

NO. 192 | SUMMER 2026

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

As I write my last presidential column, I am mindful of what a tumultuous year it has been on so many fronts. Institutions formed by structures that emerged or intensified in the eighteenth century are struggling or even unraveling, making all too clear the reach of the period we study. We have also faced the challenges of changing leadership within our own society. I want to thank you for entrusting me with this role in eventful times and to commend the remarkable dedication and service of the many committee chairs, caucus leaders, editors, Board members, and volunteers who kept ASECS vibrant during this year.

My hope of curating a year-long series about using our expertise as public historians in this volatile moment was realized in your work. Thanks to **Jeremy Chow, Mona Narain, Miriam Wallace, Suzanne Guiod, Julia Oestreich**, and others, the *Transits* and *Scènes Francophones* series are being rescued from Bucknell and given new life at University of Delaware Press. **Ramesh Mallipeddi (ECS)** and **George Boulukos (SECC)** gathered, edited, and published the best of your work while also keeping their editorial boards vibrant. Please say yes to book review editor **Mark Vareschi** when he asks if you possibly can do a book review. We've continued to fight for the NEH, to speak up for academic freedom in the classroom at TTU, to help projects that have lost funding, and to do the more local work in our institutions and communities. That conversation continues when "The Eighteenth Century in the Present" returns with Michael Meranze's upcoming webinar "Whigs, Hunters, Managers, Faculty" on June 4 at 4 PM eastern, followed by what is sure to be a vibrant conversation. You can read more in the "Calls and Conferences" column and [register here](#).

Supporting our members in these times has a material dimension as well. We recently added a non-residential fellowship sponsored by Gale/Cengage destined for early career scholars who will use Gale resources. This fellowship also carries travel support to our 2027 Annual Meeting in Portland; [the application deadline is June 19](#). The Women's Caucus, that powerhouse of ASECS fundraising, raised over \$25,000 in celebration of their 50th anniversary, which will fund more travel awards to attend the conference and other ongoing needs. Even if you are not in a position to donate to ASECS, you can support the society by clicking through to *ECS* and *SECC* articles, which matches the intellectual reward of reading each others' scholarship with a small material reward for the society. ASECS is indeed the work of many hands.

We are starting a new chapter with **Mackenzie Kelley and Management HQ (MHQ)** as our association management team. The director@asecs.org and asecsoffice@asecs.org addresses are being actively monitored, but please be patient as they work through some voluminous email backlog on their way to answering your questions. Thank you for being a part of this community of mutual support and scholarly excellence. I hope to see you in Portland April 1-3, 2027.

In solidarity,

Misty G. Anderson



CONFERENCE UPDATE



From Philadelphia 2026 to Portland 2027



Our recent Philadelphia meeting illustrated the role our own work plays in the present. Current global challenges to democracy influenced panels like “No Kings,” “Academic Freedom and Eighteenth-Century Thought,” and “Justice and Moral Cupidity,” while

the Philadelphia Arts Collective’s production of Royall Tyler’s *The Contrast* brought delights to the viewers and the players, who enjoyed having audiences packed with eighteenth-century scholars. Despite the absence of international colleagues who could not come to the U.S. at this time, the meeting was vibrant. We hosted 700 people across 185 panels, including those from colleagues in the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Society. Thanks to all who booked at the conference hotel, we *just* made our room block, saving the society from steep penalties. **Devon Binder**, who has returned to help us manage conferences as part of the MHQ team, deserves special thanks and praise for making the meeting come together.

Next year in Portland, April 1-3 at the Downtown Hilton, you can look forward to a conference program app that will allow us to realize our commitment to accessibility. Individuals will be able to upload an access copy or a slide deck directly to their panel’s page. We will also be able to generate a basic pdf of the schedule earlier in the process for those who prefer to print or read the whole program from a tablet, a workable compromise at a time when print costs are high and when the app can support communication and access.





The first stage of the CFP for Portland is for the guaranteed sessions from caucuses and affiliates, with the general call for panel proposals opening in just a few weeks.

Information on the process lives on our website at the “Meetings” tab.



Image Credits, top to bottom: Detail, William Russell Birch, Arch Street Ferry, Philadelphia, 1800 (ca. 1860), [Library Company of Philadelphia](#).; Flora Champy addresses the 50 attendees of the annual dinner of the Society for Eighteenth-Century French Studies; Nora Naschumi with the Writing Popular Historical Fiction roundtable: Janet Daniels, Sharon Harrow, Sabrina Yates and Jennifer Vanderheyden; Adam Kozaczka (L) and Fauve Vandenberghe (R) with retiring Lewis Walpole Library Executive Director Nicole Bouché; Jason Pearl, Rajani Sudan, Aleksandra Hultquist, Rivka Swenson; ASECS Night Revels.

SPOTLIGHT: ASECS ASA ALCS Africa in the 18th Century Publication Fellowship



For two years, the African Studies Association and ASECS have collaborated on the Africa in the 18th Century Publication Fellowship, funded by the American Council for Learned Societies. At ASECS 2026, members of this cohort were featured in the Friday session, “Africa’s Eighteenth Century,” chaired by **Steven W. Thomas**. **Tola Ajao** (University of Toronto) historicized the role of African knowledge in the creation of modernity in “The Two Bilalis of Georgia: Senegambian Perspectives on the War of 1812.” **Ethan Michael Key** (Boston University) analyzed intermediaries in communities in the Horn of Africa in “The Emperor’s Dearest Rebel: Exceptional Integration in the 18th-Century Ethiopian Imperial Court.” They were followed by **Rebekah Mitsein**’s presentation on “Out of Africa: African Historiography and the Intellectual Roots of Cultural Anthropology.”



Tola Ajao commented that this experience “provided valuable mentorship and contacts for the publication process as well as practical and detailed feedback on article drafts from experienced scholars.” **Ethan Key** also commented that the grant “facilitated my participation in both the African Studies Association and Eighteenth-Century Studies Conferences [... and] allowed me to stretch myself beyond the time period of my dissertation [... and] introduced me to several excellent colleagues whose work has inspired me, and whom I hope in turn to encourage.”

On what we need to learn about Africa in the 18th century, **Ajao** states that “the overarching question animating my research is “where is Africa in the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology?” While the physical work of enslaved Africans in accelerating technological developments in the eighteenth-century is generally acknowledged, the impact of their intellectual innovations remains underappreciated.” **Key** stated that our conference can “be a means to speak across continental divides... this intersection of time and place provides eighteenth-century scholars with the opportunity to see the world wider through what African people have done, made, said, and thought.”



“The interdisciplinary array of approaches among the African publication fellows testifies to what they already know,” commented **Rebekah Mitsein**. “Africa is inextricable from the wider eighteenth-century world. Grappling with this essential fact is necessary for stewarding the knowledge of our fields with integrity. These scholars are opening doors into a fifth of the world. We will all owe them an intellectual debt.” We look forward to learning from the entire cohort at their presentation at **ASA New Orleans on December 3-6, 2026**.

Image Credit: Icon of Empress Mentewab, Church of Narga Selassie, Dek Island, Lake Tana, Ethiopia, Late 18th Century. Photo by [A. Davey](#).



The Board welcomes the three new elected members who start their terms in July: Second Vice President **Tili Boon Cuillé** and new directors **Jared Richman** and **Wendy Bellion**, who will be joined by a new Secretary to be announced soon. The 2026-2027 ASECS Board, starting on July 1st, 2026, will be led by **Elena Deanda**, president, **Amy Freund**, 1st vice president, and **Tili Boon Cuillé**, 2nd vice president, with the help of continuing directors and officers.

This past year, your Board led through many challenges and still managed to reboot our News Circular, search for a new Secretary and Executive Director, fill in on committees, host webinars, and advocate for our colleagues at TTU and elsewhere, at a time when academic freedom is being eroded. 2025-26 was also our first year with a graduate student representative on the Board. **Shruti Jain** served with distinction and revived the dormant graduate mentor prize, which allowed us to honor **Joe Roach** and **Ruth Mack** for their lifetime of service and mentoring.

The Board also voted to bring on **Mackenzie Kelley** and the firm behind her at **Management HQ (MHQ)** as our next professional Executive Director and management team. A new Board plan puts a member of the presidential line with Board members in four key areas: Conference; Committees; Publications; and Outreach and Development. This structure will help our new ED Mackenzie Kelley and her team at Management HQ onboard with a strong sense of ASECS’s culture and collective priorities in the coming months.

Your ASECS team members include:

- Dara Rudick, MHQ CEO and Contract Manager
- Mackenzie Kelley, Executive Director
- Devon Binder, Events Manager
- Lynn Noble, Events and Sponsorship Coordinator
- Kael Henlock, Client Services and Membership Coordinator
- Vince Lungaro, Marketing and Communications Coordinator
- Will Shaughnessy, Office Coordinator
- Aspen Axelman, Controller
- Kent Fordyce, Accountant

ASECS Contact Information

Along with securing a new association management partner, ASECS has some new contact information.

Please update your records and direct questions and correspondence here:

ASECS Web Site: <https://asecs.org/> (no change)

ASECS Phone: 612-284-2471

ASECS Email: director@asecs.org and asecsoffice@asecs.org

ASECS Mail: American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS)

400 South 4th Street

Suite 754E

Minneapolis, MN 55415



Treasurer's Report

As of May 5, ASECS's invested funds totaled nearly \$2.2 million. This is more than the balance at the end of the last fiscal year, but it is important to remember that more than 60% of these funds are restricted, and that we have once again had to draw on unrestricted funds to help pay for operational expenses, including of course the annual conference. We are very grateful for the Women's Caucus Celebration Fund campaign, which has raised approximately \$25,000, half of which is unrestricted. To help us maintain a stable financial future, please renew your membership annually, attend the Annual Meeting whenever possible, and consider donating to ASECS. In the coming years, ASECS looks forward to “future-proofing” our financial situation to ensure we can continue to maintain our scholarly work. Please consider setting up an ongoing gift (e.g., through PayPal) for \$18.00/month toward our Sustainability Fund.

Image Credit: The ASECS leadership team in Philadelphia: President Misty Anderson, First Vice President and Incoming President Elena Deanda-Camacho, Second Vice President Amy Freund, and Past President Paola Bertucci

GRANTS, AWARDS & PRIZES



2026 ASECS Award Winners

The **Gottschalk Prize** was split between **Mei Mei Rado**, *The Empire's New Cloth: Cross-Cultural Textiles at the Qing Court* (Yale, 2025) and **Dan Edelstein**, *The Revolution to Come: A History of an Idea from Thucydides to Lenin* (Princeton, 2025). Mei-Mei Rado's *The Empire's New Cloth* dazzles with its deep research into textiles and their cross-cultural uses in both Asia and Europe. Dan Edelstein's *The Revolution to Come* situates canonical figures alongside lesser-known writers to reveal the broader discursive field in which revolutionary futures were articulated. The **James Clifford Prize** went to **Oliver Wunsch**, "The Aesthetic Redemption of the Black Body in Eighteenth-Century France" (*Art History* 48:1), in which Wunsch adeptly demonstrates "how the differing goals of artists and philosophers yielded divergent forms of engagement with Blackness." The Honorable Mention was given to **Jacob Myers**, "Keeping the Rat-Book: *Marly* and Visceral Histories of Jamaican Agriculture." (*Early American Literature*, Volume 60, Number 1, 2025, pp. 21-41). The **Annibel Jenkins Prize** went to **Janis Tomlinson**, *Goya: A Portrait of the Artist* (Princeton UP, 2020), a rigorous account of the politics, patronage, and courtly intrigue of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Spain. The Honorable Mention went to **S. Scott Rohrer**, *The Folly of Revolution: Thomas Bradbury Chandler and the Loyalist Mind in a Democratic Age* (Penn State UP, 2022), an intimate portrait of a loyalist cleric that reveals the entwinement of royalist and Episcopal thought in the American revolutionary age. The **Srinivas Aravamudan Prize** went to **Jacob Myers**, "Keeping the Rat-Book: *Marly* and Visceral Histories of Jamaican Agriculture." (*Early American Literature*, Volume 60, Number 1, 2025, pp. 21-41), an article that explores what rats and rat-cuisine reveal about agricultural practices, discourses of slavery, and racial tensions in colonial Jamaica.

The inaugural **George E. Haggerty Prize in LGBTQ+ Studies** went to *Unsettling Sexuality: Queer Horizons in the Long Eighteenth Century* (University of Delaware Press, 2024), edited by **Jeremy Chow** and **Shelby Johnson**, an exciting and urgent collection of essays foregrounding Black, Indigenous, Middle Eastern and Asian studies. The **Innovative Teaching Award** went to **Taylin Nelson** (PhD. candidate in English at Rice University) with the course "Coffee, Sex, and Tobacco in 18th-Century Public Culture." The **Race and Empire Caucus Prize** went to **Shruti Jain** (PhD. candidate in English at Binghamton University) for her essay entitled "Global Abolition and the Assemblages of Slavery in the Eighteenth Century," which interrogates Mariana Starke's 1788 play *Sword of Peace* alongside the Parliamentary debates about the abolition of slavery, and the justifications for the East India Company. The **Graduate Research Prize** went to Minji Huh (PhD Candidate in English at SUNY Albany), for the essay "Biopolitics, Racialization, and Frankenstein," which situates the creature within the shifting "racializing assemblages" of early-nineteenth-century biology and sociopolitical relations.

The **Women's Caucus** awarded the **Catharine Macaulay Prize (Graduate Student Paper Prize)** to **Faith Barringer** for "The Delineated Breast: Race and the Maternal Body in French Eighteenth Century Portraiture," an examination of whiteness in French depictions of breastfeeding women. The **Editing and Translation Fellowship** went to **Aleksondra Hultquist**, who is editing Volume 6 of *The Cambridge Edition of the Writings of Aphra Behn*. The **Émilie Du Châtelet Award** went to **Karenza Sutton-Bennett**, for "The Female Intellect: Emerging Counterpublics of Informally Educated Women Reading Periodicals in the Eighteenth Century," which promises an important intervention to traditionally male-centered ideas about the Enlightenment. Finally, the **Women's Caucus Intersectional Prize** went to **Elena Deanda-Camacho**, for "Colonial America, Sexuality, and the Centering of the Margins," which draws on sexual politics of the eighteenth-century to offer a transnational approach to 18th-century definitions of obscenity.

Image Credit: Amelia Rauser presents the Gottschalk Prize as President Misty Anderson looks on.





Eighteenth-Century Studies

Eighteenth-Century Studies, Volume 59, number 3 (Spring 2026) is in production and will be live on Project Muse shortly. Edited by **Ramesh Mallipeddi**, the issue features new research articles by **Christophe Gillain**, “The King’s Medical Body: Public Perceptions of Louis XV’s Character and Health in Edmond-Jean-François Barbier’s Journal”; **Jonathan Haddad**, “Combien de Chimères! The French Lives of Nadir Shah”; **Millie Schurch**, “Paper Colonialism: Instructions and Institutions at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 1770–1820”; and **Jacob Biel**, “‘Good Works He Had None’: Methodism and Antislavery in Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative*.” There is also a roundtable discussion of **Kevis Goodman’s** *Pathologies of Motion: Historical Thinking in Medicine, Aesthetics, and Poetics* (2023), with contributions by **Ramesh Mallipeddi**, **Rishi Goyal**, **Bradley L. Craig**, **Carmen Faye Mathes**, **Deirdre Shauna Lynch**, **Jonathan Sachs** and **Thomas Dodman**. Additionally, **Brian Cowan** contributed a multiple title review of recent work on the Enlightenment, which appears alongside 11 book reviews. You’ll be able to access ECS 59.3 [here](#).

The deadline to submit to the the next special issue of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* is upon us. Guest editors **Ruth Mack** and **Crystal B. Lake** are accepting proposals for “Practical Knowledge in the Enlightenment” no later than June 1. Research papers of 7,500 to 9,000 words for consideration should be sent to ec.studies@ubc.ca.

Image Credit: Detail, Jan Steen, *Rhetoricians at the Window* (1658-1665), [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#).

Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture

Volume 55 (2026) of *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* is now available on Project Muse. This edition features clusters of shorter essays derived from conference panels on Free Indirect Discourse, Indigenous Critique, and the representation of queer eighteenth-century pirates in the HBO show *Our Flag Means Death*. Individual essays cover the possibilities of gender-fluid play in early nineteenth-century paper dolls (**Marlis Schweitzer**); Chardin’s pastels (**Heather McPherson**); taste-making women art collectors in Paris (**Natasha Shoory**); a reassessment of the taste debate between artists and antiquarians (**Sarah**



Carter); the importance of commonplacing in Ignatius Sancho's letters (**Moinak Choudury**); an Islamic Traveller's view of Ranelagh (**Humberto Garcia**); the social and economic theory of prostitution in Paris (**Cecilia Feilla**); as well as **Lisa A. Freeman's** 2024 Presidential Address, an analysis of race and performance in Edward Young's play, *The Revenge*.

Editors **George Boulukos** and **Allison Cardon** are now soliciting submissions for Volume 58 (2028) of *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*.

They invite provocative and rigorous essays that chart out new directions for research on the cultures of the long eighteenth century, across all disciplines and geographic regions. Remarks or talks presented in any public venue by a member of ASECS or of a learned society affiliated with ASECS or ISECS between June 1, 2024 and June 30, 2026 are eligible for consideration. In addition to single-author essays of roughly 5,000 to 10,000 words, the annual publishes "clusters"—thematic groups of brief essays—growing out of panels or roundtables accompanied by a brief introductory essay. Submissions are due on August 15, and they should be sent to secc@asecs.org.

Image Credit: Detail, Unknown, Listening to the News (17th century), [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#).

OUR COMMUNITY



Humanities 1 - DOGE 0

In a major victory for the humanities and academic freedom, on May 8 a federal judge ordered the National Endowment for the Humanities to restore thousands of grants that were summarily terminated by operatives of the Department Of Federal

Efficiency (DOGE). In her 143-page [ruling](#), Judge Colleen McMahon, of Federal District Court in Manhattan, stated that the cuts provoked “the disruption of protected expression, the interruption of ongoing research and publication, the cancellation or suspension of humanities programming, and the chilling effect caused by the government’s use of viewpoint-based and unauthorized criteria to terminate federal grants.” The ruling also found that the NEH’s 1965 law “does not authorize the wholesale revocation of grants already awarded simply because a new administration disagrees with the decisions of a previous administration or prefers to redirect funds elsewhere.”

So far, however, this is not much more than a “moral victory,” according to Mattie Burkert (University of Oregon) who directs the [London Stage Database](#), which had its funding pulled by DOGE. The judge’s ruling ensures that the government can’t turn around and re-cancel the grants, Burkert noted, and they are prohibited from spending the earmarked funds elsewhere, but the judge “stopped short of requiring them to resume payments on the awards, likely because her court is not empowered to rule on contract disputes.” Danielle Spratt (Cal State Northridge), whose project “Blank Spaces in the CSUN University Library Archives” was also kneecapped by a revoked NEH grant, is similarly guarded. “There’s speculation that it would be some time before anything could take effect, since there’s basically no one staffing the NEH anymore,” said Spratt.

John O’Brien (University of Virginia), who co-directs the [Literature in Context](#) open access literature anthology project with Tonya Howe (George Mason), said that on May 13 they received a notice of the ruling from the NEH, but with “no information about the possible reinstatement of all or part of our lost funding, much less a possible timeline.” The grant revocation has left the project in a “frustratingly unfinished state,” and that they are actively seeking alternative funding, as is Burkert.

And so the fight goes on. ASECS members can monitor the websites and news feeds of professional organizations like [ACLS](#), [MLA](#), [AHA](#) and [NHA](#), for updates and opportunities to get involved. As Burkert put it, we should “take courage from this development but not to check out...instead try and channel that courage into the energy needed for the continued fight.”

Image Credit: Robert Cruikshank, Detail, Town & gown, or, The battle of the togati & the town raff in the High Street Oxford (1824), [Lewis Walpole Library](#).



CALLS AND CONFERENCES

“Eighteenth Century In the Present” Webinar With Michael Marenze

On **Friday, June 5**, at 4 PM eastern, **Michael Meranze**, Professor of History at the University of California, San Diego, will be talking about how we as scholars of the eighteenth century can bring our knowledge and our commitments to higher education to bear in “the struggle against the enclosure of the university.” His talk, “Whigs, Hunters, Managers, Faculty” reads Edward Thompson’s *Whigs and*

Hunters (1975) alongside his *Warwick University Ltd* (1970). Both were products of the early 1970s: one an analysis of the Black Act of 1723, the other of the attempt to impose a business university on the then-radical University of Warwick. Each, in its own way, addressed the repetitive and resonant history of enclosure; the enclosure of forests, the privatization of universities, the imposition of new forms of order against the resistance of practitioners. These processes of enclosure and policing link the 1720s to the 1970s to the 2020s not as origins or contradictions but as moments of clarity and conflict. For a full abstract, click [here](#), where you can sign up and receive a link to the webinar, which promises to be an important discussion for our moment.

Open Calls

***Eighteenth-Century Studies* special issue, “Practical Knowledge in the Enlightenment.”** For just a few more days, guest editors Ruth Mack and Crystal B. Lake are still accepting proposals. Research papers of 7,500 to 9,000 words for consideration should be sent to ec.studies@ubc.ca no later than June 1.

2026 ECASECS Conference in Virginia State University, November 5-7, 2026. The theme is “Beginnings: Restarts, Revisions, and Reinventions in the Eighteenth Century.” Deadline for panels was April 30, 2026, and for papers June 1, 2026. Email proposals or queries to ecasecs2026@gmail.com. Details [here](#).

Gale/Cengage Primary Source Research Grants. Early career scholars can apply for non-residential mini-fellowships, sponsored by Gale/Cengage, to conduct research using Gale’s portfolio of over 60 Primary Sources archives in the late summer and early fall. The application is simple: a CV and a 1000 word proposal. You can find the [complete instructions to apply here](#), but note that the deadline is June 19, with award decisions announced July 3. ASECS members can preview the Gale Digital Scholar Lab [here](#) (the password is **asecs**).

Chris Houghton of Gale/Cengage will hold a Teams call on Friday, May 29, 2026, at 12:00 PM Eastern, for anyone who would like more information about applying for these fellowships. Join the Teams Call here (Meeting ID: 293 292 249 327 443; Passcode: Bi73CG7V).

ASECS 2027 in Portland, Oregon. The CFP process for the 2027 annual conference will open shortly. The first round will be the call for guaranteed sessions from caucuses and affiliates, expected in mid-June.

The Race & Empire Caucus is seeking submissions of revised versions of papers read at ASECS and affiliate conferences during this academic year for the [Graduate Student Essay Prize](#). The submission deadline is **July 15, 2026**.

The Burney Society (North America) offers the annual [Hemlow Award](#) for the best graduate student essay on any aspect of the life or writings of Frances Burney or members of the Burney Family. Submissions of up to 6,000 words are due by **September 1, 2026**.

Upcoming Conferences

2026 ISECS - SIEDS Conference in Paris, June 10-12, 2026. The conference will focus on the question of how research into the historical Enlightenment and contemporary references to or critiques of the Enlightenment challenge each other. Details [here](#).

2026 ISECS - Early Career Seminar at Trier University, Germany, June 17-19, 2026. "Reforming Religion, Morality and Society in Afro-Eurasia: Intellectual and Cultural Traditions in Motion in the Global Eighteenth Century." [Details here.](#)

2026 Slavery North Conference at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, July 9-12, 2026. The theme is "Rebellion, Resistance, and Refuge: Slavery and Border-Crossing during the American Revolution." Details [here.](#)

2026 Fourth Nordic Conference for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland, Aug. 20-22, 2026. The topic: "The Eighteenth Century and the North." Details [here.](#)

2026 Colloque « Je le vis, je rougis, je pâlis à sa vue ». Les couleurs fugaces du visage dans la littérature française du XVIIe au XVIIIe s." Sorbonne Université, Paris, [Automne 2026.](#) Details [here.](#)



Map is a detail of Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson, *A Map of the Most Inhabited Part of Virginia . . .* (London, 1755). Library of Congress Geography and Map Division. Images superimposed on map are of the following from left to right: Toussaint Louverture; Olaudah Equiano; Phillis Wheatley Peters; and Joseph Bologna, Chevalier de Saint-Georges.

Beginnings: Restarts, Revisions, and Reinventions in the Eighteenth Century

**EAST CENTRAL AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES
2026 ECASECS CONFERENCE
Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia
5-7 November 2026
CALL FOR PAPERS**

**CALL FOR PAPERS, EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES
SPECIAL ISSUE ON "PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE
ENLIGHTENMENT"**

Guest Editors
Ruth Mack (University at Buffalo, SUNY)
Crystal B. Lake (Wright State University)



Henry William Bunbury, A tailor riding on the back of a goose representing an exploited worker (1780)

Famously and influentially, Aristotle severed theory from practice, epistēmē from technē. By epistēmē, Aristotle meant to designate those forms of knowledge derived by reasoning and characterized by universality; technē, in contrast, designates the kinds of hands-on know-how one acquires by labor and handicraft. This special issue of *Eighteenth-Century Studies* seeks to address the fate of Aristotle's division in formulations of Enlightenment knowledge and expand revisionary accounts of the Enlightenment recently advanced by Paola Bertucci's work on French artisan-philosophers, Abigail Zito's on practical aesthetics, and Ruth Mack's on handicraft philosophies, among others. Is empiricism as practical as Bacon's embrace of the artisan makes it out to be? At this historical moment, what kinds of thinking count as theory? What, after all, is the meaning of practice? How is practice related to work and society, and who has access to theory, to practice, or to creative combinations of the two?

We welcome essays from all disciplinary perspectives that document and reassess the kinds of practical knowledge that occasioned, responded to, or resisted the philosophical ideals we commonly associate with the Enlightenment. Contributions might focus on the period's genres of instruction; developments in labor, agriculture, and manufacturing; the material cultures of science and philosophy; the everyday experiences of church or state; the techniques employed in the literary, visual, and performing arts; or the recovery of Indigenous knowledges. We are keen to read essays that attend to the bodies, gestures, and skills implicated in acts of doing and making—and how attention to such knowledge might reshape our understanding of the period's legacies in the scholarly work we do today.

Given the inherently interdisciplinary nature of this topic, we hope to draw together scholarship from history, literary studies, art history, performance studies, and musicology. We aim to curate a conversation that not only investigates epistemic practices but also reflects critically on how practical knowledge operated within the Enlightenment—and how attention to such knowledge might reshape our understanding of the period's legacies in the scholarly work we do today.

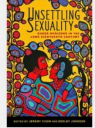





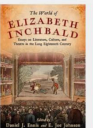

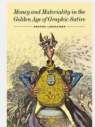

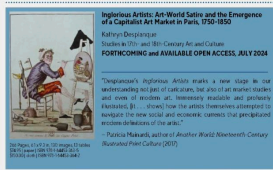
The journal welcomes new research in papers of 7,500 to 9,000 words by June 1, 2026. Please submit to studies@ubc.ca and feel free to contact special issue editors Ruth Mack (rmack@buffalo.edu) and Crystal B. Lake (crystal.lake@wright.edu), or journal editor Ramesh Mallipeddi (ramesh.mallipeddi@ubc.ca), with questions or ideas for this issue.

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