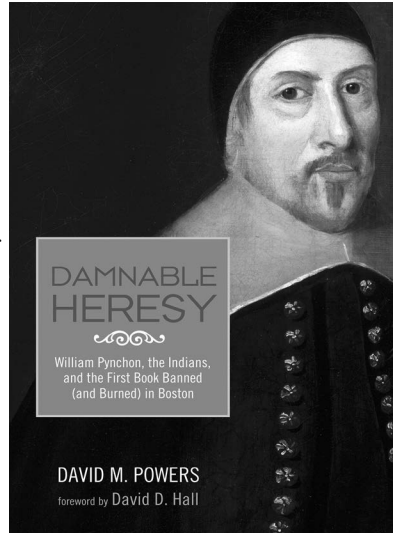


BOOK REVIEWS

***Damnable Heresy: William Pynchon, the Indians, and the First Book Banned (and Burned) in Boston.* David Powers. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015. 245 pages. \$30.00 (paperback).**

Combining both biography and theological analysis allows David Powers to shed light on the life of William Pynchon, founder of Springfield, Massachusetts. What emerges is a complex profile—a risk taker, an entrepreneur, a trader, a problem solver; pious, scholarly, liberal in his view of Indians, and a Puritan who was too isolated from Boston to understand the desperate need of the leading Puritans there to maintain unity in their religious dogma.

From the inception of the Massachusetts Bay Company, Pynchon vocalized his intention to relocate as quickly as possible to the New World, depositing £25, which entitled him to a division of lands. He was named one of the eighteen members of the Board of Directors and specifically charged with purchasing weapons for the company. He, his wife, and four children arrived in Dorchester, Massachusetts, on the *Mary and John* in early 1630. His wife, Ann, did not live long and he quickly remarried another passenger, Frances Sanford, who had been twice widowed and had an adult son. The blended family moved to Roxbury where Pynchon purchased land from Chickataubut, the Massachuset sachem. Pynchon made a point to have positive relations with Indians, to learn the rules of cultural interactions, and to engage an interpreter. Although now removed from the main communities in Massachusetts, Pynchon continued to participate in Bay Colony government, including serving as treasurer. In 1636, Pynchon and seven others started a new community, Springfield, founded on the “principle of equity”(37). The town meeting voted to distribute land equitably based on a sliding scale of need and to set salaries for farm laborers. Town residents collectively built infrastructure and roads. Pynchon served as a trader providing necessary items for life on the frontier as well as Springfield’s magistrate. In the latter position, Pynchon oversaw the case against Hugh



Parsons, which is well known to early Americanists familiar with witchcraft accusations in New England.

However, Pynchon's founding of Springfield is only part of his legacy. A controversy overshadows it: his writing of *The Meritorious Price*, an otherwise ordinary Puritan theological tract, which became the first book banned and burned in Boston. Powers devotes a significant portion of the book to analyzing the theology behind Pynchon's text. He concludes that most of Pynchon's ideas could be traced back to Puritans of the previous generation. Even so, what caused *The Meritorious Price* to be labeled heretical was Pynchon's assertion that it was not Christ's suffering and dying but rather his obedience that redeems all Christians.

From his home in Springfield, Pynchon failed to realize how important a common doctrine was to Puritan leaders in Boston. Powers sums up the problem: "The General Court saw Pynchon's heterodoxy as a rupture in the solidarity the colony's leadership deemed essential. When Pynchon's orthodoxy came into question, it called the whole system [Puritan social and political organization] into question, and the leadership felt compelled to act" (181). Acting quickly, the General Court paid the teacher of a local church, John Norton, £20 to write a rebuttal and ordered Pynchon to meet with Norton and two others to be instructed on his errors in thought and hopefully to recant. Ultimately, Pynchon agreed he could have clarified his argument in some places, but never admitted to being wrong. An unhappy court ordered Pynchon to appear again in the spring to give a better apology and replaced Pynchon as magistrate of Springfield with his stepson. Pynchon never appeared before them again. Like other Puritans of his generation in the 1650s, he returned to England, where he continued to write theological tracts defending his beliefs until his death in 1662.

Although less well known than Anne Hutchinson, William Pynchon is another example of the precariousness of the early days of the Puritan experiment in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Once respected and part of the core of colony founders, Pynchon discovered that authorities in Boston were willing to censure anyone who promoted theological division, even if those divisions were based on Puritan dogma. When he chose to return to England rather than face their wrath, Pynchon prevented what could have been his forced exile (as had been done to others).

Powers's book sheds new light on this largely forgotten figure and reminds us that Puritan religious intolerance was as much about promoting social order as it was dogmatic. There was no space among them for Pynchon's entrepreneurial and fair-dealing interactions with Indians or his outdated religious beliefs.

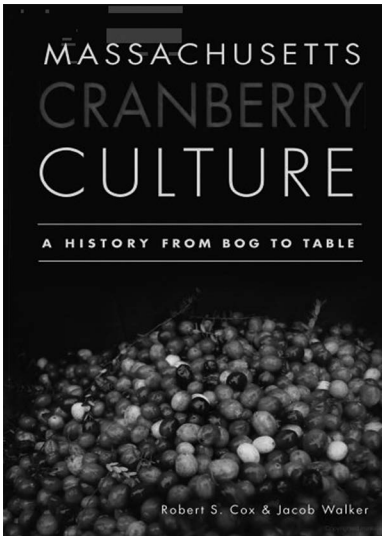
Wendy Lucas is an associate professor of history at the University of Central Arkansas.

***Massachusetts Cranberry Culture: A History from Bog to Table.* Robert S. Cox, and Jacob Walker. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2012. 142 pages. \$19.99 (paperback).**

In their new book, *Massachusetts Cranberry Culture: A History from Bog to Table*, authors Robert S. Cox and Jacob Walker demonstrate that the tart, bright red cranberry is much more than an iconic accompaniment to the holiday turkey. Though national sales are currently driven by juice blends and cans of jellied sauce, this seasonal fruit has long been a defining element of New England life and agriculture. The authors reclaim the significance of this humble fruit by tracing its cultivation and consumption through hundreds of years of Massachusetts history. By combining histories of agriculture, geography, food production, and labor, Cox and Walker narrate the emergence of a “cranberry culture” that continues to define the region to this day. They argue that in the transition from wild berry to cultivated crop, the cranberry bound together and “absorbed into the landscape” the peoples of New England through its “remarkable penchant for connection” (7, 140).

Massachusetts Cranberry Culture takes readers through a tour of the towns, fields, and bogs of the state’s cranberry heartland. The authors’ love for the region is palatable as they use the cranberry as a lens for understanding “our shores,” “our villages,” and “our regional cuisine.” This sense of ownership and regional identity invites readers to recognize their towns, their communities, and their history; those who have never called Massachusetts home are asked to look beyond “a diet in which cranberries appear only at holiday time” by surveying cranberry country (32). Though the authors focus primarily on Massachusetts, they contextualize the region within a larger, national history. For instance, Cox and Walker discuss growing practices, pest control, and commercial ventures in other cranberry-producing states—New Jersey, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin. They also connect Massachusetts to national economic, political, and social forces. For example, they demonstrate how immigration and migration led to racial tension during labor disputes at the turn of the twentieth century. They also explain how industrialization and mechanization in the nineteenth century helped shift an informal harvest of wild berries to an industry driven by technological development. The scope of the book is thus large and small, as the authors focus on Massachusetts’s fields while connecting them to regional and national events.

With meticulous and fascinating detail, Cox and Walker demonstrate how natural forces and human cultivation came together to create a cranberry culture. Early European settlers, for instance, developed a taste for the berry



that grew wild in local wetlands. By the early eighteenth century, the cranberry spread “all across the British Atlantic” as “hundreds of New Englanders” gathered berries for trade and personal profit (25, 39). With a rising demand for the fruit, enterprising growers realized they could “transform an abandoned iron bog or millpond into a productive asset” (46). Cox and Walker argue that this demand led to cultivation and the rise of a formal cranberry industry, inextricably connecting the fruit and regional culture. The authors take on an ambitious temporal scope, opening with the geographical formation of North

America and concluding with modern cranberry sales figures. The bulk of the text, however, focuses on the century between the 1830s and the 1930s, and the authors move through the thematic chapters without following a clear chronology. A greater emphasis on the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries would have been an ideal way to help readers connect “our regional cuisine” and “our shores” of today to hundreds of years of cranberry culture.

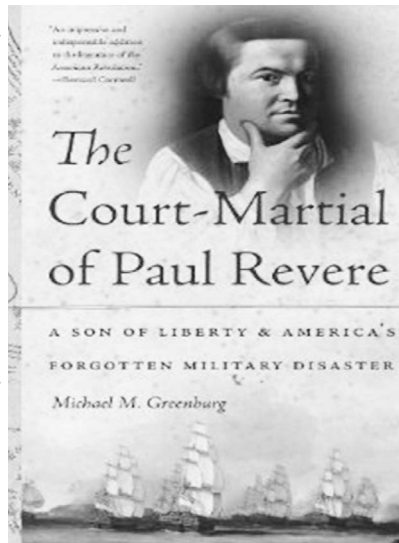
Massachusetts Cranberry Culture is at its best when Cox and Walker describe the connections between Massachusettians and the land where they worked to harvest the fruit that would help define New England. In clear and comprehensible language, the authors describe decades of environmental challenges for cranberry farmers who struggled with weeds, worms, and pesticide scares, while attempting to control soil, sand, frost, and flooding. Cox and Walker provide a fantastic analysis of labor in the bogs that ranges from developments in tools and harvesting methods to the living conditions of migrant laborers, and public debate over unionized strikes. Unfortunately, readers only occasionally follow the cranberry “from bog to table,” as the title promises. Cox and Walker provide fascinating, yet brief examples of the cranberry in popular culture: “unrelentingly sweet” nineteenth-century recipes instructed cooks to make sauces with equal parts sugar and cranberries (27); postcards in the early twentieth century depicted women screening cranberries as men operated mechanical picking machines; and a picture from 1950 shows the winner of a Miss Cranberry contest atop boxes of the fruit (119). These moments beyond the bog only begin to explore

the cranberry as something that is consumed, as well as grown, picked, sorted, and sold. This appetite for a more extensive history is a testament to Cox and Walker's success in drawing readers into the cranberry culture of Massachusetts.

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***The Court-Martial of Paul Revere: A Son of Liberty and America's Forgotten Military Disaster.* Michael M. Greenburg. Lebanon, NH: ForeEdge, 2014. 282 pages. \$29.95 (hardcover).**

The Court-Martial of Paul Revere offers the reader a glimpse into pages of history long hidden by embarrassment and shame. It recounts a battle so ignominious to the United States that we buried its memory for over two hundred years. The actions of its leading officers were so replete with cowardice and misjudgment that the battle became a comedy of errors, with deadly repercussions. And a central figure in the debacle was the now legendary figure of Paul Revere. We learn that Revere could be difficult, belligerent, and prideful, and that he was ill suited for his position as lieutenant colonel of the militia artillery. Revere was not the primary cause of the military disaster, but his behavior before, during, and after the battle does show us that even a historical legend of his stature could be all too human in times of extreme stress.



The Revolutionary War mission to recapture Penobscot, Maine, from the small defending British force seemed like a sure thing at the time. Organized exclusively with Massachusetts militia and accompanied by the largest American fleet composed to date, it dwarfed the defending British naval and land forces. Confidence was high and predictions optimistic, with little outward indication of the calamity to come. But the seeds of disaster are apparent in hindsight, as this riveting study reveals.

Many factors contributed to the eventual American tragedy, but perhaps foremost was the classic error of divided command. Failure to appoint an overall commander for the entire expedition, land and sea, precluded a coordinated strategy and resulted in piecemeal tactics that doomed the expedition at critical times when victory was within grasp. Other important factors leading to defeat were the inexperience of the militia, poor and indecisive leadership, and a fleet composed of independent-minded privateers more concerned with prize money than overall victory.

Initially, the battle was a close-run thing. On land, the British commander later wrote that after the vastly superior American forces confronted the fort, he was prepared to surrender after making a token defense to satisfy honor and duty. The final assault never materialized as the vacillating American commander decided to settle in for a siege, despite the vociferous pleas of his subordinate officers. Not to be outdone by his contemporary on land, the commanding American naval officer refused to attack the tiny defending British fleet and was also beseeched by his subordinates to do so, to no avail. It is always easy to judge a battle after the fact, and to misjudge the decisions of the commanders from the safety of time and distance, but there seems little doubt that victory was within our grasp and we failed to achieve it. The “fog of war” can often obscure the rationale for what seem to be bad decisions at the time, but in this case almost universal contemporary opinion from both forces supports an opinion of victory squandered and defeat summoned.

The land forces dug in for a siege, the naval forces for a blockade, and in the meantime a small British fleet arrived on the scene. Despite their numerical superiority, the American fleet panicked, scurrying into the bay and upriver in a frantic and fruitless attempt to escape. More American ships were scuttled and burned by their own commanders than were ever damaged by the British, and the rout was as complete as any in naval history. The sight of such a monumental loss in front of their eyes, combined with the knowledge that the now-wrecked fleet was their only means of escape, set off an equally total panic on land. All vestige of command was abandoned or ignored as panicked soldiers adopted “every man for himself” and escaped through the Maine backwoods, many not pausing until they reached the safety of their homes and families in Massachusetts.

And what of Paul Revere through all of this? He had already alienated many of his contemporaries with his arrogance and love of creature comforts, often dining and sleeping on ship during the siege while his men and fellow officers camped on shore. He was argumentative, arrogant, and in most officers’ opinion too cautious in the numerous councils of war convened by his commanding officer. Accused of disappearing at critical times during

the battle and retreating on his own initiative without orders, he was subsequently court-martialed. In a note of exquisite historical irony, his chief accuser was the grandfather of poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who subsequently immortalized him in “The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere.” Whatever personal shortcomings Revere may have had, lack of persistence was not one of them. He requested and lost numerous hearings over many years before finally clearing his name. In this case, the initial ignominy and the eventual clearing of his name were both probably justified. He clearly was a bad officer and probably should not have been in command of the artillery. But many others were far more culpable for the disaster, and it seems that he was court-martialed as much for his obnoxiousness as for his incompetence.

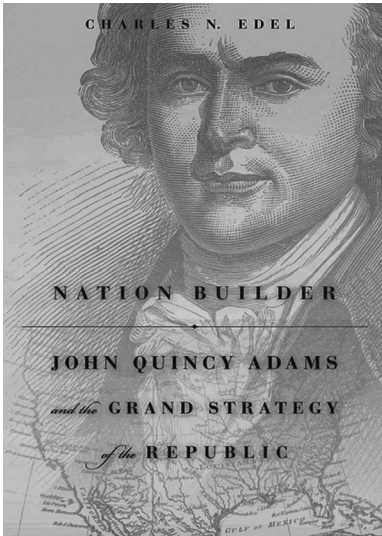
This captivating book does what few aspire to do. It unlocks a fascinating page of the American past involving a famous historical figure and an almost forgotten major battle. Anyone interested in the lives of our founding fathers, the history of New England, or the Revolutionary War should read this book.

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***Nation Builder: John Quincy Adams and the Grand Strategy of the Republic.* Charles N. Edel. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. 392 pages. \$29.95 (hardcover).**

Charles N. Edel, a professor at the US Naval War College, demonstrates why John Quincy Adams (1767–1848) remains one of the most fascinating figures in US history. Although interpreting Adams’s political actions through the lens of nationalism is not unusual, Edel’s biography manages to provide a fresh look at Adams as secretary of state (1817–1825), president (1825–1829), and Massachusetts representative in the US Congress (1831–1848). *The Grand Strategy of the Republic* steers the reader through each phase of Adams’ life and career, culminating in his final days as a congressman whose antislavery activism added a fiery end to an already illustrious career.

The book’s engaging narrative glistens most brightly in chapters 2 and 3, which focus on Adams’ diplomacy, incomparable contribution to foreign relations, and participation in nation-shaping treaties and territorial acquisitions (136–154). Of special note is the detailed look at Adams’ tenure as secretary of state. In these discussions, Edel offers a rare glimpse at Adams’ relationship with James Monroe and his imprint on the momentous Monroe Doctrine, which would drive the nation to hemispheric prominence (116–



117, 178–183). In spite of his influence as a diplomat, Adams was not suited to govern, Edel insists. For that reason both Adams' presidency and postpresidential career as Massachusetts' representative in Congress, outside of his challenges to the perpetuation and extension of slavery, failed. Most historians would agree with the former interpretation, but because of his oversight of the funds bequeathed to the United States by James Smithson, which established the Smithsonian Institution, and his participation in the bill to outlaw dueling in the nation's capital, most would disagree that Adams's term in the House was a failure (288). In

fact, Edel never elaborates on any of the fights that Adams lost in Congress, so this assessment remains unsubstantiated.

Yet, what Edel sees as his protagonist's true legacy is his vision for the nation. Adams' grand strategy to help firmly establish a united, independent, and morally superior republic is the book's central theme. Adams facilitated national expansion as a way to safeguard the nation from foreign encroachments and the menacing sectional divisions that threatened national security. He provided presidents from Abraham Lincoln onward with the philosophical framework from which they fulfilled the nation's destiny. Lincoln was perhaps the chief beneficiary of Adams' antislavery activism and reliance on the Declaration of Independence as the founding document containing the founders' precepts and directions for creating a virtuous republic. Well into the twentieth century, Edel aptly demonstrates, national leaders relied on Adams' for guidance (290–305).

To convey the evolution of Adams' grand strategy and efforts to strengthen the Union in a comprehensive but concise monograph, Edel had to limit discussions of Adams' personal life to his early years. The young John Quincy takes a backseat to his parents, whose influence often eclipses their son's nuanced development. As portrayed, his mother, Abigail, often played a more stifling and somewhat negative role in their son's development than his father, but the book says nothing about their influences in John Quincy's later life and career (47, 48). Their deaths go unremarked as Adams plunges headlong into national politics. This is a palpable omission since John Adams lived long enough to see John Quincy become president and died on July

4, 1826, the same day as his mentor Thomas Jefferson. The treatment of Adams' marriage to the pretty Louisa Catherine is also succinct. After marrying Adams despite his moodiness and stoicism, she used her talents as a host to advance John Quincy's career, but once Adams becomes president, Louisa Catherine resurfaces only when their son George commits suicide, and essentially disappears for the remainder of the book (255).

Throughout the book, Edel avoids using personal ambition as a driving force early in Adams' career, but this has its costs. When dealing with the fact that he severed ties with the Federalist Party and joined Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans, Edel attributes this change in party affiliation to fears over the survival of the Union (105). The book's treatment of his support for slaveholding in the 1815 Treaty of Ghent is also attributed to Adams' nationalism (251). The foundation for these interpretations is Edel's assertion that slavery was not a threat to national unity before the crisis over Missouri (96). But here the book rakes over a somewhat outdated interpretation of slavery in national politics.

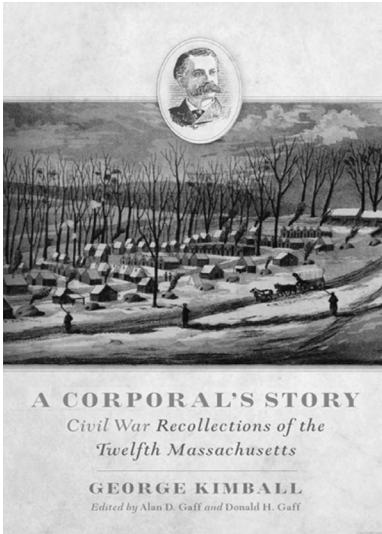
For at least two decades, scholars have noted the frequency of debates over slavery and the part that its perpetuation and extension into new territories played in deepening sectional hostilities, shaping political party development, and heated congressional debates soon after ratification of the Constitution. Yet, Edel omits both the Federalists' sectionalism and the fact that Adams resigned from the Senate after the Massachusetts General Court elected a replacement before his term had expired. What had always been a divisive topic reached crisis level over Missouri because contention over slavery lingered far longer in Congress than it had during previous debates. According to Edel, however, slavery was overshadowed by partisan politics, which posed a greater threat to the nation (247). As a result, the book does not provide a satisfying explanation for Adams' silence over slavery and diplomatic support of slaveholding the first 50 years of his public career. If, as Edel argues, his nationalist philosophy did not change, Adams' deportment in the House of Representatives differed so sharply from his previous conduct that the transformation merited a clearer analysis.

Yet, any interpretive weaknesses do not diminish the book's thematic integrity or undermine the popularity that Adams gained in Massachusetts and the rest of the nation due to his fight against the spread of slavery. Edel nicely captures Adams' mental agility and intrepidity during the final phase of his political career, including his defeat of the House's gag rule and successful defense of the *LAmistad* Africans before the Supreme Court. The book also takes a rare look at Adams' view of the Constitution's slavery-related clauses and forward-looking decisions as secretary of state. These

seldom-discussed aspects of his thought processes uncover intriguing layers of Adams' personality that are not generally featured in similar biographical studies. The book does not answer every question about Adams' philosophical transformations or Senate career, but those interested in Adams' diplomatic prowess will be delighted with Edel's focus on foreign policy. Casual readers, researchers, and academics alike will also find that the arrangement of images tells the story of Adams' life that complements Edel's absorbing yet succinct writing style. Actually, anyone curious about John Quincy Adams' legacy as a diplomat, visionary, and antislavery politician will consider *The Grand Strategy of the Republic* an important addition to their reading list and personal library.

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***A Corporal's Story: Civil War Recollections of the Twelfth Massachusetts.* George Kimball. Eds. Alan D. Gaff and Donald H. Gaff. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. 368 pages. \$34.95 (paperback).**



For Corporal George Kimball of Company A of the Twelfth Massachusetts Volunteers, the Civil War unquestionably began in the fall of 1860. At a political rally in Boston, Kimball and his fellow Wide Awakes became involved in a violent clash with anti-Republican demonstrators. After being hit in the ear with a brick, Kimball broke “the pole that supported my torch upon the head of one of the nearest and noisiest of the blackguards” (7). That brick, Kimball commented, was for him as much a *casus belli* as the firing on Fort Sumter

and he was ready to go to war at once.

Thus begin Kimball's vivid recollections of his tumultuous three years of service as a soldier during the Civil War. Editors Alan and Donald Gaff write that:

Kimball's recollections are a special kind of history. Written from the perspective of an enlisted man, he relates only the personal and human aspects of his Civil War experience. Avoiding the pitfalls of relating events and conversations that he did not personally witness, the author has left a unique glimpse of soldiers who are today known only as statistics and names on a roster or headstone (xiii).

Although the authors overstate their case—this reviewer remains unsure how Kimball's reminiscences represent a "special kind of history"—their larger point is on the mark. Kimball's reminiscences most certainly bring to life people who have been lost to history or ignored in the historical record. They also provide a compelling narrative of three years of fighting in the Civil War.

The Gaffs bemoan the tendency to favor Civil War diaries and letters over memoirs because, in their estimation, "the reading of an entire volume of personal letters or diary entries is never riveting and is generally downright boring to the general reader" (xix). Recollections, the two contend, are more entertaining insofar as they "allow the writer to go beyond mere facts and connect with the reader" (xix). While Gaff and Gaff make an interesting point, this reviewer would have appreciated a discussion of some of the problems inherent in reminiscence testimony: for instance, the fallibility of memory.

Kimball's reminiscences are rarely dull and present, on almost every page, interesting tidbits of information for the reader. Consider, for instance, his characterization of the various leaders under whom he served. The colonel of the Twelfth Massachusetts, Fletcher Webster, the son of Daniel Webster, was a model leader and a skilled orator who got the better of an angry Virginian convinced that soldiers of the Twelfth had stolen his sheep. Kimball defended the performance of Nathaniel P. Banks against Stonewall Jackson; complained about Irvin McDowell and John Pope; defended Fitz John Porter; praised George B. McClellan; and regaled the reader with a story of how he criticized the leadership of the Army of the Potomac to an officer he met near a spring, without realizing that it was Joseph Hooker. Kimball utilized humor frequently throughout his reminiscences as a way of detailing some of the absurdities of army life, but his use of humor brings up a thought-provoking point. Given that his reminiscences were written in the 1880s, how might his tone and attitude have differed, if at all, had Kimball kept a diary or written home during the Civil War?

Kimball's memoirs are particularly valuable because, at various times, he displayed different ways of remembering the Civil War. At various points, Kimball contended that the Civil War was an abolition war and that the

rising generation cannot understand the suffering and sacrifices involved in the extirpation of slavery. Kimball praised John Brown, noted that the soldiers in the army were continuing Brown's work, and, when his regiment passed through Harpers Ferry, observed that "those of us who had a passion for relics gathered an abundant supply" (84). At a time when John Brown was viewed unfavorably by many white people in the United States, these comments are striking. However, if Kimball believed the war an abolition war, he used words such as "darkies," "uncles," "aunties," and "pickaninnies." Kimball also found the story of a soldier verbally abusing an African American laundress and her husband for washing, at the request of the soldier in question, paper collars, amusing.

Thus, Kimball was certainly not free from the prejudices of his day. In addition, Kimball was deeply committed to the Union cause and frequently espoused a Unionist interpretation of the Civil War, often linking it with the emancipationist memory of the conflict. Finally, Kimball embraced, at times, the reconciliationist memory of the Civil War, by promoting blue-gray fraternalism. Kimball commented, on more than one occasion, about how there were heroes on both sides, how both northern and southern men were brave, and if Kimball displayed nothing but contempt for John S. Mosby and guerrillas, he nevertheless found the men of the Army of Northern Virginia both valorous and manly. One wonders how these attitudes would have changed, or indeed whether they would have changed, had Kimball been writing as he was fighting and campaigning.

No review of an edited collection of soldier letters, or, in this case, soldier reminiscences, would be complete without posing the inevitable question: given all the material that exists in published form, do we really need another volume? In this case, the answer is a resounding yes. Kimball's reminiscences serve a variety of useful functions. For one, they demonstrate the extent to which one man could embrace several distinct, and often contradictory, strands of Civil War memory. Kimball was, alternatively, emancipationist, reconciliationist, and unionist. The reminiscences are also useful because Kimball provided a wealth of information about army life and demonstrated how humor could serve as a way for veterans to process their experiences. In addition, Kimball's reminiscences tell readers something about the Gilded Age and the transition from the Civil War generation to the rising generation. One of Kimball's persistent refrains, throughout the book, was that young people have no idea what it took to win the war and he seemed determined to tell them. Interestingly, unlike some of his comrades, Kimball did not sentimentalize, romanticize, or soften the past, but presented war as it actually was. Kimball, unlike many of his fellow soldiers, did not reenlist in 1864 and he never explained the factors behind this decision. This reviewer would have liked to see Gaff and Gaff consider this point at greater

length and offer some analysis of Kimball's decision. In sum, this is a useful book that will appeal to anyone interested in Massachusetts history, military history, and Civil War history.

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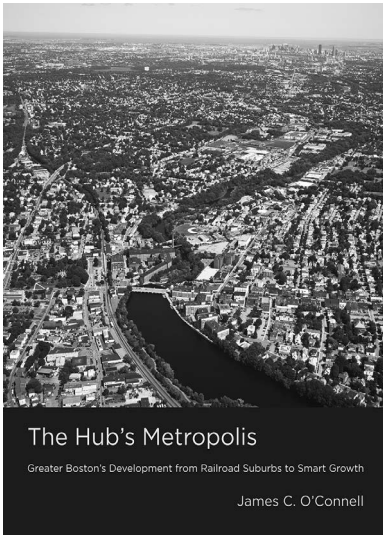
***The Hub's Metropolis: Greater Boston's Development from Railroad Suburbs to Smart Growth.* James C. O'Connell. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013. 326 pages. \$36.95 (hardcover).**

Boston-based National Park Service planner James O'Connell has produced a worthy and thoughtful addition to the illustrious succession of studies of Boston's urban development. His emphasis extends beyond the traditional accounts of Boston's physical expansion by "making land" or absorbing formerly independent municipalities to describe the growth of an immense metropolitan region around the city's historic core. The focus is on the territory covered by the Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council, which serves 101 cities and towns inside the I-495 beltway, but later expands to consider the Boston Combined Statistical Area, which includes a chunk of southern New Hampshire as well as a larger portion of Massachusetts.

O'Connell divides the region's suburban development into nine distinct but overlapping phases, beginning in 1800 (prior to 1800, nothing resembling suburbia existed). Each model left some imprint on the landscape, and each chapter of the book concludes with an "exploring" section, which presents characteristic examples of that period. There is also a general "Exploring the Metropolitan Landscape" appendix, enabling readers to organize an itinerary, or at least train themselves to view the cultural landscape with a more discerning eye.

"Proto-suburban development" can be discerned as villages expanded and coalesced between 1800 and 1820, but there were no real Boston suburbs until after 1820. Some wealthy individuals began a movement to suburbia, hoping to achieve a "pastoral Arcadia." This kind of development was inherently limited by the small number of participants and by transportation constraints.

Railroad builders of the 1830s intended to develop the business of Boston's hinterland and beyond, but likely did not anticipate the rise of the railroad commuter. Nevertheless, within ten years, that now-familiar character had appeared and true suburban development was launched. The linear growth that



railroads inevitably inspired became even more pronounced as streetcars—first horse-drawn, then electric—formed highly visible “streetcar suburbs.”

Brookline’s rejection of annexation by Boston in 1874 was “portentous,” as it meant that continuing suburban expansion would encompass numerous jurisdictions with divergent interests. Later attempts to form a single regional government, building on successful defined-purpose authorities such as the Metropolitan Park System, ultimately failed.

The book highlights the sometimes-overlooked role of Frederick Law Olmsted in advocating suburbs as an ideal way of

life. He put his theories into action by planning the widening of Beacon Street in Brookline and Commonwealth Avenue in Brighton, which paradoxically threatened the exclusivity of the suburbs. The new boulevards were designed to accommodate streetcars, and the transition to electric streetcars in 1889 facilitated Boston’s period of greatest growth.

Prominent spokesmen such as Charles Eliot and Sylvester Baxter promoted a coherent policy of improvement within the parameters of the Progressive movement. However, the explosive increase of the private automobile, with its overtones of individualism, proved difficult for civic-minded planners to manage. Eliot, Olmsted, and other promoters of parkways did not anticipate that they—like the landscape in general—would be overwhelmed by automobiles.

O’Connell makes an important point in reminding us that the era of “Postwar Automobile Suburbs” from 1945 to 1970 “bore the imprint of government.” The sprawl that is now deplored by most planners is the direct result of “the national housing policy,” advocated and supported by 20th-century government programs.

Glorification of suburbia had predictable effects on downtown Boston, which sank to a low point after World War II. To the surprise of many, city leaders launched a remarkable revival, often centered on preservation, of which Quincy Market furnishes an outstanding example. In pursuit of larger goals, the interests of people may sometimes have been neglected: many still regret the destruction of a viable neighborhood in Boston’s West End; and the new Boston City Hall, though designed by renowned architects, created a forbidding, inhuman space.

Beginning around 1970, suburban growth entered a new and even more aggressive phase, visible in phenomena such as I-495 and the rise of “category

killer” stores that drove out regional chains associated with New England. O’Connell concludes that “The traditional dichotomy between city and suburb no longer described reality” (202).

Megaregions like Boston’s, now extending into southern New Hampshire, were not susceptible to any kind of systematic planning. Cape Cod, where O’Connell worked as a planner, became “the era’s most notable battle about over-development and the need for smart growth.” The “Smart Growth” era O’Connell defines as beginning in 1990 seems to represent a partial reversion to preautomotive forms, or at least an effort to mitigate the damage caused by automotive dominance; yet it may be more of an ideal than a prescription. Many examples can be found, as he notes, but a great deal of development continues in the old-fashioned style of individual sprawl. Thus the term “build-out,” radiating out from the central city, is coming increasingly into use as developable land runs out. O’Connell performs an important service in stressing that the MBTA, however troubled it may be, is essential if “smart growth” is going to become a standard.

The book does not dwell on the environmental impacts of suburban sprawl, already the subject of numerous studies. However, O’Connell’s acknowledgement that a “misplaced belief that expansive land parcels conserve open space, while they actually fragment wildlife habitat” (210), calls attention to a critical modern planning issue.

In a postscript, O’Connell looks ahead to consider the potential consequences of two powerful forces: digital technology and climate change. While these massive trends will undoubtedly exert a profound impact, predicting their precise immediate effects is risky, as the temporary decline in oil prices since this book was published shows.

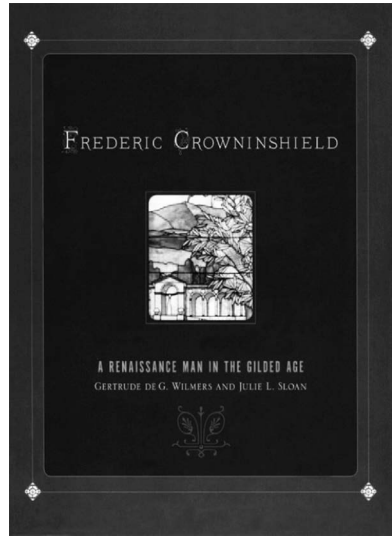
It would be altogether too easy to make a book on this subject unreadable, whether through excessive use of specialized jargon, statistical overload, or detailed attempts to untangle endemic political infighting. O’Connell avoids these deadly hazards and instead has given us a lively, stimulating summary of a topic that is of compelling historical interest but is also of vital current importance as open land runs out in southern New England and human activity threatens the survival of the planet.

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***Frederic Crowninshield: A Renaissance Man in the Gilded Age.* Gertrude De G. Wilmers and Julie L. Sloan. Amherst, MA, and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010. 352 pages. \$39.95 (hardcover).**

In 1860, historian Jacob Burckhardt popularized the term “Renaissance” to describe the late Middle Ages period in Italy during which the greatest artists of Western Civilization flourished. In the years following Burckhardt’s novel

historiography, American artists trained in France and Italy, like Massachusetts-born Frederic Crowninshield, ushered in a renaissance of their own in the United States. In a fashion similar to its predecessor, artistic creativity, innovative techniques, and money generated from commercial expansion fueled the American version. The heir to old wealth, Crowninshield deplored the crass materialism of the nouveau riche robber barons who funded much of the art produced in the late nineteenth century, but he also believed that his work would inspire both his wealthy patrons and the common workingman with an appreciation of the more surreal and beautiful things in life that could not be assigned a cash value.



This attractive and lavishly illustrated volume is divided into two parts. The first section traces Crowninshield's biography from his birth into one of Boston's wealthiest established commercial families in 1845 through to his death in Italy in 1918. It is impossible to separate his life story from his art. His patrimony afforded him the opportunity to pursue his career independent of financial concerns, and it provided him many commissions through his impressive social connections. His greatest influence on other artists came through his seven-year stint as an instructor at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where he instituted an original curriculum that included summer sessions, a course on murals (the first such class in the United States), and readings in the literary classics because he believed artists had to have a solid cultural foundation. He further broadcast his vision of art through his one book, *Mural Painting* (1886), and in magazine articles.

The second and larger section is a detailed critical examination of Crowninshield's art. The chapters are arranged by genre: stained glass, mural designs, and painting. Running three times longer than the next longest, the chapter on stained glass reflects what the authors considered to be their subject's most important artistic contribution. Julie Sloan is an expert on stained glass with several publications to her credit, and is clearly in her element discussing this topic. The authors argue that the most innovative and original work of the American renaissance was done in this field. Even though Crowninshield was overshadowed by contemporaries Louis Comfort Tiffany and John LaFarge, Crowninshield produced important works of his own—some of which can still be seen throughout New England. There was competition between Crowninshield

and Tiffany, who represented contrasting visions of their craft. Crowninshield preferred neat forms and criticized Tiffany's blurred lines and flashy colors. Tiffany countered that Crowninshield's subtle and subdued palette was too bland. Despite these disagreements within the field, Crowninshield demanded respect for stained glass as a unique artistic endeavor that should not be approached or considered as just another media for painting.

The authors explore the role of nature, which is a theme present in almost all of Crowninshield's art. There are some stunning landscape works in his canon, although the purpose was generally to provide a setting for buildings, humans, monuments, or ruins instead of showcasing natural beauty. In terms of stained glass, natural settings allowed him to treat his many religious subjects in a more "informal and nondogmatic" light, according to his biographers (119). Nor was Crowninshield above taking liberties with the environment. In 1887, he designed a window for the Center Church in Hartford, Connecticut, that depicted Jesus in a New England landscape complete with a cherry tree. It was his most controversial work. In keeping with his times, Crowninshield experimented with impressionism, but he appears to have been oblivious to the burgeoning back-to-nature movement in the United States of his day.

A Renaissance Man is well researched and documented. Yet, Frederic Crowninshield was a challenging subject. He did not leave a complete set of papers, and some of his thoughts have to be mined from the collections of others. The authors, for example, cannot pin down the itinerary of his tour of Europe in the 1870s, nor can they offer a solid answer as to why the artist refused to attend his own daughter's wedding. This, of course, is not their fault, and it underscores the impressive level of detective work it took to compile such a richly detailed biography. The same holds true of his artwork. While many examples of stained glass and murals have survived, others have been destroyed in building demolition, fires, and remodels. Some can be deduced from catalogs (one is included as an appendix) or other published descriptions, but one has to speculate how many have been lost to time. It is even worse with his paintings, which were largely in private hands. In such cases, one always wonders if the best work of the artist has been lost to time.

Sloan and Wilmers have produced an enjoyable biography that successfully situates an innovative American artist from the upper social crust in the era in which he lived. *A Renaissance Man in the Gilded Age* is the first biography of Frederic Crowninshield and makes substantial progress in reclaiming him from relative obscurity.

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