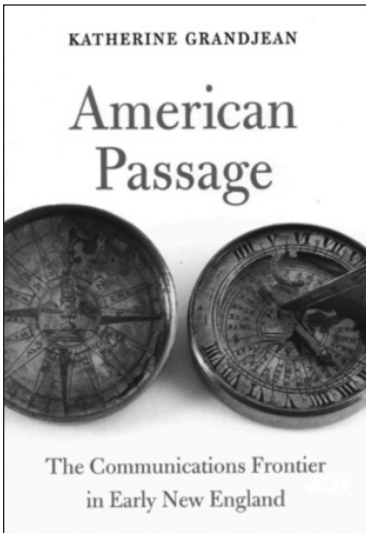


BOOK REVIEWS

***American Passage: The Communications Frontier in Early New England.* Katherine Grandjean. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015. 312 pages. \$24.99 (hardback)**



Since Fredrick Jackson Turner's now-famous 1893 essay, historians have grappled with the significance of the frontier in American history. Katherine Grandjean joins that continuing conversation with her book, *American Passage: The Communications Frontier in Early New England*. Utilizing almost 3,000 letters which are part of the Winthrop Family Papers, primarily housed at the Massachusetts Historical Society, Grandjean argues that "communication, in the end, was an arm of colonization" (215). While her dataset is primarily these letters which date from 1635 to 1675, Grandjean's analysis of communication extends beyond the content of the letters to the technology

and the personnel—the logistics—of communication, including roads and waterways.

Grandjean asks us to rethink some moments in early American history through the lens of communication. For example, her book opens with the two traders found dead in their boats which helped spark the Pequot War. Why, she wonders, would the deaths of these two men (who had questionable reputations) cause the war? In the early years of settlement in New England, traders were the lifeblood that kept the people who had moved beyond Boston connected with food, supplies, and letters/news. Without them, colonists in places like Connecticut would not be able to survive for long. "Because the violence threatened those who carried goods between the English colonies, it threatened all" (33). Once the war was over, colonists worked to make peace between the warring Mohegans and Narragansetts specifically to keep the land route between Boston and the outlying communities connected.

Initially, these land routes were the domain of Indians who frequently served as couriers of letters (especially during the winter when water travel was nearly impossible, if a letter needed to reach its destination quickly, or if the contents were confidential, as most Indians could not read English). Grandjean argues that

“Letter writing was a way of making New England whole, of conquering space” (49). As such, an official postal service served as a critical component to ensure letters were delivered. She discusses the problems with the first postal service between New York and Boston in 1673 and the later successes people (including Benjamin Franklin) enjoyed, like the widening and marking of the routes. These routes were meticulously described in almanacs and first appear on maps in the mid-1670s. In part, this inland travel was also made possible by horses which were in short supply and expensive before the 1650s, when an export tax caused New England colonists to begin raising their own horses. According to Grandjean, horses signaled English command of trade routes, and she notes that several colonies passed laws that colonists could not sell horses to Indians in order to maintain that advantage. Between horses and the new 1710 Post Office Act which standardized postal rates, the colonies were incorporated into a greater network of transatlantic letter bearing.

Historians of early America will find *American Passage* a refreshing retelling of key events in early New England through the lens of communication—an often overlooked aspect of these events. Grandjean is clear to assert that she is not arguing that looking through this lens gives us new reasons for events, but rather that it adds another layer of nuance to our understanding. For example, she says: “It isn’t that English roads caused King Philip’s War. It isn’t that the horses did. But the flow of people moving thru Nipmuck country, and other Native places, was but one more signifier of English intent” (152). This may disappoint some readers who had hoped that Grandjean would argue that the communications frontier would alter the narrative of events. Some may also wish that she had pushed her analysis into the eighteenth century (beyond the epilogue) or utilized other sources beyond those of the elite Winthrop family and their connections. However, anyone interested in the history of seventeenth-century New England through the gaze of its letters will enjoy revisiting familiar events and places from a slightly different angle.

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***Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage.* Vincent Carretta. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2014). 312 pages. \$27.95 (paperback).**

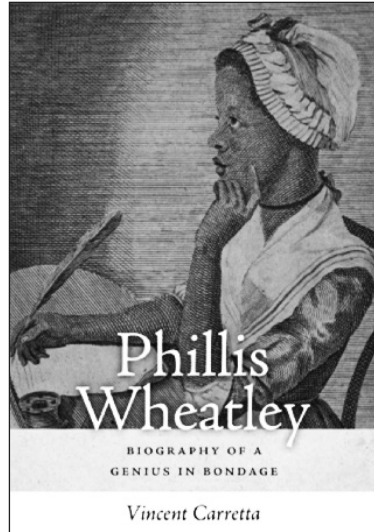
Phillis Wheatley’s name is known to many as the first published African American woman in North America. Born in West Africa around 1753, she

was sold into slavery at the age of seven and transported to the British colonies, where she was purchased by the Wheatley family of Boston. They taught her to read and write, provided an advanced education in the classics (along with many other subjects), and encouraged her poetry when they saw her talent. Her first poem was published in 1767. In 1773 the publication of her first and only book of poems, titled *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, brought her fame both in England and the American colonies; figures such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin praised her work.

However, many white Americans of the time found it hard to believe that a young, female, African slave could write poetry. In 1772 Wheatley defended her literary ability in public. She was examined by a group of Boston luminaries which included John Hancock, Thomas Hutchinson (the governor of Massachusetts), and his lieutenant governor Andrew Oliver. They concluded she had written the poems ascribed to her and signed an “attestation” which was published in the preface to her book. Despite this, she was unable to find enough prepaid “subscribers” to publish in Boston; instead she went to London to campaign for its publication.

Barely aged twenty, she gained her freedom shortly afterward, but her remaining life has been shrouded in obscurity. She married a free African, John Peters, and slipped from the public limelight amidst the chaos, confusion, and economic dislocation of the American Revolution, only to die impoverished a decade later. Although her name is widely known, the full history of her short life has remained obscure until now. No scholar has ever attempted to construct a full biography. If one were to Google her name, much of the biographical information that one would discover on numerous websites and in many online encyclopedias, databases, and educational forums would be false and misleading.

Dr. Vincent Carretta’s recent study, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage* (2011), magnificently fills that gap. A revised edition was published in 2014. It has garnered lavish praise from many scholars. Renowned historian Henry Louis Gates wrote in his review: “At last, Carretta has written a biography of this great writer as complex and as nuanced as Wheatley and her work themselves. This book resurrects the ‘mother’ of



the African American literary tradition, vividly, scrupulously, and without sentimentality, as no other biography of her has done.” Historian John Wood Sweet concurs: “An extraordinary achievement, Carretta’s groundbreaking research and sensitive readings greatly enrich our understanding of Wheatley’s life and work.”¹

Vincent Carretta is an English professor at the University of Maryland. The author of many acclaimed books on African American biography, he specializes in eighteenth-century transatlantic authors of African descent. According to Dr. Carretta, new information about Phillis’ origins, her upbringing, the role of evangelical Protestantism in her education, the role she played in securing her freedom, and her husband’s character are some of the reasons she needs to be re-introduced to us. At the same time, as he explores and unearths the historical background of her life, Carretta reintroduces us to Wheatley’s poetry. He offers a thoughtful and original analysis of many of her poems.

The Phillis Wheatley (1753?–1784) who emerges from these pages is a far more active, shrewd, and self-actualizing woman than traditional portraits suggest. For example, her freedom was not simply “granted” to her magnanimously by her owners but was carefully and cunningly procured during a trip to England. Indeed, Carretta characterizes it as a “self-emancipation.” In June of 1772, British Lord Mansfield had ruled that a slave owner who brought a slave to English soil “could not legally force a slave in England back to the colonies” (121). Although this decision did not legally end slavery in Great Britain, it was widely considered as the “moment slavery was abolished in England” (121). London’s African community greeted the decision “euphorically.” After the Mansfield decision, slaves had the right of habeus corpus and could demand a writ to prevent their master from returning them to the colonies.

Carretta’s careful sleuthing and reading of the historical record allows him to argue that Wheatley was well-aware of the status of slavery in England before her June 1773 trip and was “willing to take advantage of the opportunity that that knowledge might have offered her” (128). I will not give away the exact means by which Wheatley pursued her freedom, but I found this one of the most fascinating sections of the book. As Carretta writes:

1. Reviews by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and John Wood quoted on the University of Georgia Press website at http://www.ugapress.org/index.php/books/phillis_wheatley/1/0 accessed Feb. 1, 2015.

We have increasingly come to appreciate Wheatley as a manipulator of words, perhaps we should have more respect for her as a manipulator of people as well. Rather than being a gift passively received from her master . . . the promise of freedom was probably a concession Phillis Wheatley coerced from Nathaniel Wheatley in exchange for her promise to return to Boston (137).

Approximately twenty years old, Wheatley returned to Boston and gained her freedom in October of 1773. Had she remained in London, Carretta argues that she probably would have found a publisher for her proposed second volume of poems, which she never succeeded in publishing. Moreover, freedom meant that she was now on her own to earn a living and support herself. Meanwhile, many of her most ardent and closest supporters would soon pass away in a series of tragedies as the colonies were enflamed in war.

In the spring of 1774, the British occupied Boston; Susanna Wheatley, her mistress and benefactress, died that March. Her master, John Wheatley and his married daughter, Mary Wheatley Lathrop (whom Phillis had grown up with and lived with in Provincetown when the British occupied Boston), both died in 1778. John Wheatley left his former slave nothing in his will. That same year his son, Nathaniel Wheatley, left for London with his wife, then returned and died in Boston in 1783.

With the outbreak of war and the death of her closest supporters, Phillis' life became harder. By 1778 nearly half of the prominent Bostonians who had signed the "attestation" to her *Poems* were dead. Although internationally known, her fame offered little material support through the lean years of war and the depression that followed. She struggled to make a living by selling copies of her Poems. Meanwhile, her health, which had always been poor, deteriorated after 1774. An "asthmatic complaint" afflicted her for the remaining ten years of her life, particularly during the winter, and may have caused her death.

In addition to his extraordinary archival and detective work which uncovered new sources for filling in many missing dimensions to Wheatley's life, Carretta offers the reader a thoughtful analysis and rereading of many of her poems, including hitherto unknown poems. Yet Wheatley's poetry is never analyzed in the abstract; instead it is deeply situated in the specific historical period. In the process, Carretta gives the reader an insightful glimpse into the lives of both free and enslaved Africans in colonial New England.

Assessing Wheatley's entire body of work (both published and unpublished), Carretta discusses the active role she played in the production,

marketing, and distribution of her writing. Fame did not drop into her lap. She strategized and sought out correspondence with many of the luminaries of her time, carefully cultivating relationships and nurturing networks. “For someone from such humble and unpromising beginnings, Wheatley developed a remarkable transatlantic network of friendships and affiliations that transcended racial, class, status, political, religious, and geographical boundaries (xi).” Carretta reconstructs that network and, in the process, offers new interpretations of her religious and political identities.

The one weakness or unsatisfying aspect of the book is not the fault of the author. The written record that Wheatley left consists primarily of her poems and some two dozen letters. Yet many of these letters are formal and/or business letters. There are no diaries, journals, or other firsthand accounts. As a result, her interior life remains somewhat opaque. Nowhere does she “pour out her heart” in a purely personal way.

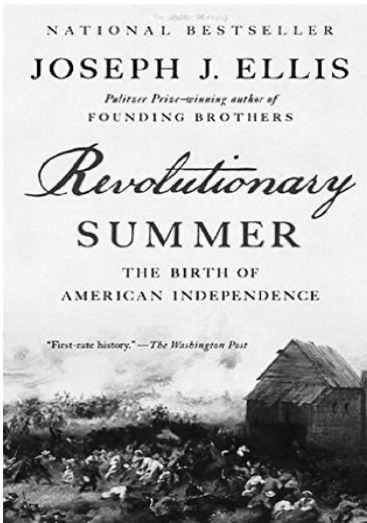
As a result, one does not gain a clear sense of her “personality,” felt experience, or personal feelings (as we would understand them from a twenty-first century perspective). For example, although Carretta has uncovered numerous hitherto-unknown sources (primarily court records and tax rolls) to flesh out her husband’s life and character, the last ten years of her life still remains somewhat shadowy despite her iconic status.

Yet Carretta succeeds admirably in his main objective: “relocating Wheatley from the margins to the center of her eighteenth-century transatlantic world, revealing the life of a woman who rose from the indignity of enslavement to earn international celebrity, only to die in obscurity and poverty a few years later (xi).” This thoughtful, deeply researched, and groundbreaking work deserves a wide readership.

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***Revolutionary Summer: The Birth of American Independence.* Joseph J. Ellis. New York: Vintage Books, 2013. 265 pages. \$15.95 (paperback).**

Revolutionary Summer presents us with the crescendo moment of American history: the months of May through October 1776 in all their confusion, uncertainty, defeat, and courage. A more conventional treatment of 1776 would include the stirring climax of the battles of Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey. Instead, this book chooses to focus on the problems surmounted and lessons learned that would eventually lead to the outcome



that now seems preordained, but was far from certain at the time. In some ways, it's like a book about the Pacific War before the battle of Midway, focusing on the lessons of the holding actions and defeats rather than on the eventual glorious comeback.

This book often focuses on the actions and interactions of two of the prime movers of the time: statesman and polemicist John Adams, and General George Washington. Each in his own way and in his own arena was arguably the central figure of the drama. Independence probably would have occurred without them, but at a far different pace and possibly in an altered form.

The earlier action at Bunker Hill had infused the colonists with an inflated sense of the relative merits of militiamen to professional soldiers. It wasn't until the Battles of New Orleans and Fredericksburg in later wars that generals finally learned the folly of a frontal attack on entrenched positions supported by artillery. Consequently, the colonists were apt to attribute their near success against daunting odds as proof of the superiority of their fighting spirit rather than as proof of their defensive position. This is hindsight, however; and this early battle success, combined with the forced British evacuation of Boston, contributed to a feeling of overconfidence that was soon to be dissipated. Washington considered making New York into one giant version of Bunker Hill, without fully realizing that the scope of the area made the project impossible. Defense works only when it can't be flanked.

The growth of Washington as a person and as a commander is a central theme of the book. Washington's obsolescent sense of personal honor, where a leader's sensibilities can have profound affects upon his army and possibly even his country, almost led to disaster in a number of precarious situations. This code of honor was learned at birth in the home of every Virginia planter and was reinforced by Washington's early exposure to British military tradition during his battle experiences in the French and Indian War. In his defense of New York, Washington persistently sought a set piece battle that would have pitted his outnumbered and untrained rabble against the numerous hosts of the professional British army. Fortunately for the American cause, Washington called a war council of his top generals before embarking upon any major military maneuver. A less secure leader might have overruled

the almost unanimous opposition to his cherished schemes. Washington, however, was big enough to take the advice of his subordinates, swallow his honor, and retreat to fight another day. This style of leadership served him well as a general and subsequently as president. Washington eventually came to the conclusion that restraint can often be the better part of valor and that the colonists could only afford the luxury of an all-out battle when circumstances were extremely favorable to their prospects.

While Washington was defending New York, Adams was working for independence and trying to get the Continental Congress to support the army. It's hard to say who had the most difficult job. If Washington's personality fit the time and place perfectly, so unquestionably did Adams. His drive, perseverance, persuasiveness, and incredible capacity for work provided the ideal counterpoint to Washington's endeavors. Even more so than his subsequent presidency, this was Adams' finest hour. The meeting of these two great men with their hour of destiny is one of the central ideas of this book.

The battles for New York in 1776 were a series of defeats and disappointments that helped to teach the army and the colonies a number of valuable lessons. The colonists were in it for the long haul, and the only victory that mattered was the last one. The colonies could win the war by not losing it, a lesson relearned by occupied peoples (and their occupiers) throughout history. A defensive "War of Posts" would be pursued, avoiding decisive engagements unless the odds were extremely favorable. The Continental army would get better with experience and with the development and importation of a professional officer corps. France would provide money, munitions, a navy, and help with a final victory that would eventually lead to independence. But none of that was obvious in the Revolutionary Summer of 1776.

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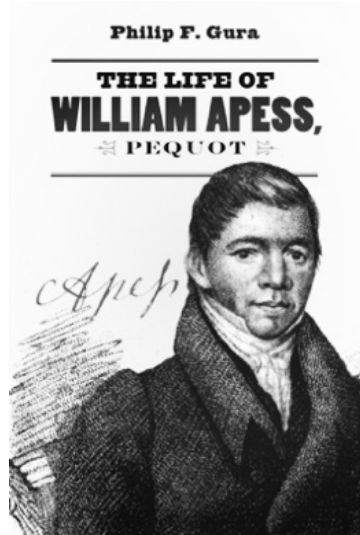
***The Life of William Apess, Pequot.* Philip F. Gura. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015. 216 pages. \$26.00 (cloth).**

Who we remember in American history, insofar as the remembrance enters popular memory, is a fraught and politically charged question. Who we remember and privilege in historical narratives says much about our own period's ideals, because it serves as a direct statement to the values we find

important. In this way, Philip F. Gura has provided a much needed, and long overdue, biography on the nineteenth century Native American thinker, writer, lecturer, and activist William Apess (1798–1839). Gura's book is one of the first full-length studies dedicated to chronicling the life and development of Apess, and his study does much to both popularize the late Pequot Methodist minister and intervene into the discussion over where to place Apess in the larger antebellum world.

Gura begins the study with Apess's birth into abject poverty in 1798 in Colrain, Massachusetts. After his parents separated early in life, he was sent to live with a grandparent who emotionally and physically abused him. Thanks to the intervention of town officials, Apess was pulled out of this home and placed with a series of white families in Massachusetts before becoming an indentured servant. Although conditions in these homes were better than the abuse he experienced from his own family, Apess still faced societal discrimination as a Pequot and as a person of color in relation to education opportunities and social mobility. Eventually, he broke his indentured status and ran away, joining the U.S. military during the War of 1812. Misled by the Army, Apess believed that he was joining to serve as a noncombat member of the music corps. When he was moved to the infantry he cited it as a "breach of contract" and deserted. He was soon arrested, brought back to the ranks, and forced to fight in Canada. "On the subsequent march north to join other troops at Plattsburgh, New York, on Lake Champlain, the officers continually tormented him," Gura writes, "In an unambiguous insult to his background, they repeatedly told him that they intended to stick his skin full of pine splinters and, after 'having an Indian pow wow' over him, then light the wood and burn him to death" (23).

Apess bore this discrimination, served his time in the military, and later claimed he was discharged. Army records contest this, however, saying he deserted again on September 14, 1814. After his time in the military, he worked odd jobs in and around Canada, falling into alcoholism, a condition that plagued him for the rest of his life. It was during this period that he became deeply religious, eventually converting to Methodism. By showing how the Methodists' openness to the marginalized in society provided a way



for Apess to grow spiritually and intellectually, Gura once again integrates Apess's life into the larger context of early nineteenth century United States.

Eventually, Apess became a minister for the Methodist church, and found his talent for presenting ideas to a larger public audience. Apess was eventually compelled to write about his life and conversion in an autobiography. The first book length autobiography published by a Native American in the United States, *Son of the Forest* was published in 1829. It serves as a particularly interesting biography, Gura argues, because it helps in understanding larger questions of social, cultural, and political engagement in the early decades of nineteenth century America. A product of the exploding print culture of the early nineteenth century, the book was typical for its time since it focused on a personal narrative of religious awakening and conversion. However, the book did much more than just provide another conversion story, Gura contends. He writes,

What makes his publication unique . . . is that the reader encountered such things in the life of a Pequot. Thus, the most important thing he offered in his autobiography was an account of his gradually increasing realization of how Christianity provided Native Americans a set of arguments through which to criticize American society. He would continue to hold to that structure. (47)

As a minister, Apess focused on issues of social justice, anti-racism, and multiculturalism, in addition to questioning supposed white American Christian dominance. This moved him further and further from the realm of religion and firmly into the world of politics. As the early nineteenth century continued, the increased hostilities toward Native Americans, conflicts, and removals by the federal government caused Apess to draw more and more from history to make his case that such actions constituted a prolonged assault on Native American peoples. His Eulogy on King Philip, delivered first as a lecture and then as a printed piece, showed this history by directly comparing King Philip of the Pequot's in King Philip's War with other founding figures like George Washington. The result was a popular argument for the American people to view Native Americans as an oppressed and colonized people.

Gura argues that Apess was one of the first read and publicly noted Native American thinkers to make this case so publicly to the literary world. This leads Gura to what he sees as the most important understanding of what we can gain from Apess's life.

Apess deserves the same widespread recognition as others in the antebellum period who questioned the sincerity of the nation's ongoing commitment to democracy, a cohort of reformers that includes Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, champions of women's rights; Frances Wright and Orestes Brownson, of the dignity of labor; and William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, David Walker, and Frederick Douglass, of African American freedom and equality. These were the reformers who were unafraid to speak the truth about the emperor's new clothes. (xiv)

Placing Apess in this tradition of a Jeremiah to the U.S.'s lack of fulfillment to its ideals, Gura makes an important distinction. We should remember and champion Apess's life and work without canonizing him. Ending his study, Gura writes, "The astute cultural critic Edward Dahlberg warned, 'We cannot perceive what we canonize,' for 'the citizen secures himself against genius by icon worship.'" (138) Instead, Gura argues, Apess should be viewed as one of the many people in the United States who represents the still present possibility of the United States to finally live up to its highest ideals. "[Apess] deserves all our attention but none of the mindless adulation that would turn him into a speechless monument . . . [rather he is] a painful reminder of what the United States might have been, and still might be" (138).

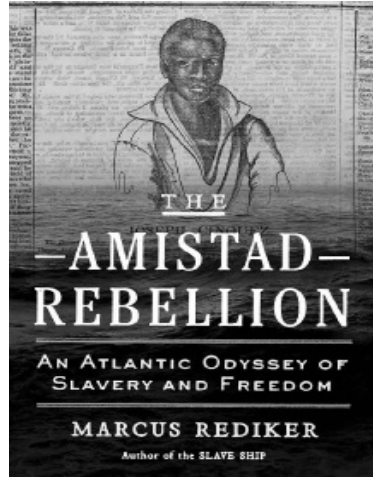
Gura notes that Apess passed away due to health complications at the all too young age of forty-one, dying just as his work was entering some of its most promising potential to radically rethink the Native American condition. However, with Gura's new book, we are reminded that Apess is still worthy of examination. Well written, and meticulously researched, Gura has provided here a masterfully written biography that should do much to spark both the interest of scholars, and non-academics alike, to this truly fascinating individual.

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***The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom.* Marcus Rediker. New York: Viking, 2012. 288 pages. \$28.95 (hardcover).**

The story of the slave ship *Amistad* and the successful 1839 revolt that occurred onboard is one of the most well-known slave rebellions in the history of both the Atlantic World and the United States. The circumstances

that surrounded this event have been well-documented by scholars and Hollywood alike, the latter thanks in part to Steven Spielberg's 1997 film *Amistad*. Marcus Rediker, the esteemed historian of the *Atlantic World* and author of the impactful monograph *The Slave Ship*, retells the story of the *Amistad* in an important new way, using significant new evidence. In his narrative, *The Amistad Rebellion*, Rediker examines the slave revolt not through the eyes of the white crew, the white courts, nor the man who served as their defense attorney, former president John Quincy Adams. Rather, Rediker views the events



through the eyes of the men of Sierra Leone, forced into servitude and left with no other choice but to return home by any means necessary. He tells the stories of the *Amistad*'s "rebels" not only while they were on the ship, but after the ship's voyage. As he claims in his introduction, his story "puts the *Amistad* rebels back at the center of their own story and the larger history they helped to make. Theirs was an epic quest for freedom" (12).

The book is divided into six chapters, each marking a different period in the lives of the rebels, from the first chapter, "Origins," to "Jail" (chapter four), and "Freedom" (chapter six). This quest for freedom did not begin aboard the decks of the slave ship in the midst of the Middle Passage. Indeed, for Rediker, identifying the rebels' roots is as important as his retelling of the revolt itself. The agency of these enslaved persons allows the story of the *Amistad* to become not only the story of a revolt, but also of the institution itself, and its effect on its victims. In Rediker's hands it becomes the story of not just an individual slave ship, but also of Africa and Atlantic slavery. The captives' experiences in Africa prior to their forced migration were influential in their actions aboard the slave ship and beyond. As Rediker writes in "Origins," the book's first chapter, "[e]verything the rebels did, from the moment of enslavement to the moment of repatriation and afterward, was based to a large extent on their experiences in Africa before capture" (21).

The monograph's success lies in the author's portrayals of the individual rebels. Though he notes that "the original fifty-three [*Amistad* Africans] consisted of people from at least nine different groups," Rediker argues that the success of the rebellion depended on the rebels' commonalities, which he identifies clearly. Despite their "different histories and cosmologies . . . they shared

common cultural characteristics, practices, and beliefs, especially about kinship, family, ancestral spirits, and the afterlife” (22). The *Amistad* rebels were also familiar with Islam, the slave trade, and violent warfare. Rediker convincingly argues that it was the captives’ ten-day stay in the slave pens of Havana, Cuba, before they stepped onboard the *Amistad*, that truly united them. It was in Havana that “old bonds were broken and new ones formed amid dreadful uncertainty . . . Something happened in Havana to create terror among the *Amistad* Africans” (62). It was this terror that led them to rebel; “Rebellion” is the focal point of the second chapter. Rediker’s account of the event is as gripping and cinematic as any film.

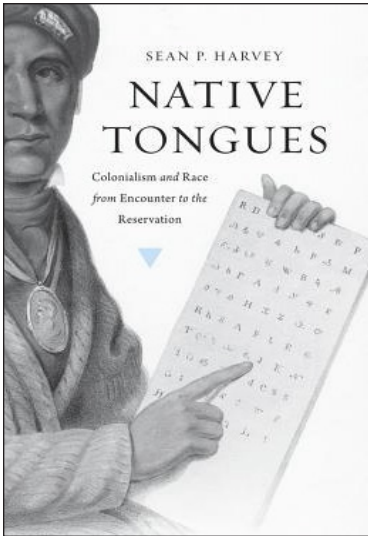
New England, of course, plays a central role in the story of the *Amistad*. The ship’s arrival in New London, Connecticut, was a major event. “Word of the arrival of the *Amistad* rebels began to buzz around the waterfront, spreading rapidly, locally and throughout Connecticut, north to Boston,” Rediker writes. “Spectators flocked to the docks in the thousands to see the so-called pirate ship and its fearsome black crew” (96–97). The author provides full representations of many of the participants in the *Amistad* trial, including Judge Andrew Judson of the New Haven district court. Judson is shown to be a politician with a racist streak; he was “known for his racist opposition” to the schooling of black children in Canterbury, Connecticut (97). John Quincy Adams, of course, is depicted here as well, but his presence does not detract from the real centerpieces of this narrative, the rebels themselves.

Rediker’s sources are vast and various, and each play a critical role in the success of the text. Drawing upon diaries, newspapers, dramatic retellings of the events, as well as portraits, paintings, and interviews the author offers the reader a full and complete view of what happened onboard the *Amistad*, as well as long after. This is a stunningly moving account of an event in American history that was in need of retelling. Clearly, Marcus Rediker was best suited for the task, and he does it admirably.

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***Native Tongues: Colonialism and Race from Encounter to the Reservation.* Sean P. Harvey. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015. 338 pages (hardcover).**

At the heart of Sean P. Harvey’s *Native Tongues* are the usages to which intellectuals and U.S. federal officials applied philology for the displacement of Native Americans during the nineteenth century. What can only be termed



a “Euro-American linguistic colonialism” initially fed off of encounters with Native consultants who sought only to maintain sovereignty or reach a linguistic middle ground in order to promote group self-interest (4). While linguistics clearly played a role in accelerating dispossession and colonialism by the end of the nineteenth century, the complicated history of philology itself at times both reinforced as well as contradicted notions of biological racial difference. As such, Harvey’s “linguistic colonialism” cannot simply be referred to as a zero-sum game that favored difference and oppression above all, although it clearly worked toward such

ends.

Harvey begins with an analysis of the so-called “language encounters” of the first meetings between Native Americans and Euroamericans. Such encounters led to a cataloging by Euroamericans of the initially startling array of languages present in native America, which in turn helped non-Indians form perceptions of the supposedly “savage” mindset. Ideas concerning a sense of “linguistic poverty” sprung not only from Euroamericans’ encounters with Indians utilizing pidgin dialects at frontier nodes of trade, but also missionaries’ frustrations at their inability to easily render the gospel into Indian languages contributed to “an essentialist view of ‘race,’” which Euroamericans subsequently applied to Native Americans during the period of Indian dispossession (22). Part of the great irony of Native American philology is that its genesis elucidated a fragmented linguistics that to many observers indicated Indians’ alleged social divergences from one another. This, however, coincided with the rising power of such Shawnee leaders as Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa in the Ohio River Valley, who emphasized a pan-Indianism in the face of U.S. western expansion that seemed to contradict the new Native American linguistic taxonomies. According to many Americans during the early nineteenth century, language could be used to determine the biological descent of groups, helping to order and organize the way certain Indians would be treated during the massive upswing in U.S. western expansion and settlement. The work of men like John Heckewelder popularized notions that Native Americans had once held a more “civilized” status and thus could be rescued from the alleged dregs of “savagery” and bewildering linguistic diversity.

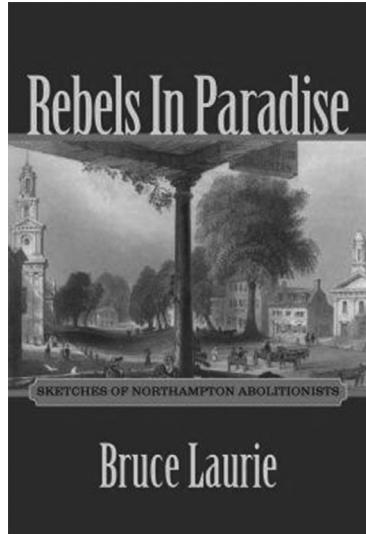
Syllabaries for Native languages—some developed by Indians, themselves, such as Sequoyah’s famous invention of written characters for the Cherokees that became popularized during the 1820s—left many Euroamericans convinced not only of the difficulties of Native languages but also that Native Americans were fundamentally different from everyone else, in turn reinforcing certain notions of racial difference that became increasingly emphasized as the nineteenth century wore on. Consequently, commentators like Indian agent Henry R. Schoolcraft fused philology with popularized notions of a certain Indian mindset for the U.S. government, leading federal officials like Lewis Cass and others to more fully elaborate racialized notions of language as proof of the “undeveloped and unchanging savage minds” in order to justify Indian removal (181). Despite the fact that philologists increasingly questioned the usefulness of language for understanding social progress by the mid-nineteenth century—not to mention that Indians themselves resisted consolidation and removal upon linguistic lines—federal officials still pushed for a taxonomy that would help strengthen the United States in its colonization and administration of Indian lands. In the end, as Harvey writes in his epilogue, “understandings of Native languages helped create a Euro-American philosophy and science of language,” one that certainly played a role in nineteenth century U.S. colonialism but also must be understood within the larger context of Western powers colonizing the third world (223). In this instance, the relationship between U.S. colonialism and larger world colonialism during the nineteenth century are readily apparent.

Native Tongues is an exceptionally intelligent book that reminds readers of the complexities of nineteenth century U.S. colonialism; Harvey also adds a further layer of complexity to the well-trod but tragic grounds of biological racism and Indian removal. The author ultimately shows historians that despite the fact that many current borderlands and Native American scholars are more interested in cross-cultural cooperation or Native American agency (worthy topics in their own rights), studies of the imposition of U.S. federal and social power during the age of colonialism are still revealing fascinating new insights that previous generations of historians have missed. *Native Tongues* will find a ready and interested audience among Native American historians, intellectual historians, and historians interested more broadly in the nineteenth century United States.

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***Rebels in Paradise: Sketches of Northampton Abolitionists.* Bruce Laurie. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015. 184 pages. \$22.95 (paperback).**

In *Rebels in Paradise: Sketches of Northampton Abolitionists*, historian Bruce Laurie profiles five men: Sylvester Judd, Jr., John Payson Williston, David Ruggles, Henry S. Gere, and Erastus Hopkins and analyzes how they built an antislavery movement in antebellum Northampton, Massachusetts. These men, Laurie contends, were hardly lone voices crying out in the wilderness. Instead, they were part of a “larger fraternity of reformers” (2). Each of the five men began as a Garrisonian but, by the end of the 1830s, repudiated Garrison’s antipolitical strategy in favor of political action. In bringing to the fore the strategies of political abolitionists, Laurie



builds on his *Beyond Garrison: Antislavery and Social Reform* (Cambridge University Press, 2005). *Rebels in Paradise* contains an elegant discussion of the meaning of political abolitionism in antebellum Northampton. Political abolitionists in other settings, Laurie comments, might have been racists and white supremacists, but in Northampton they were “legitimate abolitionists, not compromisers, and exemplary egalitarians” (8).

Laurie begins with Sylvester Judd Jr. the “oldest and most eccentric rebel in paradise” (11). Judd, the publisher of the *Hampshire Gazette*, was a political dissident and critic of elite rule. His dislike of the elite led him to reject colonization and embrace Garrison and abolitionism. His dim view of human nature, however, never brightened, and Judd soon abandoned the movement. Thus, despite helping launch the local movement, Judd withdrew and spent most of the rest of his life in solitude.

In contrast to Judd, the other four men were very much part of a wider world. David Ruggles, an African American abolitionist and proponent of the water cure, “infused black Northampton with a new sense of purpose” (39) and “sparked higher levels of African American self-awareness” (44). Ruggles and his white allies helped make Northampton a hub on the Underground Railroad and “a lodestar for obscure slaves on the run” (59). Ruggles might have achieved greater successes but for his untimely death. His life, Laurie

contends, illuminates three features of the history of abolitionism at the local level: the quality of black activism, relations between political and nonpolitical abolitionists, and the workings of the Underground Railroad.

Northampton abolitionists, Laurie notes, were not of one mind about the relationship between issues such as prohibitionism, nativism, and abolitionism. John Payson Williston, for instance, an ardent crusader against slavery, became sidetracked by prohibitionism. When Williston turned from voluntary temperance to punitive prohibition, he not only “unleashed a culture war” (83) but opened rifts in the antislavery movement. Williston was not responsible for the animosity between political and nonpolitical abolitionists – those fault lines predated his turn to prohibitionism – but he provoked arguments among political abolitionists. Political abolitionists sensibly chose to work within the political system, but they were not in agreement about how best to enact change. Should they focus exclusively on slavery or target other issues? Williston, among others, poured himself into the prohibition movement. Thus, although he was an exemplary egalitarian, Williston also became a “provocative moral absolutist” (84).

Henry S. Gere, a journalist, embraced a position diametrically opposed to that of Williston. Gere spent the second half of the 1850s “paring prohibitionism and nativism from the Republican Party, honing it into a sharp antislavery instrument” (87). Gere believed the Republican Party did best to focus solely on antislavery activism. Thus, he not only disparaged Williston for wandering down the prohibition path but scourged Republicans who embraced or flirted with nativism. Gere, Laurie comments favorably, “dexterously steered the local party between the destructive shoals of prohibitionism and nativism to the noble waters of antislavery” (115) and kept Northampton “on the enlightened side of the debate over race and slavery” (115).

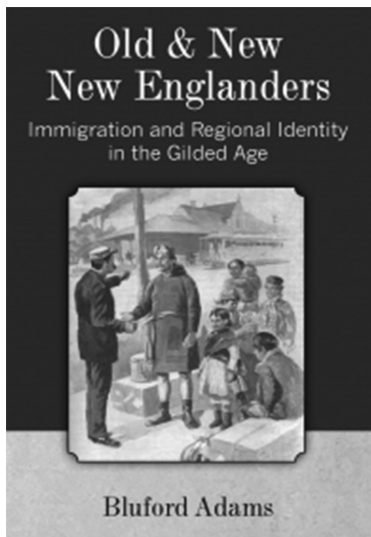
Erastus Hopkins, who of the five men achieved the most prominence, combined elements of Williston and Gere. For a time, after embracing political abolitionism, Hopkins locked horns with the Catholic Church, but he eventually made peace with the church and came to a more “liberal, if qualified, perspective on immigration” (131). Hopkins grew to hate nativism, seeing it as pernicious and took delight in baiting and ridiculing nativists on the stump. After the Civil War, Northampton saw a changing of the political guard. The new men in politics cast aside “the idealisms of the antebellum years for reconciliation at the end of Reconstruction and the gaudy materialism of the Gilded Age” (153).

Laurie has produced a readable and compelling study of political abolitionism in Northampton. The ending of the book felt somewhat abrupt.

Laurie might have spent more time analyzing the lives of Willison, Gere, and Hopkins after the Civil War as well as the attitudes of the new men. What did they think of the older generation of abolitionists? This, however, is a minor point. *Rebels in Paradise* is well worth reading. It will appeal to both an academic and a popular audience.

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***Old and New New Englanders: Immigration and Regional Identity in the Gilded Age.* Bluford Adams. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014. 260 (xii) pages. \$70.00 (hardcover), \$38.50 (paperback), \$37.50 (e-book).**



Bluford Adams has written an excellent analysis of New England identities during the industrial era of the late 1800s and early 1900s. *Old and New New Englanders: Immigration and Regional Identity in the Gilded Age* demonstrates that immigration into (and out of) New England during a period of urbanization and industrialization prompted much soul searching about the region's past, present, and future. A "Yankee community that was itself internally divided over what it meant to be a New Englander encountered an immigrant population with its own diverse notions about the meanings and uses of regional identity" (6).

Each chapter focuses on a different discussion about immigration and its perceived effects. In chapter one, we read about writers who worried whether New Englanders were conquering the globe or dying out. "Brahmin Anglo-Saxonists" such as Henry Cabot Lodge and John Fiske were confident that white "Teutonic" Americans could spread their culture through the world, yet feared that back home in New England their proud traditions were being stifled by new waves of immigrants. The second chapter analyzes ethnicity, history, and memory. On the one hand, "racial regionalists" sought to craft a New England historical narrative that stressed the primacy of their ethnic

group—whether Yankee or Irish or French Canadian. On the other hand, “racial pluralists” were more “inclusive” and “saw New England’s culture as a storehouse to which many ethnic groups were contributing and on which all could draw” (40).

In chapter three, Adams analyzes discourses about gender and the body. “Whether the issue was climate or abortion or domestic labor,” he writes, “people across the political spectrum believed they could read the future of New England on the delicate bodies of its women” (80). Were those delicate bodies a sign of “True Womanhood” or of racial decline? Would immigrant women’s sturdy and fertile bodies ruin the region’s racial stock, or replenish it? Come to think of it, asked nascent feminists, were New England women really too delicate, or were they merely the educated and well-acclimated descendants of hardy Puritans? Chapter four focuses on the perceived decline of late 1800s rural New England. Traditionalists and progressives debated whether immigrants would hasten the region’s deterioration or infuse it with new life.

The fifth chapter turns our gaze to those who were leaving New England and heading to what was then considered the “West”—Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Ohio, especially Connecticut’s Western Reserve. Adams argues that while “Greater New Englanders” saw this Midwestern hinterland as a place to impose Anglo-Saxon culture, a coterie of “preservationists” hoped that traditional ways that were dying out in New England might be transplanted there. Meanwhile, “nationalists”—including influential historian Frederick Jackson Turner—thought it best to leave New England traditions behind and transform them into progressivism in the West’s fertile soil (165–166). Clearly, turn-of-the-century New Englanders (and their progeny) imagined the Midwest as a place whose development had direct implications for their home region.

Adams is a professor of English and American Studies at the University of Iowa; *Old and New New Englanders* exhibits both the strengths and limitations of those fields. The author does a marvelous job of parsing the intellectual and cultural tensions within the writings of Gilded Age New Englanders, showing that there was no clear consensus about the meanings of immigration and urban-industrial growth. Yet the reader occasionally gets bogged down in various groups (two or three are typically introduced in each chapter) who debated immigration and regional identity. Furthermore, even though this book’s aims are discursive in nature, Adams could more clearly contextualize his analysis. Readers would benefit from a few graphs or maps illustrating the number of immigrants to the region by year, the countries from which they came, and the states or cities in which they settled.

A stronger sense of change over time would also help. It is not clear, for instance, whether New Englanders' discussions were waning or intensifying as immigration to the United States peaked around 1907.

One of this book's best features is its insistence upon considering regional identity as something in flux. Adams writes that "regional identity proves . . . to be a very slippery customer, unstable, ambiguous, and often passing itself off as something else" (1). Regions are not static places, indeed, but rather topographical mentalities built over time, layer by layer, by people of various ethnicities. A city like Boston, we might come to understand, is a house with many additions, with Southie and the North End having as much claim on regional identity as the Common or the Old South Meeting House. Readers are forewarned, though, that this book mines the literary imagination more effectively than it tells stories about actual places. Although Adams analyzes the fears and aspirations of many writers hailing from Massachusetts, the Bay State yields few specific references in *Old and New New Englanders*. Discussions of immigrant neighborhoods in cities like Boston, Lowell, Lynn, or Fall River are surprisingly lacking. Also, the majority of voices in the book are Anglo, along with some Irish American and French Canadian sources. Future studies might incorporate additional perspectives from Italians, Poles, Ukrainians, African Americans, and other groups who populated Gilded Age New England.

Despite such lacunae, this book is a must-read for anyone interested in late-1800s New England intellect, culture, and immigration. Scholars of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era will also find much to appreciate and admire in this smart analysis of regional identity. A brief review cannot quite do justice to the richness of its argument.

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***The Great Lawrence Textile Strike of 1912: New Scholarship on the Bread & Roses Strike.* Edited by Robert Farrant and Jurg Siegenthaler. Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company, 2014. 252 pages. \$49.95 (paper).**

As the subtitle indicates, this short collection brings together recent scholarship on the Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile strike of January–March 1912, including an article that debunks the myth that the strike was actually the "bread and roses strike." The strike itself was not particularly long or

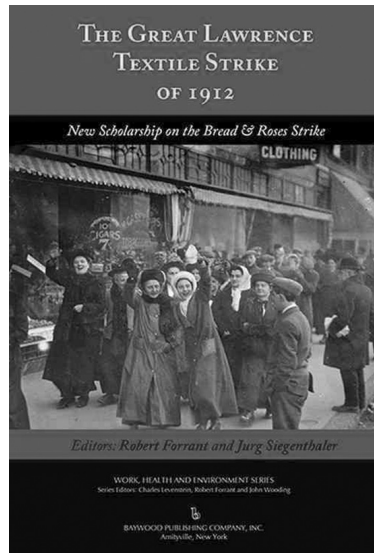
violent. In fact, given the context of the times, it was quite peaceful and short, lasting only three months. However, the fact that it was short and mostly nonviolent in an age of labor-management violence does not make it an anomaly nor minimize its significance.

The Lawrence strike of 1912 stands out for a variety of reasons. For one thing, the strikers were mostly women, mostly immigrants, and mostly impoverished: the working poor. The trigger for the strike was a decision by management at one of Lawrence's major mills to reduce the work week by two hours, a seemingly humanitarian gesture in keeping with Progressive ideals. For those barely scraping

by on the pitiful wages provided by the profit-maximizing employers, the loss of two hours of work, unfortunately, meant the loss of two hours of wages, and two hours meant three loaves of bread unbought because they were now unaffordable. The women walked out, and the other mills quickly emptied until fifteen to twenty thousand workers were on strike. Early on, the strike appeared to be doomed in the face of recalcitrant and united ownership and indifference of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) leadership. However, the International Workers of the World (IWW) sent in major players, and the local workers began to organize for a long stoppage. Eventually they prevailed: a rare victory for labor at this time, which is another reason the strike stands out.

This edited volume brings together papers from a variety of disciplines, presented at the centennial meeting of left leaning labor historians and other scholars and practitioners. It not only covers the strike itself as history but also brings it into a broader context through the use of other disciplines.

After the introductory chapter by the editors, the first contributor essay speaks to the role of striking Franco-Belgian textile workers in providing food and other support for the strikers. The following chapter addresses the strike leadership: a committee of ten. That chapter is followed by one on the use of children in the strike effort, a precursor of the much later Selma, Alabama, strike that put children on the front lines of a different but equally strenuous struggle. The subsequent chapter uses game theory and other theories to offer



analysis of why the strikers succeeded and why the police failed, a sub-story of the broader worker-owner conflict.

A chapter on the commemorative parades illustrates the changing perception of the strike at the fiftieth and one hundredth anniversaries, changes reflective of the difference in America during these two times. The chapter later talks about the American dream and how it changed from the early Lowell/Lawrence humanitarian textile industry, through the Gilded Age exploitation, into the immigrant dream that led to unionism and strikes.

The work changes direction at that point, providing a broader context than merely the single strike. One chapter compares 1912 with subsequent strikes into the 1930s, while another broadens women's strikes to encompass several other Massachusetts and New England strikes. The focus then shifts to the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire for two chapters and China for a chapter. The final chapter examines the "bread and roses" myth and why it continues to resonate regardless of its historical inaccuracy. The chapters on the Triangle fire deal respectively with the development and performance of the radical theater centennial portrayal of the fire and the activities of the centennial commission in dealing with local bureaucracy to bring about the event. The chapter on China describes the current Chinese exploitation as notably similar to the exploitation of the Massachusetts mills a century ago. Not to be overlooked is the special photographic section.

Although the volume is not exhaustive or comprehensive, the selection of articles provides the reader with a solid sense of the strike and why it mattered to the participants, as well as why it matters even today. By incorporating research and reporting from various academic and nonacademic authors, the volume offers an up-to-date view of the Lawrence strike and its impacts. Notably, the articles are mostly jargon-free, readily accessible to the interested non-professional or student, and well documented.

Those interested in learning more will find guidance in the footnotes. Also, the reader tempted to feel complacent that these events are so last century should look more closely at today's exploitation and see if the pattern still fits. That chapter is missing from this otherwise substantial work of labor history.

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***Emily Greene Balch: The Long Road to Internationalism.* Kristen E. Gwinn. Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010. 232 pages. \$45.00 (hardcover).**

Today, few remember Emily Greene Balch (1867–1961). An economist, sociologist and internationally known pacifist, Balch combined an academic career at Wellesley College with a long-standing interest in social issues such as poverty, child labor and immigration along with settlement house work. Balch played a central role in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and was the third woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946. However, her legacy suffers from a relative absence in historical studies. Biographer Kristen E. Gwinn examines Balch from childhood through old age in order to show that Balch's mid-life commitment to full-time peace work must be understood in terms of personal choices and experiences unique to her upbringing and young adulthood. Existing treatments of Balch's life, in contrast, focus solely on the period in which she served as an international peace advocate.

Gwinn cites Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, where Balch was born in 1867, as the place Balch first encountered the academic and moral pursuits that shaped her later efforts in reform, academia, and pacifism. From her father, Balch developed a love of learning and an appreciation for negotiation. Balch's upper middle-class parents valued formal education and sent her to Miss Ireland's School for Girls in Boston's Back Bay. When Balch was ten years old, Charles F. Dole, a Congregationalist who became the minister at Jamaica Plain's traditional Unitarian First Church, played a formative role in Balch's development by instilling in her a strong sense of responsibility for others.

After college at Bryn Mawr and graduate study in Paris, Balch devoted herself to reform initiatives in Boston. Charles W. Birtwell of the Children's Aid Society introduced her to issues affecting orphans and foster children. This drew Balch closer to North End Italians. Vida Scudder enlisted Balch in the creation of Denison House in the South End. Balch served as the settlement's headworker in its first year, but, in stark contrast to the movement's philosophy of community building, she lived not among the Denison House residents and neighboring Irish immigrants but with her widowed father and family in Jamaica Plain.

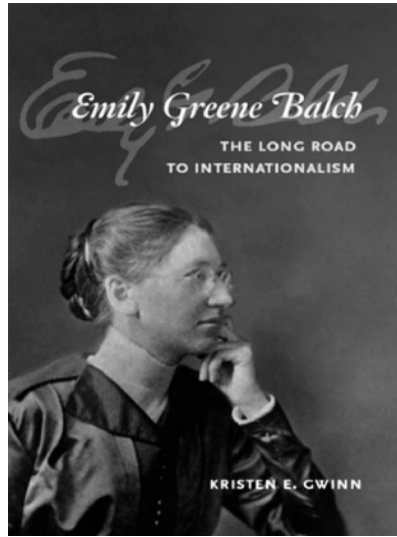
According to Gwinn, Balch's brief formal affiliation with Denison House in no way denoted a lack of commitment to Boston's working class. At the settlement, also a meeting ground for labor activists, Balch joined forces with labor leader Mary Kenney O'Sullivan (1864–1943) and contributed to

the establishment of the Boston branch of the Women's Trade Union League. Balch became its president in 1908.

Gwinn maintains that Denison House and the settlement movement spurred Balch to see herself as a "global citizen." Through dealings with residents and immigrants, Balch developed a "philosophy of intercultural cooperation" and honed the skills in "dispute resolution" that served her well in the international peace movement (34). With this interpretation, Gwinn expands scholarly debates about the nature and significance of settlement workers' interactions with immigrants.

Yet Balch yearned to satisfy her intellectual curiosity more fully. She briefly studied at Radcliffe College with Harvard's Sir William Ashley, who examined economics through the lens of social questions. From there she spent a semester at the University of Chicago, wrestling with how to combine economics and sociology before deciding to further her education at the University of Berlin. As a woman, Balch received permission to audit classes but not to pursue a degree. On her return voyage to Boston, Balch met Katharine Coman, a founder of Denison House and a professor in the Wellesley College economics department, who hired her for a part-time position. Balch became a professor and spent twenty fruitful years at Wellesley.

Balch's opposition to World War I precipitated her unexpected departure from the college. Neither her socialist beliefs nor pacifist convictions were secrets. In 1915, for example, Wellesley granted Balch a leave of absence to attend the international conference of women in The Hague to discuss diplomatic alternatives to war. Wellesley also gave Balch time off to journey to Stockholm and serve as a delegate to the Neutral Conference for Continuous Mediation. Yet the national culture hardened against pacifists during a period when Balch was away from the college. She spent the years 1916 and 1917 on sabbatical to aid the Woman's Peace Party in New York City. There, she also joined the radical People's Council of America, which opposed conscription and included several socialist members. When she tried to resume teaching at Wellesley in 1918, Balch found she required a formal reappointment. The Wellesley community had previously embraced



her politics as an intellectual benefit to the campus. However, the trustees did not look kindly on Balch's recent antiwar activities, especially those with the People's Council of America, and did not rehire her. Balch was just a year shy of being eligible for a pension.

Although not immediately apparent, another career awaited her. In 1919, Balch became the international secretary-treasurer of the newly named WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom). In this and many other instances, Gwinn attributes Balch's election to her excellent diplomatic abilities. Her tasks included establishing the Geneva headquarters, creating inroads with the League of Nations, devising ways to meet the needs of women in war-torn countries, and acquiring new members. Gwinn finds that Balch was self-effacing and unwilling to acknowledge how crucial she was to the WILPF at this important time in its development. Balch held her post from 1919 to 1922 and resumed it again in 1934, three years after becoming the president of the United States section of the WILPF and three years before being named the organization's honorary international president.

The interwar years were difficult ones for the WILPF; Gwinn credits Balch with the organization's survival. Balch strongly believed in the importance of institutions to settle international disputes. Yet the failure of the League of Nations to halt Japanese and Italian militarism spelled its possible demise and, in turn, the end of the WILPF. Under Balch's direction the WILPF continued to back the League, although Balch questioned its stopping short of a call for total disarmament. Agreement on this issue united the WILPF during a time marked by financial strain and the national section's discontent with the parent body's shift toward centralized authority. Balch's knack for approaching a problem from multiple angles and finding common ground between disputants proved to be vital in preserving the WILPF.

Gwinn rightly highlights the value of Balch's personal qualities, but her repeated claims regarding Balch's diplomatic skill or character often seem like overly deterministic attempts to connect Balch's later work in internationalism to her previous experiences. Whether, for example, Balch's letter to the Wellesley trustees, as they considered her future, displayed her extraordinary talent for negotiation or just tact in a precarious situation is debatable. Gwinn, however, does well in explicating the moral compass and scholarly thoroughness with which Balch approached contentious issues throughout her life, as well as detailing Balch's changing ideas about peace advocacy. For example, the goals of the Axis powers prompted Balch to reconsider her absolute pacifism.

Writing a biography of a largely forgotten person is a risky venture. Gwinn's accomplishment is a reminder that there should be more scholarly

biographies of women. Surely there are other female reformers whom historians have either viewed too narrowly or overlooked simply because they worked behind the scenes or did not seek the spotlight.

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