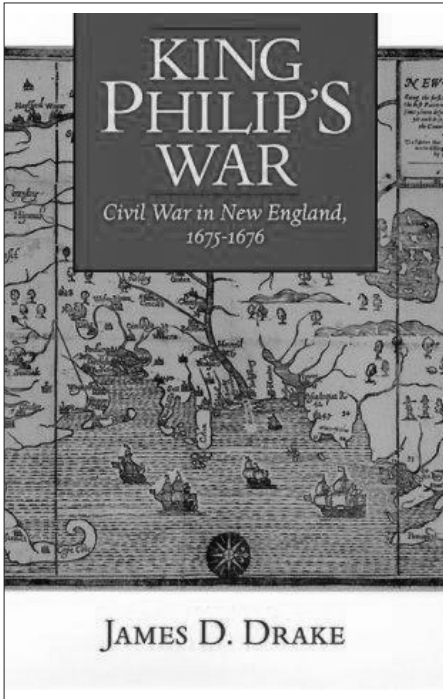


## BOOK REVIEWS

***King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676.* By James D. Drake. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999. 257 pages. \$25.95 (paperback).**



*King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676*, written by James D. Drake, is a book that describes the events of King Philip's War as well as the development of the relationship between English colonists and Algonquin Native American tribes in southern New England. Drake argues the rather nuanced position that the way native-white relationships have been thought of since the aftermath of this war is radically different than how they actually were in the time of the New England colonies. The society of early New England was much more diverse and mixed than what is commonly understood. Rather than a rigid divide between Englishmen and Indians, each

colony had many semi-autonomous Indian nations as subjects. The colonies did not strictly have an us-against-them mentality prior to this war. Drake's book goes into incredible detail on the exact nature of the conflict, revealing the many ways that the war radically changed the character of New England.

Drake points out that there were no clearly defined borders between Indian territory and English territory. There was little in the way of a true frontier, where land dominated by one culture transitioned into that of another. Instead, Indian settlements could be found between and amongst English colonial settlements, well within the lands claimed by the colonies of New England. Colonies such as Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Plymouth even based the legitimacy of their rule on the fact that various Indian groups had submitted to them as subjects. The natives that joined Philip in rebellion against the English were often very conflicted in their loyalties.

Drake purposefully chose the subheading *Civil War in New England* to describe how he views the nature of Indian-English conflicts in this time period. The author uses the heterogeneity of early New England politics to support his claims that King Philip's war was prosecuted as a civil war rather than a war between two independent groups or the incursion of a foreign horde. The brutality of the war, with a high civilian death toll, can be explained by this context, as participants in rebellions were seen more as criminals deserving death than foreign combatants worthy of respectful treatment. James Drake emphasizes the importance of understanding the events of King Philip's War in the context of its time period rather than from the perspective of the modern age. For instance, the many massacres that were committed over the course of the war seem like horrid war crimes to the modern reader. While Drake does not condone the slaughter of innocents, he does point out how it was viewed in the time. In light of the excessive brutality of the recent Thirty Years War and Irish Rebellion, King Philip's War was viewed as having been waged with a large degree of mutual respect and decorum.

Many complex political factors contributed to the course of the war. For instance, the political maneuvering between the New England colonies and New York affected their decisions during the war. This led to criticism and scrutiny from authorities in London, which contributed to the erosion of the traditional Puritan authority in the region. This subtle detail is just one of the many that Drake uses to convey how nuanced and complex the history of this period truly was.

This book is incredibly compelling to read. It deals with a period of history that has shaped the course of this region's history as well as the course of the entire nation. The author does a very commendable job of conveying the importance of the conflict to his readers. His writing is very engaging, avoiding becoming dull or dry while still relaying very important and comprehensive information. Readers will gain a unique and thorough understanding of early colonial New England. If one wants to learn about how modern New England was formed from the sparse settlements of Puritan Englishmen and Algonquin tribes, this book can be a wonderful contribution to a reader's efforts.

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***American Tempest: How the Boston Tea Party Sparked a Revolution.* By Harlow Giles Unger. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 2011. 288 pages. \$16.00 (paperback).**

In *American Tempest: How the Boston Tea Party Sparked a Revolution*, Harlow Giles Unger ties together disparate threads of colonial history into a comprehensive overview of American political and social unrest, using the Boston Tea Party as the prism through which he explores the road to revolution. With his stated goal to provide the “true and entire story of the original Tea Party and the Patriots who staged it,” and its important social, political and economic consequences, Unger provides valuable context for scholars of eighteenth-century domestic and international affairs (4). Meticulously researched and written in a style designed to appeal to both academic and popular audiences, *American Tempest* contextualizes and describes the events leading to the outbreak of hostilities in an effective and thorough manner. Numerous illustrations add depth to his prose and help the reader visualize the events and people brought to life in the book.

A prolific author and accomplished historian, Unger has published twenty-five books, including ten biographies of America’s founding fathers. He has experience as a journalist, broadcaster, and educator, having worked as a foreign correspondent and analyst for an overseas news service, and taught English and journalism. According to his website, Unger is a graduate of Yale University and has a Master of Arts from California State University.

Unger’s gripping introductory chapter illuminates the passionate revolutionary sentiment alive in Boston in the late fall of 1773, with riveting first person accounts of the activity on board the ships in the harbor. He provides insight into the attitudes of both Loyalists and Patriots in the other American colonies both before and after the Tea Party, and he documents the violence of the rebellion from a unique perspective. Unger argues that the Boston Tea Party “provoked a reign of terror” across the colonies, and that the turmoil “stripped tens of thousands of Americans of their dignity, homes, properties, and birthrights – all in the name of liberty and independence” as a result of the violence unleashed by the revolt (3).

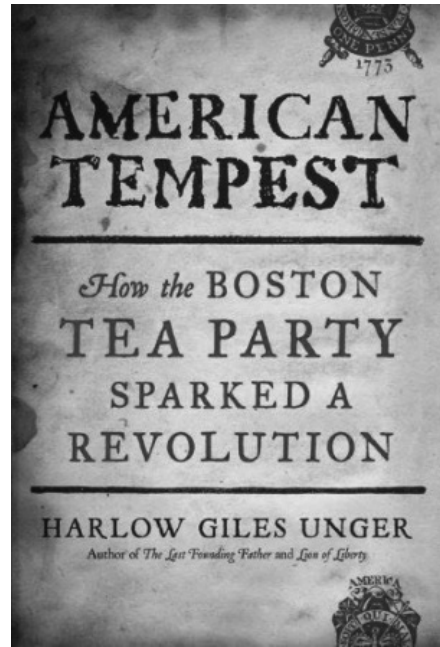
The chronological structure of the book allows the reader to absorb and analyze each decision made by both sides in the conflict, meticulously explaining the ramifications of each. Of particular interest are the descriptions of the clear disconnect between perception and reality on the part of the Royal government and loyal colonists and the burgeoning Patriot movement. Propaganda played a large role with men like Samuel Adams and Paul Revere quick to capitalize on missteps made by the British. John Adams

characterized the destruction of the tea as bold, daring, and inflexible, and Unger asserts that it released uncontrollable “social, political and economic forces” (3-4).

Trade and taxes had long been issues of contention between Royal governors and wealthy colonial merchants, and efforts by Governor Sir Francis Bernard to crush smugglers as early as 1760 “ignited the first embers of revolution” (35). Unger traces the attempts by British authorities and Parliament to increase revenue by taxing the colonies as they tried to alleviate the tax burden imposed on Englishmen, which existed largely

as a result of colonial defense. According to Unger, the “arrogance and miscalculations of British political and military leaders” was largely to blame for the disintegrating colonial relationship and encouraged and supported Adams’ ongoing propaganda war. The eventual organization of Committees of Correspondence across America allowed Boston Patriots to control the narrative and maintain organized resistance against the perceived tyranny of the British government. Unger carefully describes Adams’s tactics and credits him with making tea symbolic of that tyranny (162).

Several themes emerge as Unger traces the events leading up to and following the Boston Tea Party, including the importance of personality and personal relationships in the buildup to revolution. John Hancock’s central role as a Patriot leader is illuminated, with the personalities of the early patriots outlined in detail. Recruited initially by Samuel Adams, Hancock eventually finds himself in a leadership position and uses his vast wealth to underwrite and support the Patriot cause while protecting his own financial interests. Samuel Adams emerges as an angry and ill-kempt ne’er do well, whose personal short comings belied his ability to organize and motivate others. Giving equal time to the Loyalist cause, Unger offers nuanced and detailed portraits of both Thomas Hutchinson and Thomas Gage among others, allowing the reader to draw conclusions about their actions and the choices they were forced to make.

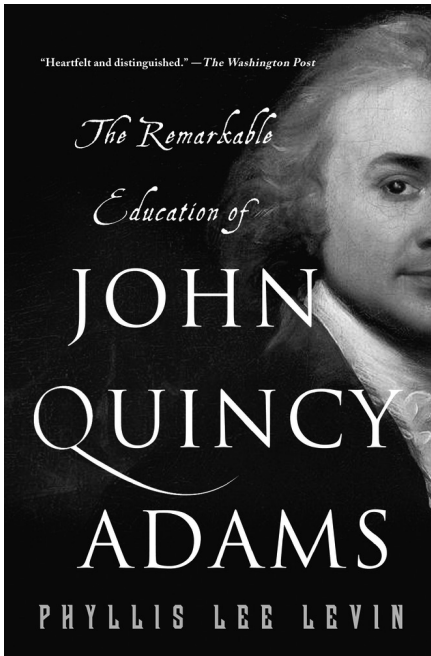


Unger provides a detailed overview of the events in Boston, England and the colonies leading to the outbreak of war at Lexington and Concord, and he illuminates the violent nature of the conflict from its beginnings. His concluding chapter brings the reader some closure on the so-called “forgotten Patriots.” He both chronicles John Hancock’s successful political career and explains Samuel Adams’ loss of influence and popularity. The fate of the many thousands of Loyalists forced to flee America is also dealt with, though the final pages seem designed more to tie up loose ends than offer any substantive conclusions. Overall, however, *American Tempest* carefully and completely describes the events that led to “a declaration of independence, a bloody revolution, and the world’s first experiment with self-government” (4).

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***The Remarkable Education of John Quincy Adams.* By Phyllis Lee Levin. New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2016. 524 pages. \$30.99 (paperback).**

In the past few years several writers have turned their attention to John Quincy Adams (1767-1848), whose long and outstanding political career began in diplomacy during the American Revolution (1775-1783) and ended in the U.S. House of Representatives where he protested the spread of slavery and adamantly opposed the Mexican War (1846-1848). It is due to the richness of his long life, family ties, and contribution to the development of a new nation that the literature on Adams’ personal and public life continues to grow. To these works Phyllis Lee Levin adds *The Remarkable Education of John Quincy Adams*. Levin, the author of several biographical works and a former columnist, editor, and reporter, provides a captivating look at seminal moments in Adams’ early career.



While not diminishing Adams' presidency, Levin focuses on his talent and early diplomatic appointments, his responses to the political convulsions during his time in the states, and his brief tenure in the U.S. Senate. Levin skillfully interweaves his professional accomplishments and interactions with leading politicians in American history, such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, with Adams' relationships with his famous parents, siblings, wife and children. As a result, Adams emerges as a multidimensional, complex man who must at times bow to circumstances and the will of others in ways that would often bend his life in directions that he did not foresee.

To provide the astronomical level of details contained in the book, Levin relied on thousands of letters, memoirs, published papers, and public records left by John Quincy Adams and generations of the Adams family. Similarly, the study draws from scholarly literature and features an impressive bibliography and index that will provide historians with ample sources for further research. Readers, especially biography buffs, will enjoy the synthesis of political, diplomatic, and cultural history presented in clear, flowing prose.

Yet, in many areas the narrative attempts to paint a picture of Adams' world that has little to do with Adams. While descriptions of the natural landscape add texture and vivacity to the events of Adams' life, fantastic and mundane alike, they also extend the book into a forbidding length. The same is true of discussions of Adams' feelings, or the feelings of others, for which there are no citations. On the other hand, four pages of images sandwiched between chapters 17 and 18 provide helpful visuals of the people and places in Adams' life.

Scholars and college students may decry the dearth of sources that could have provided updated interpretations of political developments within the Federalist Party during Adams' time in the Senate. This results in a palpable four-year gap that glosses over the acerbic partisan climate that finally forced Adams to sever ties with congressional Federalists in 1807. A possible reason for this oversight is the fact that many of the scholarly works Levin cites were published before 1970. The biography, which Levin calls a memoir, therefore, could have benefitted from newer scholarship on the Federalist Party or the new looks at Adams in this context.

No matter the nature of its shortcomings, there is still much to recommend *The Remarkable Education of John Quincy Adams*. Levin provides a record of John Quincy Adams' early career with exacting skill. Adams' political career and private life spanned years from the creation of the United States to signs of its dissolution twenty years before secession and civil war. Over and again, Levin demonstrates that Adams' abilities were sharpened



and shaped by the historic events that encircled him from adolescence onward. Our focus on John Quincy Adams will rightly continue and will certainly increase our knowledge of the elements of his time and life while providing even more insights into the remarkable education that gave rise to a remarkable statesman.

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***Practicing Medicine in a Black Regiment: The Civil War Diary of Bert G. Wilder, 55th Massachusetts.* Edited by Richard M. Reid. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010. 282 pages. \$39.95 (hardcover).**

Editor Richard M. Reid deserves credit for drawing renewed attention to three relatively neglected aspects of the Civil War—insofar as any aspect of that conflict can be said to be neglected. First is the 55<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment; next the practice of medicine in the Civil War armies; and, finally, the career of a noted scientist, Burt Green Wilder (1841-1925).

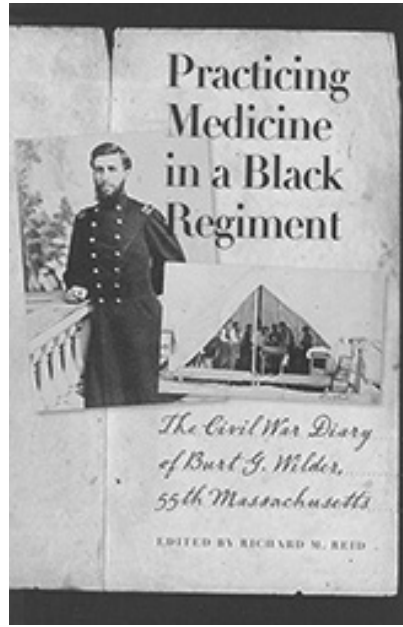
The 55<sup>th</sup> Mass. was an African-American regiment formed under the leadership of abolitionist Governor John A. Andrew after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect. It was formed after the 54<sup>th</sup> Mass. was overfilled with recruits and had a similar composition. Like the 54<sup>th</sup>, it served mostly around Charleston, South Carolina, and it had a similar casualty toll. However, it labored under the disadvantage of being second, lacked a charismatic leader like Robert Gould Shaw, and did not participate in a memorable battle like the doomed assault on Fort Wagner. For these reasons, the famous movie *Glory* featured the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment, not the 55<sup>th</sup>.

Despite the often-repeated fact that more Civil War soldiers died of disease than in battle, the subject of medical treatment, less glamorous than battles and strategy, has been relatively overlooked. In a trend of which this book forms a part, that deficiency is gradually being corrected, and it is now common to see army physicians with their equipment represented at Civil War re-enactments.

Burt Green Wilder, a Boston native with a reformist mindset, was a medical cadet in Washington, D.C. in May 1863 when he accepted a commission as assistant surgeon in the 55<sup>th</sup>. He served 27 months with the regiment, extending through the end of the war. Wilder had not received

much formal medical training and to a large extent was self-taught by individual study and experience.

Even as a young man, Wilder was a dedicated scientific observer with a wide range of interests. Being stationed on the coast of the American South introduced him to a variety of new species and phenomena. At one point he and other officers devised and patented a crank-operated machine to draw silk from a certain kind of spider. In later life, Wilder's enthusiasm for science made him an inspiring teacher and administrator at Cornell University, and he played an important part in shaping American academic science.



Wilder gives a thorough day-to-day account of the medical duties that occupied him. To his considerable regret, much of his time was spent determining which soldiers were really ill and which were malingering. It does not appear that medical practice was greatly different in a black regiment than in a typical white regiment. By the time the 55<sup>th</sup> Mass. was formed, military medicine had become more standardized and was better equipped, at least in the Union Army. Much depended on the quality of the individual practitioner, and in this regard Wilder seems to have been exemplary. He was fortunate in enjoying superb personal health, remained dedicated to his calling, and was always trying to improve his knowledge by study and inquiry.

The black soldiers in the 55<sup>th</sup> had significant grievances, particularly over delayed and unequal pay. Wilder reports several instances of mutiny and other resistance, but generally the soldiers remained faithful despite these injustices. Wilder, who was remarkably free of prejudice for his time, sympathizes with the soldiers but does not become preachy, as he easily might have been.

Wilder did not actually write a diary as such. The present "diary" consists of excerpts from letters he wrote almost daily to his future wife. Years later, after he retired, he began revising and expanding this collection for publication. He contacted former members of the regiment, other officers, and even his Confederate opponents to fill in details that he had not personally



witnessed. He had specialized in the study of the brain, and one of his main motivations in writing about his wartime experience was to counteract the “scientific racism” that had taken hold by the early twentieth century and which maintained that Negroes had inherently lower intellectual capacity than whites. Wilder’s opposition to this generally accepted belief was a lonely and courageous stand in that era.

Despite his efforts, the diary was not published in Wilder’s long lifetime. It complements a much earlier regimental history by Charles Fox but is more mundane and more honest in describing personality characteristics and conflicts among the white officers. Wilder, stationed behind the lines to attend to casualties, did not observe actual combat. Rather surprisingly, he seldom mentions larger military and political events, such as the 1864 election. Major military movements, such as General Sherman’s approach, are noted only when there is an immediate effect on Wilder and his regiment. He was home on leave when the Confederates finally abandoned Charleston.

It may be unintentional, but the diary illustrates the routine nature of the activities that occupied even educated officers like Wilder. Although he studied and worked to complete his dissertation whenever he had an opportunity, a large portion of his time was spent preparing and improving his living quarters, only to be disrupted by frequent moves or storms. Despite his scientific orientation, Wilder developed a superstitious belief that if their living conditions became too comfortable, they would be forced to move again.

In this book, pages 1 to 45 comprise the introduction, while the diary itself runs from page 49 to 261. It is thoroughly footnoted with respect to identifying locations and individuals. The entire diary is presented as a unit, and I think it would have benefited from being divided at least by month, as most entries give only the date, not the month or year it was in. Although there is an area map in the beginning of the book, it would have been helpful to have maps, particularly of the battles, closer to where they are described in the text. Leaving aside these minor criticisms of presentation, this book succeeds in illuminating a somewhat dim corner of the great conflict. Anyone interested in this period will find it informative and revealing on many levels.

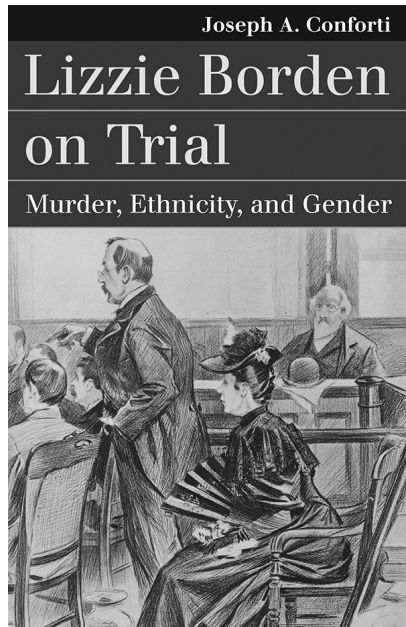
*Larry Lowenthal, a retired National Park Service Historian and Planner, is a historical researcher and author.*

***Lizzie Borden on Trial: Murder, Ethnicity, and Gender.* By Joseph A. Conforti. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015. 256 pages. \$19.95 (paperback).**

Most Americans are familiar with the popular children's rhyme about the accused Massachusetts woman Lizzie Borden and the 40, and subsequent 41, whacks she supposedly inflicted on her parents during their violent assassinations in the family home. However, few people know much about the actual history behind the Borden story. Over generations, popular depictions in literature, film, and television have skewed the details. In *Lizzie Borden on Trial: Murder, Ethnicity, and Gender*, scholar Joseph Conforti provides a new perspective on the deaths of the Borden couple and an innovative look into why jurors acquitted Lizzie of killing her parents. Conforti argues that ethnicity, class,

and gender not only fueled the tensions in the Borden household that spurred the murders but also shaped the circumstances leading to Lizzie's freedom after she was tried for the crimes. Conforti contends that Lizzie Borden's exoneration was the result of her and her defense team's ability to play on the Victorian notions of gender difference and her reputation as a respectable upper-class woman, as well as efforts to manipulate the media and ethnic and class connections within the community to generate support. At the heart of the book is legal evidence pertaining to the town, investigation, inquest, and the trials and materials gleaned from various local, state, and national newspapers. Given his attention to the nineteenth-century backdrop in which the crimes occurred, Conforti's work is as much a legal and criminal history as it is a social and cultural history.

Conforti is uniquely qualified to write about the Borden case because he is from Fall River, Massachusetts, where Lizzie's parents lived and died. Well acquainted with the area and the local past, Conforti opens with a description of what the town was like leading up to the Borden murders in 1892. He argues that during the Gilded Age, the community increasingly



split along class lines. The upper classes lived in an area above the rivers and the coast known as “The Hill,” while the working classes lived near the centers of industrial production below. By the turn of the twentieth century, Fall River, once dominated by British or native-born white Protestants, was undergoing a dramatic demographic change because of the Industrial Revolution. Immigrants flooded in for work in the textile mills and factories. To the displeasure of the local elite, Fall River had swelling populations of Irish, French Canadians, and Portuguese. Irish Catholics, in particular, found themselves at odds with the indigenous Protestants over the higher-ranking jobs in politics and law enforcement. Racial and ethnic tensions in Fall River are evident throughout Conforti’s text, and the author stresses that the division between different groups in the town shaped the responses to the Borden murders.

As Conforti suggests, in the growing Massachusetts community, Lizzie’s family held a prominent position. Lizzie’s ancestors were among the town’s founding families. Having settled in the area as early as the 1630s, they were part of the faction of native-born elite seeking to maintain power over the immigrant masses and prospering off the work of laborers in the textile industries. Lizzie’s father, Andrew, known for being wealthy yet stingy with his money, had earned his income over time through his investments in the town’s cotton mills, banks, and various rental properties. People viewed Andrew as stern, distant, and frosty. His choice of home is revealing of his personality. Although the Bordens could have easily afforded a house on “The Hill,” where the other members of the upper crust lived, much to his family’s dismay, Andrew preferred for the Bordens to live near the business district so that he could readily monitor his various commercial ventures as he aged.

As Conforti contends, the dynamics both within the Borden family and between the Bordens and the local community were complex. Lizzie had difficulty fitting in and was known for being moody from a young age. In her early thirties, she lived in her father’s home with her sister, Emma, and her stepmother, Abby. Compared to the other women of her economic standing, Lizzie had little education and remained unmarried alongside her older sister, who largely raised her after their biological mother died. When not at home tending to family duties, Lizzie worked to cultivate a respectable public image through religious instruction, but at the time of the murders, she had only recently become engaged in this position. She found her spirituality later in life. According to Conforti, neither Lizzie nor Emma was ever close to Abby. In fact, it seems that they viewed her as competition for their father’s wealth and inheritance. Lizzie and Emma battled with Andrew for a greater allowance, which disrupted the family dynamic. Lizzie, in particular, was

discontented with her circumstances, aspiring to live a life of luxury on “The Hill,” and she allegedly spoke about it to relatives and friends.

Andrew and Abby Borden also had a thorny relationship, which soured their home. First, their marriage was more about practicality than romantic love. By the time that Andrew was ready to take a second wife, he realized he needed another hand around the house and a set of eyes to watch his daughters. Although Andrew provided for Abby, he remained the quintessential patriarch, controlling the money given to his wife and his daughters, thereby limiting their purchases, lifestyle, and activities. Andrew monitored Abby’s tight allowance, from which she not only had to care for herself but also pay for items and services to maintain the household. For example, when Andrew was not willing to give their Irish maid, Bridget, a raise, sources suggest Abby might have had to turn over another portion of her limited funds to prevent Bridget from leaving. Although their home was generally clean and orderly, and Bridget’s aid lessened Abby’s chores, Andrew did not invest in many comforts. The Borden house lacked modern furnishings and plumbing, and the family sustained themselves on meager rations such as day-old food that sometimes led to sickness.

Amid this tension-filled home, the culture of displeasure, and the backdrop of the rapidly changing town, the murder of Abby and Andrew Borden, widely considered New England’s “crime of the century,” occurred. On August 4, 1892, in the upstairs guest room of the Borden house, someone attacked Abby from behind with a bladed weapon such as a hatchet or an axe, striking her nineteen times. Later that day, they then assaulted Andrew on an antique sofa in a downstairs room in a similar manner, hitting him in the face with the sharp object ten times. Lizzie was the first to find the bodies, alert Bridget, and call the doctor. However, her parents were dead. Her sister Emma was out of town, and their visiting uncle, John V. Morse, was gone as well. When questioned by police, Lizzie contended that she had come from the family’s barn to find the bodies of her father and stepmother and did not see or hear anything suspicious. However, investigators discovered no footsteps on the dusty barn floor. Inconsistencies in her story, the alleged improbability of her alibi, her comportment during the investigation, and her controversial actions, such as burning a dress, led Lizzie to be charged with her parents’ murders. She spent ten months in jail while awaiting various stages in her legal proceedings.

Conforti argues that many convoluted and often overlooked factors shaped the investigation and the trials. From the beginning, the legal proceedings surrounding the Borden case were problematic and unprofessional, and according to standards today, not fully ethical. Evidence was mishandled,

and personal and professional bias and relationships hindered a just case. The prosecutor doubted he could get a conviction. Lizzie had the support of the judge, the jury, and the upper classes in the community because she was a native-born, wealthy, white woman. Her defense team was well acquainted with the judge. Her jury was almost entirely composed of native-born Protestants, with only one Irish Catholic—a second-generation immigrant. Language barriers excluded many people among the lower classes from participation. Conforti argues that Lizzie's allies pushed hard for her release, seeking to protect one of their own from prison, and thus, helping to maintain, in some small way, supremacy in the New England town, where Protestant whites were losing power to new bodies of immigrants.

Conforti further argues that once on trial, Lizzie and her defense team carefully manicured her public image to the jury, judge, and media in a manner that would make her seem guiltless. Conforti suggests that Lizzie was a talented actress with a flair for theatrics, apparent during the trial. She tried hard to emphasize through her physical appearance and responses that she was a respectable Victorian woman who embodied dignity, delicacy, and morality. For example, while police officers described Lizzie as behaving coldly and bizarrely in the immediate aftermath of the crimes, when brought into court at key moments, such as when authorities presented the bashed-in skulls of her parents as evidence, she became notably distressed at the right moments. Her defense underscored her efforts to appear as a harmless, young, and innocent woman by referring to her as only a "girl." The goal was to make it seem impossible that a woman, especially one bearing Lizzie's characteristics, could be responsible for such vicious crimes.

The media and press coverage helped to shape the narrative and memory surrounding the Borden case. Depending on their perspective or political alignment, the newspapers, publications, and activists portrayed Lizzie as either a cold-blooded killer or a victim of an unfair judicial system, botched investigation, and rampant, gender-based oppression. Outraged at the charges against one of their comrades, for example, female reformers from groups such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), of which Lizzie was a supporter, endorsed her throughout the proceedings. The WCTU was hostile toward immigrants because of their alcohol consumption, skeptical of the Irish Catholic police force, and hoping to preserve the freedom of one of their own upper-class, Protestant sisters, as were the other elite parties involved. WCTU representatives argued for Lizzie's innocence, as did many women's rights activists such as suffragists. The suffragists argued that the real problem with the trial and investigation was that men dominated both.

Men never treated women fairly or adequately served their interests in the courts.

Ultimately, there was not enough evidence for the jury to connect Lizzie to the crimes. With only one small blood spot on a garment turned over to the police, no eyewitnesses, no clear murder weapon, a lot of conflicting hearsay, and pressure from the community's elite to release her, the prosecution's efforts to pin the murders on Lizzie faced insurmountable challenges. Authorities acquitted her of the charges and released her from custody. Although Lizzie was freed, after the trial, she faced a difficult life in Fall River. Lizzie and her sister moved to "The Hill" area where they had aspired to live and bought a home that they called "Maplecroft." However, many local women did not accept her back into the community or church. She created too much of a spectacle if she attended services or went out in public. Children constantly vandalized her home, and an ostracized Lizzie spent most of her days in solitude with her dogs, bird watching, feeding squirrels, or reading. When she traveled, her driver took her out with the curtains drawn.

Later in life, Lizzie made friends among people involved in the theater and the arts, which Conforti argues possibly attracted her because of the dramatic elements of her own life and trials. She angered her sister by throwing lavish parties to entertain her new friends, and Emma subsequently moved away and into her own house in New Hampshire. Lizzie died on June 1, 1927, at age sixty-seven, and her sister died nine days later. After reading the book, although it is clear that Conforti believes Lizzie was guilty, he never states it directly, leaving the reader to decide.

Overall, Conforti does an effective job of complicating the traditional interpretations of the Borden case and humanizing Lizzie. He shows that although troubled, Lizzie was not completely deviant or unreasonable, but rather, a complex person, struggling in a difficult environment. As Conforti suggests, it is possible that Lizzie suffered from mental illness, particularly a dissociative personality that could have made it difficult for her to be fully cognizant of her actions. He also points to allegations that Lizzie had kleptomania, and her father covered up her stealing from her family and local shops. During the nineteenth century, some people viewed female thieves as suffering from a mental disorder that caused them to have impulse control problems rather than an actual criminal nature. Conforti further mentions that Lizzie's bizarre responses and strange behaviors during the investigation again could have been related to her mental health—the result of prescribed drugs, particularly morphine, to deal with anxiety and sleeplessness.

Throughout his text, Conforti is thorough in his explanations of how ethnicity and class influenced the case, but he could have further unpacked



gender and sexuality. Lizzie strove to appear as the ideal Victorian woman, but she remained single, unusual for someone of her background. Conforti mentions that choosing to remain unmarried was increasingly common among upper- and middle-class, college-educated women by the beginning of the twentieth century, but Lizzie did not fall into this category. She dropped out of school at an early age. Conforti could have probed Lizzie's spinsterhood in greater depth, as connected to the hostilities in her family and murders of her parents. Lizzie's father was elderly and rich, yet miserly. She and her sister remained dependent on him for their livelihood and subsequently at odds with their stepmother over inheritance at a time when most women of her background would be reliant on their husband for support, lessening the need for their father's fortune. Single status, gender bias in the larger society, and an inability to provide for oneself put Lizzie (and her sister) in a difficult position. Conforti could have made even more out of this point.

Additionally, one new theory regarding the Borden case that Conforti does not really touch on but that has been perpetuated recently by popular depictions of the crimes relates to Lizzie's sexuality. It suggests that Lizzie might have attacked her disapproving parents after they supposedly responded negatively to discovering her alleged sexual affairs with female friends. Although this might be creative fiction, and some people may not have taken any such liaisons seriously even if they happened because of the period's nonchalant attitudes toward same-sex relations, especially among women, if Lizzie's parents, in particular, did find out about any controversial sexual affairs, they might have disapproved. Conforti notes that Lizzie's father had a strict way about him and came from a line of conservative Puritan ancestors. Lizzie also was involved with the religious education at church, an institution unlikely to be supportive of a promiscuous female instructor. Further, she grew up in a transitional moment, a meeting of old and new, in which some Americans, especially those from families with traditional dynamics like the Bordens, may still have been skeptical of any type of non-procreative sex or intimate sexual experimentation without official, lawful commitment, particularly those incidents occurring outside of a "respectable" heterosexual marriage. Thus, a greater discussion of gender and sexuality would have strengthened an already-intriguing book.

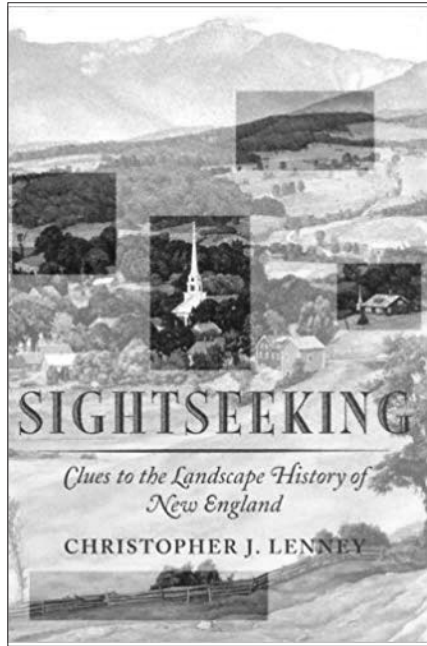
Conforti's text advances the historiography of the Borden murders by providing a nuanced explanation for Lizzie's acquittal, a sounder context for the circumstances leading to the crimes, and a deeper glimpse into the world in which they occurred. In doing so, the author successfully complicates popular narratives of the Borden murders by placing the case in the larger history of the nineteenth century and considering how ethnicity, gender, and

class influenced the tragic events. His text is an important resource for legal, social, or cultural scholars, or scholars of crime and punishment hoping to learn more about the Borden murders from an academic perspective. The book's fluidity and readability would also make it easy to understand for undergraduates in an introductory-level history course.

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***Sightseeing: Clues to the Landscape History of New England.* By Christopher J. Lenney. Lebanon, NH: University of New Hampshire / University Press of New England, 2003. 359 pages. \$35.00 (hardcover).**

The term “reading the landscape” often refers to studying the current natural features of a property in order to understand its past. In *Sightseeing*, author Christopher J. Lenney instead analyzes evidence of civilization that surrounds us. He selects six vernacular artifacts that can be nearly invisible to us: place names, boundaries, town plans, roads, residential architecture, and gravestones. For each category, he reflects upon its origins and the traditions of the region's first settlers. Then he advances well beyond these starting points, both geographically and historically, stopping only when he reaches the second half of the 19th century. Even within these self-prescribed limits, his six-state project is, indeed, an ambitious one.



This vast an undertaking requires a solid foundation from which to begin. Here Lenney uses work from the late 1930s and early 1940s: the *Linguistic Atlas of New England* (LANE) and its *Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England*, as edited by Hans Kurath. Lenney contends that the connections made between the settlers' paths and their speech and dialects

can continue into their naming patterns and how they organized themselves across the region. “As the population increased, the frontier moved inland from the coast and upland from the valleys” (134). And many of the trends follow these migration routes. But since the region consists of 1,941 unique townships, each town’s individual practices and the reasons behind them are not always easy for casual visitors or sightseers to discern. Hence the need to explore even further, through deliberate “sightseeking.”

To read the natural landscape, one should be armed with some knowledge of geology and botany. To scrutinize Lenney’s markers of mankind, one should be familiar with cultural and physical geography, as well as with some anthropology, history, sociology, linguistics, and surveying techniques. The aim here is to uncover as many levels as possible, in order to arrive at each artifact’s true source, assuming it can be found.

The detailed text presents a myriad of information and eventual answers to long-unasked questions. Who would suspect that a mappable pattern exists among those town names that end in “-boro” and those that end in “borough”? Or that linguistic trends can help to explain why many “W” towns lie next to each other in eastern Massachusetts? Has anyone else noticed that towns most often share their boundaries with exactly six other towns? Regarding the natural border that divides Vermont and New Hampshire: which state “owns” the Connecticut River? (New Hampshire.) Which came first, the roads or the houses? (Usually the houses.) Why did many founders name streets after tree species? (Perhaps to follow William Penn’s example, after he laid the grid of Philadelphia in 1682.) And just how common is the stereotypical New England town common? (Not very. Fewer than a quarter of the towns still have them.) The discoveries go on and on.

Lenney, a long-time library assistant in Harvard’s Lamont Library and former Walden Pond tour guide, confesses that he has shared this interest and addressed the regional trends here in published form because he was “convinced no expert ever would” (308). He travels widely throughout New England, often on bicycle for easiest access. He tends to return to the Massachusetts towns that are most familiar to him: North Easton (his hometown), and Concord and Cambridge (where he has worked). This kind of close study would be a challenging one to undertake for any individual community. And Lenney attempts to tackle the whole six-state region, including dips into eastern New York. He does not cover it all. But what he provides are hundreds of astute observations and deductions, as well as opportunities for more localized research to be initiated.

The text is interspersed with twenty-three pages of regional maps and drawings. Savvy explorers will want to keep current state road atlases by their

sides to move more knowingly through this text. Most readers will wish for more illustrations too, especially photographs, historical or contemporary. Yet the lack of them may prompt folks to go out and do their own searches. From his experience, Lenney advises that features depicted on standard maps often appear differently when seen in person.

*Sightseeking* reveals how much we don't know about our shared daily environment and how much we take for granted. Lenney only scratches the surface here. Somehow he simultaneously gives us too many details and yet, not enough of them. The intriguing text is so jam-packed that it requires slow and thoughtful reading. If our predecessors had only left copious notes about each one of their decisions and choices! But then we wouldn't be led on such treasure hunts, and we wouldn't learn best by puzzling out the realities for ourselves. Some mysteries will always remain.

The appropriate audience for *Sightseeking* includes historians, geographers, and avid and curious travelers. The book is far from a quick-and-easy guidebook, but it can still serve as a prompt for personal discovery. It could stir town historians and historical commissions to analyze the six artifacts found in their own sites. No matter their backgrounds or even if they live in New England, most people who pick up this book and read even part of it will travel through the landscape a little wiser and maybe even more deliberately now.

One of the book's biggest lessons is that no one typical New England style exists. "Conventional sightseeing blithely lumps the whole historic landscape under 'Old New England,' an undifferentiated Yankee dreamtime that embraces two to three centuries and sixty thousand square miles," Lenney says. "Sightseeking critically dissects this idyll along more calculated lines" (294). Or as long-time resident and close observer Henry David Thoreau once noted simply: "The question is not what you look at, but what you see."

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***From Slate to Marble: Gravestone Carving Traditions in Eastern Massachusetts, 1770-1870, Volume I.* By James Blachowicz. Evanston, IL: Graver Press, 2006. 440 pp. \$59.95 (hardcover).**

James Blachowicz's *From Slate to Marble: Gravestone Carving Traditions in Eastern Massachusetts*, the first volume of an impressive two-volume work, provides a fascinating look at Massachusetts gravestones of old. His book offers a study and documentation of some of history's most overlooked

artists—those whose craft was the carving of headstones. Blachowicz delves into the lives of fifty-five of these artists, craftsmen who lived and worked between 1770 and 1870. He notes the unique styles, carvings and images they chose and makes them accessible by presenting them as a collection. Anyone who has taken a stroll through the ancient gravesites of New England and been captivated by the intricacy of the carvings would be fascinated by Blachowicz's work.

The book thrives on its photography, although that was not the overall intent. Even someone who takes only a passing interest in the lives of the artists will enjoy the photos—their clarity and the examples provided make *From Slate to Marble* a piece that would fit nicely on a coffee table for public browsing or conversation. The photographs number into the hundreds and are labeled according to the person for whom the stone was carved, date, location, and carver. They are clear and provide graphic examples of each stylistic choice that Blachowicz discusses—from lettering as a giveaway to the carver's identity, to the cherubim, mourning figures, and willow trees that cap the stones.

Sometimes additional notes are made about the gravestone if the carving is unique for the period or shows a marked difference in the usual work for that particular carver. These photographs lend a bit of extra depth to the collection, showing the range of the artists' skill as well as giving the occasional unique touch.

This is not to say that *From Slate to Marble* should be browsed purely for the photography. One drawback, perhaps, to exploration of the book solely for the photographic appeal is that after a long while the nature of the photos can be repetitive. This is not the fault of Blachowicz, as his motive was not to present photographs or even the stones themselves, but to introduce the carvers and show their work. He notes differences and inspirations from other local carvers as well as adaptation of their work over the years as they grew from apprentices to independent stonecutters. It is very much an art study. If a person viewing the work exclusively for the photographs grows tired of the countless urns, cherubs, and willow trees broken up only by the occasional rose or endangered ship, then perhaps they ought to turn instead to the true motive and try to find some points of interest there.

The text can indeed be dense—Blachowicz is covering a topic unknown to most, even in the art history field. Rarely does it seem to occur to people when viewing gravestones that someone had to have carved them, and that carving was (and is) both a business trade and an art form. *From Slate to Marble* is a study of that very thing—where and how these carvers worked, the aesthetic choices that set them apart from other carvers, and the changing nature of

headstone art over time. Like all art forms, headstone carving had different stylistic periods influenced by the culture and preferences of the time. Blachowicz covers all of this and covers it extensively.

In this light, the repetition of the photographs makes more sense. How does an urn and willow design carved by Nathaniel Holmes in 1805 compare to one carved by William Sturgis, a contemporary of his, in 1843? Or how does Holmes' 1805 urn differ from his 1844 one during his "Second Willow Period"? If cherubs are frequently used, it is only because cherubs are

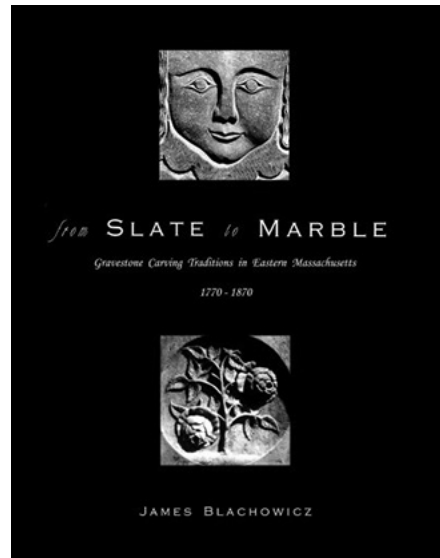
one of the most distinctive and frequent designs that can exemplify carving and the ways it has progressively changed over time, both in terms of the overall art style and the styles used by individual carvers.

The sheer undertaking of *From Slate to Marble: Gravestone Carving Traditions in Eastern Massachusetts* is an impressive feat. The extent of documentation, the photographs and carvings analyzed and compiled with each carver's works, the rigorous study of the field of gravestone carving and the biographies of the fifty-five carvers themselves make it evident that this book was a passion project as well as a compilation. In this, Blachowicz seems to achieve his full potential. *From Slate to Marble* does what it sets out to achieve and more, creating in its documentation of the artwork a work of art in itself.

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**From Slate to Marble: Gravestone Carving Traditions in Eastern Massachusetts, 1750-1850, Volume II.** By James Blachowicz. Evanston, IL: Graver Press, 2015. 686 pp. \$79.95 (hardcover).

In 2006, James Blachowicz published *From Slate to Marble: Gravestone Carving Traditions in Eastern Massachusetts, 1770-1870*, Volume I. (A review of the first volume precedes this one.) The second volume, *From Slate to*





*Marble: Gravestone Carving Traditions in Eastern Massachusetts, 1750-1850*, released in 2015, is even more impressive than the first. It provides another fascinating discussion of gravestone carvings found across eastern Massachusetts. Although there is an eighty-year overlap between the two volumes, this one focuses on a different area of Eastern Massachusetts, exploring the work of artists from areas both north and south of Boston.

In the introduction, Blachowicz explains that the two studies work in conjunction with one another. Volume I examines issues and topics related to researching gravestone carvers. These topics are not discussed in Volume II. Instead, the second volume offers an in-depth study of eighty gravestone artists who were either not mentioned or only briefly mentioned in Volume I. Blachowicz goes on to discuss the new contents and ways in which a person can identify different gravestone cutters. He explores in fascinating detail both their biographies and their bodies of work, including the evolution of their craft. Gravestones are “unsigned” art and these artists have typically gone unrecognized and unappreciated. As the author explains: “Like other artifacts that have survived from early America, gravestones both embody the sensibilities of the culture in which they were produced and reflect the changing circumstances of the crafts and businesses that produced them” [[www.graverpress.com](http://www.graverpress.com)].

The book’s website succinctly captures the study’s significance:

[T]his study focuses on eastern Massachusetts . . . it was principally in this region that the American craft of gravestone carving first developed. Gravestones produced in Boston, Providence and Plymouth County were exported up and down the Atlantic seaboard, from Nova Scotia and Maine down through the Carolinas and Georgia. . . . There are few other detailed biographies of artisans from early America—architects and cabinetmakers included—that trace their work through such a multitude of their surviving products, that examine so many lines of stylistic influence in a fairly large geographical region, and that provide such a comprehensive view of their trade as a whole [[www.graverpress.com](http://www.graverpress.com)].

Each chapter focuses on a group of carvers and provides a personal history for each artist before delving into their work. Blachowicz provides some background information on their oeuvre including an estimation of the number of gravestones carved by that artist and a map displaying the distribution of their work. He then goes on to discuss the works themselves.

Many depict similar imagery, such as cherubs, willow trees, and urns. This can become repetitive but also demonstrates the many ways that this imagery can be deployed. No two artists' work is ever the same, even if both artists utilize similar imagery.

The topic of gravestone carving calls for images in order for readers to see exactly what is being discussed. Blachowicz helps the reader to visualize details and carvings by providing ample photographs of the gravestones under study. Indeed, the book is lavishly illustrated, containing over 900 photographs, and is accompanied by a flash drive with 1,300 color images. It also offers an Excel database of over 22,000 gravestones from over 1,200 cemeteries in all the New England states and beyond, with each attributed to a specific carver. It is truly a labor of love. The author, a professor of philosophy at Loyola University in Chicago for over forty years, received the 2003 Forbes Award, given by the Association for Gravestone Studies "in recognition of exceptional service to the field."

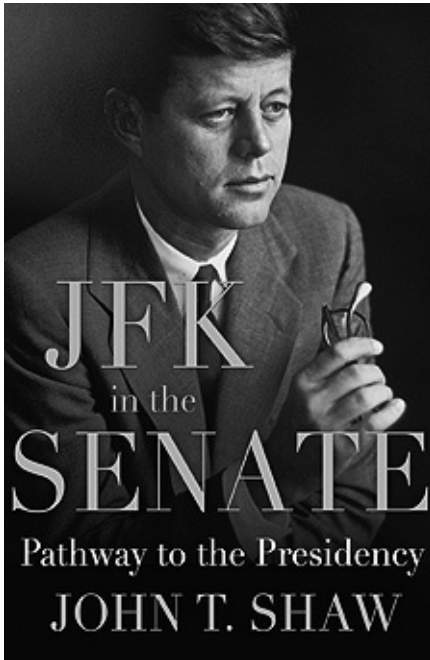
The photographs printed in the book are in black and white, which has pros and cons. As with many old gravestones, those pictured have been subject to weathering and lichen growth. This makes it slightly difficult to identify some of the features on the stones. This is not the fault of Blachowicz or the photography, but merely a difficulty stemming from the age of the subject matter. The author tries to remedy this problem by providing color photographs digitally. Additionally, many of the photos appear to have been taken in bright light, providing a sort of relief to the carvings. These are extremely useful features considering that most of the engraved writing is difficult or impossible to read.

*From Slate to Marble: Gravestone Carving Traditions in Eastern Massachusetts, 1750-1850*, Volume II would be of great interest to anyone who has been captivated by intricate gravestone carvings. Those studying art or art history in particular may find this to be a fascinating topic not typically covered in a standard course.

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***JFK in the Senate: Pathway to the Presidency.* By John T. Shaw. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. 228 pages. \$17.00 (paperback).**

For many people, Lyndon Johnson's famous quote about John F. Kennedy's tenure in the senate has stood for decades as the definitive judgment on the topic. "He never said a word of importance in the Senate and he never did a thing" (140).



The image of JFK as a man on the make, using the senate as a stepping stone to the ultimate seat of power, has a lot of truth in it, which Kennedy acknowledged privately. However, that does not mean that Kennedy never accomplished a thing in the senate. As the author briefly outlines, the statement more accurately defines Kennedy's stint as a congressman from Massachusetts's 11th Congressional District, where he was described as bored, restless, and drifting.

Unlike his brother Ted, JFK was not a born legislator. Ted was born to cajole; JFK was born to command. More reserved, intellectual, and self-restrained than his gregarious younger brother, Jack was not the

typical senate glad hander. He did have a deep sense of commitment to his constituents, and he devoted much of his time and energy to issues that had a direct bearing on the Commonwealth and its citizens. However, this was only one side of the junior senator from Massachusetts. He was ambitious and fascinated by foreign policy; and early on, he had his eyes on the prize. In the Senate he could combine interest and self-interest, working on issues he believed in while building up his image and gravitas among his senate colleagues and in the press.

One issue where Kennedy bucked the wishes of his constituents was with his support of the St. Lawrence Seaway. This joint Canadian/US project would build a seaway from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. A deep-water channel with locks and dams would circumvent the unnavigable sections of the St. Lawrence River, providing the Canadian and American Midwest with a faster and cheaper way of trading with the East Coast and with Europe. Many businesses in Massachusetts opposed the concept, fearing a repeat of the Erie Canal experience of the century before. The Erie Canal linked the Great Lakes to the Hudson River, and, thus, to New York City. This brought a tremendous amount of trade and wealth to New York, to the detriment of other nearby port cities, Boston being the most prominent. New York's quick rise coincided with Boston's slow descent, and the merchants of

the Massachusetts capital did not want to see the pattern repeated. Because of the ever-larger size of ships, the Erie Canal was becoming obsolete, and this new project seemed to hold the same fate in hand for Boston as the original canal had.

Kennedy opposed the project when he was in the House, but then supported the Eisenhower Administration in its effort to build the Seaway as a senator. He did this in the national interest, and was, therefore, able to show the country that he put the interest of the nation first. Somehow this never seemed to hurt him with voters in Massachusetts, partially because of his argument that the Canadians were going to build it with or without US support, so we might as well support it and reap some of the benefits as well.

JFK served on the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor and Management Field, where he helped to expose union corruption and drafted a major labor reform bill. This effort helped to establish him as a “serious” senator to the American public, despite what LBJ thought or said about him.

John Kennedy’s time in the senate established him as a man to be watched. His eloquence, his writing ability, his father’s influence and money, his own hard work, and his charisma all marked him as a budding statesman and potential presidential candidate. His interest and knowledge of foreign policy often led people to seek out his advice in that realm as well.

It is true that JFK did not plan on making a career of the Senate, and he used it as a platform for launching his presidential bid. But this book shows that he was actually a hard-working and consequential senator who believed in his work and did it well. Over time, if he had not run for president, it’s possible that JFK, rather than Ted, would have developed into the “Lion of the Senate.” We’ll never know.

*Stephen Donnelly is a consultant for the insurance industry and a Westfield State University alumnus.*