Editorial

Although we are assembling this issue in December, we extend our wishes that it finds 2020's "winter of discontent" past and, to borrow shamelessly from T.S. Eliot, that April proves not to be "the cruelest month." While we continue to engage the challenges of operating remotely, we are comforted by the continued flow of submissions that indicate quality work on New England history and literary culture continues to be produced as demonstrated by the five essays in this issue. Submissions over the past year brought together three interesting, complementary perspectives on the dismal winter preceding Lincoln's assumption of the presidency in 1861 that account for three.

Fortuitously, as we contemplated this bleak winter, our inventory of essays presented the opportunity to be able to bring together essays that provide common, complementary threads that shed light on anti-abolitionism in New England up to the Secession Winter. Together, in another publishing time, they might have provided the core for a volume of essays devoted to the exploration of anti-abolitionist sentiments in New England. The portrayal of antebellum New England as an extensive and homogeneous center of abolitionist sentiment is an obvious oversimplification that recent scholarship has revealed to be far more complicated. Our tendencies to see the march to secession coincidental with the gradual growth of abolition sentiment and accelerated by growing sectionalism and the events of the 1850s imparts a whiggish, progressive quality to the historiography of the coming of the Civil War. Our three essays take issue with an historic and heroic image that too easily portrays New England as on the side of the angels of

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our better nature. Together, our authors, Lyndsay Campbell, Patrick T.J. Browne, and Richard Rohrs, not only complicate the story, finding Boston and Newport places where racism and pro-Southern sentiments were remarkably robust well onto the eve of the Civil War, they illuminate a world in which free Black men and women and white abolitionists, especially women, led in developing resistance to anti-abolitionism through the exploitation of informal legal, political, and judicial procedures to frustrate supporters of slavery generally and of the Fugitive Slave Act specifically.

Lyndsay Campbell in "The 'Abolition Riot' Redux: Voices, Processes" provides a detailed, description of the alleged "abolition riot" that effected the escape of Eliza Small and Polly Ann Bates, two accused fugitive slaves. In so doing, she illustrates not only extensive levels of anti-abolitionist sentiments in Boston but the ways in which Black men and women assumed the initiative in engineering the escape of Small and Bates, and how their understanding of legal processes facilitated their success. In her essay Campbell also provides three noteworthy observations: how the "riot" in 1836 contributed to the elite's taming of mobs as an acceptable form of extralegal protest during the nineteenth century, how legal documents predispose narratives that dismiss or obscure the agency of those deemed less authoritative or, in legal terms, less dispositive, and how a deeper, more complex understanding of the agency of Blacks and women can be retrieved from those records. Similar to Campbell, Patrick Browne, in "'This Most Atrocious Crusade Against Personal Freedom': Anti-abolitionist Violence in Boston on the Eve of War," documents how "gentlemen of property and standing" channeled sentiments against abolition to sustain their political control and protect economic interests connected to access to Southern textiles and trade. Browne carries the story of maneuvers to control the streets and the state house that persisted up to the Secession Winter and, like Campbell, illuminates both the manipulation of mob protests by Boston's "gentlemen of property and standing" and the existence of more complex efforts on the part of the abolitionists to use the legislative process. Illuminating the bases for opposition

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to abolition, Richard Rohrs in "'Where the great serpent of Slavery . . . basks himself all summer long': Antebellum Newport and the South" contextualizes the city's politics and finds robust, pro-Southern sympathies that persisted well into the Secession Winter. Despite a significant population of free Blacks, Newport retained the reputation for being a Southern city in the midst of New England because it had developed an antebellum economy that was dependent upon Southern tourism and real estate investment.

In a complementary essay on antebellum literary culture, Michael Everton in "'Which Ethics for Essex'? Elizabeth Gaskell, Salem Witchcraft, and the Problem of Forgiveness," explores Salem's engagement with the legacies of its treatment of the witchcraft trials and the translation of its discourse across the Atlantic by Elizabeth Gaskell in her novella, *Lois the Witch*. Despite what he sees as an emerging rational, scientific approach to the phenomenon, Everton points out the extent to which the understanding of witchcraft resonated in a culture familiar with the supernatural. From Salem's attempt to move past the guilt of the witchcraft trials, Gaskell, he argues, challenges a simplistic notion of reconciliation and forgiveness as a transformative process allowing a deeper, nuanced cultural understanding of the event. Our remaining essay demonstrates an essay on a familiar topic for readers of the QUARTERLY, eighteenth-century religious theology, in an unconventional connection to a Native American theologian. Ryan Carr in "'The Never Chosen': Samson Occom, the New Divinity, and Indigenous Self-determination," links the post-Great Awakening and Samuel Hopkins's New Divinity to Samson Occom, a Native American preacher. Occom engages the New Divinity's exclusion of Native Americans from the status of being part of an elect nation and links them in an ironic way to a reconciliation of sanctification and an affirmation of Indigenous national identity.

At the start of a new volume and year, we take stock of our continued good fortune, the support of our friends, and those moving on. Kevin Hoskins has found the burden of a new position at Brown and continuing as our book review editor

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excessive and has proffered his resignation from the position. Kevin has been an enormous help, and we will miss him. Although we have restricted access to our office, we have been able to communicate electronically with our authors and book reviewers who seem to retain their good spirits in response to the copy-editing requests and book deliveries. We especially thank the contributors to the Annual Appeal and the Bernard Bailyn editorship fund. Because the pandemic has affected our access to campus and regular mail delivery, members of our Board of Directors have been instrumental in helping us move our fundraising activities offsite. Coordinating this alteration in our customary procedures inevitably has led to some dislocations and delays. We are grateful to our dedicated corps of supporters; if we have dropped the ball in acknowledging your contributions, please feel free to contact us, preferably by email; please note that while we continue to receive regular mail at the university, our access is limited to once a week so our ability to respond quickly is very limited. Finally, because we shifted the mailing of fundraising away from the editorial staff, the editors did not have the opportunity to note their customary greeting to colleagues and friends. I take the license here, as a one-time student of the seventeenth-century, to wish all a Happy New Year when it begins on Lady Day.

—Jonathan M. Chu

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