



The Colonial Society of Massachusetts

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Conference on New England Slavery and the Slave Trade Breaks New Ground

RECENT CONFERENCES sponsored by the Colonial Society have acquired a reputation for opening new fields of scholarly endeavor, and this past spring's Conference on New England Slavery and the Slave Trade, held April 21-23, was no exception. Former Council Member Robert Hall first suggested the idea over five years ago, and gradually the concept won a remarkable number of cosponsors, including our Beacon Hill neighbors, the Museum of Afro-American History; the National Park Service; Old South Meeting House; the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture; Suffolk University; and the W.E.B. DuBois Institute for Afro-American Research.

After an opening session at Old South Meeting House, concurrent presentations took place at the Boston Athenæum and Suffolk University Law School. Thus, all events were within easy walking distance of the Parker House, where conference participants were housed courtesy of the Colonial Society. On April 22, the Colonial Society gave a reception for speakers, commentators, and their spouses at its 87 Mount Vernon Street headquarters followed by a festive dinner at the Union Club. Local arrangements for the conference were the work of Beverly Morgan Welch of the Museum of Afro-American History; Marty Blatt of the National Park Service; Robert Allison, Robert Bellinger, and Beth Bower of Suffolk University; and Fellow Member Marilyn Richardson and Editor John Tyler representing the Colonial Society. Special thanks are due to Beth Bower, Archivist at Suffolk University Law School, and the Colonial Society's indefatigable sec-

retary, Elaine Paul, upon whom all the arrangements fell most heavily.

The intellectual success of the conference was surely the result of its talented and well connected Program Committee, composed of Ira Berlin of the University of Maryland as chair, ably supported by James Horton of George Washington University and Joanne Melish of the University of Kentucky. Each member of the Program Committee spoke at the opening session on Wednesday, April 21. Ira Berlin began with a brief introduction on "The Significance of Slavery in New England," followed by a dynamic address from James Horton on the impact of the American Revolution on slavery and racial identities in New England. Joanne Melish concluded with "The Vernaculars of Slavery and Race in New England," illustrating just how fluid such categories could be in the early republic.

On Thursday and Friday, participants had to make an often difficult choice between concurrent sessions at the Athenæum and Suffolk Law School. The proximity of the two venues even made it possible for the truly undecided to shuttle back and forth between locations. The first session at Suffolk Law School concerned African American slavery in New England, beginning with Linda Heywood and John Thornton of Boston University on "The Removal of 'Cannibal Negroes' from New England to Providence Island." Lois Brown of Mount Holyoke retold the story of an African, Sebastian Kayne of Boston, who purchased the freedom of Anna Keayne's servant, Angola, with his own labor, a rare example of African legal agency in Massachusetts courts. Richard A. Bailey of the

University of Kentucky concluded the session with an examination of the issues of conscience faced by a slave-owning Puritan divine.

Meanwhile at the Athenæum, conference participants heard a session on “Slavery and the Law in New England,” with papers by James J. Allegro of Western Reserve University on “The Idea of New England Slavery: Slave Law, Self-Government, and the Glorious Revolution in Massachusetts, New York and Maryland,” Paul Finkelman of the University of Tulsa Law School on “Ending Slavery in New England: The Interaction of Law and Social Forces,” and Emily Blanck of Rowan University on “The Legal Emancipations of Leander and Caesar: Manumission and the Law in Revolutionary South Carolina and Massachusetts.”

After a break for lunch, a session on “Native American Slavery and New England” convened, including a number of familiar faces from the CSM conference on “Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience” held at Sturbridge in 2000. Ruth Wallace Herndon of the University of Toledo and Ella Wilcox Sekatau, Narragansett Tribal Historian, continued their research into the *de facto* slavery created by Rhode Island laws governing pauper apprentices, which fell particularly hard on Native Americans. Daniel Mandell, speaking about “Freedom and Conflicts over Class Gender and Identity: The Evolving Relationship between Indians and Blacks in Southern New England, 1750-1870” offered some points of difference with Joanne Melish’s address of the night before. Margaret Newell of Ohio State University was scheduled to comment on the session but volunteered to make a preliminary presentation of her own research after one member of the panel cancelled at the last minute.

The afternoon session at the Athenæum involved screening a soon-to-be-released documentary film: “Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North,” chronicling the extensive involvement of the De Wolfe family of Bristol, Rhode Island, in the slave trade, even after the importation of slaves into the United States was formally banned in 1807. Katrina Browne, the producer of the film and a De Wolfe descendant, was on hand to answer questions and moderate a discussion on some of the controversial questions raised in the film, such as reparations.

An important part of the conference centered on the experiences of free people of color in New England in the early years of emancipation. In a late afternoon session at Suffolk Law School, independent scholar

Peter Hinks examined the career of William Lanson of New Haven, an African American entrepreneur of the 1820s. Bryan Rommel-Ruiz of Colorado College explored African colonization movements in both Rhode Island and Nova Scotia during the Revolutionary period.

The abolitionist movement enjoyed its first flowering during the early years of the Republic, a fact marked by another late afternoon session at Suffolk Law School. Matthew Mason of Brigham Young University explored the links between the Federalist Party and the early abolitionists. Joe Lockard of Arizona State University illustrated Justice Joseph Story’s attitudes about slavery were considerably more ambivalent than his famous “Charge to the Maine Grand Jury” has led people to believe, and Celeste Marie Bernier of the University of Nottingham (one of several international scholars attending the conference) gave a paper on “Spectacle, Rhetoric and the Slave Body in New England and British Anti-Slavery Oratory.”

The Friday morning session at Suffolk Law looked at New England’s role in the slave trade. Rachel Chernos Lin of Brown University, who spoke at a regular CSM meeting two years ago, advanced several reasons why she thought Rhode Island emerged as “leader of the pack” [her words] in the slave trade. Simon Smith of the University of York, UK, looked at Hugh Hall, who carried on the slave trade in both Boston and Barbados, as an example of seventeenth-century gentry capitalism among family members of England’s landed classes. George Brooks of Indiana University used the career of Samuel Hodges Jr., U.S. consul to the Cape Verde Islands during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, to reveal various ways in which the Anglo-American ban on the international slave trade was easily evaded.

Appropriately enough, the final session of the conference at the Boston Athenæum focused on “The Memory of Slavery in New England.” John Wood Sweet of the University of North Carolina, another speaker familiar to CSM audiences, examined the early nineteenth century *Narrative* of Venture Smith as a document written primarily to remind the free black community of New England of the horrors of slavery before such details passed from collective memory. Patrick Rael of Bowdoin College delivered a paper on the ways in which free people of color in the North tended to link their own history with the older Puritan idea of America as a divinely elected exemplar of freedom to the rest of the world.

Ephemeral, but nonetheless essential, components of the conference were the comments offered at each session. For this important task, the Program Committee had assembled an all-star cast of leaders in the field: Peter Benes of Boston University, David Blight of Yale University, David Eltis of Emory University, Annette Gordon-Reed of New York Law School, John

Saillant of Western Michigan University, and John Stauffer of Harvard University.

The conference certainly created a favorable “buzz” not only in academic circles, but also in the pages of the *Boston Globe* (with an article by Sam Allis, son of the CSM’s previous Editor of Publications Fritz Allis) and even on National Public Radio.

Quincy Project

By Daniel R. Coquillette

ON AUGUST 10th, your Editor, John Tyler, met with our fellow members, Dan Coquillette and Neil York, to discuss the final publication of the Quincy Project. This is the culmination of a major research effort, resulting in four volumes, including important unpublished pre-revolutionary material. Together with the Bernard Papers, now being edited by Dr. Colin Nicolson, and the Editor’s own *Hutchinson Papers*, this project will allow a contextual view of the American Revolution that was never before possible. Here are the true counterpoints to John Adams: Josiah Quincy, Son-of-Liberty, but careful moderate, Bernard, servant of the Crown, and Hutchinson, the American Loyalist.

Quincy’s brilliant young mind, keen curiosity, and, for his time, an exceptional sensitivity to race and gender issues, make for fascinating reading. For example, on one page of his *Journal of the Voyage to the South* (1773), he describes the fashion of the Charleston women, and the arrival of “two Macaronis” – English gentlemen with the latest hairstyle. (The Editors have beseeched the Society to reproduce a print of a “Macaroni,” together with a picture of a “Macaroni Penguin,” named by contemporary English sailors due to the close resemblance.) Yet on the next page Quincy is engaged in the most serious political discussion with the likes of John Dickinson or Charles Pinckney, or is describing the law for execution of slaves.

The first of the volumes, edited primarily by Neil York, will contain a major biographical introduction, plus Quincy’s *Political Common-Place*, a never before published journal. This will be followed by a newly edited version of Quincy’s important journal of his *Voyage to London* in 1775. The second volume, edited

primarily by Dan Coquillette, will contain Quincy’s *Law Common-Place*, also never before published, together with the *Voyage to the South* (1773) and scholarly introductions to each. Finally, Dan Coquillette has reannotated and edited Quincy’s *Law Reports*, covering the period 1761-1772, the earliest American law reports. These contain cases of the greatest importance, including disputes about the sale of slaves, the execution of unwed mothers, the rights of women to contract and inherit, the right of jury trial, the evolution of consumer protection law, and many other topics.

With the Editor’s permission, I conclude by quoting from the draft *Foreword* to the volumes.

“During his short life, Josiah Quincy Jr. (1744-1775) shone like a brilliant shooting star across the landscape of pre-revolutionary America. In thirty-two brief years he gained the respect and admiration of men difficult to please, including John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, James Otis and John Dickinson. Had Quincy lived, he would have been a leader of the new Republic and a household word. Even cut off so cruelly, he was idolized by his contemporaries and descendants, not the least by his son, who became Mayor of Boston and President of Harvard. Today, towns, streets, stylish marketplaces and Harvard buildings bear the proud family name. Indeed, Josiah Quincy’s patriotism, his compassionate and wise maturity beyond his years, his inspiration to others who survived him, and his own, quite considerable acts of political courage, earn him a place among the founders of American freedom.

One of Quincy’s gifts to posterity, however, has

been widely overlooked. An industrious and brilliant student, he kept detailed commonplace books and travel journals throughout his life. From his initial studies in law and politics, to his courageous – given his health – travels to the South and the extraordinary mission on behalf of Benjamin Franklin and others to London in 1774 that caused his death, all were carefully recorded in manuscripts now at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Equally important, in 1761 Quincy undertook what was to become the first American law reports, partly to aid his studies, but also to provide a badly needed tool for colonial legal development. These, too, have been preserved, both as manuscripts at the Massachusetts Historical Society and in a volume published in 1864 by his devoted grandson, Samuel M. Quincy, then serving as a Union officer in Port Hudson, Louisiana. The latter book, prized and continuously cited over the years by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, lacks a modern edition and, due to the use of pulp paper, is deteriorating on the few shelves where it can still be found.

Quincy's industry has provided political and legal historians with an extraordinary opportunity, the chance to enter the mind of an American patriot immediately before the Revolution. And this is not just an ordinary, but a brilliant, intellect. In addition, Quincy's roaming curiosity defied his tuberculosis-ridden body, and he traveled on long and dangerous trips. These trips are described in journals that provide a view of most of the important American colonies, and of England itself, at the onset of the Revolutionary War. It is almost as if Quincy's papers were a traveling video camera, recording table settings in Charleston, the conversations of beautiful Southern women, the ugly facts of slavery, the controversies dividing Americans, and the subtle political landscape of Charleston, Philadelphia, and London itself."

The Graduate Student Forum Reconvenes in 2005

After a hiatus in 2004 for the Conference on New England Slavery and the Slave Trade, the Graduate Student Forum returns on 21 April 2005. We are delighted to report that Joyce Appleby, emerita professor of history at UCLA, has agreed to be our guest host for the day. Professor Appleby is the author of, among other works, *Ideology and Economic Thought in*

Seventeenth-Century England; Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Jeffersonian Vision of the 1790s; Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination; and Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans. Her service to the profession includes terms as president of the Organization of American Historians and of the American Historical Association, as chair of the Council of the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, and as a board editor for the *American Historical Review* and the *William and Mary Quarterly*. With James Banner, she co-directs the History News Service, an "informal association" that, according to her website, "distributes op-ed essays written by historians to over three hundred newspapers weekly."

We have inserted a Call for Proposals in this newsletter. Please mark your calendars with the date of the event and then hand the flyer to someone you think may be interested in participating in the forum. You can also direct individuals to the Colonial Society website, where the information will be posted, or call us for more flyers. Joyce Appleby is quite enthusiastic about moderating the day, and I know she will enjoy seeing a large number of members and guests supporting our invited graduate students. We hope to see YOU there.

Our Newest Audience— and Our Youngest

By Lynn Rhoads

On 30 October, the Colonial Society, working with some of our respected partners, will present a program for ten high school students. Lisa Green, who teaches economics and advanced placement history at Swampscott High School, and Richard Kollen, who teaches U.S. history at Lexington High School, will accompany their students to three sites: Old South Meeting House, the Paul Revere House, and the Massachusetts Historical Society.

At Old South, students will view Revolutionary Boston through the eyes of two young women who attended services there, the poet Phillis Wheatley, an enslaved African, and the privileged Anna Green Winslow. Students will also tour the meetinghouse, including the balcony and steeple that once soared above the town's other buildings.

At the Paul Revere House, fellow member Patrick

Leehey will guide students through period documents and eyewitness accounts of the Boston Massacre. What is historical truth? he asks, and how do historians work within the constraints of having too little, too much, or contradictory evidence? Patrick will encourage students to look carefully at Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre and to think about illustrations as propaganda. The program will conclude with a visit to the Paul Revere House.

At the Massachusetts Historical Society, students will see the "real thing": a first edition of Phillis Wheatley's poems; the writing table on which she produced them; an original print of Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre; a Revere letter about the Revolutionary War. With the guidance of MHS Librarian and fellow CMS member Peter Drummey, students will learn how historians discover materials at an archive like the MHS and how they pull them together to tell a story about the past.

Each student participating in the program will receive a copy of Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s *The Trials of Phillis Wheatley: America's First Black Poet and Her Encounters with the Founding Fathers*, a book based on his 2002 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities at the Library of Congress. With what they have learned throughout the day, and with additional materials made available to them through the MHS, students will discuss their thoughts about race, revolution, history, and the origins of the United States of America.

If our pilot program proves reasonably successful, we will consider ways of improving upon it and offering it to additional groups in the years to come.

The Society's 2004 NERFC Fellow

In the spring, representatives of the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium selected Amanda Moniz as the Society's designated 2004 NERFC Fellow. A student of fellow CSM member David Hancock's at the University of Michigan, Amanda is in the early stages of her research for a dissertation provisionally titled "Labours in the Cause of Humanity in Every Part of the Globe": Transatlantic Philanthropic Collaboration and the Cosmopolitan Ideal, 1760-1815." In describing her project, Amanda articulated her goal as follows: "to understand the transatlantic network and globalizing trends that made

secular philanthropy a force for international cooperation and the imagining of world community in a period rent by repeated war."

In the course of her fellowship, which she completed this summer, Amanda visited the Boston Athenaeum, Countway Medical Library, and the New Hampshire Historical Society to answer questions about the membership, formation, and functioning of various philanthropic networks. She consulted, for example, papers of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, records of the Boston Dispensary and of the Massachusetts Humane Society, and the papers of Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, William Tudor, and Lyman Spalding.

Amanda will speak at the Graduate Student Forum next April, at which time members will have an opportunity to question her about her fascinating research project.

New Members

Please welcome the following individuals elected to membership during the past year:

RESIDENT MEMBERS

Beth Bower, of Stoneham, is the John Joseph Moakley Archivist at Suffolk University, where she also oversees the Adams Gallery exhibit space. She has worked as a staff archaeologist and historic preservation specialist on the Central Artery/Tunnel project, where she helped to identify the colonial sites unearthed by early excavations for the "Big Dig," and she was the Director of Archaeology at the Museum of Afro-American History. Nominated by Robert J. Allison.

James Moran, of Charlton, is the Director of Outreach at the American Antiquarian Society, where he is responsible for all programs designed for the general public and teachers and students in grades K-12. He created the "Isaiah Thomas - Patriot Printer" educational program, which is performed in classrooms across Massachusetts. Mr. Moran is also the owner of Damora Productions, a company that specializes in historic and educational audio, video, and theatrical presentations. Nominated by Ellen S. Dunlap.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Colonial Society of Massachusetts

Graduate Student Forum in Early American History

21 April 2005

Boston, Massachusetts

Purpose of the Forum:

To provide an opportunity for graduate students preparing dissertations in early American history to discuss their projects with peers and with the Society's distinguished membership of academics and other history professionals.

Format:

The event is held at the Society's Beacon Hill townhouse, with welcoming coffee and lunch provided. Nine students present and receive comments during the course of the day (3 sessions; a 15-minute presentation per student), which will be capped by a keynote address from moderator Joyce Appleby, emerita professor of history at the University of California, Los Angeles, and author of *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans*.

The Sponsor:

The Colonial Society of Massachusetts was founded in 1892 with the mission of advancing the study of early American history through preparing publications, encouraging and recognizing individual research, and conducting programs.

How to Submit Your Proposal:

The proposal, not to exceed five double-spaced pages, should give a vivid sense of the dissertation project and then highlight a particular dilemma—methodological, conceptual, source-based, etc.—encountered in the course of research or writing. We ask that you outline a problem so that the forum's audience may be focused in providing constructive advice. Preference will be given to New England topics, but the committee will attempt to achieve a balance in subjects covered. The proposal should be submitted to: Committee Chair Linda Smith Rhoads, CSM Graduate Student Forum, c/o The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1154 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02215; email: lrhoads@masshist.org; fax: 617-859-0074.

**** DEADLINE: 31 JANUARY 2005 ****

Additional Incentive:

Monies are available for students' travel and lodging. Successful candidates will be asked to submit specific requests for funding.

Rave Reviews from Previous Participants:

Previous keynote speaker John Demos remarks, "A wonderful new venue for young historians of early America; may it long continue." Students comment: "The warm, positive feedback and direction I received fired my enthusiasm for research. It was truly invaluable" (University of California, Davis). "Challenging, and energetic; I took away practical suggestions from both the CSM membership and other graduate student presenters" (Tufts University). "How can one improve on stimulating scholarly exchange combined with wonderful food" (University of Connecticut). "It was my first presentation, and I certainly appreciated the comfortable surroundings" (Princeton). "A platform to voice concerns, dilemmas, and even accomplishments to a distinguished audience" (Salem State University). "My participation in the forum was really the highlight of my graduate career to date" (SUNY Stony Brook).

New Members (Continued)

NON-RESIDENT MEMBERS

Robert J. Dunkle, of Naples, Florida, specializes in the study of Boston records in the colonial period. He is a retired investment manager, and co-founder of WorkGroup Technologies, of Hampton, N.H. Since 1996, he has been a book editor at the New England Historic Genealogical Society, where he has edited or co-edited six printed volumes and several CD-ROM publications. He also transcribed Overseers of the Poor records for the Colonial Society's forthcoming volume. Nominated by D. Brenton Simons.

David J. Silverman, of Washington, D.C., is an Assistant Professor of History at George Washington

University. He earned his Ph.D. from Princeton University in 2000, and is preparing his dissertation on the Wampanoag Indians of Martha's Vineyard for publication. He was a participant in the Colonial Society's first Graduate Student Forum in 1999, and took part in the Society's Indian Conference. Nominated by Linda Smith Rhoads.

Robert Smith Jr., of Hartford, Conn., specializes in estate law and trust administration and is a partner in the firm of Robinson & Cole. He is an active board and committee member in numerous organizations, including the American Antiquarian Society, the Grolier Club, the Hartford Public Library, the Mark Twain House, and the Wadsworth Atheneum, where he also served as President. Nominated by Ellen S. Dunlap.



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