

## **“None Need Think Their Sympathy Wasted”**



Presented as part of the Special Literature Issue

While I don't ask students to assess whether Anne Bradstreet's or Thomas Shepard's beliefs are closer to their own, early Americanists do often have allegiances to authors and texts.

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## **Why We Need a New History of Exploration: Lewis and Clark, Alexander von Humboldt, and the explorer in American culture**



In the 1820s, the idea of the traveler was in flux, a category that had come to encompass every itinerant from Joseph Banks, science officer of the Endeavour, to British lads on vacation.

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## Hard Facts for Hard Times: Social knowledge and social crisis in the nineteenth century



Nineteenth century social and economic knowledge at once functioned as an instrument of capitalism while also serving as a tool for minimizing capitalism's most disturbing consequences.

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## [The Rich Diversity of the Edge](#)

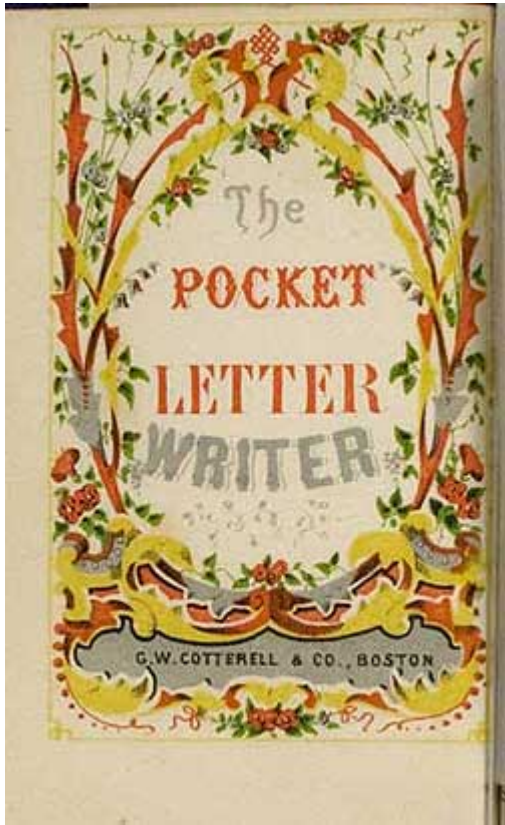




The edge between a forest and a field, with its mixture of habitats, can also host a rich diversity of species. Some are drawn to and thrive on the edge—generalists such as raccoons and coyotes—while other species cannot survive in or even enter the edge.

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## [Reading Our E-mail](#)



It has been several decades since large numbers of Americans used the U.S. mail for the majority of their long-distance communications or for casual daily contact with nearby friends and family.

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## Creative Disorientation: The Challenges of Studying, and Teaching, Atlantic World History



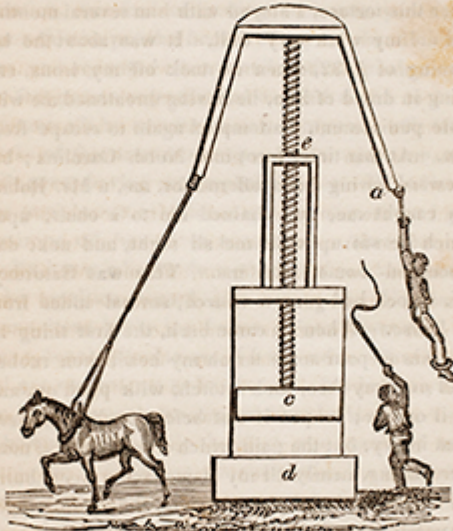
How should the course move forward, and what should the storyline be?

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## Diagram of a Fugitive Slave Narrative



top of the water. It was as much as they could do to hold me by the chain, the current being very strong. They then took me home, flogged me, put extra irons on my neck and feet, and put me under the driver, with more work than ever I had before. He did not flog me so severely as before, but continued it every day. Among the instruments of torture employed, I here describe one:—



This is a machine used for packing and pressing cotton. By it he hung me up by the hands at letter *a*, a horse moving round the screw *e*, and carrying

An interesting close-reading of an illustration from Moses Roper's slave narrative.

## [The German Love Affair with American Indians: Rudolf Cronau's Epiphany](#)



By the turn of the twentieth century, thinking about American Indians had become integral to German culture.

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## **Roundtable on TURN: Washington's Spies** **– Introduction: Truth Versus Accuracy**





## A Historical Turn for the Better, or Worse?

Scholars of early America have a complicated relationship with historical movies and television shows. While popular dramas with mass audiences have the potential to kindle wide interest in a historical period, Hollywood history productions are often glaringly inaccurate, presenting a glamorized and heavily distorted version of crucial periods such as the Civil War and the American Revolution.

Of course, not all historical dramas are created equal. At one end of the spectrum are unabashed historical fantasies like *Sleepy Hollow* and *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*; productions with no expectation of being taken as serious history by anyone. At the opposite end are conscientiously produced “docudramas” like HBO’s *John Adams* that stay palpably close to the historical record.

Most historical dramas fall somewhere in the middle of those two extremes, including AMC’s recent television series *Turn: Washington’s Spies*.

Historical fiction, for better or worse, can play a huge role in shaping popular historical memory.

*Turn*, which revolves around British and colonial spycraft during the Revolutionary War, was aggressively promoted as a meticulously researched show before its premiere in April 2014. Advertisements described it as “the true story of America’s first spy ring.” But as Season 1 unfolded, viewers discovered that *Turn* placed as low a priority on staying true to documented facts as most other historical dramas. It quickly became a prime target in the perennial debate over the importance of accuracy in historical film.

Last February, before the debut of *Turn*’s second season, a group of the show’s writers, producers, and cast members assembled before a large crowd at the College of William and Mary for a discussion (viewable in its entirety [here](#)) of the differences between academic history and historical drama. There, they argued that the altered history portrayed in *Turn* represented an “authenticity” and even a form of “truth” that transcended factual accuracy.

Do the virtues of inaccurate historical films outweigh their vices? How much weight should accuracy have in our evaluation of historical film? Most importantly, are there historical narrative truths that supersede factual accuracy?

Historical fiction, for better or worse, can play a huge role in shaping popular historical memory, and early American scholars ought to help frame the discussions surrounding shows like *Turn*. In this double review, historian Cole Jones and social studies education professor Jeremy Stoddard weigh in on this new turn in historical interpretation.

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**[Redeeming the Almanac: Learning to Appreciate the iPhone of Early America](#)**

