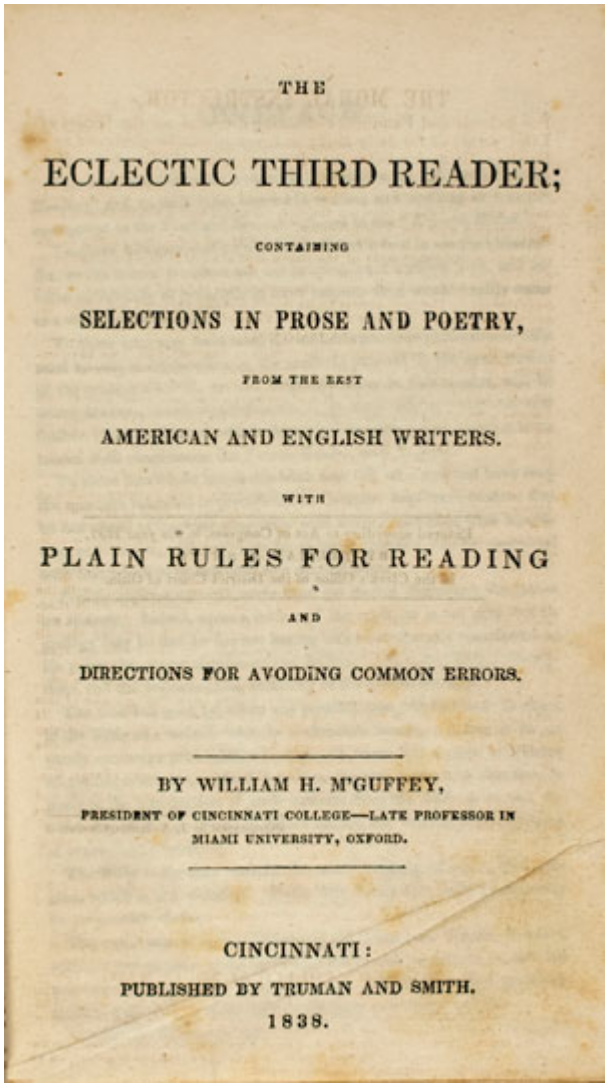
Closing the Books



THE

ECLECTIC THIRD READER;

CONTAINING

SELECTIONS IN PROSE AND POETRY,

FROM THE BEST

AMERICAN AND ENGLISH WRITERS.

WITH

PLAIN RULES FOR READING

AND

DIRECTIONS FOR AVOIDING COMMON ERRORS.

BY WILLIAM H. M'GUFFEY,

PRESIDENT OF CINCINNATI COLLEGE—LATE PROFESSOR IN MIAMI UNIVERSITY, OXFORD.

CINCINNATI:

PUBLISHED BY TRUMAN AND SMITH.

1838.

One can readily understand the ongoing resistance to e-book readers like the Kindle. Printed books are not only a marvelous technology in their own right but are rich with lifelong associations… [But textbooks] are rarely regarded as anything other than databases.

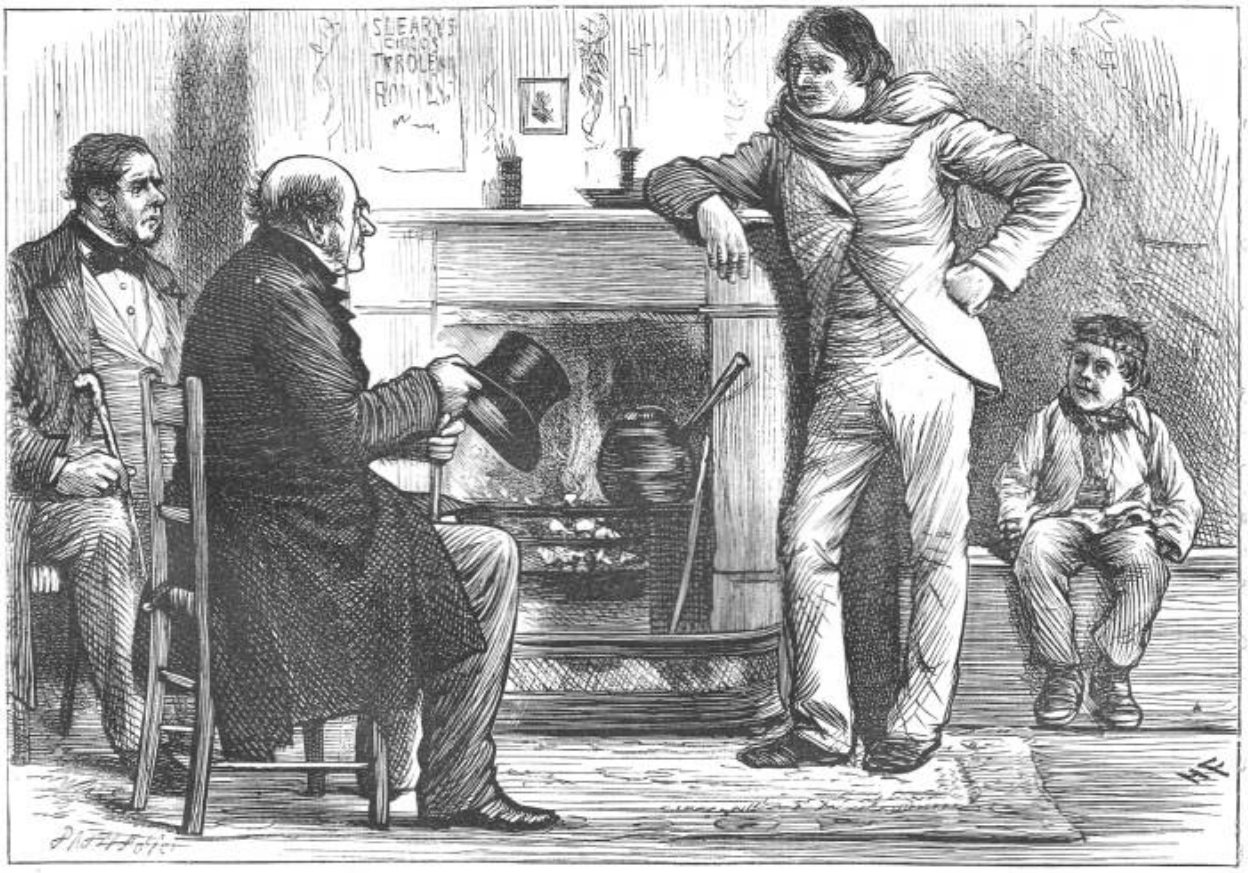
The Founding Fathers and their Dysfunctional Families: The American

Revolution on the silver screen



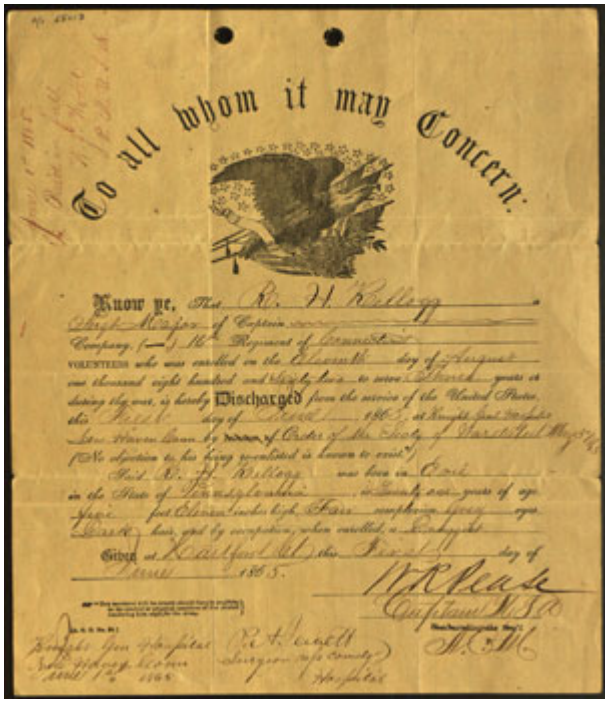
The difficulty of making a good American Revolution movie has something to do with the challenge of finding a plot for the Revolution that can be arranged in the form of a family drama.

The Best of Times and the Worst of Times: Introduction to the “Hard Times” issue



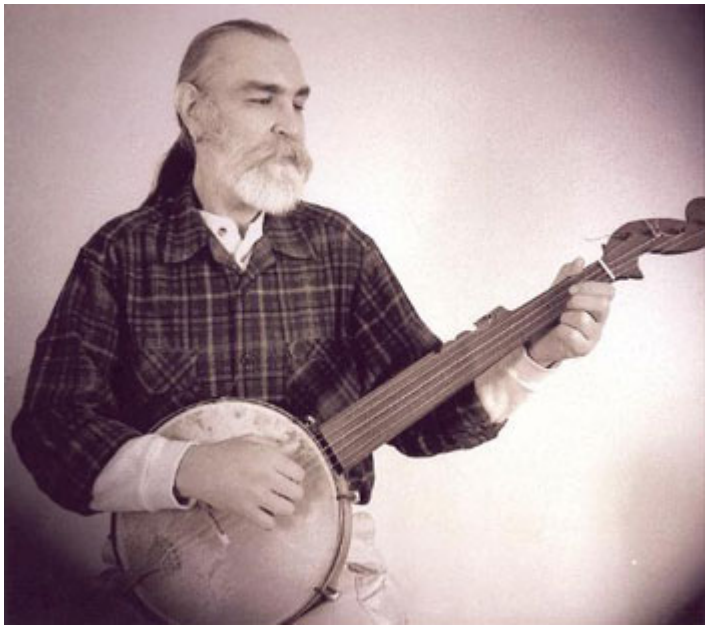
The life of the poor … is saturated with market logic, a logic experienced as the perpetual loss of one’s possessions to the anonymous forces of greater purchasing power.

Speed Reading in the Archives



Can less produce more?

Performing Early American Fiddle Tunes



Christian Wig playing the banjo. Photo courtesy of Christian Wig Ensembles.

Having been involved in different levels of reenacting for 30 years, from the

French and Indian War to the Western fur trade era, my concern for greater authenticity has grown. In my early days of entertaining with an old time band at pre-1840 rendezvous, we never questioned our music, being a mixture of popular songs of string bands from the 1930s and fiddle tunes from anywhere. When the band dissolved and my interest deepened, I began to notice the absence of period music at these historical events. Here were some of the most dedicated proponents of period accuracy in everything from clothing to accouterments, yet not the music. To be sure, there were some trained musicians playing period violin compositions from the sheet music of the day, a necessary component of period accuracy. But my focus has been on vernacular tunes played by untrained fiddlers who had an intuitive knowledge of their tunes and traditions. So for the past 10 years I have studied, recorded, and performed archaic fiddle styles of early American fiddlers from the upper South. These were among the tunes that accompanied westward expansion.

One challenge to this approach is choosing which fiddle to use to recreate tunes of earlier time periods. All fiddles before the early 1900s had gut strings. Fiddles before the American Revolution were baroque instruments; fiddles from that time up to the Civil War were more modern looking, yet still had a shorter neck. In my days with the band, I had only one fiddle and didn't know the history. Today I must limit the number of fiddles I take to a performance and trade some period accuracy for an archaic feel.

Christian Wig with his fiddle. Photo courtesy of Christian Wig Ensembles

A further hurdle is the choice of tunes. Many are easily traced back to the Civil War. But for my time periods before 1840, I consult several printed sources. *Knauff's Virginia Reels,* published in 1839, is a series of forty fiddle tunes collected in eastern Virginia and arranged for pianoforte.Then from the Cumberland Gap of western Virginia comes the *Hamblen Collection* of fiddle tunes from the early 1800s as played by David R. Hamblen (1809-1893) and son Williamson (1848-1920), arranged and copied by grandson A. Porter (1875-1958). Of the 700 tunes said to have been known by David R., only twenty-two are transcribed, along with fifteen from Williamson. I also seek recorded sources from the Library of Congress and other field recordings whose subject matter and style suggest an early provenance.

We will never know exactly how the fiddling forefathers sounded. But by listening to extant recordings of senior source fiddlers who can trace their tunes and playing styles back to a time before radio, before the minstrel stage, before modern notions of pitch, timing, and tonality, we can get significant clues to the sounds of those early fiddlers. For example, Emmett Lundy, a North Carolina fiddler born in 1864, was recorded for the Library of Congress in 1941. He learned many of his tunes from Green Leonard, born in 1810. He is but one of many from whom we get a concept of early playing styles. As re-mastering techniques improve, more old recordings are released for those

on the quest for the sounds and tunes of those early fiddlers.

Visit Christian Wig's website.

Sound files:

"Gaston," Christian Wig, fiddle, Whitt Mead, banjo. Track from *Chadwell's Station* (2008). Courtesy of Christian Wig Ensembles.

"Pompey Ran Away," Christian Wig, banjo. Track from *Chadwell's Station* (2008). Courtesy of Christian Wig Ensembles.

"Betty Baker," Christian Wig, fiddle, Mark Ward, banjo. Track from *Come Back Boys & Feed the Horses* (2011). Courtesy of Christian Wig Ensembles.

"Cluck Old Hen," Christian Wig, banjo. Track from *Come Back Boys & Feed the Horses* (2011). Courtesy of Christian Wig Ensembles.

"Pride of America," Christian Wig, fiddle. Track from *Chadwell's Station* (2008). Courtesy of Christian Wig Ensembles.

This article originally appeared in issue 13.2 (Winter, 2013).

Partners in Time



Dancers and musicians, who work primarily with physical knowledge and sensation, perceive jigs differently than historians who rely on written evidence.

Revolution Reborn



To ask whether a revolution is a civil war narrows the topic considerably, forcing us to focus on the war itself, the violent and more troubling part of the story.

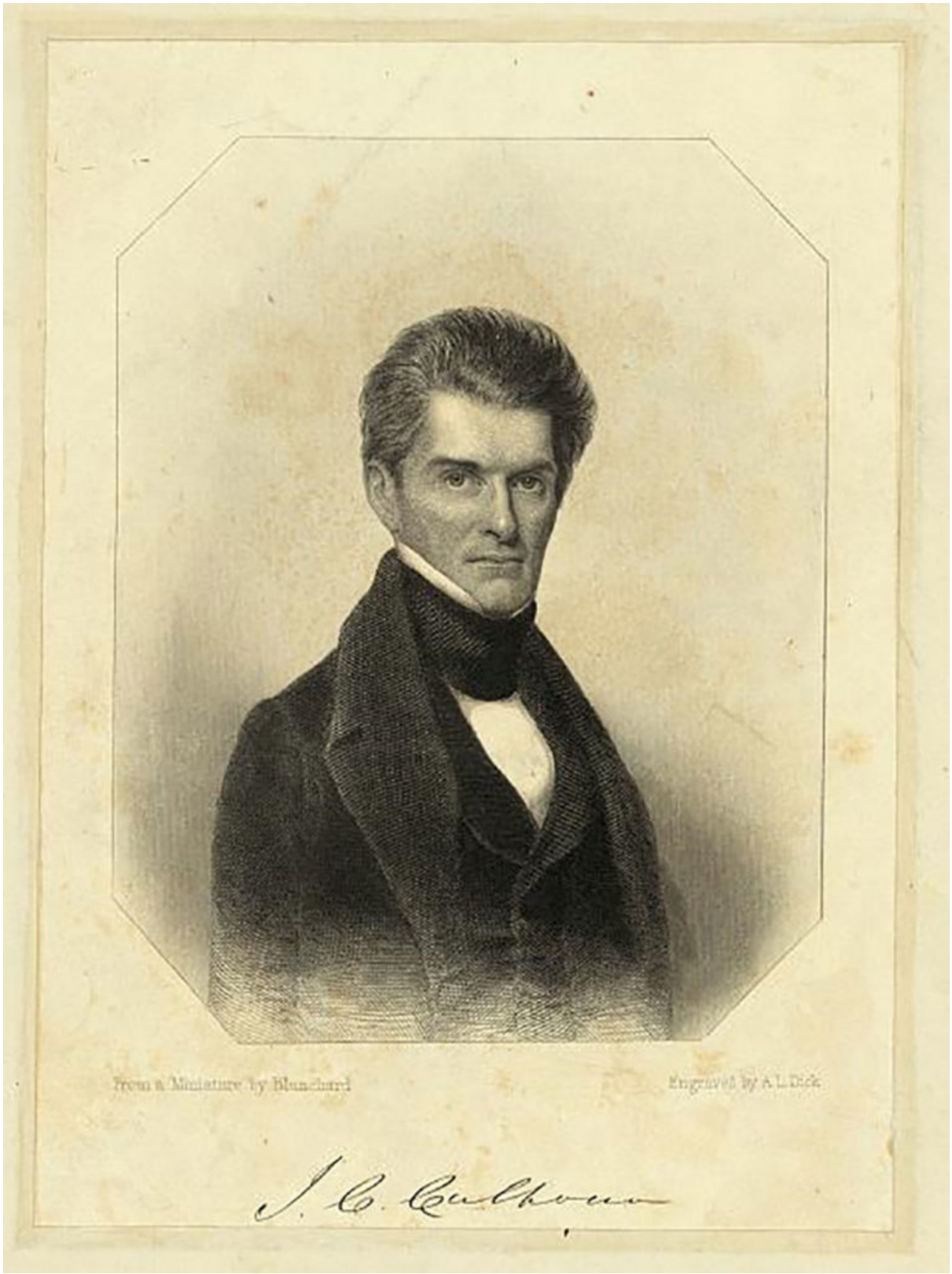
Engaging Urban Panoramas



Presented as part of the Special Issue: “Revolution in Print: Graphics in Nineteenth-Century America”

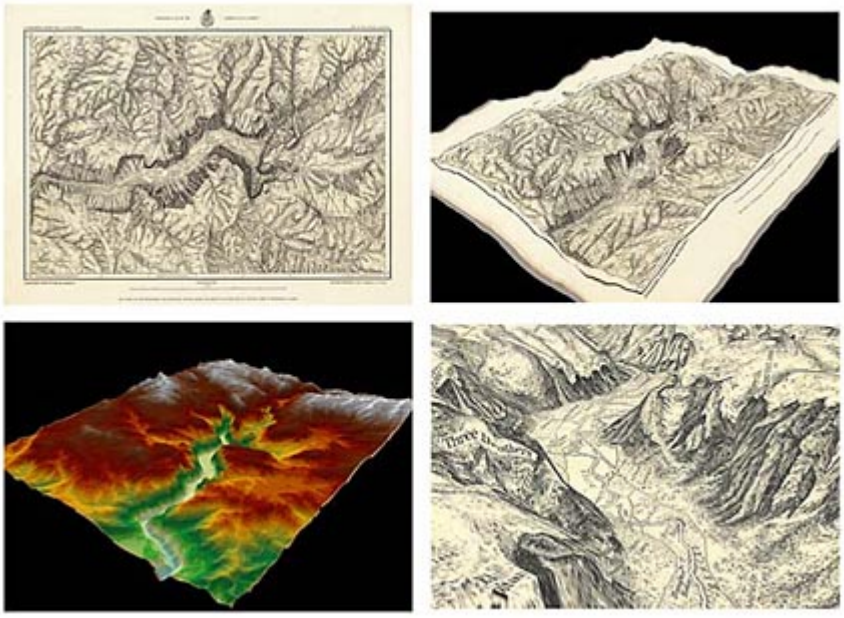
Because antebellum northern cities could be worrisome and puzzling, exactly because they were so incontestably changeful, and perhaps also because, as a result, urban vistas departed so dramatically from the iconic, reassuring visions of rural America—for such reasons, there was a generalized desire, indeed a broadly felt necessity, to develop firmer understandings of the urban milieu.

Early National Bro Culture in Daniel Parker’s War Department



Participation in a privileged culture of masculinity was an important part of achieving and maintaining political power.

Historical Maps Online



Presented as part of the special issue “Early Cities of the Americas.”

“Complete atlases were scanned, as were covers for pocket maps, puzzles, and their cases. Folding globes were shown compressed and then opened, and maps were shown enclosed within books.”