

AMERICAN
SOCIETY FOR
18TH-CENTURY
STUDIES



President’s Column
PAOLA BERTUCCI
Yale University

Dear ASECS members,

Our Annual Meeting is fast approaching, and I am looking forward to the intellectual excitement that distinguishes ASECS’s most important event. The program looks amazing, and I am grateful to all participants – and to the organizers working behind the scenes – for bringing to this meeting their knowledge and expertise.

I am thrilled to share details about the plenary presidential session, which will take place on Friday, April 4, 12:30-1:30 EDT. The session is entitled **“Conceptualizing the Unborn: Biopolitics, Medicine, and the Law”** and features three speakers whose recent work has engaged with the theme of the unborn from very different perspectives.

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Elizabeth O'Brian, an associate professor at UCLA, will present on "Gender and the Modernization of Surgery" through an analysis on Francesco Cangiama's Sacred Embryology (1745), a watershed text in 18th-century medical and Catholic history. Cangiama insisted that priests perform cesarean operations in order to extract and baptize unborn infants, thereby individuating their souls and saving them from eternal perdition. O'Brian's talk explores the "sacralization" of caesarean surgery as a tool to perfect the baptismal sacrament, outlining the influence of Cangiama's text throughout the Spanish Empire, where prominent theologians and missionaries interpreted and practiced the surgery as a core component of their service to the crown and its expansion vis-à-vis the economy of souls.

Katherine Bergevin, a PhD candidate at Columbia University, will discuss "Pleading the Belly," a request to postpone sentencing on the basis of pregnancy that women convicted of capital crime could advance under English Common Law. She will show that, in practice, the court's decision regarding a female offender's degree of culpability was very often routed through the question of her reproductive status. Her analysis of actual case outcomes, literary representations, and legal

PRESIDENTIAL SESSION

"Conceptualizing the Unborn:
Biopolitics,
Medicine, and the Law"

Friday, April 5, 2025

11am-12pm EDT

55th Annual Meeting

theory, reveals that the treatment of pregnant women was central to how the eighteenth-century public perceived criminal justice and the expanding role of prisons.

William Nelson IV, an associate professor at the University of Toronto, will talk about "Biopolitics and the Generation of the Future." He will discuss how Enlightenment thinkers began to think of future generations as something that could be transformed. Building on new theories of animal generation and practices of selective breeding, they inquired into the possibilities of transforming specific qualities of individuals. The unborn became malleable not-yet potentialities that could be envisioned and altered. This exciting session emphasizes the relevance of 18th-century studies to understand issues that are current and urgent.

I am very pleased to highlight the other presidential session that similarly points to the implications of 18th-century studies for the present. In 2022, the Supreme Court held that the government must show that a law regulating firearms is “consistent with the Nation’s historical tradition of firearms regulation. The roundtable, “**Hired Guns: Historians Investigate the Place of Firearms in Eighteenth-Century America for Current Second-Amendment Court Cases**” features four historians of who have served as expert witnesses in cases stemming from this opinion. They will share how a wave of civil lawsuits that challenge existing state and federal regulations have led to frantic calls from state attorneys general looking for historians with particular knowledge of the manufacture, sale, ownership, and regulation of firearms in late eighteenth-century America. They will discuss not only the importance of eighteenth-century history in current debates on gun regulation, but also the differences between history as an academic discipline vs. history in courts of law. That session will take place Friday, April 5, 11am-12pm EDT.

These are just two of over 130 brilliant sessions and events that members will be able to choose from and attend this year. There is a lot more that the Annual Meeting will offer. Please take some time to browse the fantastic [program](#). I am grateful to all of those who have contributed and I look forward to seeing many of you at the various sessions!

PRESIDENTIAL SESSION

“Hired Guns:

Historians Investigate the Place of Firearms in Eighteenth-Century America for Current Second-Amendment Court Cases”

**Friday, April 5, 11am-12pm EDT
55th Annual Meeting.**

[ANNUAL MEETING
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CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

- 3/27, 500-530PM, GRADUATE STUDENT & EARLY CAREER CAUCUS PRESENTS: WELCOME TO ASECS
- 3/27, 6-8PM, TAPS READING: THE BASSET TABLE
- 3/28, 11AM-12PM, PRESIDENTIAL SESSION - HIRED GUNS: HISTORIANS INVESTIGATE THE PLACE OF FIREARMS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA FOR CURRENT SECOND-AMENDMENT COURT CASES
- 3/28, 1200 - 1230PM, GRADUATE AND EARLY CAREER COMMUNITY BUILDING
- 3/28, 445-630PM, GRADUATE STUDENT & EARLY CAREER CAUCUS HAPPY HOUR
- 3/28, 530-630, KAHOOT!: TRIVIA WITH GRADUATE STUDENT & EARLY CAREER CAUCUS
- 3/29. 11AM-12PM, CLIFFORD LECTURE: "CRITICAL FABULATION MISUNDERSTOOD: WHAT IS METHOD IN THE ARCHIVES OF SLAVERY?", MARISA FUENTES, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
- 3/29, 130-2PM, DIGITAL HUMANITIES CAUCUS MEETING I
- 3/29, 630-8PM, INTRODUCING CATO (REMIXED)
- 3/29, 5-7PM, WOMEN'S CAUCUS GATHERING
- 4/4, 11AM-12PM, BUSINESS MEETING AND AWARDS CEREMONY
- 4/4, 1230-130PM, PRESIDENTIAL SESSION - CONCEPTUALIZING THE UNBORN: BIOPOLITICS, MEDICINE, AND THE LAW
- 4/4, 6-7PM, "MERCY: A BALLET FOR PHILLIS WHEATLEY, WITH POET CORNELIUS EADY"
- 4/5, 130-2PM, DIGITAL HUMANITIES CAUCUS MEETING II
- 4/5, 430-530PM, SPATIAL CHAT HAPPY HOUR



CONFERENCE
EDITION!

STUDIES IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CULTURE

VOL.54

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Executive Director’s Column

BENITA BLESSING

It’s here! The 2025 Virtual Annual Meeting! Thank you to everyone who has made this impressive gathering possible.

Why go virtual in 2025?

Most of us remember the days when virtual conferences were a necessary “pivot” in the face of a global pandemic. They were a way to maintain community within our academic homes, a way to focus on something besides ourselves. They met a need, and for all the Zoom fatigue endured in those spaces, they kept us going.

In 2025, a virtual conference is an intentional choice. It fulfills a different sort of need in response to other contexts:

- environmental concerns
- slashing of travel funds (if they ever existed for some)
- family-care responsibilities
- the dwindling resource of time

And that’s just a few reasons why we are going virtual this year. As I write this, we are fast approaching **550 registered attendees** - an amazing number I didn’t dare dream of a year ago. It’s a fantastic mix of ASECS “conference regulars” and newcomers. Scholars from over **19 countries** will be meeting over two weekends - some with a cup of hot coffee in hand for a (very) early-morning session in some time zones, others with a cup of hot cocoa as the evening turns late in their time zones. I am overwhelmed by the generosity of presenters who worked together with their sessions to find a time that worked - if not well - well enough for all.

I’ve heard from many of you who wanted to share your thoughts on the virtual conference this year. Some of you have expressed gratitude for the possibility of attending a conference that - for whatever reason - would have been impossible, or just inconvenient, had it involved a plane ticket and hotel room.

Others, well, let’s say that you’ve made clear that you’re grateful for next year’s in-person conference in Philadelphia. Thanks for being good citizens and showing up for your community, even if the internet isn’t your favorite place to present.

I’m curious to see where you’re all logging in from: Your office or study? Your garden? Perhaps a hotel room that’s part of a Spring Break trip! You can share those images in the photo module of the Virtual Event Lobby.

Let me close with 2 requests:

- Keep our community going. **Donate your session number** - whether you give \$10.10 \$101, or \$1,010 for Session 101 (a Presidential Session not to be missed!), your generosity helps ASECS support the field of 18th-Century Studies through times of crisis and times of celebration.
- Meet someone new. Call it the **Executive Director Challenge**: say “hi” in the chat to someone you’ve not yet met. Try it and tell me about it.

Happy Conferencing Everyone!

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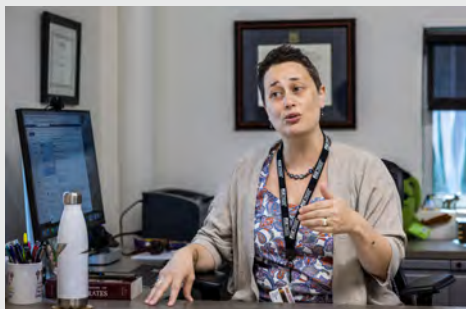
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TRUE OR FALSE?

The definition of “quorum”
is a majority.

[CLICK HERE](#) to find the answer
or go to the last page of the
News Circular

Curious to know more? Attend the Annual Meeting!

**18TH CENTURY CAFÉ IV:
ASK A PARLIAMENTARIAN**

Tips and Tricks for Your Next Faculty Meeting
Saturday, April 5, 2-3 pm EDT

**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS!**

***Eighteenth-Century Studies* Book Review Editor**

The American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies seeks nominations and applications for a three-year (renewable) appointment as Book Review Editor for *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, beginning July 1, 2025. This is an exciting opportunity for a scholar interested in cutting-edge scholarship in the field of the long eighteenth-century who understands reviews as a key component of launching and supporting research in the field.

Apply by April 15, 2025 for full consideration.

More information and application instructions here: [ECS Book Review](#)

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CLIFFORD LECTURE ASECS ANNUAL MEETING

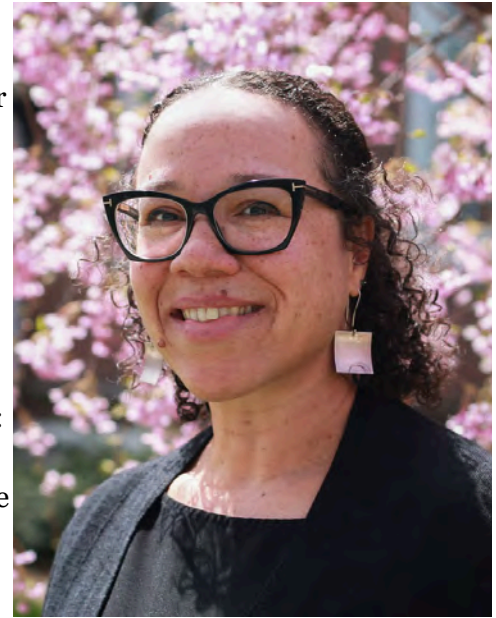
Saturday, March 29, 11:00am-12:00pm EDT

Marisa J. Fuentes, Rutgers University

"Critical Fabulation Misunderstood: What is Method in the Archives of Slavery?"

Introduction: Elena Deanda Camacho, Washington College and ASECS Second Vice President

Marisa J. Fuentes is an interdisciplinary scholar interested in the histories of gender, slavery, the Caribbean and Black Atlantic worlds. She is the author of the award-winning book *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), which won book prizes from the Association of Black Women Historians, The Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, and The Barbara T. Christian Best Humanities Book Prize from the Caribbean Studies Association. She is also co-editor of *Scarlet and Black: Slavery and Dispossession in Rutgers History*, Volume I to III (Rutgers University Press, 2016-2021), and the 'Slavery and the Archive' special issue in *History of the Present* (2016).



In March 2023, Fuentes was elected to the Society of American Historians which "honors literary distinction in the writing of history and biography." Most recently, in April 2024, Fuentes was elected as a member of the American Antiquarian Society. Fuentes's recent publications include the "Afterword," with Sarah Haley in Saidiya Hartman's Second edition of *Scenes of Subjection* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2022), "Slavery's Archive and the Matter of Black Atlantic Lives" (*English Language Notes* 21), "Genres of History and the Practice of Loss: Attending to Silence in Hazel Carby's *Imperial Intimacies: A Tale of Two Islands*" (*Small Axe* 2021), and "'Attending to Black Death: Black Women's Bodies in the Archive and the Afterlife of Captivity—A Reflection" (*Diacritics* 2020). Her next book, *Refuse Bodies, Disposable Lives: A History of the Human and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, explores the connections between capitalism, the transatlantic slave trade, and the disposability of black lives in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For the 2024/2025 academic year, Fuentes will be a member of the Institute for Advanced Study, School of Historical Studies in Princeton, New Jersey.

2025 EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AFRICA PUBLICATION FELLOWS

The American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) and the African Studies Association (ASA) are thrilled to announce the joint 2025 18th-Century Africa Publication Fellowships. Thanks to generous funding from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), ASECS and ASA have jointly designed a one-year fellowship to engage early career scholars from groups who have been systematically excluded, marginalized, or otherwise neglected in their fields or disciplines.

Twelve fellows have been selected to participate in both the 2025 ASECS Virtual Annual Meeting, the 2025 ASA Annual Meeting in Atlanta, as well as publishing workshops at both meetings.

Congratulations to the 2025 Eighteenth-Century Africa Publication Fellows!

Justine Ajao, University of Toronto, “Scales of Ruin and Restitution: Tracing the Epistemologies of Bilali Mohammed, a Georgia Sea Island Plantation Manager”

Deena Al-halabieh, University of California, Santa Barbara, “Resisting Western Paradigms: The Life of Omar ibn Said and the Politics of Translation”

Allegra Ayida, Yale University, “A Painting in Paris; An African Prince in 18th Century France”

Jack Casey, New York University, “The Black Atlantic from Caribbean Central American Shores: Haitian Auxiliaries and the Garífuna in Omoa and Trujillo, 1797-1821”

A. Véronique Charles, Columbia University, “Abolition in Two Acts: Freedom’s Gains and Losses in the Imperial Republic, 1789–1802”

Myriam Carmen Iuorio, University of Toronto, “’Conjurers, Witches and Sorcerers’: Recovering Early Modern West Central African Healing Practices”

Jessica M. Johnson, University of Oregon, “In Splendid Court Dress: William Armfield Hobday’s Portrait of Prince Saunders and the Reception of African Nobility in Georgian Britain”

Ethan Key, Boston University, “Rivals to Power: How a Mother and Daughter-in-Law Fought to Change the Ethiopian Imperial Court”

Umar Sheikh Tahir, Columbia University, “West African Hajj “Travel Lodge”: Impacts of Royals and Clerics on Economic and Intellectual Expeditions”

Tim Soriano, University of Illinois, Chicago, “The “Landlord- Stranger” Land Tenancy Relationship in Early Sierra Leone: A Reassessment”

Matthew Steele, Yale University, “Reforming the Sharī’a in 18th Century Africa: Ṣāliḥ al-Fullānī (d. 1218/1803-4), the Legal School, and Sindh”

Duangkamol Tantirungkij, City University of New York, “’Petition of Jenny, a Woman of Colour’: Chattel Slavery and the Fur Trade in Detroit During the American Revolutionary War and its Aftermath”

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Co-chairs: Misty Krueger and Elizabeth Porter



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WOMEN'S CAUCUS AT THE ASECS ANNUAL MEETING

SPONSORED SESSIONS:

DATA FEMINISM AND FEMINIST DATA [ID 84]

FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2025, 2:00-3:00PM EDT

**FEMINIST PRAXIS: A ROUNDTABLE
DISCUSSION ON CONNECTION AND CARE
[ID 97]**

SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 11:00AM-12:00PM EDT

EVENTS:

WOMEN'S CAUCUS GATHERING

SATURDAY MARCH 29, 5:00-7:00PM EDT
ALL CONFERENCE ATTENDEES WELCOME!

Join the Women's Caucus for announcements of prizes and awards, budget discussions, ASECS 2026 sessions, and a 50th anniversary celebration!

JOIN AN ASECS CAUCUS!

Interdisciplinary communities are a great way to meet colleagues who care about your interests. Join a mailing list (information below), and stop by many of the Caucus-sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025. Everyone is welcome!

Disability Studies Caucus

Co-chairs: Paul Kelleher, pkelleh@emory.edu & Leslie Thulin, lthulin@g.ucla.edu

Sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025:

Disability and the Environment [ID 55]

RT: Disability and the Practices of Care [ID 56]

Digital Humanities Caucus

Co-chairs: Kelly Plante, Wayne State University and Karenza Sutton-Bennett, University of Ottawa, asecsdh@gmail.com

Sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025:

SpS Digital Personography: A Hands-on Workshop/Edit-a-thon [ID 92]

Graduate Student and Early Career Scholars Caucus (GECC)

Co-chairs: Taylin Nelson and Shruti Jain

Sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025:

The Diasporic Eighteenth-Century [ID 43]

Eighteenth-Century Cats I: British Tails [ID 68.2]

Eighteenth-Century Cats II: European Tails [ID 68.1]

Italian Studies Caucus

Chair: Irene Zanini-Cordi

[Italian Studies Mailing List Form](#)

Sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025:

Africans and Africa in Italy [ID 51]

RT: 25 Years of Italian Eighteenth-Century Women and Gender Studies [ID 52]

Irish Studies Caucus

Chair: Scott Breuninger, breuningersc@vcu.edu

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:

RT: Moving to the “Dark Side?” Transitioning from Academics to Administration [ID 58]

New Lights Forum

Co-chairs: Jennifer Vanderheyden, jennifer.vanderheyden@marquette.edu; and Adam Schoene, adam.schoene@mail.mcgill.ca

Sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025:

Artificial Intelligence: How Could its Use Enlighten, Enhance or Negatively Affect our Disciplines? [ID 159]

Pedagogy Caucus

Chair: Linda Troost, Washington and Jefferson College

[Pedagogy Caucus Mailing List Form](#)

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:

RT: Teaching the Eighteenth Century with AI [ID 115]

Queer and Trans Caucus

Co-chairs: Shelby L. Johnson

shelby.l.johnson@okstate.edu and S. Yarberr n5t3r3@u.northwestern.edu

[Queer and Trans Caucus Mailing List Form](#)

Sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025:

RT: A History of Our Own: Stories from ASECS’s Queer and Trans Caucus [ID 64]

Transing the Transatlantic [ID 73]

Race and Empire Caucus

Chair: Jeremy Chow, jhc034@bucknell.edu

[Race and Empire Caucus Link](#)

Sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025:

RT: South-South Connections in the Eighteenth Century [ID 95]

RT: Teaching Race & Empire in 2025 [ID 94]

Science Studies Caucus

Co-chairs: Anita Guerrini and Helen Thompson

[Science Studies Mailing List Form](#)

Sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025:

RT: Roy Porter and his Legacy [ID 82]

Society for Eighteenth-Century French Studies (SECFS)/Société d'études françaises du XVIIIe siècle

Co-chairs: Masano Yamashita (President) Masano.Yamashita@colorado.edu and Flora Champy (Vice President)
[French Studies \(SECFS\) Mailing List Form](#)

Sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025:

France-Asia [ID: 69]

RT: Saisir le moment: Performance, Orality, and Composition in the Eighteenth-Century Francosphere [ID 98]

Theatre and Performance Caucus

Co-chairs: Angelina Del Balzo and Francesca Saggini asecstaps@gmail.com
francesca.saggini@googlemail.com

Sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025:
Theorizing the Fan [ID 85]

Women's Caucus

Co-chairs: Misty Krueger and Elizabeth Porter

Sponsored sessions at ASECS 2025:
Data Feminism and Feminist Data [ID 84]
RT: Feminist Praxis: A Roundtable Discussion on Connection and Care [ID 97]

AFFILIATE AND REGIONAL SOCIETIES

YOU'RE INVITED!

212. Roundtable: Regional and Affiliate Societies: Best Practices for Sustainability and Success (sponsored by the Southeast American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies)

Saturday, April 5, 3:30-4:30 pm EDT Chair: Patty Hamilton, Union University

The American Antiquarian Society

Upcoming Programs and Events:

The Bibliographical Society of America

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:

Textual Temporalities: Bibliographic Time in the Eighteenth Century [ID 61]

Burney Society NA: Celebrating the Life and Works of Frances Burney and Her Family

The Burney Society NA's website is moving! Check out their new site at: [Burney Society NA](#).

Upcoming Conference: Burney Society (NA) 2025 Conference: Crossroads, Revolutions, and Transformations
New Brunswick, New Jersey, June 12-13, 2025

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
Burneys and Dis/ability [ID 76]

Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies

Upcoming Conference: October 15-18, 2025, Regina, Saskatchewan

The Defoe Society

Upcoming Conference: The Eighth Biennial Conference of the Defoe Society, "Discoveries and Improvements, 1660-1740" Thursday, July 3 – Saturday, July 5, 2025 (Keele University, Staffordshire, U.K.).

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
Virtual Defoe [ID 87]

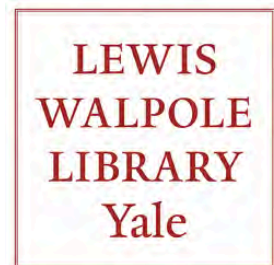
Deutsche Gesellschaft für die Erforschung des 18. Jahrhunderts

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
The Art of Balance: Concepts of Equality and Democracy in Art and Visual Culture of the long 18th Century [ID 78]

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**East Central/American Society for
Eighteenth Century Studies**

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
Sea Changes [ID 91.1][ID 91.2]

**The Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies
Society**

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
Unsettling Scottish Studies [ID 88]

The Eliza Haywood Society

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
RT: 'Haywood Studies' at a Quarter Century [ID
161]

**Historians of Eighteenth Century Art &
Architecture**

Sponsored Session at ASECS 2025:
Anne Schroder New Scholars Session [ID 53]

**Ibero-American Society for Eighteenth-
Century Studies**

Sponsored Session at ASECS 2025:
¡Basta ya! Citizen Protest in the Iberian Atlantic
and Pacific Worlds [ID 77]

**The International Herder Society
(IHS/IHG)**

Upcoming Conference: Herders Geography, 20th
Conference of the IHS – Toronto, 4.-9.
September 2025

The Mozart Society of America

Sponsored session at the ASECS 2025: Mozart's
Operas on the Global Stage [ID 59]

**North American British Music Studies
Association**

Upcoming Conference: NAKS 2025 Biennial
Meeting, October 17-19, 2025, Montréal,
Québec, Canada.

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
Music and Medicine in Britain [ID 90]

Women's Studies Group: 1558-1837

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
Afterlives: Historical Memory and
Representation of Notable Women in the
Eighteenth Century [ID 117]

**North West Society for Eighteenth-Century
Studies (NWSECS)**

The Rousseau Association

Upcoming Event: The 24th RA Colloquium on
Editing, Translating, Annotating
Rousseau/Rousseau as Editor, Translator,
Annotator, Éditer, traduire, annoter
Rousseau/Rousseau éditeur, traducteur,
annotateur under the direction of James Swenson
will take place at Rutgers University in New
Brunswick, New Jersey from June 4-6, 2025.

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
Rousseau and the Imagination [ID 60]

The Society of Early Americanists

Upcoming Conference: The Fourteenth Biennial
Conference of the Society of Early Americanists,
University of Notre Dame, 5-8 June 2025.

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
Land as Method [ID 72.1][ID 72.2]

**The Society for the History of Authorship,
Reading, and Publishing**

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
RT: Examining the 'Publisher Function' in the
Long Eighteenth Century [ID 57.1][ID 57.2]

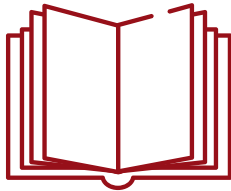
**The South Central Society for Eighteenth-
Century Studies**

**The Southeastern American Society for
Eighteenth-Century Studies**

Sponsored session at ASECS 2025:
RT: Regional 18th-Century Societies: Best
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Revised versions of papers and roundtable remarks presented in any public venue by a member of ASECS or of a learned society affiliated with ASECS or ISECS between JULY 1, 2024 and JUNE 30, 2025 are eligible for consideration. Single essay submissions are typically between 5,000 and 10,000 words in length, including notes, although we will consider substantively revised contributions of other lengths. Submissions are normally in English and should follow the 17th edition of The Chicago Manual of Style. Submissions will be evaluated through blind peer review. Authors are therefore asked to avoid identifying themselves, and references to one’s own scholarship should be made in the third person. SECC cannot consider papers already submitted to other journals. The deadline for submission is AUGUST 15, 2025. Please send all inquiries and submissions to Editor-in-Chief George Boulukos at SECC@asecs.org.

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Answer to Parliamentarian Corner's Quiz (p. 9):

False. The definition of a quorum can vary and should be defined in an organization's Bylaws. According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 40:2, the number of members constituting a quorum "may vary" and should be a number that allows business to be conducted.

AIP's *Standard Code* defines a quorum as "the minimum number or proportion of the members of an organization that must be present at a meeting to transact business legally" (22.1). ASECS's New Bylaws state that a "quorum is 5% of the Society's members in good standing" (Article IX.14).

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