



The Colonial Society of Massachusetts

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Demos Reflects on a Long Career on the Cutting Edge of Colonial Scholarship

ONE of the pleasures of the graduate student forum each spring is the opportunity at the end of the day to hear a senior historian reflect on the present state of scholarship in early American history, pointing out needs and opportunities for future study. This year John Demos of Yale University amply filled that role with his characteristic warmth and generous assessments of his colleagues' work.

Many would say that Demos was one of the architects in the 1970s of the "new social history" and that his *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in the Plymouth Colony* was a classic of the genre. Demos, with characteristic modesty, describes it more as a matter of being in the right place at the right time, but looking back on the movement he identifies the essential components of the "new social history" as a "determination to widen the subject matter appropriate for study" and an effort "to broaden the ways and means of doing history."

The study of family history led Demos through the byways of cultural anthropology, where he soon became fascinated with witchcraft as "a transcultural phenomenon central to modern anthropology." The result was his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Entertaining Satan*. Demos noted about *Entertaining Satan*, however, that for him the case studies it included took on more importance than the social theory in which they were embedded. Thus, like Monsieur Joudain, Moliere's "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" who was surprised to learn he had been speaking prose without ever realizing it, Demos discovered he had started writing narrative."

This new interest led to Demos's famous and still controversial experiment with narrative in *The Unredeemed Captive*, which once again with his uncanny sense of timeliness appeared at a moment when several leading historians were reacting to overspecialization and the thorny language of social science by calling for books that would speak to a broader audience.

With three such signal successes behind him, everyone in the audience was wondering, "What interests Demos now?" sure that it held some clue to next new direction in early American history. The answer is that Demos is now a self-confessed "antique nut," who sees material culture as a new way of experiencing the past. That opportunity was brought home to him by an encounter with a "dummy board" in Portsmouth, NH, museum. (Dummy boards are two-dimensional shapes cut out to rep-

resent people or animals.) When Demos asked the curator what purpose such artifacts served, he speculated that perhaps they were good company on long winter nights. Here, thought Demos, was a datum from the early American past which all his reading had given him no way of understanding!

Such material objects, for Demos, are reminders of what he calls the "weirdness factor," the strangeness of the past. As an example, he produced a slatback chair which usually resides in his Yale office, the front stretchers of which were deeply worn. He recalled once spending a painful two hours during a graduate student's oral exam struggling to find some comfortable way of sitting in the thing. Only when Demos saw a petite young woman, just five feet tall, resting comfortably in the chair with her head neatly framed by its finials, did he realize how much the human body had evolved.

Historians, according to Demos, are constantly confronted by the distance of the past and need to recognize its fundamental "weirdness." Our heavy reliance on words makes us feel closer than we actually are. Thus, the famous practitioner of the new social history, now believes that social history imposes even greater distance on the past through the process of abstraction and thinking in categories foreign to the time period under study. He concluded with the ironic reflection that somehow to possess an antique object, however mysterious and imponderable, is to be closer to the past than to impose one's own narrative on it. So proponents of material culture have a powerful new ally, and they should recall they heard it first on a spring afternoon at the Colonial Society's graduate student forum!

Improving Communication in the New Millennium: The Website and the Directory

ONE of the key recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee is to bring CSM members closer together: more aware of one another and their various talents, better informed about the Society's activities and how they might contribute to them. With that goal in mind, President Frederick D. Ballou recently formed two new working committees: one to plan the shape of a CSM website and the other to compile the Society's first membership directory.

Guided by Emily Curran, executive director of Old South Meetinghouse, the Website Committee is comprised of Robert Allison of Suffolk University, Robert Anderson of the Great

Migration Project, Patrick Leehey of the Paul Revere House, Linda Smith Rhoads of the *New England Quarterly*, and CSM Editor of Publications John Tyler. In keeping with the CSM mission statement, the Committee has begun to consider various ways in which the website can advance the study of early-New England history, “especially the Colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay,” by publishing and distributing documents, encouraging research, conducting educational programs for its members and others, preserving the historic fabric of the Society’s House at 87 Mount Vernon Street, and “inspiring a spirit of fellowship among its members based on a common appreciation of history.”

The Committee hopes the website will enhance greatly our ability to market CSM publications no longer being distributed by either the University Press of Virginia or Oak Knoll Books. At the moment, these titles are usually described as out-of-print when, in fact, the Society has boxes and boxes of most titles securely stored in the basement of 87 Mount Vernon Street and available to purchasers at a modest cost plus shipping and handling.

The website will also enable the CSM to communicate easily with the larger scholarly community when announcing the Whitehill Prize (not awarded in the last two years because of a lack of high quality submissions), calling for papers for academic conferences (such as the conference on New England Indians to be held at Sturbridge next spring), and informing graduate students and their advisors of the popular Graduate Student Forum. Registration forms for the annual teacher workshop also can be posted on the website for prospective participants to download.

The Committee has not yet resolved the extent to which the website should provide member services or educate non-members of our activities. We might consider, for instance, making the new directory available online or providing a calendar of events. No decision has been made on the amount of information the website will provide about the Society’s house, its interior and contents.

The website is still in its early planning stages. Members should not expect to see it online anytime soon, but the Committee encourages members with thoughts on the shape the website should take not to hesitate to contact them.

The second new initiative aimed at bringing CSM members closer together is the previously mentioned membership directory. It’s a curious fact that most CSM members don’t know who their fellow members are. Resident members may indeed see familiar faces at the annual dinner and other gatherings, but non-resident members have no way to recognize one another, let alone communicate with fellow members. With this problem in mind, President Ballou has organized the Directory Committee chaired by Charles L. Newhall of the Carroll School and the Salem Athenaeum. The other members of the committee are: James W. Baker of Plimoth Plantation, Georgia Barnhill of the American Antiquarian Society, Peter Drummey of the Massachusetts Historical Society, William T. LaMoy of the Peabody Essex Museum, and CSM Editor of Publications John Tyler.

The Committee reviewed a variety of directories for similar organizations and concluded that the most useful publication

would include both email and postal addresses as well as telephone numbers. Some members may prefer, of course, not to supply this information for reasons of privacy. The Committee hopes to make it easy for members to share common scholarly concerns. For this purpose, members will also be asked to specify their particular fields of historical interest and to list topics of ongoing research.

Each member will receive a printed directory. To aid in this important effort, please fill out your questionnaire promptly when you receive it in the mail. The Society operates with a very small staff, and it will be difficult for the Committee to follow up the tardy by telephone.

Calendar of Events

November 16—Annual Meeting, 6:30 PM at 87 Mount Vernon Street followed by dinner at the Union Club, 8 Park Street

November 30—Workshop for Pre-College Teachers featuring Gordon Wood of Brown University and David Hall of the Harvard Divinity School, 9:30 AM at 87 Mount Vernon Street

December 21—Stated Meeting, Speaker Alan Taylor of the University of California at Davis, 3:00 PM at 87 Mount Vernon Street

February 15—Stated Meeting, Speaker Elaine Forman Crane of Fordham University, 3:00 PM at 87 Mount Vernon Street

April 20-21—Conference on New England Indians at Old Sturbridge Village and the Sturbridge Host Hotel (Replaces April Stated Meeting)

New Members, 1999-2000

Resident Members

JEFFERY M. PEARLMAN of Malden, Massachusetts—Pearlman has taught history in the Revere public schools for thirty years. He has also been Adjunct Professor of History at Bunker Hill Community College for fifteen years, has worked at the *U.S.S. Constitution* Museum developing a curriculum package used nationwide, and was a presenter on *best practices* at the New England League of Middle Schools Annual Meeting in March, 2000. *Nominated by Helen Breen.*

Non-Resident Members

DAVID C. BOSSE of Amherst, Massachusetts—Bosse holds degrees in anthropology from the State University of New York at Oneonta, in historical geography from Western Kentucky University, and in library science from the State University of New York at Albany. He was senior associate librarian and curator at the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, from 1984 until 1995, when he became librarian at Historic Deerfield. He has published several articles, most recently in the Massachusetts Historical Society *Proceedings* and in *Mapping*

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*Strategic Planning Committee
Makes Recommendations to Council*

IN April, after more than a year of extensive discussions and research, the Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Nina Zannieri of the Paul Revere House, presented its recommendations to the Council, the Colonial Society's governing board. Assisting Zannieri with the deliberations of the committee were: Rodney Armstrong, director emeritus of the Boston Athenæum; Helen Breen of the Lynn Public Schools; Jonathan Chu of the University of Massachusetts/Boston, Jeannine Falino of the Museum of Fine Arts; Maurice Frye of Street and Company Realtors; and Anne Grimes Rand of the *U.S.S. Constitution* Museum.

The Committee reaffirmed that the Colonial Society's core mission is to develop publications, programs, and collaborative ventures that advance the study of colonial history. They recommended that the Publications Committee discuss the potential for a broader range of publications and solicit annually suggestions for projects from the Council and membership at large. Because the Colonial Society has such a small staff, the Committee urged it to develop programs in collaboration with other similarly minded institutions and to post an annual schedule of meetings and conferences in order to encourage attendance by members.

Several recommendations concerned improving communication with the greater public as well as with members. These included establishing both a website and a directory (mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter) and organizing more social events, so that members can become better acquainted. They also urged varying the time and place of meetings so different groups of people might attend.

The Committee was mindful of the Colonial Society's historic role in encouraging young scholars and suggested convening a task force of graduate students and young Ph.D.'s to assist the Society in ascertaining the needs of this group. They also wanted to continue to extend outreach to teachers, perhaps by establishing a speaker's bureau or making primary sources available through the Society's website.

Among a variety of recommendations concerning administration and governance, the Committee advanced the idea of expanding the number of members and adopting an annual budgeting process. Although the group believed that the CSM staff ought to continue to remain small, they suggested separating the Society's editorial and program functions by hiring a new part-time person to cover the latter. Finally, the Strategic Planning Committee reaffirmed the importance of preserving the Society's house at 87 Mount Vernon Street and urged the development of new policies governing the use of the house and its collections.

Such a brief summary hardly does justice to the thoroughness and complexity of the Strategic Plan, but is included here so that members can join the Council in the planning process by adding their own thoughts. Members are urged to write President Frederick D. Ballou with their own reflections and suggestions in care of the Society at 87 Mount Vernon Street, Boston, MA 02108.

Boston, the catalogue of the recent exhibition at the Boston Public Library. *Nominated by Donald Friary.*

JOHN CATANZARITI of Syosset, New York—A graduate of Queens College of the City University of New York, Catanzariti joined the Papers of Robert Morris in 1968 and became editor in 1980. In 1987, he joined the Jefferson Papers as senior editor and retired from that post last year. He is now free to pursue his long-standing interest in Thomas Hutchinson and is working for the Colonial Society on a new edition of Hutchinson's *Diary and Letters* first published in 1886. *Nominated by Malcolm Freiberg.*

DAVID L. GREENE of Cleveland, Georgia—Greene received his doctorate in English from the University of Pennsylvania. Currently Professor of English at Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia, he chairs the department there as well as the Humanities Division. He is the author of numerous articles on literary subjects and has helped edit or publish *Habersham Review*, *The American Genealogist*, and *Phaedrus*. He is currently preparing an article on nineteenth-century antiquarianism. He is a member of the American Antiquarian Society and a Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists. *Nominated by Ralph J. Crandall.*

CAROL HILLS of Kennebunk, Maine—Hills is Professor Emerita at Boston University. For over forty years, she was a member of its Department of Communication. She earned her A.B. degree at Jackson College (Tufts University) and completed her graduate work at Boston University. Professor Hills has acted as communication consultant and directed training programs for major corporations as well as government agencies. She is a former president of the Girl Scouts of Greater Boston. *Nominated by William M. Fowler, Jr.*

LION MILES of Stockbridge, Massachusetts—A retired airlines pilot, Miles took his B.A. degree in history from William and Mary where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. An M.A. in history from Columbia followed. He has also done graduate work at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Miles has published articles on German participation in the American Revolution and helped with the National Park Service's *Guide to Hessian Documents*. He is also on the board of the Native American Institute in Hudson, New York and has written on the Stockbridge Indians for the *New England Quarterly*. He is now at work on a dictionary of the extinct Mahican language. *Nominated by William M. Fowler, Jr.*

MARLA MILLER of Hadley, Massachusetts—Miller is an Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She received her doctorate from the University of North Carolina in 1997, where she won the Organization of American Historians Prize for the Best Dissertation in Women's History that year. The same year she also won the Colonial Society's Whitehill Prize for her essay, "My Part Alone: The World of Rebecca Dickinson, 1782-1802." Prior to her appointment at Amherst, she worked in the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College. *Nominated by Linda Smith Rhoads.*

DANE MORRISON of Barrington, New Hampshire—Morrison is chair of the History Department at Salem State College. He received his doctorate from Tufts University, and a revision of his dissertation was published as *A Praying People: Massachusetts Acculturation and the Failure of the Puritan Mission,*

1600-1690 (Peter Lang, 1995, 1998). He is editor of *American Indian Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Contemporary Issues* (Peter Lang, 1997). His current research project reflects his work in business and maritime history and is entitled "True Yankees: Maritime Discovery and National Identity, 1783-1807." *Nominated by Edward W. Hanson.*

COLIN NICOLSON, Stirling, Scotland—Nicolson earned his doctorate at the University of Edinburgh. A lecturer in United States History at the University of Stirling, he is secretary of the Scottish Association for the Study of America. Later this fall, Northeastern University Press will publish his manuscript on the career of Governor Francis Bernard, and he has begun a multi-volume edition of the letters of Francis Bernard for the Colonial Society. *Nominated by Malcolm Freiberg.*

Report on Publications: New Projects Approved

AT its February meeting, the Council approved the latest addition to the list of forthcoming CSM volumes: a collection of New England elegies from earliest settlement through 1776, edited by Ronald A. Bosco, Distinguished Service Professor of the State University of New York at Albany. Bosco is a well known documentary editor of the Emerson Papers, a project based at Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Bosco argues that if the "jeremiad" as delivered on election and humiliation days was "an engine for communal Americanization," then the elegy was its counterpart: a vehicle for "personal Americanization." The elegy was a "rhetorical and literary complement" to the funeral sermon, outlining not only a model spiritual life, but successful secular conduct as well. Bosco writes, "Initially the subject of most New England elegies were members of the ministry and political leadership, however, by the 1670s the lives of recently deceased women, good fathers, children, worthy schoolmasters, poets, and others" stood as "memorials to virtuous living" and "instruction in an idealized New England way of life." Indeed, these elegies are one of the few sources we have on women's lives in the earliest period. Previous collections of elegies have been selective, whereas Bosco intends to include every New England elegy written before 1776, thus providing a useful reference volume for scholars of early American literature.

After several years spent lassoing authors for the final version of their speeches given at the conference on New England Silver and Silversmithing held at the Museum of Fine Arts in April 1996, work now seems to be moving forward rapidly. Co-editors Jeannine Falino and Gerry Ward have been interviewing prospective designers for the volume this summer, and Ondine LeBlanc of the Massachusetts Historical Society has completed copy-editing the essays and returned them to their authors. With luck, we should be able to send the manuscript to the printers sometime this winter.

Co-editors Sheila McIntyre and Len Travers have completed their transcription of *The Letters of John Cotton, Jr.* and are now at work on the annotation. Cotton's letters, written at a time when

letters were intended to be shared with more people than just the recipient, are really newsletters, filled with the political and religious news of Plymouth Colony in the late seventeenth century, especially King Philip's War.

CSM Assistant Editor of Publications Anne Decker Cecere continues her careful work collating the transcript of *The Eighteenth Century Records of the Boston Overseers of the Poor* with the original manuscripts, while editor Eric Nellis revises his introduction.

CSM Vice-President Daniel Coquillette is checking the transcription of Josiah Quincy, Jr.'s legal commonplace book which the Colonial Society will publish together with a new edition of Quincy's *Reports of Cases Argued and Adjudged Before the Superior Court*. The system of abbreviations and legal annotations used by Quincy is particularly thorny and will require careful thought in order to make the manuscript accessible to modern readers. Another feature of the same project will be the publication, also for the first time, of a second commonplace book kept by Quincy filled with maxims drawn from his political readings. Fellow Member Neil York of Brigham Young University has prepared the text of this part of the volume. Both manuscript commonplace books are the property of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

CSM Editor of Publications John Tyler continues to work on the annotation of volume one of *The Select Correspondence of Thomas Hutchinson*. This first of four volumes will include scattered selections from the earliest surviving Hutchinson letters of the 1740s and 1750s. The letters become much more continuous, however, beginning with Hutchinson's appointment as Chief Justice of the Superior Court in 1760. Volume one was originally intended to include the year 1767, but has now been scaled back to end in 1766. Volumes two and three will cover the years from 1767 until Hutchinson's departure for England in 1774. The fourth and final volume, prepared by John Catanzariti, retired editor of the Jefferson Papers, will comprise the years until his death in 1780, including a new edition of Hutchinson's diary, first published by Peter Orlando Hutchinson in 1886.

After careful consideration, the Council approved a new project, which dwarfs even the Hutchinson Papers in its scale and ambition: *The Papers of Sir Francis Bernard*, royal governor of Massachusetts from 1760 to 1771. The Bernard Papers comprise well over 1700 letters written to the Secretaries of State, the Board of Trade, and other highly placed correspondents describing political conditions in Massachusetts from the Writs of Assistance Case through the Stamp Act and resistance to the Townshend Duties. These letters, together with Thomas Hutchinson's correspondence, are a major source for Massachusetts history during one of its most tumultuous decades and have been consulted by nearly every historian writing about the period, although only 100 or so have ever appeared in print. Fellow Member Colin Nicolson of the University of Stirling in Scotland will direct the project for the Society: it is expected to take fifteen to twenty years to complete. Nicolson is the author of *'The Infamous Governor': Francis Bernard and the Origins of the American Revolution*, soon to be published by Northeastern University Press.

Important Structural Repairs to 87 Mount Vernon Street

CHARLES BULFINCH may have been a fine designer, but the Society has learned during its nearly half century of home ownership that his skills as structural engineer were less finely honed. Several years ago the Society installed a new concrete floor in the basement to arrest the settling of the dirt floor and the brick piers it supported. Over the years, this settling caused the central beams that hold up the various floors of the house to disengage from the exterior walls that support them. While the opulence of the Ogden Codman interiors may distract most eyes from the damage this caused, the results are readily apparent once one knows where to look.

While the House Committee does not anticipate any building jacking or straightening as part of this summer's work, new steel beams will be installed within the central load-bearing wall of the house. Visitors to the house this summer saw all the carpets rolled up, the crystal chandeliers carefully protected, and temporary walls of plastic sheeting cordoning off from plaster dust those parts of the house unaffected by the work. Opening up the walls also allows contractors the opportunity to replace the CSM's antique wiring system, which in some places seems to date from the earliest days of electrification and is inadequate to support modern office needs. Once the work is completed, the plaster and molding will be carefully restored and some areas of the house will enjoy their first new coat of paint in fifty years! Come to the Annual Dinner to see the result!

News of Members

DUNCAN HOWLETT, Retired clergyman, author, environmentalist and forester. Howlett's book, *No Greater Love: The James Reeb Story* (Boston, 1993) was recently reissued in paperback.

KEVIN O'REILLY, Chair of the History Department, Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School, Massachusetts. O'Reilly is completing "Escalation," a computer simulation on decision-making in the Vietnam War and is the author of "What Would You Do? Constructing Decision-making Guidelines Through Historical Problems," *Social Education* January, 1998.

H. MORSE PAYNE, Retired member of The Architects Collaborative and Assistant Professor Emeritus, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. Payne has been made a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and an Honorary Member of the Boston Architectural Center. He lectures on map research as a member of the Boston Map Society and the New England Antiquities Research Association. He wrote on "Cape Cod Land Strategy" in 1994, "New England Seventeenth-Century Land Strategy" in 1998, and "America's Stonehenge as Architecture" in 1998.

JEFFREY M. PEARLMAN, Teacher, Beachmont School, Revere, Massachusetts and Adjunct Professor, Bunker Hill Community College. Pearlman is a member of the Advisory Board for

Curriculum Development of the *U.S.S. Constitution* Museum and has been chosen for a three-year term as a member of the Revere Historical Commission.

CARLA GARDINA PESTANA, Associate Professor of History, Ohio State University. Together with Sharon V. Salinger, Pestana edited *Inequality in Early America* (University Press of New England, 1999). She also received a National Endowment for the Humanities summer stipend to work on "Anglo-America during the Revolution of 1640-1661.

LAURENCE R. PIZER, Plymouth, Massachusetts, Town Clerk. Pizer has redesigned the municipal archives in Plymouth and has written an article on "Immigration to Plymouth" in a forthcoming volume on Plymouth History.

NATHAN PUSEY, President Emeritus, Harvard University. Since his retirement in 1971, Pusey devotes his time and attention to Fountain House in New York City on behalf of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia.

DAVID B. QUINN, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Liverpool. Quinn recently wrote "John Cabot and the 1697 Voyage to Newfoundland," *Newfoundland Studies* (Spring, 1999).

LINDA SMITH RHOADS, Co-Editor, *New England Quarterly*. Rhoads is a trustee of the Paul Revere Memorial Association and teaches editing/publishing in the Northeastern University graduate history program. She recently completed a biographical booklet on Amelia Peabody for the Amelia Peabody Charitable Fund and was editor and a contributor for *Tradition and Innovation: Reflections on Northeastern University's First Century*. Her current project is a biography of Lt. Col. Ruby Winslow Linn, who was among the first generation of dieticians in the Army Medical Specialist Corps.

CHERYL ROBERTSON, Independent scholar, curator, and museum professional. Robertson's publications include *Frank Lloyd Wright and George Mann Niedecken: Prairie School Collaborators* (Lexington, 1999) and the forthcoming "Soul of Beauty: Divining the Aesthetic Movement," *Ten Years of the Whitehall Lecture Series*, published by the Flagler Museum in Palm Beach.

ALAN ROGERS, Professor of History, Boston College. Rogers served as President of the New England Historical Association in 1999-2000 and has written "Chinese and the Campaign to Abolish Capital Punishment in Massachusetts, 1870-1914," *Journal of Ethnic History* (1999) and "Finish the Fight: The Struggle for Women's Service in Massachusetts," *Massachusetts Historical Review*, (forthcoming).

ALAN TAYLOR, Professor of History, University of California-Davis. This year Taylor is the Mellen Distinguished Scholar in Residence at the American Antiquarian Society, He has recently written "John Adams," Alan Brinkley and Davis Dyer, eds., *The Reader's Companion on the American Presidency* (Boston/2000). Taylor's book reviews are a regular feature of *The New Republic*.

BRYANT R. TOLLES, JR., Professor of History and Art History and Director of the Museum Studies Program, University of Delaware. Tolles serves as a trustee of the New Hampshire Historical Society and the Mount Washington Observatory and has written *Summer Cottages in the White Mountains* (University

Press of New England, 2000) and edited *A Suburb of Paradise: The White Mountains and the Visual Arts* (New Hampshire Historical Society, 2000).

JOHN W. TYLER, CSM Editor of Publications and Chair of the History Department, Groton School. In 1998, Tyler received the Kidger Award of the New England History Teachers Association for scholarship and distinguished contributions to the profession. When he has a free moment from everything else the Colonial Society wants him to do, he continues to work on the *Select Correspondence of Thomas Hutchinson* to be published by the Society.

S. MORTON VOSE, formerly of Vose Galleries, Boston, Massachusetts. Since retirement, Vose, together with his wife and son, has embarked on a much-needed biographical dictionary of American painters born before 1900, known as the "Vose Archive." The project is now a non-profit corporation happily under the wing of the Phillips Library of the Peabody Museum of Salem. Vose, nearing age 90, says he is coming under increasing pressure from his family to write his memoirs, a happy thought for all of us interested in American art history and the art market.

RICHARD WENDORF, Stanford Calderwood Director and Librarian, Boston Athenæum. Wendorf's most recent publication is *Sir Joshua Reynolds: The Painter in Society* (Harvard University Press) which won the Annibel Jenkins Biography Prize of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

DAVID WOOD, Curator, Concord Museum—Wood is the author of "Cabinetmaking Practices in Revolutionary Concord: New Evidence" in *Rural New England Furniture* (Boston University, 2000) and "Concord, Massachusetts, Clockmakers, 1789-1817," *Antiques* (May, 2000).

CONRAD E. WRIGHT, Ford Editor of Publications, Massachusetts Historical Society. Together with Charles Capper, Wright edited *Transient and Permanent: The Transcendentalist Movement and Its Contexts* (Massachusetts Historical Society, 2000) and together with Fellow Member Edward W. Hanson and others compiled Volume 18 of *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*. He is now working on "Revolutionary Generation: Harvard Men and the Consequences of Independence," a collective biography of the Harvard College classes of 1771-1774.

NEIL YORK, Professor of History, Brigham Young University. York has two forthcoming publications "Fiction vs. Fact: 'The Horse Soldiers' and Popular Memory" (Kent State University Press) and "Feudalism and the Failure of Imperial Reform, 1774-1775" in the journal *History*. He was also appointed Karl G. Maesar General Education Professor at Brigham Young for the years 2000-2001.

DONALD A. YERXA, Professor of History, Eastern Nazarene College. Yerxa is a contributing editor of *Books & Culture* and recently wrote an essay entitled, "Macrohistory at the Millennium's End: Recent Themes in World Historiography" *Fides et Historia* (Summer/Fall, 1999).

*Conference on "Reinterpreting New England
Indian History and the Colonial Experience"
to Take Place This Spring*

COLONIAL SOCIETY members should mark their calendars for April 21 and 22, 2001, when a major conference will take place at Sturbridge, Massachusetts, joining both the academic and Native American communities in an effort to reinterpret New England Indian History and the Colonial Experience. University professors and Native American scholars have often conducted their research in isolation from one another and rarely appeared on the same platform. To remedy this deficiency, the Colonial Society and Old Sturbridge Village are jointly sponsoring this opportunity for both groups to meet on equal terms.

Conference events will take place both at the OSV Conference Center and the Sturbridge Host Hotel, directly across the Main Street. The conference will be open to the general public for a modest charge, and a block of rooms at the hotel has been reserved at a reduced rate for conference goers who wish to spend the night in the area. The telephone number of the Sturbridge Host Hotel is 1-800-582-3232; mention the conference on New England Indians.

Members of the program committee (Marge Bruhac, Colin Calloway, Barry O'Connell, Jeanne O'Brien, Russell Peters, and Neal Salisbury) are encouraging audio, visual, theatrical, and mixed media presentations as well as more conventional academic papers. Since the Colonial Society intends to print a volume of selected proceedings drawn from the conference, papers should not have been previously published elsewhere. Brief descriptions of proposals are due October 1, 2000, and should be sent to the program committee in care of John W. Tyler, Editor of Publications, Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 87 Mount Vernon Street, Boston, MA 02108.

Although plans for the next major CSM conference to follow the meeting on New England Indians are less settled, they are being enthusiastically received. At the moment, the Colonial Society is projecting a conference on New England Slavery and the Slave Trade for a date not earlier than spring 2002. New Englanders are so proud of their abolitionist heritage that people often forget the institution of slavery flourished in New England as well as the Deep South. The Massachusetts Tax List of 1771 makes clear that most wealthy households in Boston had at least one slave and recent archaeological excavations at the Isaac Royall House in Medford provide striking evidence of African-American culture in the slave quarters there.

A conference on New England slavery presents an opportunity for a variety of instructive contrasts between the enslavement of Native and African Americans, as well as between slave communities in the plantations of the Deep South and households in Massachusetts. The W.E.B. DuBois Institute at Harvard recently published a CD-ROM of slave trading records, and we hope that the DuBois Institute will agree to co-sponsor the conference. The CSM will also explore cosponsorship with some of our Beacon Hill neighbors, most notably the African Meeting House and Suffolk University. CSM members who would like to help organize the conference should contact Editor of Publications John Tyler.

*The Colonial Society of Massachusetts
Graduate Forum in Early American History:
The First Two Years*

by JONATHAN B. FIELD, University of Chicago

EVEN under the best of circumstances, the life of a graduate student can be a lonely one. When he or she studies colonial New England, that feeling can be exacerbated by a lack of colleagues who know or care about the period. Early in my graduate career, I recall telling an art historian that I was working on early American literature, and receiving a cheery "Like Faulkner?" in return. In this light, the Colonial Society of Massachusetts' Graduate Student Forum has been a real treat for me and the other seventeen participants so far.

NEQ editor Lynn Rhoads organized the first of these gatherings in the spring of 1999, and the format is quite simple: early Americanist graduate students at various stages of their careers present their topics as well as current problems in their research for the audience to consider. The day is divided into panels of related interest and capped by a keynote address from a senior scholar in the field of early American studies. Additionally, there are intervals throughout the day for more informal interaction, with refreshments provided through the generosity of the CSM.

I was privileged to be part of the first group of CSM forum participants and was also able to attend the 2000 event. Across both years, the most important aspect of this event has been the collegiality it generates. As Pat Griffin, a 1999 participant from Northwestern, pointed out, "We can never begin building professional relationships too early in our careers." In this respect, the singular advantage of the forum is that it offers graduate students from different departments the chance to interact outside of the pressured context of the AHA or MLA conferences. As one participant commented, "I appreciated the chance to try out some of my (least tenable) methodological claims. Where else can you do that?"

Beyond the opportunity to meet other graduate students, the forum offers this cohort a rare opportunity to interact with senior faculty in the field. Thus far, the keynote speakers have certainly been among the leading lights in the field, with John Murrin in 1999 and John Demos in 2000. In addition, the forum encourages participants to invite their mentors, and, CSM members are also invited. To put a face and a voice to a familiar book and to see how the field looks outside the confines of a library carrel are both edifying and heartening.

Even as younger scholars benefit from the encouragement and guidance of an older generation of scholars, the forum also offers society members and interested faculty an opportunity to keep abreast of new research in the field. A glance at the programs of the two meetings so far gives some indication of how the field of colonial studies may evolve over the decades to come. In 1999, the prevailing bent was towards projects challenging views of the period in New England as the exclusive preserve of orthodox, white Protestants: panels on "Challenges to Authority in Seventeenth-Century New England," "Representing the

Under-represented,” and “Biographies: From Singular to Plural,” detailed projects sharing a desire to unearth silenced or forgotten voices from the historical record.

This year’s projects shared this desire to hear unheard voices, though they also demonstrated an increased concern to link research in the colonial period to current theoretical debates over questions of race, class, and gender. Through the panels on “Defining Self and Others,” “Drawing Together: Pluralism,” and “Defining America,” some of the liveliest discussions were generated by these more theoretically-oriented projects. As Robin de Rosa of Tufts commented, “I really appreciated having a chance to present my work to a group of historians. As a literary theorist, I employ slightly different methodologies and frameworks than most historians, and it was useful to expose my research to critique from folks outside of my specific field.” Beyond the nature of the presentations, a survey of the 2000 program also reveals the increasing variety of institutions from which participants came: the 1999 forum was hardly a parochial affair, but with a successful year behind it the 2000 forum attracted scholars from as far away as California, and as many participants from Maryland as Massachusetts.

This year’s gathering culminated with a presentation by John Demos, entitled “Getting the Distance Right: Questions of Evidence and Interpretation in Early American Studies.” Over the last decades, Demos has been one of the most prominent voices in the study of early American culture, and his talk lived up to his reputation. With the aid of a colonial chair from his own collection, Demos touched on both the opportunities and pitfalls afforded by material artifacts and his own efforts to use these resources in his own research, which has evolved dramatically over his career. Demos also used these concerns to draw together the presentations from the three sessions and to point the way toward the next generation of colonial history.

One of the desiderata of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts in recent years has been to encourage the scholars who will write this next generation of history. Through the energy of Lynn Rhoads, Anne Grimes Rand and Robert Allison in organizing this event, and the generosity of the Colonial Society in opening its home, the forum has become a stimulating and rewarding event for young scholars and a welcome respite from their solitary pursuits. I would encourage any graduate student working in this field to apply.



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