



Editorial

HENRY ST. JOHN, the Viscount Bolingbroke in his *Letters on the Studies and Uses of History* once commented, “To converse with historians is to keep good company.”¹ With this final issue of 2017, we are fortunate to be in good company. We have in this issue essays by Peter Messer and Zachary Bennett, an article in our Memoranda and Documents from Kevin Thornton, and two longer, review essays by Marla Miller and John Belohlavek. Peter Messer’s “A Scene of Villany acted by a dirty Banditti” explores newspaper reports that deliberately recast a street brawl, albeit one with deadly consequences, into the Boston Massacre. The circumstances that explain this manipulation of the press, he concludes, asks us to re-consider the meaning of a revolution that consciously reduced the participation of sailors, apprentices, and laborers to one that suited the well-calibrated plans of patriot elites. Last year, we sent out a call for New Voices, for submissions that would address innovative areas in research, in subjects that would introduce new authors, broaden our customary focus, or mark a new or unconventional turn in an author’s specialty. Zachary Bennett’s essay examining the struggle over water power in Maine inaugurates our “New Voices” column for the *Quarterly*. Bennett’s essay combines the use of traditional sources and of methods appropriate to Native American and environmental history to recast

¹(London: Printed for A. Millar, 1752), 28. http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.umb.edu/ecco/retrieve.do?sort=&docLevel=TEXT_GRAPHICS&inPS=true&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=mmlin_b_umass&doDirectDocNumSearch=false&tabID=Too1&resultListType=RESULT_LIST¤tPosition=0&contentSet=ECCOArticles&showLOI=&bookId=1519600300&collectionId=&relevancePageBatch=CB3326184520 (accessed September 9, 2017).

our understanding of the value of rivers and water to present a window into the clash of Anglo and Native Americans over strategic resources. Kevin Thornton's essay on Eliza Marsh and her book of "sentiments" provides us with an intensive reading of a document that sheds light on the life of women in rural Vermont and reveals the penetration of abolitionist sentiments and activity beyond urban areas like Boston.

This issue also includes review essays by Marla Miller and John Belohlavek that speak to the *Quarterly's* editorial charge and point out the centrality of New England in documenting America's artistic literary and historical failures or successes. They speak in troubled times more than ever to another Bolingbroke admonition, to use history to learn by example. In their essays, Miller and Belohlavek illustrate how to use history generally and New England specifically to reach beyond sectional interest and regional patriotism to learn by example. Miller's essay on new histories of Kennebunkport, Maine and Cambridge, Massachusetts provides insights into the ways public history connects the specialist to town residents at multiple levels and suggests the ways in which local history binds communities and builds civil society. Addressing the tensions inherent between scholarly and lay audiences, Miller reminds us of the intimate and concrete knowledge possessed by local historians, its utility to scholars, and its importance to the public in civic life, especially for residents new to small communities. She also teaches scholars how to interrogate the work of local historians and use it to connect the local and regional to larger, national or global communities. Belohlavek examines two recent books on one of New England's quintessential native sons, John Quincy Adams. In his essay, he sums up recent scholarship on Adams and revisits a moment when the New England presumption of being at the center of national and international events was in fact reality. Belohlavek's essay on Quincy Adams, however, has an especially timely quality especially when fewer than two in ten Americans assume favorably the integrity of their congressional representatives. Adams's career, he tells us, represented a life of complicated, principled leadership, of engaging in a public service frequently limited and frustrated by

his ambition, inflexibility, and arrogance. As we yearn for examples of principled political leadership, Belohlavek's review provides a cautionary tale about the shortcomings of even the best and brightest of our national leaders and reminds us of Samuel Eliot Morison's admonition that for a history or a culture to be worthy "it must build upon something firmer than the creeds and shibboleths of any district. But by only knowledge of the elements, good and bad, drawn from each district may come understanding."

The New England Quarterly congratulates Professor L. H. Roper for receiving the 2017 Clague and Van Slyke Article Prize from the New Netherland Institute for his essay "The Fall of New Netherland and Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Imperial Formation, 1654–1676" which appeared in our December 2014 (volume 87) issue.

—Jonathan M. Chu