
Everyone loves a mystery and one of the most enduring in American history has been the fate of the "lost colonists" of Roanoke Island, North Carolina who vanished between 1587 and 1590. Although not the first English settlers to have disappeared on Roanoke, their numbers, the intended permanency of the settlement, and the paucity of evidence surrounding their fate has long captivated historians.

In the sixteenth century, the greatest naval power in the western world was Spain, whose empire included settlements in the Caribbean, the West Indies, North, South, and Central America. The French had unwisely attempted to challenge the Spanish in Florida in 1564 with disastrous results, while the English, whose initial exploration in the New World had been essentially restricted to the cold and seemingly barren climes to the North, had shown little enthusiasm for further ventures or settlement in the region. However, the strident Catholicism of Mary Tudor, her sterile marriage to Philip II, and his support for Mary Stuart against Elizabeth all contributed to a growing English xenophobia towards Spain. Throughout much of Elizabeth's reign, Spain also represented a constant military threat to her kingdom. In this context, the English, focusing greater attention on the navy, decided to establish settlements along the east coast of North America in order to harass Spanish shipping, and to interrupt the almost constant flow of silver from South America to Spain. They were assisted in this effort by a renegade Portuguese mariner, Simon Ferdinando, who discovered the passage from the Atlantic Ocean into the sounds of North Carolina, and by the initial enthusiasm of Sir Walter Raleigh who, ironically, was never to set foot on North American soil. The first attempt at a permanent English settlement took place in June 1585 on Roanoke Island, in what was then known as Virginia. It was an unpromising choice. Lacking a protected deep water harbor and subject to treacherous weather, the Outer Banks of North Carolina proved to be pitiless hosts to these early colonists. Nor did the English help themselves by their casual brutality towards the local Indians, whose assistance was critical to their own survival and who had behaved with generosity and peacefulness. In addition, with some exceptions, the initial supporters of settlement—such men as Sir Richard Grenville, Sir Walter Raleigh, Ralph Lane, Philip Amadas, Arthur Barlowe, and Simon Ferdinando—appeared to lack the consistency and determination to see it through. Even John White appeared to lose interest, despite having his American-born granddaughter, Virginia Dare, with her parents, among the missing colonists. Too often, privateering and adventure,
rather than colonization, motivated these men.

The initial settlement of June 1585, led by Grenville and Lane, was composed of about 600 men, evenly divided between soldier-colonists and mariners. Grenville returned to England in August 1585, promising to return by Easter of the following year, and leaving behind Lane and 107 men who were to explore the surrounding countryside with an eye to a sounder strategic location. With dwindling supplies, increasingly bitter relations with the Indians, and no sign of Grenville at Easter, Lane and all but three of his men (accidentally left behind) left Roanoke in June 1586 and returned to England. When Grenville finally arrived, he left 15 men with provision for two years. Neither the three men left by Lane nor these 15 were ever seen alive again. In 1587 John White led a substantial party of men, women, and children back to Virginia. Although intending to settle near the Chesapeake, they were forced by circumstances to land on Roanoke Island. Supplies were insufficient, causing White and others to return to England, leaving behind about 116 colonists. White promised to return as soon as possible. On 18 August 1590, three years to the day of the birth of Virginia Dare, White again set foot on Roanoke Island. Not one man, woman or child remained, the only clue to their whereabouts the word "CROATOAN" carved into a tree.

This year is the 400th anniversary of the original settlement. David Stick, a North Carolina historian and resident of the Outer Banks, was asked by "America's Four Hundredth Anniversary Committee" to commemorate the occasion with a book on the colony. Stick, aiming for the general reader, has not broken any new ground, but has provided an admirable, albeit simplified, synthesis of the contemporary printed materials and the recent scholarly works of David and Alison Quinn. The book is well-written and entertaining, as well as informative, and includes both a careful analysis of the many theories concerning the fate of the colonists and Stick's own tentative conclusion. What is that conclusion? Mystery devotees will have to read the book.

_Historical Society of Pennsylvania_  
CRAIG HORLE

_1676: The End of American Independence_. By STEPHEN SAUNDERS WEBB.  

As the title 1676 implies this book is both an analysis of that turbulent year in American history as well as an attempt to tie this turbulence to the more
well-known uprising of 1776. Webb focuses specifically on "Bacon's Revolution" (Bacon's Rebellion) and the "Algonquin Resistance" (King Philip's War). The events in Virginia produced an "Imperial Revolution" that brought royal intervention and a shift from local American to imperial English rule. The "Amerindian Revolution" saw the rise of the Iroquois and their allies as a continental power and, because of their New York affiliations, a shift in the power structure of colonial America to the newly settled areas of the North. Both "Revolutions" prepared the groundwork for the American Revolution.

This is a well-written study of the political and diplomatic stirrings of this undoubtedly important year. Webb brings together much of the recent scholarship in his primarily narrative account of the underlying unity of these colonial crises. His description of events from American, native-American, and British perspectives adds fullness and accuracy to his analysis. The result is a readable, interesting narrative of events and key personalities.

Webb's ambitious task to uncover the roots of the Revolution in this pivotal year, however, has a specific focus that should be acknowledged. His argument, confined primarily to the introduction and conclusion, holds up well as a political or diplomatic interpretation. He is somewhat confined, however, by his 1676—1776 analogy which, even he freely acknowledges, is not entirely accurate. Neither year alone encompassed the changes he attempts to analyze. Webb, however, tries to take his analogy into the realm of social history with his occasional allusions to women and slaves. He should either fully discuss the implications of 1676 for these groups, which I think he will find less momentous than he implies, or unabashedly admit the limitations of his study. Leaving these elements out of his work would have been preferable to treating them superficially.

Similarly, in his well-intentioned zeal to put native-Americans in their rightful place in seventeenth-century colonial history, he overemphasizes the good qualities of Edmund Andros and the sinister nature of the Puritans. Andros ended King Philip's War thanks to his "racially blind policy" (p. 366) toward his native allies. His pursuit of personal power was secondary, in Webb's analysis, to his even-handed treatment of native-Americans. Equally overstated is Webb's description of the narrow-minded, bigoted, "bloodthirsty" (p. 373) Puritans. He fails to consider the motives behind this seemingly "bloodthirsty" behavior. His attempt to correct past historical biases succeeds simply in creating a new one-sided description of Andros and his Puritan nemesis.

Within certain parameters and with particular exceptions this work convinces the reader that 1676 had a significant impact on the events of 1776. One of the most pressing questions arising from such an analysis, however, is the relative importance of 1676 to other eventful pre-Revolutionary years. How important was 1676 compared to 1688, for example? Does the search for a
turning point or pivotal year in fact do more to obfuscate rather than illuminate the complex roots of the American Revolutionary experience?

Temple University

LISA WILSON WACIEGA


The Iroquois empire is dead. Many non-Iroquois Indians and some ethnohistorians have long suspected as much; in this sequel to The Invasion of America (1975) Francis Jennings drives the last nail into the coffin and delivers an autopsy report. Some readers will dispute the coroner's diagnosis and forensic techniques, but no one will be able to revive the corpse.

The Iroquois empire, Jennings concludes, was a myth created by Anglo-Americans to buttress their claims to a continent. The logic was simple: if Iroquois warriors had vanquished most natives east of the Mississippi and if the victors were dependents of the British crown, then Englishmen, by second-hand right of conquest, could claim the subdued territories. Principal disseminator of the myth was Cadwallader Colden, whose History of the Five Indian Nations (1727, 1747) crystallized a syllogism that had simmered in imperialist minds for years. When, says Jennings, the American Revolution ended both Iroquois and British pretensions to empire, the myth receded from view. In the nineteenth century it was resurrected by Lewis Henry Morgan and Francis Parkman, whose works would dominate generations of thinking about the League of the Iroquois. The reborn myth served the new masters of scientific racism: savages will be savages even when they are imperialists.

Like most myths, the tale of empire rested upon a core of truth. The reality that Colden and his successors embroidered was an ambiguous set of intercultural connections known to English and Indian diplomats as "the Covenant Chain." In the late 1670s New York Governor Edmund Andros forged the Chain when he settled under Iroquois protection various Indian refugees from King Philip's War and Bacon's Rebellion. His pacification of frontiers from New England to Virginia gathered the initial Indian and English partners in the Covenant, made Iroquois leaders spokesmen for the Indian groups comprising their "empire," and anointed the governor of New York as chief
English negotiator with the northern Indians. Andros’s successors expanded his program, while Iroquois leaders obligingly placed lands they did and did not own under English “subjection.”

In the early eighteenth century, after the League was defeated by French and Indian foes, the Covenant Chain’s focus turned gradually southward to Pennsylvania. In the process, the Chain was subtly transformed from protector of the Indians of the Susquehanna and Delaware valleys to a means of their betrayal. Principal villains were William Penn’s right-hand man James Logan, Oneida headman Shikellamy, and Onondaga orator Canasatego. The pivotal event was Iroquois ratification of Pennsylvania’s theft of Delaware lands in the infamous “Walking Purchase” of 1737. Logan’s and Canasatego’s arrogance peaked at the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 and sealed the fate of both their peoples. Soon key members of the Covenant Chain would desert the Iroquois, and in the Seven Years’ War Pennsylvanians would suffer the violent consequences.

*The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire* is often heavy going, despite the omnipresent conspiracies and the trail of missing documents that are the author’s trademarks. The narrative, like the Chain whose evolution it explores, is complex and sometimes confusing. Action occurs on a number of fronts that frequently seem to have no center. And like the Chain, Jennings’s story is primarily a matter of international relations; this leading advocate of innovative approaches has produced a surprisingly traditional sort of diplomatic history.

When the diplomatic dust settles, Jennings’s evidence reveals precious few Anglo-Americans conspiring to create an Iroquois empire so that they could claim it for themselves. Instead, one sees in these pages desperate—if seldom scrupulous—Englishmen struggling to control a host of independent and justifiably angry native peoples. From Andros’s creation of the Chain to the events surrounding the Walking Purchase, the purported Indian empire promised a tidy solution to messy problems of English-native relations. It was infinitely easier to deal with a few Iroquois whose hobnailed moccasins presumably kept their subjects in check than it was to grapple with myriad resentful Indian neighbors. For nearly a century Iroquois leaders had good reason to play along—especially in the 1670s and 1680s when enemies besieged them and in the 1720s and 1730s when Europeans exerted serious pressure on their homelands. For both Iroquois and English, however, the quick fix led ultimately to disaster. That, for both, the debacle was less a product of a grand conspiracy than of short-sightedness and wishful thinking only compounds the tragedy.

*Institute of Early American History and Culture*

Daniel K. Richter

Historians have long noted the hardships endured by Revolutionary War soldiers. E. Wayne Carp asks why the Continental army starved. His explanation successfully places the problems of supply within the cultural context of the Revolution. It also destroys many of the myths surrounding the men who served in the staff departments responsible for bringing food and clothing to the army.

Carp argues that American political culture obstructed efforts to mount an effective war for independence. The same tradition of provincial autonomy that rendered colonists fearful of British encroachments made them suspicious of Continental efforts to administer the war. In the counties and towns, the deferential character of politics, while providing cohesion in a chaotic political environment, meant that the army's needs took a back seat to those of local officials and their constituents. Finally, the deep suspicion of power, and especially military power, which was part of the political ideology that Americans inherited from the Real Whigs, left revolutionaries incapable of adopting measures that would have made the fight for independence less difficult. "That Americans so often seemed willing to lose the war rather than sacrifice their principles," Carp concludes, "is great testimony of the strength of ideas in history and to the strength of that American political culture as it had evolved over 150 years of settlement" (pp. 15-16).

Impressment policy is a good example of how political custom and ideology shaped the conduct of the war. In the first place, the army resorted to impressment only when absolutely necessary, fearful of losing popular support for the war and concerned that the seizure of property would have an adverse impact on military discipline. When circumstances necessitated impressment, state legislatures required Continental officers to work through local officials. This arrangement reflected the fear that armed soldiers would abuse helpless civilians as well as a desire to protect local interests from Continental encroachment. The consequence, however, was that the army starved while magistrates sought to protect their political popularity by shielding their civilian constituents from the hardships of war. Carp points out that the decision to place administrative responsibility for impressment in the hands of local officials assumed that the political deference that bound community leaders to constituents would ensure that supplies would be forthcoming when emergencies required. Deferential politics, though, proved as much a victim of the Revolution as imperial authority. When civilian officials and military officers cooperated to impress much needed supplies after 1779, citizens revolted not
only against the intrusion of Continental authority but also against local leadership. The patriot leadership discovered, as they had suspected all along, that support for the Revolution collapsed at the local level when supporting it proved too burdensome.

Efficiently feeding and clothing the army never became an important part of the republic's strategy for independence, Carp argues. For example, concerns about corruption and a desire to cut expenses at the national level motivated the 1779 decision to leave to the states the responsibility for supplying the army. Even Robert Morris's successful provisioning of the army prior to Yorktown had nothing to do with long-term nationalist commitment to a centralized supply system or to the organization of executive departments at the Continental level. Though brought to power by military and state leaders concerned about the republic's ability to win the war, nationalists approached the problems of supply with the same distrust of the military, fear of fraud, and determination to cut expenses that had motivated their predecessors.

Rejecting the contemporary charge—repeated by historians since—that the army suffered because the men responsible for supplying it were corrupt and self-serving, Carp contends that officials of the staff departments were among the unsung heroes of the revolution. Fraud, though frequently charged, was rarely proven. Few men got rich supplying the army. Far more were denied fair compensation for their services by outrageous accounting standards—standards, Carp suggests, that reflected more American self-doubt about being a people fit for republican government than they did the business practices of staff officers. So why did men continue to serve? They served because they were loyal to the patriot cause and committed to fulfilling the responsibilities of their office—themes that readers of Charles Royster's *Revolutionary People at War* will find familiar. They also stayed in public office because of a personal sense of honor. The same desire for fame that drove men like Washington and Hamilton also fired the souls of the men that labored in obscurity to supply the Continental army.

Carp has written a well researched and instructive account of a long neglected aspect of the revolutionary war. It is a significant addition to the growing body of literature concerned with the military as part of the political and intellectual context of the revolutionary era. It merits close reading by anyone interested in the relationship between the revolutionary war and the society that fought it.

*Texas A&M University*  
*Lawrence Delbert Cress*

The division of sovereignty between central government and state governments that characterizes American federalism, as Andrew C. McLaughlin observed many years ago, had its origin in the pre-revolutionary relationship between the colonies and British imperial authority. Peter S. Onuf now advances our understanding of the development of federalism by showing how jurisdictional conflicts among the states during and after the Revolution produced changing conceptions of statehood and central authority that determined the structure of the American state system embodied in the Constitution of 1787.

For perfectly sound political reasons, and with much historical accuracy, we usually view American federalism in competitive terms: the states and the federal government are depicted as locked in a continuing struggle for power in which the expansion of central authority necessarily occurs at the expense of state authority. The roots of this model are evident in Onuf's description of static conceptions of statehood and union in the Confederation period, when continental politics was concerned with the size of the several states, and states identified their existence as sovereign polities with territorial and jurisdictional claims. Onuf persuasively argues that the key to constitutional reform in the 1780s, however, contrary to the orthodox model, was the reciprocal reinforcement of state sovereignty and the expansion of central authority. This happened, he contends, when states such as Virginia made cessions of land in the west on terms that confirmed their sovereignty; Congress gained control over a newly created national domain and hence enlarged its authority; and a system for creating new states in the western territories, adopted in the Northwest Ordinance, marked the transformation of a static conception of the union into a dynamic and expansive one. Simultaneously there emerged a sectional view of politics to supersede the large versus small state distinction that prevailed at the start of the Revolution. The ground was thus prepared for the creation of the federal system in the Constitutional Convention—an accomplishment that Onuf provocatively says was in fact "unremarkable," although the Federalists for strategic political reasons insisted on presenting it as a "miracle."

The most important part of Onuf's study, which takes the form of related essays on jurisdictional conflicts in Pennsylvania's Wyoming valley, New York's northeastern counties where separatists formed the state of Vermont, and the trans-Ohio region, is its perceptive analysis of concepts of statehood. In 1776 statehood claims rested on the fact of succession to the colonial govern-
ments and the revolutionary right of self-government based on natural rights. Yet Onuf shows that from the beginning of national existence, and to an increasing extent in the 1780s, statehood also depended on the approval of a higher superintending authority—the states in Congress assembled. Although its constitution did not properly express the fact, Congress in a political sense spoke for the United States as a single polity in its management of war, diplomacy, and territorial conflicts among the states.

It is no small achievement to contribute in an original and significant way to the age-old yet still relevant debate over the nature of sovereignty in the American republic. Onuf has done so in a work that merits the attention of all students of the American founding.

University of Maryland at
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HERMAN BELZ

James Barbour, A Jeffersonian Republican. By CHARLES D. LOWERY. (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1984. xi, 320p. Illustrations, bibliography, index. $32.50.)


The generation of American politicians raised in the aftermath of the Revolution spent their adult lives in a constantly changing nation. The politics of the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian eras reveal a constant struggle to reconcile principles revered as the heritage of the Revolution with the demands of territorial expansion and economic development and diversification. James Barbour of Virginia and Samuel Southard of New Jersey were political colleagues throughout those turbulent years and shared remarkably similar careers as they evolved from young Jeffersonian Republicans into pragmatic economic nationalists and finally into founders of the Whig party. Charles Lowery and Michael Birkner have written thoroughly researched and lucid political biographies of Barbour and Southard respectively, which chronicle the intricate politics of the early national period.

Lowery emphasizes Barbour's traditional Virginia gentry upbringing. The strong Jeffersonian Republicanism inculcated by Barbour's father was reinforced by the late eighteenth-century world of Orange County in which he grew up, and by his increasingly close association with his neighbor James
Barbour was denied much formal education for financial reasons, but as a result of his own study, he was admitted to the bar at an unusually early age, and soon began an active political career. Barbour was highly esteemed in spite of his youth, as testified to by the significant role he was assigned in the debates over the Virginia Resolutions during the legislative session of 1798-1799. What makes Barbour intriguing is that in spite of his orthodox beginnings he became Virginia's most visible nationalist after John Marshall.

Lowery focusses his study upon Barbour's unusual nationalism and its probable causes. Lowery portrays Barbour as a representative of an enlightened future who was broadminded enough to free himself from the "narrow agrarian particularism" which Lowery contends—in concert with most historians of the period—increasingly infected Virginia politics after the War of 1812, and which became pathological state rights after the Missouri controversy. Lowery does an excellent job of recounting Barbour's political activities and opinions. But because he accepts the idea that the direction of Virginia politics after the war can be explained simply in terms of reactionary responses to apparently threatening change, Lowery fails to explain satisfactorily Barbour's divergence from that pattern. Barbour's response is reduced to the apparently natural behavior of an enlightened mind. Nevertheless, Lowery portrays the stress which national development put upon Jeffersonian Republicanism graphically. If the analysis of Barbour's behavior is not entirely satisfactory, it accurately reflects an extraordinarily complex and tortured chapter of American political history. Lowery's accounts of Barbour's reaction as governor to the War of 1812, his role as a United States senator in the Missouri Compromise, his avowal of the American System while Adams's Secretary of War, and his violent hostility to Andrew Jackson, leading to his role in the founding of the Whig party, are particularly informative, and should prove useful to any student of the period.

Southard was Barbour's colleague throughout much of their respective careers. They shared similar political backgrounds in spite of their disparate geographical origins. Southard's father was one of New Jersey's most devout followers of Thomas Jefferson and he raised his son within that tradition while setting an example through his own political activity. In addition, Southard spent a number of years as a young man in Virginia, and it was there that he studied law and found a wife. Southard returned to New Jersey at the time of his marriage, but his personal and political ties to the Old Dominion remained strong. Birkner describes a political career parallel to Barbour's. Southard got his start in state politics with the aid of his father's name, and then moved on through a variety of state offices to the governorship, the United States Senate, and a cabinet post as Adams's Secretary of the Navy. Southard was a somewhat unusual character throughout his career. He sympathized with the South during the Missouri controversy, but was a firm economic nationalist and
advocate of the American System. He violently opposed Andrew Jackson and devoted his last years to forging the bizarre coalition that became the Whig party.

Despite the similarity between Southard's career and Barbour's in terms of office-holding and political orientation, the two differed in one significant respect. Throughout his life Barbour supported himself, and in fact amassed a respectable fortune, as a planter. Southard on the other hand represents the first generation of professional politicians in the United States. His income depended upon politics and he was always conscious of that—and by Birkner's account, rather petulant about it. Birkner paints a graphic portrait of the impact which that professional dependence had upon Southard's political behavior, his opinions and his character. Southard's evolution from Jeffersonian Republicanism to economic nationalism and Whiggery seems plausibly explained, at least in part, by his pragmatic political ambitions and incessant financial needs.

Yet that explanation of Southard's behavior raises intriguing questions about Barbour's, and generally about the principles, interests and motivations of their generation of political actors. The response of Jeffersonian principles to development, diversification and increasing sectional tension must finally be understood in personal terms. These books offer students of the period a wealth of detailed information about the careers of two significant politicians. The authors have assumed a familiarity on the part of the reader with the ideology and political history of the period. For those which such knowledge, both biographies should prove useful and informative. In addition they are fascinating individual portraits.

Pacific Lutheran University

Kathryn R. Malone


Given the unequal access to power and wealth that characterized nineteenth-century urban society, to what extent were wage earners able to oppose the dominant elements of society? From the vantage of Worcester, Massachusetts, working-class opposition was weak and ethnically fragmented. Labor unions sheltered only a small minority and political opposition to the major parties was almost nonexistent. Nevertheless, workers and their families
fashioned a response that allowed significant autonomy and resistance in at least one sphere of activity—leisure.

Roy Rosenzweig's book carefully reconstructs the atmosphere of saloons, holiday celebrations, parks, and motion pictures to demonstrate that seemingly powerless immigrant groups were able to preserve increasingly important segments of their lives from the intrusion of employers and middle-class reformers. The emergence of the saloon, for example, owed much to the growing discipline and regimentation that characterized the workplace. When factories no longer paused for periodic refreshment, workers sought temporary refuge from their harsh lives in new commercialized institutions. Older customs and rituals of mutuality and equality did not disappear; rather, in such places as saloons they gained a new strength in working-class opposition to middle-class values of thrift, sobriety and individualism. Similarly, July 4th observances, like other celebrations that punctuated the calendar, did not conform to the quiet, respectable events expected by civic leaders, but instead became occasions for boisterous freedom from the restraints of industrial society.

Local elites, once they obtained control of the workplace, did not give in easily to other challenges to their authority. Despite the fact that drinking and celebrating encouraged little opposition to capitalist domination, manufacturers led movements to suppress expressions of working-class autonomy. Here, immigrant workers flexed their political muscle. If the Irish, Germans and French-Canadians would not join the same union, they did unite to protect their saloons, their holidays, and their access to parks. Indeed, it was not the local economic elite who posed the greatest threat to an alternative working-class culture. It was, instead, the more subtle invasion of such forms of commercialized mass entertainment as the movies and amusement parks that destroyed more class-specific forms of recreation.

Rosenzweig's important study is careful not to derive too much significance from the class-oriented struggles over leisure. Borrowing from Raymond Williams, he notes that these aspects of working-class culture were not really "oppositional"; they posed no real threat to the dominance of capitalist wage labor. Rather workers were creating an "alternative" culture; their resistance to the bourgeois culture coexisted with their inferior status in the economic and political arenas. Together with Frank Couvares's complementary work on Pittsburgh, Rosenzweig's book uncovers cultural facets of urban conflict too often lost among the drama of strikes, lockouts and political contests.

One hopes for similar studies of other cities to answer questions only suggested by this work. For example, could working-class culture play a different role, particularly in a place that was not as ethnically fragmented or in a city where labor was significantly stronger? In such cities, would the "alternative" working-class culture include the same elements? British studies, for instance,
suggest that a truly oppositional culture emerges from workers involved in more “respectable” leisure pursuits. Could Rosenzweig’s alternative working-class culture also be viewed as a defeated culture? These questions aside, *Eight Hours for What We Will* is a fascinating, well-crafted book that adds immeasurably to our understanding or urban society.

*University of Massachusetts*  
KEN FONES-WOLF

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**E.L. The Bread Box Papers: A Biography of Elizabeth Chapman Lawrence.**  
By HELEN HARTMAN GEMMILL.  
(Doylestown: Bucks County Historical Society, 1983. xii, 275p. Illustrations, index. $22.95.)

This lively, chatty biographical account of the life of Elizabeth Chapman Lawrence (1829-1905) is based on a group of her letters and papers fondly collected, haphazardly organized, and saved in an old tin bread box in the family home, Fonthill, by her nephew, Henry C. Mercer. The preservation of the papers attests to Mercer’s affection for his aunt as well as to his interest in material culture and history. The papers frequently read like a social register of important people in England and America, people like James Buchanan, George McClellan, James G. Blaine, Benjamin Disraeli, Princess Mary of Cambridge (granddaughter of George III) and her mother the Duchess of Cambridge, Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugenie, Thomas Carlyle, Thomas Macaulay, William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Dickens, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Henry James, Henry Adams, Frederic Church, Hiram Powers, William Wetmore Story, and so on.

So who was this Elizabeth Lawrence? Born in 1829 in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, to Henry Chapman and Rebecca Stewart, Elizabeth Chapman “by a chain of incredible accidents” (as James Michener points out in the Introduction) married into one of the most wealthy textile families in New England. Her marriage in 1854 to Timothy Bigelow Lawrence took her first to Boston to meet his family, and then to England, where Lawrence served as an attaché to the American legation under American Minister James Buchanan (successor to Lawrence’s father). Elizabeth Lawrence’s position brought her a presentation to the Queen and an acquaintance among the principal statesmen, authors, and artists of her time. Her husband’s political appointment enabled her to stay several years in England before returning to the United States. Then, when her husband was appointed Vice-Consul General at Florence
(upon Lincoln’s inauguration, 1861), she went to Italy. With summer excursions to Switzerland and occasional trips back to the United States between 1861 and 1869, she would most likely have remained in Florence, but Timothy Bigelow Lawrence died suddenly in March, 1869. The widow returned to Doylestown to build a family home (named Aldie after the Scottish ancestral home of her sister's husband, a Mercer) and to begin spending lavish amounts of her Lawrence inheritance on her family and on philanthropic and cultural endeavors. The succeeding years took her to Washington, where she took on the social limelight (along with the attentions of James G. Blaine) much in the way she had done abroad, and to Europe, for successive seasons. She died December 3, 1905.

The biography is enjoyable reading for anyone interested in nineteenth-century events ranging from the Civil War to spirit-rapping. Elizabeth Chapman Lawrence had an interest in material culture and manners that comes forth from her assiduous record of her daily activities. To have created a biography from the volume of detail was no small task.

But scholars will be frustrated in their need for dates and notes. A spot-check of the papers at the Spruance Library (Mercer Museum, Doylestown) revealed that the letters are usually carefully dated. Dates of quotations appear infrequently in the biography. In the biography, transcriptions of letters, not always exact, are editorially inconsistent as well: the Latin “[sic]” appears after some “errors” but not after others; clarifying editorial comments appear within brackets in only some instances; punctuation is introduced—or omitted—silently. Scholars will find fault with the seeming narrowness and lack of a sense of proportion in the material presented. One example will have to suffice. Early in the book the biographer spends a full paragraph on the young Chapman’s response to an ingrown toenail (p. 10). Later, when speaking of and then quoting Elizabeth Lawrence with regard to her having dined “en famille’ with Lady Ashburton, the only other guests being Thackeray, Thomas Carlyle, and Mr. and Mrs. Brookfield” (p. 100), the biographer makes no comment whatsoever about the social sphere into which the Lawrences were evidently familiarly admitted: Thackeray and Mrs. Brookfield had a well-known affection for one another, an affection countenanced by their closest friends. Were the Lawrences admitted that far into the inner social circle of alliances? The scene shouts for biographical speculation and comment; no comment is made. What is presented, and quite rightly, is part of Elizabeth Lawrence’s recorded conversation between herself and Thomas Carlyle on spiritualism. Carlyle’s disdain for the modish fascination with spirit rappings is indeed interesting and useful. But the letter’s date (May 4, 1855) is not even noted. Scholars, then, probably had best put away their pencils while reading E.L. The Bread Box Papers, so that they can more freely enter the nine-
teenth-century world it reveals in content and prose texture. They can later check the papers for themselves at the Spruance Library.

Such a research approach is easy, for the book, amply illustrated with photographs and plates from the Mercer Museum archives, has a good index. And its attractive, large format leaves much room for marginal notation, as well. *E.L. The Bread Box Papers*, intended for an audience not of scholars but of interested history buffs, engagingly re-introduces to us in the twentieth century a woman who evidently needed no introduction in her own time.

*Villanova University*  
*Carla Mulford*