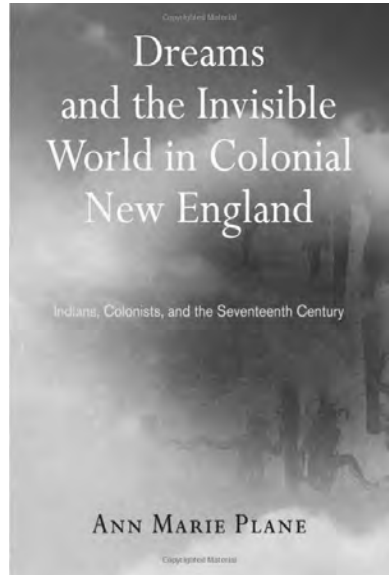


## BOOK REVIEWS

***Dreams and the Invisible World in Colonial New England: Indians, Colonists, and the Seventeenth Century.* By Ann Marie Plane. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. 251 pages. \$65.00 (hard-cover).**

In the late eighteenth century, an English fur trader living among the Ojibwe in northwestern Canada crossed a significant mental and cultural boundary, noting in his journal, “This night dreamed in the Chipewyan Language for the first time.” History is almost exclusively concerned with how people act and react to the waking world, avoiding the murky realm beyond the veil of sleep. Dreams have not gone unnoticed by historians, but usually they are discussed as being some marginally interesting aspect of an individual’s personality or experience and not as a critical influence on cultural or societal development. Historians of Europe, particularly of the medieval period, found much to discuss on the subject of dreams, but scholarship on early America has been deafeningly silent. Merle Curti sought to rectify this oversight in the 1960s, but even then he only asked whether it was a worthy topic of inquiry. A few historians dared to dip their toes into dream worlds since then, but only recently has anyone thought to devote an entire monograph to it; thus, Ann Marie Plane’s *Dreams and the Invisible World in Colonial New England: Indians, Colonists, and the Seventeenth Century* is a pioneering study.

Plane explores the unfolding drama of seventeenth-century New England colonization’s effects upon the English, Anglo-American, and Northern Algonquian peoples through their reported dreams. Beginning with an overview of how English people during the Tudor and Stuart periods took dreams very seriously, she underscores the degrees to which Christian doctrines intersected with folk religious beliefs stretching back to the pre-Christian period. Dreams, Plane argues, are the means by which people can



reinforce social “control, mastery, and hierarchy,” and that this is true both of the Algonquian and English peoples who encountered one another from the beginnings of contact and through the fraught process of colonization, which also engendered “wonder, shame, and anxiety” (75). Dreams were deeply interwoven with religious beliefs, and both Natives and newcomers understood dreams as a conduit of communication between the spiritual and material worlds. Since much more is known about the Puritans’ recording of dream experiences, Plane has to focus most of her attention there. But even with the comparatively scant evidence from Native sources, her contention that “Dream reporting . . . furthered new forms of self-representation, emotional expression, and spiritual practice” is a powerful new insight (103).

*Dreams and the Invisible World* centers around the devastating conflict called King Philip’s War by the English, but which is better named after the proper name of its Wampanoag leader, Metacom (or Metacomet). Although active fighting began in 1675, the roots of the conflict go back almost to the very beginnings of English incursions a half-century before, a period marked by growing tensions between rapaciously land-hungry colonists and Indians increasingly pushed off of their homelands and pressured to assimilate to the newcomers’ culture. Dreams became ever more important to both sides as the bloodshed raked New England settlements and vulnerable Indian villages.

Not surprisingly, the Anglo-Americans’ dreams and nightmares engendered by the war were interpreted as divine admonitions and hopeful signs of inevitable triumph of the saints over Satan’s minions. The Indians’ dreams, by contrast, were dismissed as “diabolically inspired” (125). The war cast a long shadow over New England, and Indian raiding on the northern frontier served as one stream of anxiety that, along with other causal factors, resulted in the Salem witch hunt in 1692. While Cotton Mather played a crucial role in the crisis through his cataloguing of wonders, Plane’s sympathetic treatment of Court of Oyer and Terminer judge, Samuel Sewall, offers a portrait of a man whose dreams reflect his guilty conscience as he realized that he was participating in an atrocity.

The extant accounts of Indians’ dreams, on the other hand, are even more indicative of how their collective need to comprehend the world suffered relentless assault. Although we have to look skeptically at these accounts, most of which were written down by Christian missionaries whose motives, sincerity, and familiarity with the Algonquian mentality are suspect, what has survived nevertheless presents us with “a critical conversation . . . in which Indian survival was very much at stake” (170). Importantly, Plane points out that this conversation was not one in which there was a clear and unambiguous “Indian” side standing in stark opposition to a pure “English”

side, the two unable to understand each other across some insurmountable cultural barrier.

She features the recorded dreams of Christianized Indians such as “Major Symon,” who clearly absorbed English notions of Indians as horrifying devils, and of his newly adopted culture as a protective shield (105). The key difference between the two groups remains the greater importance Indians attached to dreams as predictive and instructive, and for whom there was practically no difference between dream and vision. The Anglo-Americans did not discount the personally revelatory potential of their dreams, or even of their prophetic import—mainly among those who lay on their deathbeds—but most agreed with Rev. Experience Mayhew that one should “leave these strange Occurrences to the Thoughts of others” (165).

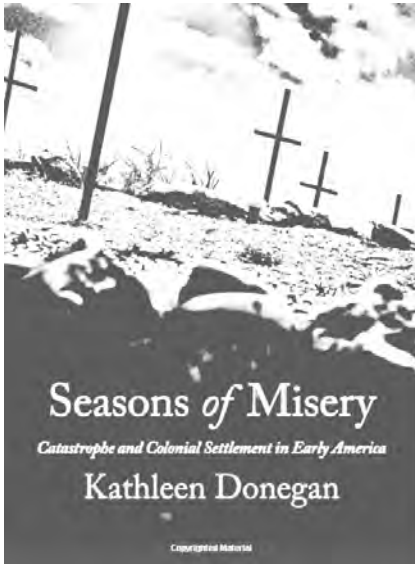
This highlights the major pitfall for any scholar seeking to analyze a phenomenon that is so intensely personal, and dependent upon the willingness of a subject to report as honestly as possible their dream experience, as well as the skill of anyone seeking to interpret through as accurate a contextual lens as available. Plane inevitably can only bring her own professional training to bear in her analysis of the reported dreams of seventeenth-century people of two very different cultures. It begs the question of whether it is appropriate to attempt to subject the dreams of the distant past—or almost any past, really—to modern psychoanalytic exploration. Then again, would it be any less inappropriate to interpret our contemporary dreams using elder modes of understanding, or those of a culture not experientially our own?

These are good questions to ask, and more books like *Dreams and the Invisible World in Colonial New England: Indians, Colonists, and the Seventeenth Century* are needed. Dream analysis at any point in the past and the present is a perilously tricky business, but Plane has done an admirable job in presenting the ways in which people occupying contentiously difficult geographic and cultural spaces interpreted their negotiation of this utterly unique borderland in their nocturnal journeys.

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***Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America.* By Kathleen Donegan. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. 260 pages. \$24.95 (paperback).**

Kathleen Donegan’s *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America* makes a splash in the historiography of early American



settlement as an interdisciplinary narrative filled with rich description and woven through with creative discussions of theory. Donegan, Associate Professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley, uses her first book to take a closer look at the suffering and violence that occurred between first contact and permanent British settlement in the New World. She argues that catastrophe became a discourse through which English settlers constructed their new identity. The pre-hegemonic seasoning period deserves more focus by scholars, according to Donegan, because examining the identity-forming

process highlights the abrupt and reactive nature of changes, thereby contradicting the traditional, linear narrative of early settlement ingrained in the national ethos.

To track the process of identity formation, Donegan grapples with the complex relationship between language and event as she walks her readers through close readings of primary source texts from four separate settlement situations. In chapter one Donegan selects Ralph Lane's meandering report as the central text of her exploration of the Roanoke colony. Unlike more popular sources of the failed settlement, Lane's account better captures the social and mental spaces where meaning was frequently compromised because he integrated imagined events and hopes for the future into real narratives. For Donegan what is important is how Lane described events, not their factual accuracy.

In chapter two Donegan expands the often-condensed colonial moment at Jamestown by focusing on George Percy's extensive account instead of John Smith's popular story of success in the larger Virginia area. George Percy's writings allow Donegan to emphasize the significance of crisis in producing coloniality because Percy was more involved in recording the daily material and representational crises in Jamestown. Donegan shows how "the body became the primary site of disarticulation" by elaborating upon instances of violence connected to deteriorating relations with Native Americans prior to

the first Anglo-Powhatan war and scenes of misery under Percy's leadership as the starving settlers became feral (86).

Diving more specifically into the meaning of the dead in chapter three, Donegan uses William Bradford's account of the Plymouth colony in present-day Massachusetts. The story of Bradford and the pilgrims is part of a national memory of suffering and triumph, but Donegan contends that the reality of the situation was much darker and more complex than commonly understood. Donegan demonstrates how Bradford consciously framed his narrative to match biblical stories and purposefully attempted to shape opinions about the pilgrims and the Native Americans. For example, she explains how Bradford chose to write about the bodies of Native Americans in the passive voice, "relocating them to a presettlement past" (133).

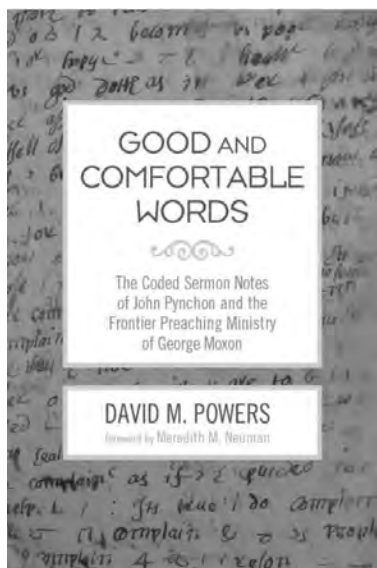
Interestingly, in the fourth and final chapter of *Seasons of Misery*, Donegan transitions geographically in a dramatic way to focus on colonial crisis in Barbados. Using Richard Ligon's account of the evolution of slavery and the Sugar Revolution, Donegan highlights textual similarities with sources from the previous three chapters. Although the outlier geographically, Barbados may be the best example of Donegan's linkage of settlement and crisis because it was slavery that "institutionalized catastrophe and permanently changed its nature" (197).

Critics may notice in *Seasons of Misery* that Donegan draws from no new sources. What she does instead is highlight forgotten pieces of sources. Additionally, what Donegan may lack in original source material or subject matter she makes up in her interdisciplinary analysis and incorporation of a variety of methodologies and new theories. Scholars like Andrew Delbanco and Mitchell Breitwieser have previously examined aspects of violence and suffering in early settlement. However, by mixing the methodologies of New Historicism and New Narrative History, Donegan makes her intervention unique. She uses "the framework of catastrophe to stay close to . . . acute experiences and their textual representation . . . to find coloniality in crisis rather than in accretion" (12). Overall, Donegan's *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America* explores captivating and morbid scenes of early American settlement while providing a healthy dose of perspective and inspiring deeper thought on the legacy of atrocities.

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***Good and Comfortable Words: The Coded Sermon Notes of John Pynchon and the Frontier Preaching Ministry of George Moxon.* By**

David M. Powers. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2017. 234 pages. \$28.00 (paperback) and *The World of Credit in Colonial Massachusetts: James Richards and His Daybook, 1692–1711*. By James E. Wadsworth. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2017. 376 pages. \$44.95 (paperback).



The internet and social media may or may not have had a net positive impact on the world. They have, however, in some respects, made the historian's task easier. Archives are continually moving more and more documents online, thus making them accessible to everyone with an internet connection. Some of this material has been transcribed and, in other cases, is being transcribed by crowdsourcing projects. It is also quite simple to photograph or scan older or illegible documents and circulate them online among friends and colleagues in order to decipher illegible, faded, or crabbed handwriting and symbols.

These important trends have expanded the body of material available to scholars and allow historians to tell more nuanced and complex stories about the past, rooted in many different documents. That said, the advances in technology can obscure the amount of time and effort it takes for scholars to publish transcribed, edited, and annotated documents. Given the nature of these documents, untangling and deciphering them proved to be, in each case, time-consuming but extremely important because of the information they contain. Indeed, the two volumes considered in this review—*Good and Comfortable Words: The Coded Sermon Notes of John Pynchon and the Frontier Preaching Ministry of George Moxon* and *The World of Credit in Colonial Massachusetts: James Richards and His Daybook, 1692–1711*—offer illuminating perspectives into life in colonial Massachusetts.

*Good and Comfortable Words* began as handwritten notes by John Pynchon of Springfield, Massachusetts, when he was about fourteen or fifteen years old. Pynchon recorded sermons delivered by George Moxon, a Puritan minister, in 1640–1641 and 1649. Keeping sermon notes, David M. Powers explains, was a common practice among Puritans, because “by recording what the

ministers said, the hearers participated in a process of communication which connected Scripture and preacher and fellow worshippers” (4). Pynchon could not write his notes out in longhand because he needed to preserve paper and quickly record the gist of what Moxon said. Thus, Pynchon used a type of shorthand to facilitate his notetaking. As Powers explains, Pynchon did not consistently hew to one particular style, but adopted various symbols, sometimes gave them different meanings, and even made up his own signs. Pynchon adopted his shorthand for the sake of expediency, but it made his sermon notes inaccessible for many scholars. Through a lengthy and painstaking process, Powers deciphered three different sets of Pynchon’s notes. The first came from the Lyman & Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History and contained eight sermons from January 26–March 16, 1640. The second came from the American Antiquarian Society and contained five sermons from December 6, 1640–January 3, 1641. The third came from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and contained 23 sermons from April 1, 1649–December 2, 1649. The temporal gap is important because the notes from 1649 were “written in a more mature hand, lack almost all of John’s original symbols” (8). The notes from 1640–1641 are longer—roughly 2,460 words on average—versus 1,590 words on average for the 1649 sermons.

Readers will appreciate the discussion of how Powers broke Pynchon’s code as well as the analysis of the importance of the sermon notes. “They assist,” Powers argues, “in accessing the issues, the questions, and the flavor of a long-lost community. Not only do they provide snippets of popular theological discourse at particular moments in the seventeenth century, they often point to the paramount issues of the day through the observations of a community leader charged with addressing a ‘word from the Lord’ to his contemporaries” (10). In general, Moxon’s sermons cleaved to Puritan understanding of preaching. He used a plain style and “developed his messages with a strong reliance on logic” (22).

Anyone looking for angry Puritan jeremiads is likely to come away disappointed. Moxon’s sermons were hardly “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Instead, they often focused on other topics such as hunger and poverty, governance, the youth, heresy, church life, relationships with Native Americans, a positive frame of mind, neighborliness, complaining, struggles of the spirit, and uncertainty. His words are strikingly different than many people’s stereotyped views of the Puritans. Consider, for example, Moxon’s reassurance that “God speaks comfort to his people and answers with good and comfortable words” (66) and “God would have us live comfortably and rejoice. Now we should labor not to be so sad, because God would comfort our hearts” (75) from the first set of sermons and “then comes Christ, and



he doth not only pardon your sins but he helps you to be more watchful in future time. Is this not comfort" (104) from the second set of sermons.

Critically, Moxon's tone changed somewhat from 1640–1641 to 1649 because Moxon himself became "crankier, crustier, crabbier with passing years" (36). Indeed, Moxon's 1640–1641 sermons did not use the word "hell" once where the 1649 sermons mentioned "hell" twenty-one times—eight in one sermon alone. Still, Moxon's tone changed in some respects, not all. He still included many sentiments such as this in the 1649 sermons: "but to have the great God to be your friend, it's a happiness indeed" (144). Pynchon's sermon notes, therefore, are an important window into colonial society in a number of ways—the practice of notetaking during sermons, the issues Moxon thought worthy of comment, and Moxon's evolution as a preacher—and allow the reader to see the fascinating and complex world of Puritan life in colonial Massachusetts in the 1640s, in other words, just a few decades into the colony's existence.

*The World of Credit in Colonial Massachusetts* begins several decades after Moxon's sermons. The volume presents the daybook of James Richards of Weymouth, specifically his accounts for nineteen years (March 1692–February 1711). James E. Wadsworth first saw the original daybook in a friend's attic—vacuum-sealed and stored in an old pillowcase for protection. With their permission, he began using it as a tool to demonstrate colonial paleography to students. Wadsworth probably had an easier time preparing this document for publication than Powers did the Pynchon notes because Richards did not write his accounts in code. However, Wadsworth's task was not an easy one, given the ever-present challenge of reading colonial handwriting, the fact that many pages had wear and tear and other markings, and the need to identify the people in the accounts and map their relationships with Richards. Wadsworth successfully transcribes and annotates the daybook, giving readers an intimate look into networks of trade, credit, and power in and beyond Weymouth.

The daybook, Wadsworth argues, "is an artifact of the credit economy that infused virtually every social and economic relationship in colonial Weymouth" (1). While well-to-do, Richards was not one of the wealthier men in Weymouth. Thus, his daybook provides a middle-class perspective often lacking in accounts of the colonial Americas. Credit made the world go round, so to speak, and Richards "formed credit relationships with his neighbors and family members and developed several commercially viable activities that allowed him to extend his credit relationships and acquire much needed income that could later be translated into land purchases" (12–13). The daybook demonstrates that Richards was connected to both



interregional and international markets and that his “practice of mixed husbandry and composite farming entangled him in networks of obligatory reciprocity with individuals and families” (21).

The majority of the transactions took place with residents of Weymouth, but Richards also sold goods to people living in Braintree, Bridgewater, Nantasket, Taunton, Easton, Charlestown, Hull, Boston, and Barnstable. Where some might see a lengthy list of debtors and creditors, Wadsworth demonstrates how the accounts reveal deep networks of credit, trade, power, and dependence. Moreover, the daybook began in 1692 for a specific reason. Richards did not inherit the property that his father left him in his will until 1692, when his mother died. It was only after inheriting this property that he could offer credit.

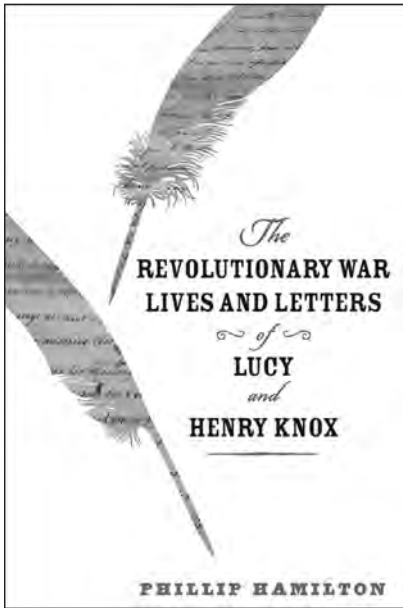
Just as *Good and Comfortable Words* challenged some of the stereotypes about Puritans, *The World of Credit in Colonial Massachusetts* reveals some elements about life in colonial Massachusetts that may surprise people. For one, Wadsworth notes a “lack of rigid boundaries between the male and female spheres of production” (26) and argues that the daybook reveals “the sometimes invisible world, at least in most men’s daybooks, of an economy in which women played a significant role” (30). Wadsworth thus joins other scholars who refute the old idea of separate and distinct spheres by revealing how intertwined people’s lives could be in this society. In addition, race and ethnicity were a very important part of the colonial world, but specific mentions of people of different races and ethnicities are sometimes hard to discern. For example, at various points, Richards mentions an African slave by name with no reference to race (173); uses the words “negro” (182), “franck negrowe” (239), and “mulata” (199); and alludes to “Nashes Indian” (193). There is one instance where he uses a slur to refer to a person of color (258). Richards, in other words, paid inconsistent attention to the race and ethnicity of many of the people he dealt with on a daily basis. In sum, the daybook “provides a rare glimpse of the intricate networks that generated the pulse of life in rural communities” (31).

*Good and Comfortable Words: The Coded Sermon Notes of John Pyncheon and the Frontier Preaching Ministry of George Moxon* and *The World of Credit in Colonial Massachusetts: James Richards and His Daybook, 1692–1711* are both excellent examples of transcribed, edited, and annotated primary sources. Both volumes might have benefitted from additional attention to context. The period covered by both books was a busy one indeed that involved many different actors, different types of movement, invisible threats such as witches and diseases, and violent conflicts. At times, both authors could have added a bit more about how some of the external events likely influenced

the creation of these sources. That said, these volumes will serve as critical components for additional scholarly narratives about this period. Powers and Wadsworth are to be commended for their efforts to make challenging documents legible and accessible to students, scholars, and a general audience.

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***The Revolutionary War Lives and Letters of Lucy and Henry Knox.* By Phillip Hamilton. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017. 205 pages. \$19.95 (paperback).**



Phillip Hamilton remarked that the correspondence between Abigail and John Adams received much attention in scholarship on Early American history. However, less attention examines the correspondence between Lucy and Henry Knox. In his work *The Revolutionary War Lives and Letters of Lucy and Henry Knox*, Hamilton's focus is on the Knox family, particularly the intimate relationship between Lucy and Henry Knox. His deliberate attention shift away from the Adamases seeks to explore three main arguments. First, the Knox's correspondence provides scholars the ability to peer into the inner workings of the Continental Army. The Knox letters trace the

evolution of the Continental Army and its maturation from an ill-prepared cluster of revolutionaries to an experienced fighting force. Second, they provide scholars a better understanding of how broader social transformations from the American Revolution confronted spouses and altered their lives. The American Revolution accelerated social change in the Knox family by equalizing relations between man and wife. Lastly, they help historians better understand how married couples endured and survived the war. According to Hamilton, increased interdependence resulted from Lucy's essential

contributions in maintaining the family estate at home and caring for the couple's children.

*Revolutionary War Lives and Letters* is split up into six chapters and follows the lives of Lucy and Henry Knox from their early childhood to their courtship and eventual death. The chapters are organized periodically. Apart from the introduction and the last chapter titled "Afterwards (1784–1824)," each chapter starts with an annotation of the couple's letters followed by transcribed text of the actual correspondence. The letters are organized chronologically by date. Most of the book utilizes the Knox Papers.

Chapter one examines the Knox couple's early years, courtship, and marriage, 1773–1775. Lucy was born daughter of a wealthy and influential loyalist family. Henry was the son of the struggling shipmaster and small wharf owner. According to Hamilton, the couple met at Henry's bookstore located in Boston, Massachusetts. Lucy's father, Thomas Flucker Sr., did not like Henry as a match for his daughter because of his lack of wealth or education and because he was a suspected rebel sympathizer. Thomas Flucker Sr. and his wife Hannah Flucker did not approve of their daughter's relationship with Henry throughout the young couple's courtship. In demonstration of their disapproval, they refused to attend their daughter's wedding.

Chapters two, three, and four examine the early stages of the American Revolutionary War, 1775–1777. They explore Henry's career in the Continental Army and his military experiences fighting the British. This section also reveals how the war affected his marriage. During the early stages of the war, the Knoxes "endured long and painful separation from one another." At the same time, the Knoxes' relationship became more equitable. According to Hamilton, the responsibilities, contributions, and struggles that Lucy bore for the family at home allowed her to renegotiate the power dynamic in the family, reflecting a more equitable dynamic. What's more, the couple's growing interdependence on one another to sustain their marriage similarly supplied the equalization of their relationship dynamic. For example, while Henry fought the British, Lucy managed the home front. Lucy raised their children and managed the household affairs and family estate. She also sent Henry much-needed supplies while he was on campaign.

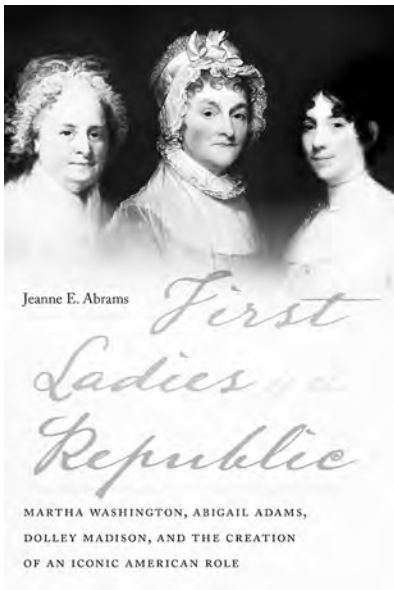
Chapters five and six examine the remainder of the war, 1778–1783, and the final days of the couple's life, 1784–1824. During the second half of the conflict, the Knoxes correspondence shifts away from discussions about the war and instead focuses more on family matters, personal finances, and the couple's future together. In two quick pages, the final chapter covers the couple's life after the Revolutionary War. Hamilton argues that the Revolutionary War forever altered the dynamics between the couple. Based

on their experiences in the war, Lucy would insist that family decisions be made jointly, and “Henry acquiesced in this.”

In all, Hamilton writes an exceptionally good book. His arguments are well supported with a wealth of evidence. He sheds light on an overlooked relationship and an understudied topic from the Revolutionary War era, offering valuable insights into how social transformations altered the lives of married couples. It is important to note, however, that Hamilton’s study could have been done in a concise research paper. Without the transcribed letters, which make up most of the book, all that is left is a research paper and not a book-length project.

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***First Ladies of the Republic: Martha Washington, Abigail Adams, Dolley Madison, and the Creation of an Iconic American Role.* By Jeanne E. Abrams. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2018. 312 pages. \$18.95 (trade paperback).**



*First Ladies of the Republic: Martha Washington, Abigail Adams, Dolley Madison, and the Creation of an Iconic American Role* presents us with portraits of the inaugural first ladies of the United States. It shows how each one helped to forge the role they were thrust into, with little help or guidance save from each other. Each needed to strike a balance between numerous shifting influences that helped to define the role, but that could also lead to disaster if not artfully managed.

The traditional roles of supportive wife and mother were a given, but then had to be blended with the demands of being a highly visible public figure and role model. The examples of European courts could and did provide some precedent, but often it was as a negative example of what a first lady should not do. The American people were convinced of the righteousness of their republican form of government and

were always on the lookout to eradicate any possible monarchical tendencies in their elected leaders. In the case of presidents, this scrutiny involved their wives as well. Thus, when the initial first ladies started to build their positions out of whole cloth, they always had to walk a tightrope between imbuing the role with the dignity and majesty it deserved and crossing the line into royal-like behavior. They all managed to achieve this feat with relatively little criticism. Abigail Adams' husband John was not so lucky, often being piteously lampooned for his supposed bent toward monarchy. His example shows that if the first ladies had not got this balance right, in all likelihood they would have suffered the same fate.

Martha Washington was first into the void, and in many ways served as mentor and example for those who followed. In an era where to wed for money was considered routine, her marriage to George provided him with many things he lacked and needed to advance in society. A respected family name and connections, wealth, estates, slaves, and a ready-made family (Martha was widowed with two sons) were all part of the bargain. In addition, Martha displayed fortitude and ability during the course of her widowhood, capably managing her households, farms, and servants without the guidance of a male hand. During the Revolution, Martha supported George by running the estates during the growing and harvesting seasons, and by joining her husband in winter quarters during each year of the conflict. She was also instrumental in organizing private fundraisers in support of the troops, who were chronically underfed and lacking in shoes and blankets.

It was Martha who inaugurated the drawing room for the "Republican Court," which became a popular vehicle for the public to meet the president in a dignified, though not overly majestic setting. The drawing rooms became very popular, combining the qualities of dignity and restraint that were called for by an infant republic wary of monarchical taint. She also initiated a series of formal receptions at the presidential mansion that encouraged communication between the president, politicians, and other leading citizens. These receptions were very popular but were inevitably criticized by some as being too similar to royal European courts—which shows that then as now, you can't please everyone.

Significantly, Abigail Adams was the vice president's wife during the Washington presidency. During that time she became a close friend and admirer of Martha and learned much from their association. She maintained the basic structure of social outreach that Martha established, hosting countless dinners and functions that allowed for free communication between the president, members of Congress, foreign dignitaries, and others. But her most important contributions were often behind the scenes. Abigail

was John's life partner and most trusted advisor. Her political good sense, impeccable judge of character, and intellectual ability made her integral to John's success. During a time of societal constraints which indicated that "behind every good man there is a good woman," Abigail Adams personified that role. If she were alive in a different era, that phrase might start with the word "beside" rather than "behind." And if she were alive today, a woman of her ability might be president in her own right. But the times dictated that she play a supporting role to her husband, which she did magnificently.

Prior to the vice presidency, Abigail gained firsthand experience with European courts as the wife of one of our most prominent overseas diplomats. She was able to determine what she liked and what royal affectations she wanted to avoid in future republican courts. She was also a cool counterweight to her volatile, passionate husband (it still amazes me that a man of his temperament was a successful diplomat, but times were different then). She often provided John with calm political advice and insightful character analysis that were a steadying boon to his career. Also, like Martha, Abigail ran the farm during John's frequent and long absences, playing a critical role in allowing John the space he needed for his many accomplishments.

Thomas Jefferson's wife died before he became president, and the first lady's role devolved to his niece, who fulfilled a caretaker role for her uncle. Thus, there is no chapter covering Jefferson's presidency.

The most flamboyant first lady, Dolley Madison, was the Jackie Kennedy of her day. Intelligent, extravagant, and beautiful, Dolley put her own imprint onto the first lady's role. The country now being well established, the public was less afraid of slipping into monarchy, so Dolley had more freedom than her predecessors in how to present herself and her husband to the world. She reinstated the Washington/Adams drawing rooms, which Jefferson had scrapped as too regal, to broad acclaim. Her flamboyant costumes and jewelry made her look "queenly" and regal, but never seemed to instigate serious criticism in that regard. She also realized that the White House was an important symbol of the country and the presidency, and was deeply involved in redesigning the public space to make it compare favorably with European courts. Like Abigail before her, Dolley's social skills complemented (and in some ways made up for) her husband's. She understood the importance of personal diplomacy better than most, and her many dinners and parties were often designed for maximum political benefit to her husband, while still being wildly successful on the social level.

Perhaps the most famous incident in Dolley's eventful life was her calm evacuation of the White House as the British marched towards Washington. James was inspecting the inadequate defenses of the city, the militia was

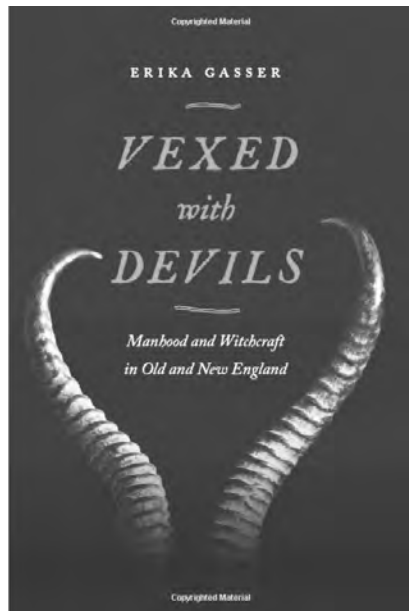
collapsing, and the British were advancing much faster than anyone imagined, so Dolley took command. She saved many government documents and a large portrait of George Washington just before the White House was burned by the invaders. This episode made her a genuine hero to the American public during a time of defeat and disgrace. It also enhanced her husband's image, helping him to soldier on.

*First Ladies of the Republic: Martha Washington, Abigail Adams, Dolley Madison, and the Creation of an Iconic American Role* illustrates how the Founding Mothers contributed significantly to the success of their husbands, our presidents, and of the early American Republic. It's an interesting read and reveals important aspects of the presidency that are often too lightly touched upon.

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***Vexed with Devils: Manhood and Witchcraft in Old and New England.***  
**By Erika Gasser. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2017. 223 pages. \$75.00 (hardcover).**

Erika Gasser, an assistant professor of history at the University of Cincinnati, juxtaposes manhood and witchcraft while also exploring the scholarly vexation with devils in her first monograph, *Vexed with Devils: Manhood and Witchcraft in Old and New England*. Within the larger backdrop of the Atlantic World, Gasser focuses on the Anglo-Atlantic to understand how ideas of manhood and witchcraft shifted between England and New England. From the outset, she carefully defines terms of difference, like possession and obsession, that contemporary scholars during the witch trials used interchangeably on both sides of the Atlantic. This careful scholarship characterizes the research and writing in *Vexed with Devils*.





The book does not contain any images but provides ample excerpts from primary sources, such as witchcraft-possession accounts. Gasser provides close readings of a carefully selected body of published literature that played critical roles in witch trials in England and New England. By contextualizing their arguments while foreshadowing the authors' demographics, she demonstrates a "transatlantic flow of texts" (102). Her concern is the degree of continuity that existed on both sides of the Atlantic. Because her focus is on manhood and patriarchal power, Gasser cannot take the more common perspective of women affected by the trials. Instead, she argues that a more necessary gendered reading of the witch trials must include men.

Despite her focus on manhood, women are not absent from this analysis. Gasser's intellectual and religious history of manhood provides a much-needed layer to the history of women in the witchcraft narratives. The spaces that she explores often define gender in inconsistent ways, but the "patriarchal principles" remain firm (79). At some points in the book, this forces her to examine gendered language as it functioned indirectly through "roles so inextricably male that they merged connotations of gender with social status, piety, and honor broadly conceived" (73). In doing so, she offers a complex gendered analysis of witchcraft accusations as they affected men. As she proves, rather than becoming "feminized" when men were accused of witchcraft, they were instead "unmade" as men (115).

*Vexed with Devils* is logically organized, giving nearly equal time and weight to possession cases on both sides of the Atlantic. Gasser approaches each of these spaces through close readings that demonstrate how those possessed were engendered in texts, and then analyzing the gendered mechanism for disputing those possession claims. She does this as she moves chronologically from England to New England, systematically working through each possession narrative. Each chapter stands alone in the layered argument, so there are not transitions between her discussion of England and New England.

The first half of the book delves into possessions in England. Gasser begins with publications of the Margaret Cooper case, which span nearly 100 years with varying details in each account. The inconsistencies in the storytelling allow Gasser to analyze what she calls the "possession script," which she returns to throughout the monograph (23). In the second chapter, her examination of the Samuel family stands out as some of the most astute analytical work of the book. The execution of John Samuel's wife and daughter fit into familiar narratives about women facing witchcraft accusations for crossing patriarchal powers, but Gasser demonstrates that John Samuel's execution happened on similar terms. Although societal expectations

in sixteenth-century England allowed men to act upon their wives with physical violence, the community viewed Samuel's abuse as excessive. While women faced witchcraft accusations because of societal beliefs that they were too weak to fight preternatural influence, men who could not control their emotions and physical reactions could face similar accusations.

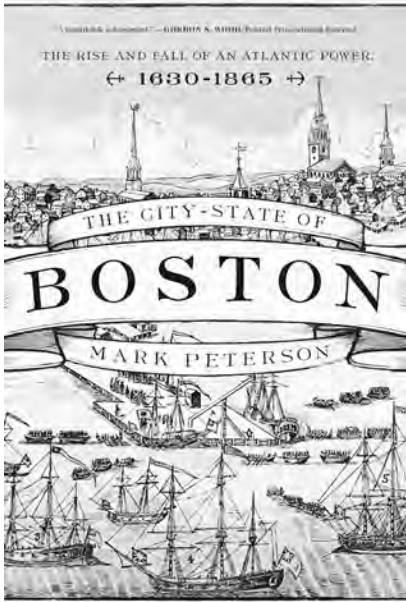
The second half follows a similar trajectory as it places New England possession narratives, particularly in Salem, within the larger Anglo-Atlantic World. Gasser uses possession narratives that had a transatlantic market and could be found in both England and New England. She situates her work within literature that has long acknowledged the factors that made Salem different from witch trials in England, such as the impact of Native American wars around New England. But her contribution to the historiography is her analysis of more nuanced similarities in cultural constructions, like those of power, gender, and religion. Her discussion of George Burroughs, John Willard, and other men accused of witchcraft in Salem show a narrative that is familiar from the first few chapters. Burroughs and Willard defied expectations of manhood by neglecting their posts as "an honorable man at the head of the household" (112). In a similar vein, her final discussions of Cotton Mather's public dispute with Robert Calef center on gendered language and socially constructed ideas of proper manhood.

This work makes several historiographical interventions in the intersections of gender, witchcraft, and religious thought. For Gasser, an Anglo-Atlantic vantage point of the witch trials provides a way to see how continuity of patriarchal power, religious beliefs, and skepticism "resonated across the Atlantic" (172). As she notes, "the system of patriarchal authority . . . remained fundamentally unchallenged across the long seventeenth century . . . and the Atlantic" (5). Her work also fits within broader scholarship on gendered bodies, as her evidence demonstrates that "witchcraft-possession cases hinged upon who held power over bodies" (53).

This work has implications within larger conversations about the impact of local and global politics, and forces scholars to consider cultural continuities within immigrant communities, even generations removed from migration. Gasser acknowledges the limitations to this sort of close cultural reading of sources, noting that possession narratives make it difficult to find a historical truth in the stories. Instead, they are stories about societal expectations and power. Gasser's look at a smaller subset of the Atlantic World fills gaps in the literature from other works that explore how additional power structures, like race and class, also played into the witch trials. In doing so, she adds to a growing body of literature that demonstrates how witchcraft accusations centered on power.

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***The City-State of Boston: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Power, 1630–1865.* By Mark Peterson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019. 741 pages. \$39.95 (hardcover).**



The history of city-states occupies a small corner of human history. Mere mention of the word city-state conjures images of ancient European and Mediterranean cities. The presence of city-states in colonial North America, however, is not commonly realized. In *The City-State of Boston*, Mark Peterson provides a narrative of Boston, arguing that the Massachusetts metropolis was a distinct nation from 1630 to 1865. According to Peterson, Boston developed as a polity, consisting of the city and its hinterland, that pursued its economic and political aspirations, competing with similar entities in the early modern Atlantic world. The emergence of the United States sparked the decline of the city-state until its

eventual demise in 1865. Before its downfall, Boston can best be understood as a city-state. It was “a self-conscious attempt to build an autonomous self-governing republic modeled on biblical and classical republican ideals in a New World environment” (5–6). Viewing Boston as a city-state has been obscured and overlooked in America’s national narrative. Boston’s vision as a New World city-republic, put forth by its Puritan founders, consisted of two aspects: an autonomous body of “republican self-government in both church and state,” and the practice of the principle of mutual charity among members existing voluntarily within the commonwealth (13). According to Peterson, these virtuous aspirations for Boston were undermined by an exclusionary social vision and a dependence on a slave-based economy. Slavery, Peterson points out, existed in “New England’s origins, aided its growth and prosperity, but ultimately destroyed both its autonomy and internal cohesion” (22–23).

Peterson's research brings to light the untold narrative of Boston. Counter to the national narrative, Peterson's version contains a cast of obscure characters. People such as Samuel Sewall, Jonathan Belcher, Jean-Paul Mascarene, Abijah Willard, Phillis Wheatley, and Fisher Ames, are some of the lesser-known names who occupy center-stage in Boston's historical drama. The research in this book utilizes an exhaustive list of primary sources consisting of letters, maps, diaries, street plans, land grants, and legal documents.

Peterson's book is organized into three parts. Beginning in 1630, the first section covers Boston's development during the seventeenth century, exploring the city's expansion and engagement with the slave trade in the West Indies. Indeed, the seventeenth century witnessed Boston's economic and political expansion. The creation of New England's independent commerce helped establish Boston's independence as a city state. After the establishment of the New England Confederation, Boston became the focal point of diplomacy for negotiations with Native Americans, Dutch settlers, and New France. Through Boston's imperialism, Natives captured from the Indian wars were sold into the Atlantic slave market. This ran counter to the principles of the commonwealth. While Boston flourished, New England leaders paid tribute to the British Crown in order to remain independent from the Crown meddling in colonial matters. During its rise in stature, accumulating power and influence within the New World, Boston remained relatively autonomous especially in matters pertaining to self-government.

Part Two covers the period after the Glorious Revolution in the 1680s, tracing the rapid growth of Boston until the American Revolution. This section explores how Boston's virtues collided with the slave trade. This became particularly evident with the city-state's increased participation in the British Empire, an empire that dominated the Atlantic slave trade. Indeed, from 1691 onwards, Boston became a royal colony which resulted in the loss of much of its autonomy. Britain's imperial wars militarized Boston, damaging its commercial relationships with neighboring polities. During the Imperial Crisis in the 1760s and early 1770s, Boston's vision for government collided with the interests of the emerging United States. Boston leaders discovered, to their dismay, that the common goals of the united colonies did not place Boston at the center of their nation-building plans. As the transfer of power was consolidated in North American hands after the Revolutionary War, Boston's ability to hold on to its identity was uncertain.

Part Three covers the period of Boston's history after the American Revolution until the end of the polity's existence as a city-state in 1865. According to Peterson, the ratification of the United States Constitution

“began the slow demise of Boston’s independence and regional power” (20). After 1783 Boston found itself under the thumb of majorities within the new republic. Some of these majoritarian decisions were destructive to Boston’s prosperity. Boston’s vision for the United States collided with Virginia’s (and that of other Southern states) who preferred land exploitation rather than overseas trade to decide the means of securing the nation’s future prosperity. The South’s majority in the early Congress helped secure Southern interests at Boston’s expense. In time, Boston was forced to compromise on its own personal interests in favor of the unified nation’s common interests. This is evident in the national commercial regulation, the 1807 Embargo Act, and Louisiana’s admission as a state which threatened the slave/free state balance in Congress. Boston’s dissatisfaction, and its leaders’ belief that the federal government was not respecting Boston’s traditions and was instead was preferring the interests of the Southern states, led to the Hartford Convention, 1814–1815. The failure of the convention marked an end to Boston’s federative politics.

By the end of the first decade of the 1800s, Boston shifted its economic focus inland from its concentration in the Atlantic trade as it developed its manufacturing, especially in the textile industry. Boston’s industrialization severed the relationship between Boston’s merchant class and the hinterland. Industrialization also grew Boston’s dependence on Southern cotton, a crop that relied heavily on slave labor. Geographically, Boston changed during the nineteenth century. The city dismantled its defensive fortifications, a staple of city-states, and railroads reoriented Boston inward instead of seaward while also making the city a part of the American mainland. As national unrest intensified and the unity of the states crumbled, Boston experienced a cascade of violence linked to deteriorating national affairs. With the Civil War drawing near, “spacial, racial, religious, ethnic, gender, class, and political divisions,” divided Boston, fracturing the city and eventually leading to its dissolution. According to Peterson, Boston as a city-state ended by 1865.

While the Civil War proved detrimental to the existence of Boston as a city-state, Boston emerged from the war with increased influence and commitment within the United States. Peterson argues that historians created a national narrative in the wake of the Civil War that deliberately wiped clean the story of America’s democratic origins which rested on slavery. In *The City-State of Boston: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Power, 1630–1865*, Peterson essentially provides a biography of Boston in New England. His exhaustive use of sources leaves no doubt to the existence of evidence supporting his arguments. Although his work is not a complete history of Boston, Peterson

makes sure to address this issue by stating that there is not enough time or room to accomplish an overwhelmingly large task such as that.

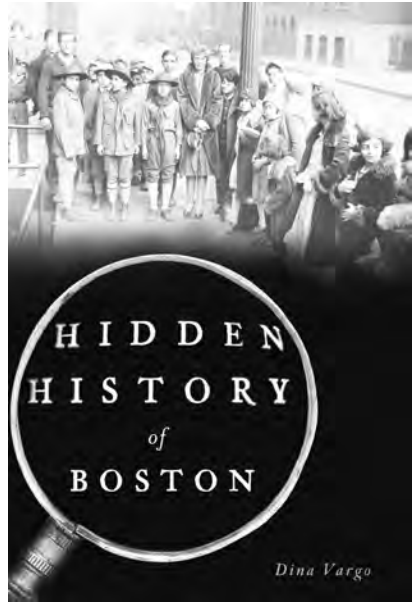
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***Hidden History of Boston.* By Dina Vargo. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2018. 127 pages. \$21.99 (paperback).**

When one thinks of the extensive history of the city of Boston, a multitude of events and people will immediately come to mind. From its Puritan founding in 1630, to its central role in the American Revolution, to the busing crisis of the 1970s, and the recent Boston Marathon Bombing in 2013, there are a litany of chapters and characters that place the city at the very heart of American history. In *Hidden History of Boston*, however, Dina Vargo offers an eccentric but very compelling collection of stories that will enlighten the most ardent history buffs and perhaps even some local scholars.

A self-proclaimed lover of what she calls “oddball” history, Vargo earned her B.A. in fine arts and M.A. in public administration from the University of Pittsburgh before transplanting to the Boston area more than ten years ago. Vargo began compiling the eclectic tales as part of her work as an instructor for the *Boston By Foot* walking tours, a non-profit program dedicated to expanding the history of Boston beyond conventional boundaries. What emerges from Vargo’s penchant for the “offbeat” and her enthusiasm for teaching is an assortment of truly intriguing short histories that heighten our already rich understanding of this storied American city.

Ranging anywhere from between four and nine pages, each of the seventeen chapters in *Hidden History of Boston* is written with a unique blend of brevity, clarity, and flair. Beginning with the Scrooge-like tale of the banning of Christmas in Boston because of widespread extortion syndicates and unruly celebrations in 1659, and ending with the largely ignored assassination of five





men in the city's Chinatown neighborhood in 1991, Vargo recounts stories about real people and the events that impacted their lives. With a clever pen she introduces us to characters such as John Collins Warren and his Harvard classmates, who were part of a strangely prevalent "body-snatching business" in the early 1800s. We also meet Jesse Pomeroy, the "Red Devil" who terrorized the city of Boston in 1872. And then there is Avis Linnell, a young—and very pregnant—woman whose diabolical murder in 1911 could serve as the storyline of a sinister *Netflix* crime drama.

One of the more important stories told in *Hidden History of Boston* is that of William Monroe Trotter. As the son of James Trotter, a volunteer in the 55th Massachusetts Colored Regiment during the Civil War, William was no stranger to the ongoing struggle for racial equality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was only after he graduated from Harvard University, however, that he fully realized the immeasurable chasm that separated blacks and whites in the economic, social, and political landscape of a post-emancipated world. To combat the overt racism and blatant injustices perpetrated against his fellow African Americans, Trotter established the *Guardian* in 1901, a radical newspaper committed to uplifting his race. As the paper's chief editor, Trotter countered disparaging reports about blacks in white newspapers with stories that emphasized the many accomplishments of African Americans in the Boston area and beyond. Fearlessly he challenged anyone who stood in the way of complete equality for African Americans, and he unapologetically used the *Guardian* as a weapon in the fight against segregation.

A prime example of Trotter's resolve was his fierce criticism of Booker T. Washington's accommodationist approach to race relations. Without concern for Washington's national prominence, Trotter condemned the passive tenets espoused in what W. E. B. Du Bois later dubbed Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" speech of 1895, and instead argued that blacks should demand full equality in all social, political, and economic aspects of American life. In fact, Trotter was so determined to obstruct what he believed was Washington's submissive vision for black progress that he even went to jail for a month after intentionally disrupting Washington's 1903 visit to Boston.

Although all of this certainly makes Trotter a remarkable figure in Boston's history, it is his relationship with President Woodrow Wilson that is perhaps most impressive. In the same way that he opposed Booker T. Washington, Trotter was not afraid to go "toe to toe with the president" on matters concerning racial justice (76). On two separate occasions in 1913 and 1914 respectively, Trotter was invited to the White House to advise President



Wilson on the abhorrent conditions facing most African Americans. Although Trotter pressured Wilson to solidify a cohesive plan to remedy the ever-increasing injustices inflicted against blacks, he was ultimately let down by the president's approval of segregation and his failed promise of racial equality.

Undaunted, Trotter secretly followed Wilson to the post-World War I Paris Peace Conference in 1919. While there, he publicly chided the president and shrewdly used the press to spotlight the hypocrisy of African Americans fighting in a foreign war for democracy while simultaneously being denied civil rights in the United States. Although he never accomplished his goal of convincing Wilson to include a plank of racial equality in the Treaty of Versailles, Trotter sustained his one-man crusade for social justice until his tragic death in 1934.

Trotter's story demonstrates one of the genuine strengths of *Hidden History of Boston*. Shedding light on Trotter's early twentieth-century strategy for achieving racial equality not only helps us better comprehend who we are as a nation, but it also reminds us of the countless number of overlooked champions in the long struggle against racism and exhibits the importance of bringing their stories into the fold of mainstream American history.

Similarly, Vargo recovers the harrowing tale of Ellen and William Craft, two escaped slaves from Georgia who miraculously made it safely to Boston in 1849. Alas, the couple was forced to flee to Europe in 1850 after President Millard Fillmore threatened to deploy the U.S. Army in an effort to return them to slavery. While the valiant endeavors of runaway slaves such as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman are well documented, there are thousands of other escapees who triumphed in anonymity. As such, incorporating the Craft's story—and the many others like it—into contemporary historical perspectives adds considerable insight to both our past and present.

Vargo also devotes a chapter to the “rampant and ugly anti-Semitism that held Boston in its grip for a decade” (105). Although the chapter focuses mainly on the ten-year period from 1935 to the end of World War II in 1945, Vargo reveals that sporadic episodes of violent “Jew hunting” persisted in Boston into the early 1950s (109). Lifting the veil on this latent and disturbing era of the city's past serves as a highly instructive function in the pursuit of authentic Boston history.

To be clear, not all of the stories contained in *Hidden History of Boston* are meant to complicate traditional historical narratives. For example, “Soaring Social Worker” maps out the unlikely journey that led Amelia Earhart to the Dennison House in 1925, a Boston settlement house designed to help newly

arriving immigrants acclimate to life in the United States. As it turns out, the trailblazing pilot was a bit of an innovator when it came to social work as well. Rather than focus solely on conventional programs aimed at educating and supporting adults, Earhart paid special attention to the children of her community. Not surprisingly, she ensured that young girls were afforded equal opportunities for physical activity and recreation. And it was while she was working at the Dennison House that Earhart was chosen to serve on the board of directors at a local airport in Quincy, MA, and notified that she would become the first female to fly across the Atlantic Ocean in 1928.

Another captivating topic is the mid-nineteenth-century practice of spirit photography, a deceptive ploy that convinced people the ghosts of their departed loved ones could be captured on film. So persuasive was the technique, in fact, that in 1870 Mary Todd Lincoln posed for a photo with Boston photographer William Mumler in the hopes of being reacquainted with her late husband. When the widow was later shown a photograph of her being embraced by a ghostlike presence, she took comfort in believing that it was really him.

Still other peculiar stories comprised in *Hidden History of Boston* include: the mysterious and macabre death of Susanna Geary, a case that revealed the dark underbelly of Boston's illicit abortion industry in the early 1900s; the "Summer Street Trolley Disaster" of 1916, where forty-six passengers were doomed to a watery coffin after a streetcar on the city's Elevated Railway crashed into the Fort Point Channel; and the idiosyncratic 1938 "Zoo Shipwreck" that left millions of dollars-worth of exotic creatures floating in the Boston Harbor.

It is important to reiterate that *Hidden History of Boston* does not offer a comprehensive examination of any of its subjects. Even though it is not intended to be a scholarly text, it does provide a relatively substantial bibliography for those interested in further reading. Ultimately, *Hidden History of Boston* never promises to be anything more than what it actually is: a succinct, informative, and tantalizing book that will appeal to a diverse, if "offbeat," audience.

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***The Boys of St. Joe's '65 in the Vietnam War.* By Dennis G. Pregent. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2020. 246 pages. \$29.95 (paperback).**

Dennis G. Pregent's well-structured, researched, and clearly written study presents the riveting Vietnam War experiences of one female and eleven young male natives of northwestern Massachusetts. They were students at St. Joseph's High School in North Adams from 1961–65. Whether or not the reader is a veteran, the author's account as a former Marine from the Adams and North Adams area will speak to reflective members of the war generation and their descendants in deep and lasting ways.

To reinforce this verisimilitude, the book opens with a map featuring Da Nang, the author's location for two tours, plus several pages devoted to the military terms he uses throughout the book. Numerous black-and-white prints show the stories of all of these young patriots in additional detail.

"My Vietnam," the heading for Part I, contains six chapters. The section devoted to Pregent's Berkshires boyhood also includes his induction into the Marines at Parris Island and his subsequent training in North Carolina and Virginia before rotations through Okinawa and Vietnam, 1967–68, and Quantico and Vietnam, 1968–71.

The second chapter alone, entitled "When Memory Invades," quickly engages us: Pregent and his wife Carol are touring the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia. Almost immediately, she can see in his face that he has been transported back in time. It is September 1970, and Dennis is suddenly an aerial gunner again:

"Only minutes ago we landed at a Marine Corps fire base. It was under attack, which meant so were we. Our critical mission was to pick up some seriously wounded and dead Marines and get out of there. The base radio operator announced one emergency medevac, a few priorities, and at least two 'permanent routines.' The operator also instructed our pilot to keep both his machine gunners 'on their guns' since there were 'gooks in the wires' which translates to: the enemy is about to penetrate the base perimeter (9)."



Pregent separated from the military in August 1971 in South Carolina. By that time he was married with one daughter. His college education, much of it to be completed at night, lay ahead as his family grew.

In Part II of *The Boys of St. Joe's*, each of the author's ten male graduates in the Class of '65 is presented in his own chapter with the same care for detail employed in Part I. Their female classmate, Carol Bleau Boucher, was never in service herself. Her chapter reveals that she became a silent and then active war protester as her stance against the war solidified and the nation and her native region witnessed more and more death and damage to life, limb, and patriotism. She herself was wounded emotionally. John Hartlage III, a '65 graduate of nearby Adams High School, met Carol at a dance in Bennington, Vermont. Their romance followed.

After the completion of one tour of duty in the Navy, John extended his overseas tour, which allowed him a 30-day leave. He arrived back in the States just in time to see Carol graduate from college in June 1967. John was increasingly serious about the relationship; Carol loved John but had reservations about marrying too young. The topic was discussed during his leave but no decision was made, and he returned to Vietnam to complete his extended tour.

On March 8, 1968, the Dong Ha Combat Base was bombarded by 80 rounds of enemy rocket fire. Ten soldiers and three Seabees were killed. One was John, who died 60 days before he was to return home.

Pregent and nine of his male classmates lived to establish their impressive war stories. Three Marines, one Navy, and seven Army men made up this St. Joe's unit. Marine Infantryman Russell Roulier was killed in action on June 21, 1967. He received the Purple Heart and a Combat Action Ribbon. His surviving classmates, the cadre from St. Joe's, "earned a total of four bronze stars, a Navy/Marine Corps medal, five combat infantrymen's badges, three combat action ribbons, more than ten air medals, four purple hearts, many unit citations and a number of U.S and Vietnamese commendation medals" (5).

In addition to Pregent and Russ Roulier, the other Marine profiled in the book is Joe Daigneault, an infantryman. He was Russ's closest friend in Adams. During Operation Desoto, Joe was wounded at Chu Lai by sniper fire on April 1, 1967, leaving his right arm barely attached to his body. Initially helicoptered to the battalion aid station for treatment, he received his Purple Heart, and after two days was medevacked first to Japan and then to Chelsea Naval Hospital in the Boston area. His family and friends visited him there during his six-month stay, which included thirteen surgeries. An occasional weekend liberty allowed him a trip home to Adams, facilitated by his father.

On Halloween Day, 1967, Joe was permanently and medically retired from the Marine Corps. One of Joe's visits to Adams during that tragic summer had been to attend the June 30 funeral of his best friend and enlistment buddy, Russ Roulier.

Today Joe Daigneault and his wife Ellie still live in Adams. They have two grown sons and four grandchildren. Never one to feel sorry for himself, Joe, a successful businessman, husband, father, and grandfather, does acknowledge, however, that "he thought at the time we were fighting for South Vietnam's freedom, only to realize later in life that our government and its military leaders lied—or worse, had no idea what they were doing" (108). Army Infantryman Jim Luczynski of St. Joe's, in contrast, asserts that "our efforts in supporting the Vietnamese government were justified." Commenting that "we never lost a battle," Jim insists that the war was winnable, but "we lacked the political will and leadership to accomplish our mission" (206).

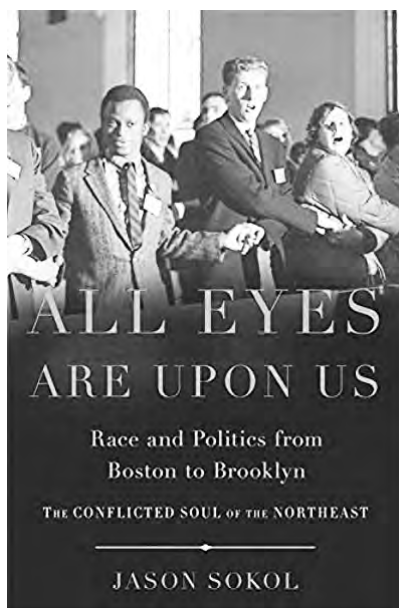
Dennis Pregent's sobering accounts of himself and his St. Joe's classmates, both male and female, leave the clear impression that after half a century, our Vietnam battles are not yet dead and gone.

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***All Eyes Are Upon Us: Race and Politics from Boston to Brooklyn.* By Jason Sokol. New York: Basic Books, 2014. 385 pages. \$28.95 (paperback).**

Jason Sokol's previous book, *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945–1975*, examined the confusion, anger, and angst of white southerners in the face of the civil rights movement. *All Eyes are Upon Us: Race and Politics from Boston to Brooklyn* looks at the North during much of the same period. If Sokol problematized popular images of violent, unyielding southerners defending Jim Crow in his first book, his second book portrays a similar complicated and contradictory history of race relations in the postwar Northeast, where his focus is New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. [Editor's note: *All Eyes Are Upon Us* was selected for the Winter 2021 issue's "Editor's Choice Award."]

Compared to the South, northerners "fancied themselves as colorblind" (xxv). Boston, where abolitionism was born and thrived, and New England in general, appeared the antithesis of vile southern racism. As the Boston busing crisis of the early 1970s made clear, however, the reality of race relations in the Northeast was significantly more complex. African Americans, as in the South, faced discrimination in housing, education, and employment. As in the South, racists could wield violence to enforce the racial order.



Witness the brazen attack on Yale-educated, African-American lawyer Ted Landsmark on April 5, 1976. The assailant's weapon, captured in an iconic photograph: an American flag. Neither that photograph nor the myth of a color-blind region tells the complete story, argues Sokol. Instead an odd, often frustrating dynamic emerged in the Northeast: whites in this region could show remarkable progressivism on race issues, especially when framed around the elusive goal of a "color-blind" society. Simultaneously, *de facto* segregation persisted, and poverty and inequality for minorities increased during the postwar era. The northern "mystique," concludes Sokol,

both acted as an accelerant and as a drag on racial progress. In the end the author lands on the side of optimism despite the very mixed history he depicts. Still, clearly there is just as much to decry as to celebrate when it comes to the recent history of race in the Northeast.

Sokol opens his study with a discussion of the long-forgotten Springfield Plan, a curricular program introduced into the Springfield school system in the late 1930s. Reformers planned to combat prejudice through intercultural education. Celebrating what we today call multiculturalism, the Springfield Plan sought to "develop a sympathetic attitude for all racial and nationality groups" (8). The plan had its limitations, but Sokol sees "revolutionary" potential (23). Still, despite good intentions and actions, Springfield schools remained segregated. Sokol also tells the bitter story of efforts to desegregate Springfield's schools in the mid-1960s. That drive revealed deep-seated tensions and racism that some compared to that brewing contemporaneously in Selma.

From there, Sokol focuses on a number of "forerunners," inspirational men and women who pointed the region toward an elusive integrated future. Although Sokol treats him in an earlier section, path-breaking baseball hero Jackie Robinson is clearly one of these forerunners. Robinson's story is interwoven with the changing Brooklyn community he electrified and unified when he broke baseball's color barrier. Robinson's singular presence portended a brighter future for the Brooklyn borough as it underwent

gargantuan changes and stresses in the immediate postwar years. Still, despite Robinson's emergence as a local and national hero, racial tensions remained high in Brooklyn. Housing emerged a particular flashpoint. Robinson and his wife experienced the challenge firsthand when looking for suitable housing near Ebbets Field and later when they struggled to buy property in Connecticut. "When the brokers saw us, the houses turned out to be just sold or no longer on the market, phrases like that," recalled Rachel Robinson (63).

Other forerunners include Senator Edward Brooke, the Republican liberal from Massachusetts, and Representative Shirley Chisholm of Brooklyn, known best for her 1972 presidential run. The two African American politicians unleashed "political possibilities" and welded together political "coalitions across lines of race, sex and party" (165). Moderation and an overt appeal to the ideal of a color-blind Massachusetts propelled Brooke to become the nation's first popularly elected, African American senator in 1967. Early on, Brooke artfully maneuvered around controversial issues related to race. But by the 1970s, with a violent busing crisis consuming Boston, Brooke shelved his moderation and became the Senate's leading proponent of busing, despite the position's very obvious political perils. In that capacity he ran afoul of an ambitious rising fellow senator from Delaware. Joe Biden, hailing from a border state and well aware of the importance of working-class white votes for the Democratic Party, mobilized to block federal funding for busing. Biden essentially won the day, but Sokol insists that Brooke's efforts to desegregate schools through busing was a viable lost opportunity to promote racial justice.

In Connecticut, a state of pristine small towns and struggling, impoverished cities, Sokol recounts Senator Abraham Ribicoff's 1970 crusade to draw attention to segregation in the North. Addressing his fellow senators, Ribicoff assailed the North's record on racial issues. "We've looked down our noses at the people in the South . . . without having the guts to face up to our own problems," blasted Ribicoff (176). The senator went on to propose legislation that would merge metropolitan and suburban school districts. In the end, Ribicoff enjoyed more success publicizing the problem than solving it: his education bill was soundly defeated in the senate. A decade later Thirman Milner emerged as New England's first black mayor when he won a hotly contested Hartford mayoral election in 1981. As Brooke, Ribicoff, and Chisholm found earlier, addressing endemic problems of race and poverty in the Northeast presented near impossible challenges. During Milner's three terms, downtown Hartford boomed, but minority communities continued their slide backward. Another black mayor, David Dinkins of New York



City, lasted only one term in the face of mounting racial antagonism in the early 1990s.

Political buffs will particularly appreciate Sokol's revisionist take on important yet nearly forgotten political figures from our recent past. Others might rightly ask for deeper consideration of the problems that so bedeviled the heroes of Sokol's story—a context, no doubt, deeply rooted in economic and class issues.

Sokol ends *All Eyes Are Upon Us: Race and Politics from Boston to Brooklyn* with a discussion of the twenty-first-century rise of Governor Deval Patrick and his friend Barack Obama. Patrick's climb from poverty on the South Side of Chicago to two terms as the Bay State's governor suggests that the mystique of the Northeast as a region where race can be overcome lives on. Two years after Patrick's ascent to the governorship, the North rose again, when Obama swept northeastern states in his election as the first black president. Sokol ends on an upbeat "audacity of hope" note. His engaging study, however, reminds readers that even under the best of circumstances the pace of racial progress in the United States often seems to be one step forward, two steps back.

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***The Italians in Worcester County, Massachusetts.* By Vincent A. Lapomarda. Independent publisher, 2015. 296 pages. No price listed (paperback).**

Rome was not built in a day, and this book documents the decades it took for Italian immigrants to establish their place in Worcester county. The book describes military sacrifices and their achievements in the fields of education, medicine, sports, and culture in central Massachusetts. It was difficult to dispel the negative image of Italians in Massachusetts following the Sacco and Vanzetti trial and their classification as "enemy aliens" under the 1940 Smith Act.

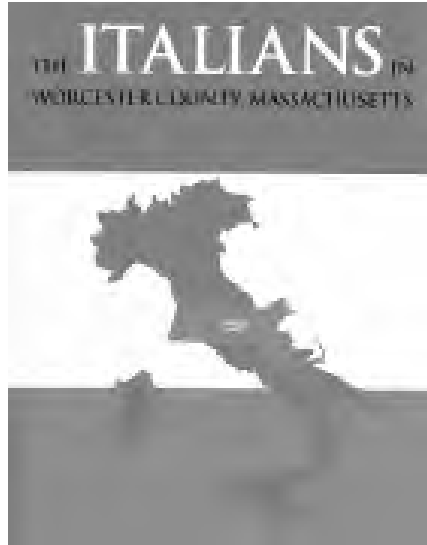
Rev. Vincent A. Lapomarda, a history professor at the College of the Holy Cross, has published a substantial number of books examining the experience of Italian immigrants in Maine, Italian judges in Massachusetts, and the religious history of the Jesuits in New England and Europe, and under the Third Reich. In this work he focuses on a large geographical region, unlike many recent city-based studies such as Stephen Puleo's *Boston Italians*, and Peter Belmonte's *Chicago-Area Italians in World War II*. While Italian

American immigration history has focused either broadly on Italians in America or more thoroughly on neighborhoods like the North End, this book gives a detailed examination of Worcester County.

In twelve chapters, Lapomarda offers a survey of their contributions by describing those who arrived earliest, the contributions of *prominenti*, or the well-known families, and the development of social institutions, the law, the military, political and religious organizations, education, restaurants, health services, and sports. The book concludes with a detailed bibliographic essay which is especially helpful for those who want to examine specific topics in more depth.

Lapomarda demonstrates how Italian Americans established their place in Massachusetts. The second generation's record in World War II is especially important as the author documents the military service of three, four, and even five sons from some Italian families. The book does a good job of retrieving the nearly lost history of the Italian American social clubs which were once quite common in Massachusetts towns and cities. In addition, he addresses their role in labor activism during the 1908 Clinton Strike and the 1913 Hopedale Strike at Draper mills, as Italian Americans struggled to move up from what was known as pick and shovel labor to establish parity in the workplace. Another section describes the contributions to the legal field of Italians in law enforcement, as lawyers and judges, despite the power of the *Godfather* movies and the *Sopranos* series in shaping the Italian image in America.

The most valuable documentation from his research is the material on Italian Americans in military service. The author organizes the chapters by areas of interest focused on prominent families and economic fields. There is not an overarching thesis to unify the work, but perhaps the chapters dealing with military service provide key areas of interest as they document the experience of Italian Americans as war veterans and reflect extensive research across the county from the Civil War era through both world wars to contemporary conflicts. Only in recent decades have archives and local



historical societies begun collecting materials to document Italian American life in the early twentieth century. There are additional names identified from his research beyond those listed on area monuments and some additional details could be added. For example, Fitchburg's Captain Leonard Lanzilotti received the Silver Star for capturing a large group of Germans in the Hurtgen Forest in 1944, and two Italian American women, Staff Sgt. Maria Batistella and Private Rose Posco, both served in Europe as well.

In some areas, Lapomarda has gone beyond conventional sources and produced detailed information from the Civil War through more contemporary conflicts. The documentation of war service is of special importance for Italian veterans, especially during the period 1940–42, when many first-generation immigrants were classified as “enemy aliens” and required to carry identification cards and live under curfew and other restrictions. The military service Lapomarda describes was given at a time when some of their parents dealt with this stigma. The book reveals a record of sacrifice and bravery and retrieves lost names to expand that history.

The sources he cites in a detailed bibliographic essay reveal a comprehensive, town-by-town search through Worcester County archives. It is well done and adds considerable resources for other researchers at the local as well as the regional level.

A few caveats: the author could have offered more analysis to connect this evidence with the larger scholarship on the Italian American experience in a national context. The book's strengths are the depth of local historical research and the evidence that the author has not only visited these towns but spoken with librarians and archivists to track down elusive details. In a few areas the author might have told his readers a bit more. While the book discusses some of the traditional *festas* brought to America and their Italian American expression, he might have added more detail on the religious origins of those *festas*.

In the sports chapter the author references the Italian love of *bocce*, but then moves on to the more popular American sports like baseball, football, and basketball in which Italians excelled. In Worcester County *bocce* began as, and remains, a social activity. Some Italian social clubs in communities like Southbridge and Leominster still sponsor league play. In addition, there should be some discussion of how candlepin bowling became the means for Italians to compete as professional athletes. First as competitors, and then as investors, Italians rose to become independent businessmen as proprietors of alleys. In the 1940s and 1950s, they competed in the Fitchburg Sentinel Bowling Tournament and the Worcester Telegram & Gazette Tournament,

which was New England's largest candlepin contest. By 1955 the *Telegram* estimated there were 12,000 men and women competing in local leagues.

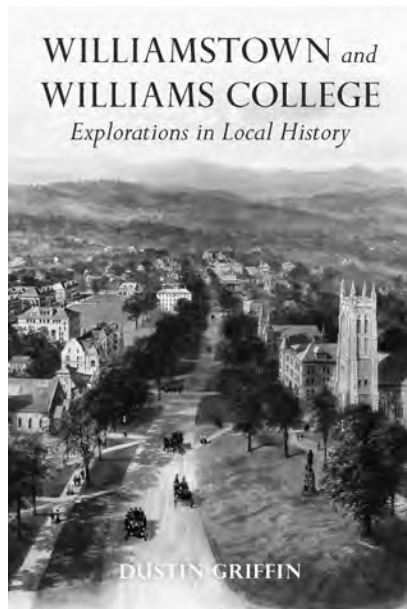
Lapomarda provides an important foundation for other researchers and a model for further study. He has completed extensive research and constructed a portrait of Italian Americans and their contributions to central Massachusetts.

*Teresa Fava Thomas is a Professor of History at Fitchburg State University and author of The Reluctant Migrants: Migration from the Italian Veneto to Central Massachusetts.*

***Williamstown and Williams College: Explorations in Local History.* By Dustin Green. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2018. 254 pages. \$23.95 (paperback).**

New York University Professor Emeritus Dustin Green has provided the reader with a well-written and entertaining synthesis of the numerous published histories of Williamstown and Williams College. A graduate of Williams, Green has delivered numerous public lectures on the local history of Williamstown and Williams College. Most of the chapters are enhanced versions of his annual lectures from 2009 to 2018 sponsored by the Williamstown Historical Museum. Chapters are arranged topically with emphasis on the most notable and entertaining stories related to the town or the college. Of course, while some chapters primarily focus on either the college or the town itself, there is always a natural overlap given the close relationship of the two entities.

Essays begin with the colonial period chapters entitled, "The 1746 Attack on Fort Massachusetts" and "The West Hoosuck Blockhouse, 1756–1761." These are important essays on the defense of the Massachusetts frontier during the French & Indian War. After early French successes blunted



the early offensive campaigns of the British colonial forces, Massachusetts Bay Governor William Shirley developed a defensive strategy of fortified strongpoints along the colony's frontier. The author describes Colonel Israel Williams' management of those defenses at Fort Massachusetts and outposts like the West Hoosuck Blockhouse.

Williams College is one of the most prestigious liberal arts colleges in the country. Some chapters cover college-specific specialty topics such as "Yard by Yard: The History of the Williams College Fight Song." Chapter eleven provides insight into the origins of Williams' "school song" written by Washington Gladden as an undergraduate in the Class of 1859, "The Mountains." Its claim to fame is that it is "the oldest alma mater composed by an undergraduate." Green notes that "although it grows out of nineteenth-century literary, religious, and patriotic traditions ["The Mountains"] gives form to a fantasy of rural retreat that still resonates today" (179). Even the stained glass employed in the architecture of the campus has been given a historical review. Chapter thirteen, "Windows on the Past," chronicles the creation and placement of the many unique Tiffany-produced windows and their donors.

Of particular note, chapter fourteen is entitled "Prehistory of Coeducation at Williams College, 1961–1969." Under the college presidency of John Sawyer, the first college exchange student from Vassar arrived at Williams College for studies in 1969. Based upon that positive experience, a trustee-faculty committee recommended that the college become fully coeducational starting in September 1971. As early as 1961, Sawyer had been in communications with Sarah Blanding, President of Vassar, and his enthusiasm and support of co-education grew from that relationship. He explored the possibility of establishing a women's college at Williamstown, but attempts at Mount Hope and Denison Park remained unrealized. Ultimately, the Vassar relationship led to the 1969 exchange students from Vassar whose performance as students lead the way to Williams College becoming co-educational. The story is much more complicated than this, and the author provides a detailed chronicle of the people and events that led to this major transformation at Williams College.

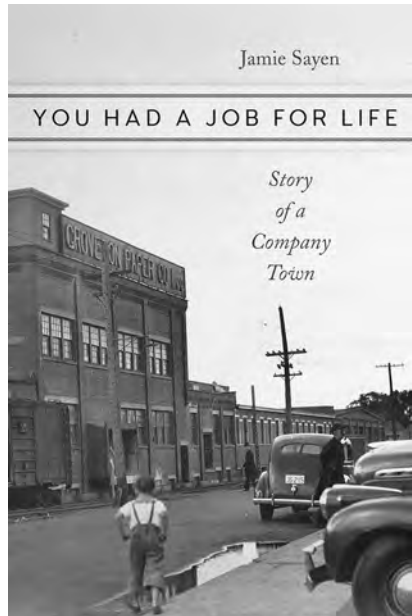
*Williamstown and Williams College* is a welcome addition to our understanding of the college's evolution which is not covered in the standard histories of Williamstown by previous authors, such as R. R. R. Brooks, Arthur Latham Perry, Leverett W. Spring, and Wyllis E. Wright. Although the book does not contain a notes section and essays are not specifically footnoted in the traditional style, the author provides his notes via an online source, *Scholarworks*.

*Joseph Carvalho III is co-editor of the Heritage Book Series of the Republican newspaper in Springfield, MA and retired president and executive director of the Springfield Museums Association.*

***You Had a Job for Life: Story of a Company Town.* By Jamie Sayen. University Press of New England, 2018. 283 pages. \$24.95 (paperback).**

*You Had a Job for Life: Story of a Company Town* is an in-depth account of Groveton Paper Mill, established in 1891, and how its long existence and eventual closure were intricately interwoven with the lives of the people of a small New Hampshire community. The book transports readers to another time and place where patriarchal management was considered positive and company housing and stores existed. Most importantly, this comprehensive, chronological, fact-based narrative educates the reader on the effects of a town's loss of its main employer—a familiar situation in small communities across the United States.

Sayen spent considerable time and effort researching his topic. Most fascinating and supportive are the numerous interviews with former employees and local citizens that bring the narrative to life. As one woman whose father worked at the mill said, “Everything they had was purchased down at the company store. It was almost like: you worked there, you were rewarded; you get all your food you needed there. Everybody was so happy to have jobs. They could eat” (15). Many of those interviewed worked decades at the Groveton Mill and were ardent supporters of the plant and town in which they lived. Employee interviews throughout the book give the reader a solid understanding of how the mill's processes affected individual workers and their lives right down to the much-tolerated rotten egg smell, a byproduct of the chemical pulping process. The author aptly describes the early pollution that emanated from the mill and the hazards of working there. Over the years statutes like the Water Quality Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration



(OSHA) began to have an impact on both of these serious issues. Dumping waste in the nearby river was no longer permitted, the sulfur smell was abated, and hearing protection and machine guarding were instituted.

The Groveton Mill closed in 2007 and had a series of owners at the end of its life span. The mill was most successful when privately owned and managed by the Wemyss family from the 1940s through the early '80s. The mill and community thrived during the patriarchal, sometimes autocratic, and always-concerned involvement of Jim Wemyss Sr. and his son, Jim Jr. It's a story of a more relaxed time when children played in the mill during off hours and employees lived in company tenements, buying goods with script from the company store. Loyalty to the mill was prized over most other attributes, as the mill was closely interconnected with the small town's viability. Plant expansions seemed to run in tandem with the town's growth in the form of a new sewer system, the building of schools and churches, a new opera house, and the addition of a number of saloons.

The plant, which once employed 800 employees, ultimately closed, which deeply and irrevocably scarred the area. The reasons for its demise were many and complicated, making it difficult to assign any one cause for its closure. Some of the reasons include the plant's isolated location, the high cost of energy, the newer and more efficient mills built in the South, and overseas competition without unions and with a lower-cost base. There was also a decreasing demand for paper with the rise of electronic media. Hostile takeovers, subsequent sales, and a lack of local management coupled with numerous economic factors eventually spelled the plant's doom.

One of the most satisfying parts of the narrative is the ongoing effort by the workforce in the face of strong headwinds to keep the mill running and profitable and to stay focused on what they could control. The plant was unionized and there were struggles over the life of the mill. The union and management compromised and resolved work stoppages, equal pay issues, wage increases, and work hours. Even the thorniest issues were settled, especially at certain points when both sides realized the fragility of the mill and united to protect its existence.

Up until the last day, workers were unceasing and valiant in their efforts, yet went unrewarded as the plant closed regardless. During the last weeks, the employees remained focused on their jobs, held their heads high, worked hard, avoided inclinations to sabotage, helped box up equipment, and even trained others to operate their former machines. Sayen artfully crafts the narrative so that the reader empathizes with those affected and knows that the same situation has been repeated with other industries and in small towns across the United States.



The epilogue, titled “They Ruined This Town,” provides memorable and poignant commentary from those affected by the mill’s shutdown. Interviewees expressed shock, anger, and devastation at the closure announcement on October 23, 2007. Their comments reflect how deeply the mill’s closure changed their lives. Longtime mill engineer Tom Bushey noted, “Now, with the closing of the mill people aren’t coming together as much as they used to. I feel like the fabric of the town is unraveling a little bit each day. It’s just hard to see it” (241). Pam Styles, an office worker, affirmed that “the mill was like another family” (241). Plant worker Hadley Platt, who started working at the mill in the 1940s and retired in 1993, believed that “the mill did good for this town, and it’s really hurting without it. I wouldn’t have a home if it hadn’t been for the mill. The mill was the life of this town” (240). Plant worker Louise Caouette noted, “I think where everyone missed the boat was how important that place (the mill) was from not only putting the roof over your head and the food on your plate, but also it really was part of you” (240).

The final ignoble act that left lasting bitterness was a covenant in the closing contractual agreement prohibiting any future owner from manufacturing paper at the mill, presumably to prevent future competition. Over the next ten years, Groveton’s vibrant Main and State streets devolved from thirty storefronts to seven or eight, with the remaining businesses boarded up or replaced by vacant lots.

In the postscript the author exhibits his keen understanding of Groveton and its people by providing a summation of why the mill was successful, what caused its demise, and a number of thoughtful recommendations to bring a prosperous, low-carbon economy to the area. One suspects the author’s template could be used across the United States to reinvigorate local, long-suffering economies, although with the realization that these solutions require some time to successfully germinate and be applied.

*Dennis Pregent is a former vice president of a consumer durables company and the author of The Boys of St. Joe’s ’65 in the Vietnam War.*