Wright, was certainly not the first woman to declaim publicly in the United States when she was attacked for her own controversial speaking tour in 1828 and 1829.

Carolyn Eastman underplays ceremonial occasions such as Lafayette's tour in her new book, but her scholarship offers a number of thought-provoking insights that can help us to understand the importance of such oratory in the early republic. Recently, many scholars have probed how "the public" constituted itself in the United States in the decades following the Revolution by participating in festive culture, reading books and newspapers, commemorating the Revolutionary War, attending religious revivals, admiring portraits of esteemed leaders, and taking part in partisan political organizations and rituals. Eastman brings new attention to the role of oratory, and the interaction between speechmaking and print culture, in the building of the American public between the 1790s and the 1830s.

Eastman seeks to use the history of popular oratory to show how "nonelites" used speeches and print to include themselves in a collective public that defined American national identity in the early republic. She wants "to demonstrate the broad political import of speeches and writings by ordinary people within the context of constructing an American public," by which she means not only the "public sphere" as defined by Jürgen Habermas, but also some more specific forms of collective self-understanding (5). Race, class, and especially gender play important roles in Eastman's analysis of the ways that giving, listening to, and printing speeches helped people who were outside of power define themselves as part of "a public and eventually to identify as national citizens" (4).

Eastman takes a creative approach to her topic. In the first half of the book, she examines how elocutionary education underwent a shift toward more nationalistic themes after 1810; how the "rise and fall" of girls' public oratory first created and then destroyed a possible female "counterpublic"; and how the frequent repetition of Indian speeches created nationalist, white identities in school children and helped to generate the trope of the "vanishing Indian" in American culture and politics. In the second half, Eastman examines case studies that she sets up as representative of important debates over definitions of "the public" in the early republic. She uncovers

how print and oratory sometimes reinforced one another and sometimes clashed as she examines the magazine writings of the New York Calliopean Society, the speeches and publications of protesting journeymen printers, and the clashes between Frances Wright and newspaper publishers in the late 1820s.

Along the way, Eastman makes several significant points. Her examination of schoolbooks is thought-provoking, and she juxtaposes insights about school curricula with the contents of popular instructional speeches in a clever way to demonstrate how "during the second half of the early republic, oratory and print media reimagined the public order—evoking schoolchildren who uncritically admired their leaders, girls who embraced their domestic and nonpolitical roles, and Indians worthy primarily of pity" (111). The chapter on Frances Wright offers an extremely important corrective to historiography that claims Wright was a trailblazer because women were prohibited from speaking in public, especially to "mixed audiences," before her 1820s speaking tour.

Eastman creatively shows how speaking, listening, publishing, and reading were intertwined, and her readers will come away with a new appreciation for the auditory dimensions of identity formation. While the majority of her evidence comes from the northeast, Eastman's approach to analyzing oratory does offer a significant addition to the study of national identity. Many scholars have focused on speeches by famous Americans and their audiences, but Eastman provides the tools to think about those audiences giving speeches of their own.

Eastman argues that "rather than focusing on canonical texts or prominent authors, *A Nation of Speechifiers* examines a profusion of oratory and writing by nonelites and their active uses of the media" (5). Eastman does not do enough to convince the reader that the category of "nonelites" can apply equally to all of her subjects. Surely all students at girls academies were disenfranchised by their sex, but many came from resolutely wealthy "elite" families and would go on to exercise a large measure of societal influence. It is not clear what interests the middle-class clerks and businessmen who joined the Calliopean Society shared with the struggling journeymen printers—especially since the rising market economy offered each group opposing opportunities for upward mobility. Frances Wright positioned herself outside mainstream culture as a radical utopian reformer and female activist, but was she truly "nonelite?" Eastman never discusses Wright's association with Lafayette, her visit to the U.S. Congress, or her discourse with many prominent authors and politicians. Eastman does helpfully point us to how all of her examined groups and individuals used oratory to position themselves, but she does not convince us that they necessarily shared a common or "nonelite" sense of identity.

Eastman's book, and her claim that various groups used oratory and print to think of themselves as citizens, would be strengthened by more attention to how these groups interacted with elites, even if she wants to hold on to the idea that her subjects were all firmly outside that category themselves. More discussion of how printers' speeches and toasts resonated with Jeffersonian

themes or how girls' speeches stood apart from politicians' prescriptions for gendered behavior would probably strengthen Eastman's claim for the importance of these group's self-perceptions. The ceremony with the Lafayette Female Academy students and the Marquis de Lafayette was certainly not the only occasion when young women such as those studied by Eastman interacted with powerful men in real and symbolic ways that must have influenced their own sense of politics and citizenship.

Eastman offers her voice to the growing number of scholars who helpfully urge us to recognize how those who were outside of power helped to construct public culture and define the issues of the day during the early republic. But her work also reminds us that perhaps a history that includes both elites and "nonelites" will ultimately offer the fullest picture of "the public." In the meantime, readers will happily finish Eastman's book with a renewed appreciation for oratory in the early republic.

Measuring Literature: Digital Humanities, Behavioral Economics, and the Problem of Data in Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-first Century*

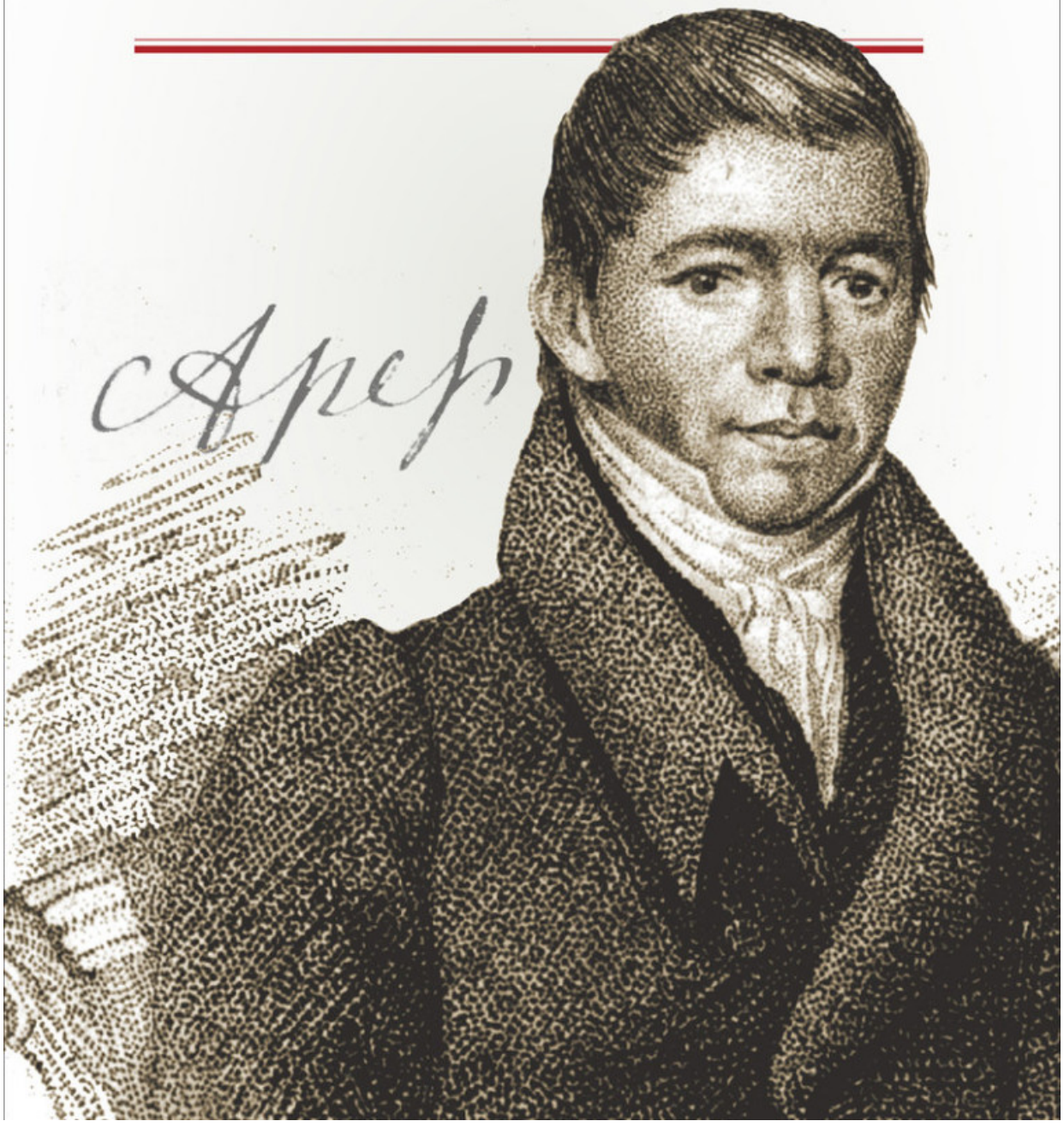


As a literary scholar, I think we need to reevaluate . . . enthusiasm about Piketty’s use of literature as data.

Introducing the Life of an Early Native Writer to a Wider Audience

Philip F. Gura

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM APESS, PEQUOT



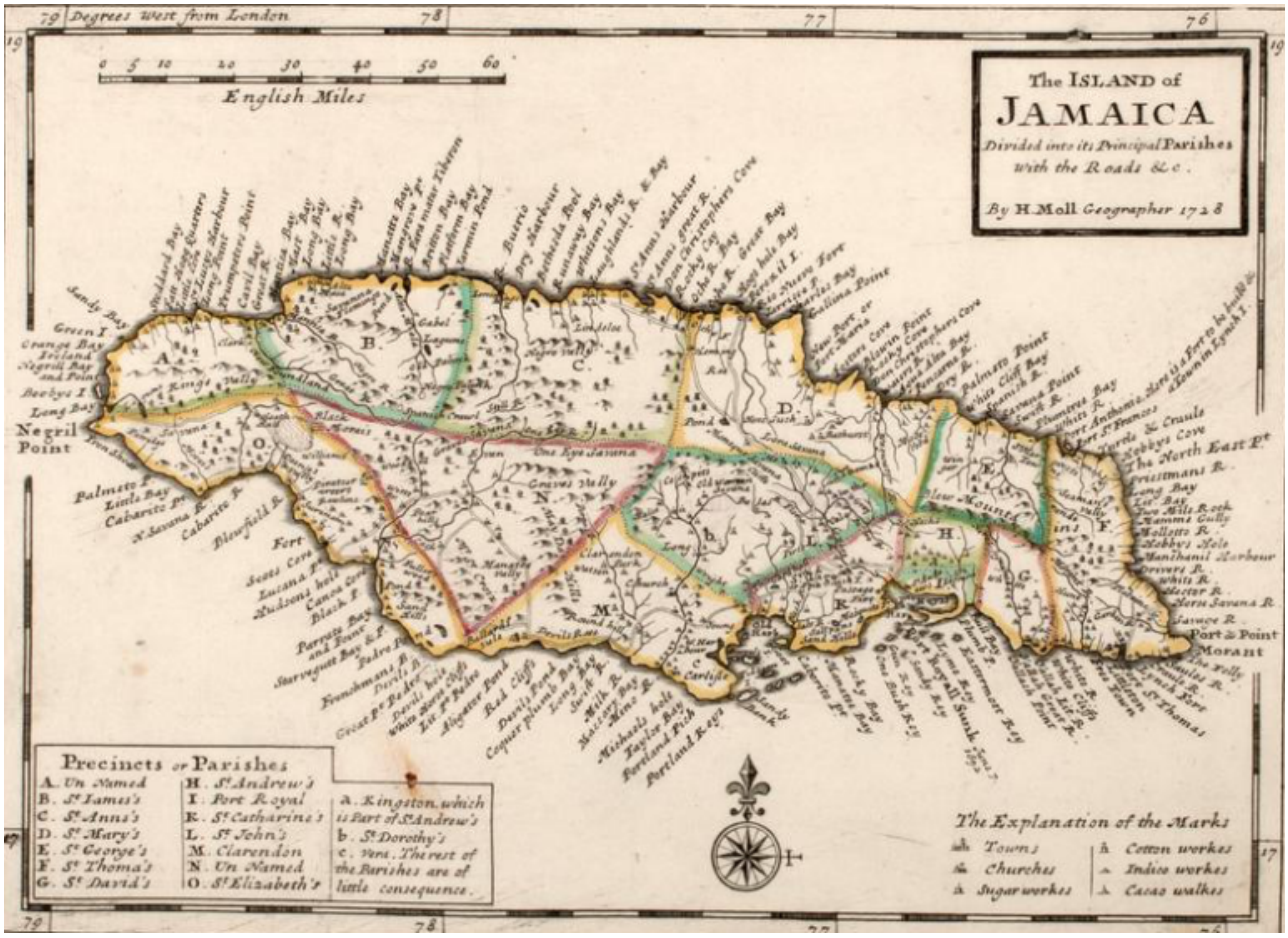
Looking for connections between various reform movements, rather than examining them as distinct entities, can reveal surprising convergences.

Reframing Abolition: African Americans and Calls to End Slavery in Revolutionary Massachusetts



Common-place talks with Christopher Cameron, author of To Plead Their Own Cause, about the chronology of abolition, the role of religion in the movement, and the importance of African-American voices in intellectual history.

Capital in the Eighteenth Century



If Piketty had turned to literary writing before Austen, he would have found a world teeming with the world-creating energies of overseas trade that economic historians take very seriously.

[“The total market value of everything owned”: Piketty and the Presuppositions of Political Economy]



Piketty invites us to take seriously the forms of value discussed and represented in literary texts, and to call into question the tendency to treat everything in purely quantitative economic terms.

Pourquoi Piketty? French Enlightenment and the American Reception of *Capital*

in the Twenty-First Century



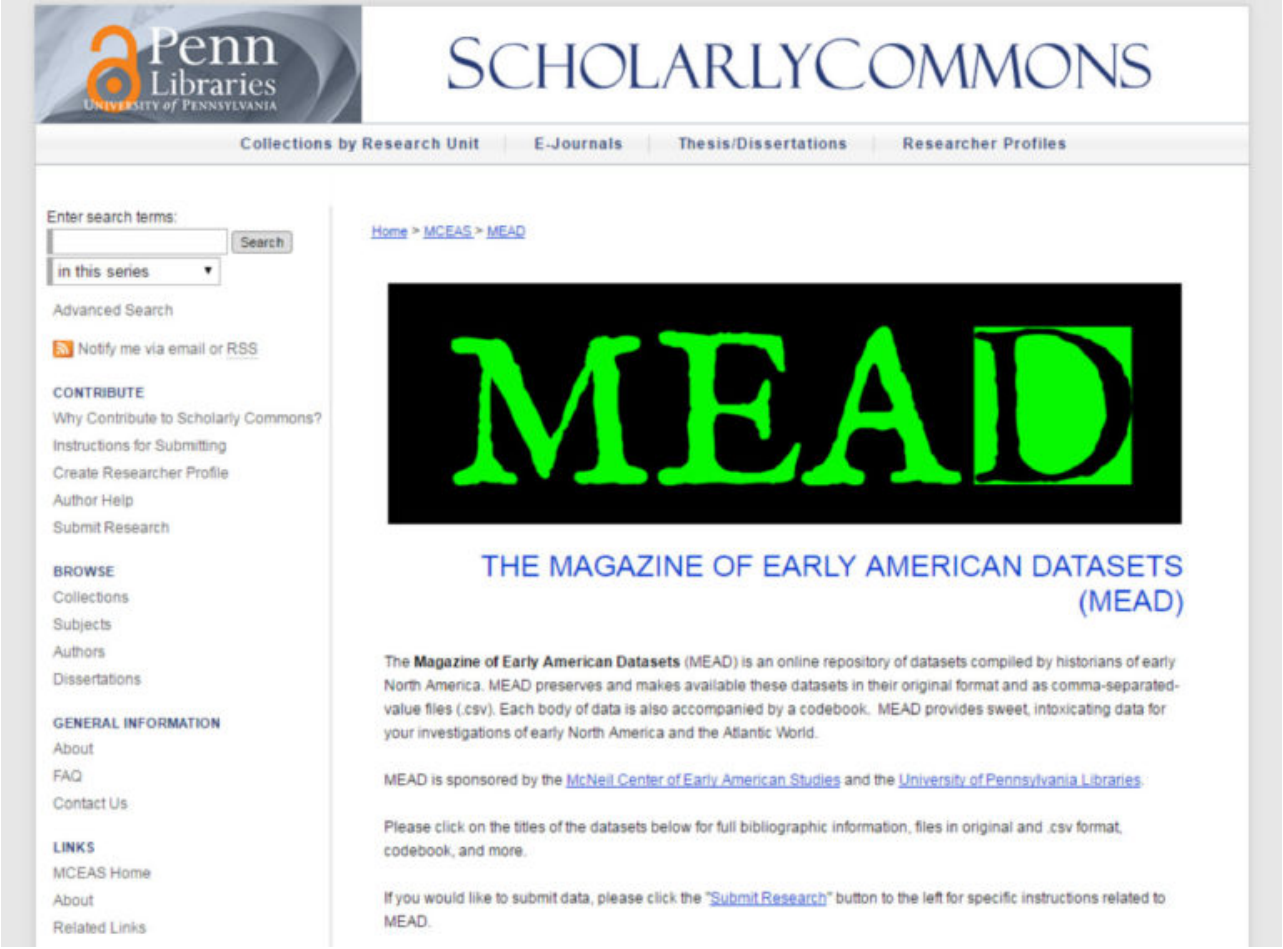
Piketty draws attention to the mystique surrounding economics, encapsulated in the notion that it is far too complex for the non-specialist to understand.

Future by Numbers



To speak of the imperfection and incompleteness of numerical data is, for Piketty, a way of speaking about the work of the economist.

Constructing the Magazine of Early American Datasets (MEAD): An Invitation to Share and Use Data about Early America



As a profession, we are experiencing a generational shift, and much of the data created several decades ago has already been lost.