

In the final section of the book, the authors attempt to write a “more holistic sort of political history” (p. 17). Andrew Cayton leads the way by showing how competing authorities, the United States and Mexico, provided people unhappy with the rule of either one an imagined, and possibly better, public and private life under the other. Richard John uses the debates over the federal government’s involvement in mail delivery and telegraphy to outline the debate raging over the scope of private enterprise. Reeve Huston finds contemporaneous debates raging in the countryside during the Anti-Rent Wars, which offer him a chance to explore the dialectical relationship between popular movements and party politics. Finally, William Shade offers an overview of the new new political history, rightly concluding that while the authors in this collection eschew a more quantified analysis and stay away from overt (and over-) theorization, they are opening new paths in how they, and we, conceive political history in the early republic.

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Art in a Season of Revolution: Painters, Artisans, and Patrons in Early America.

By MARGARETTA M. LOVELL. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005. x, 360p. Notes, illustrations, index. \$39.95.)

As one of the first advocates for the study of material culture in American studies and in the history of American art, Margarett M. Lovell remains among its most articulate and persuasive champions. In *Art in a Season of Revolution*, the author, who is professor of art history and director of American studies at the University of California, Berkeley, continues to refine the methods she promoted in one of her earliest courses: the close observation and careful interrogation of paintings, drawings, furniture, architecture, and entire townscapes in order to reach a deep comprehension of colonial American life. This volume is part of the University of Pennsylvania Press series on early American studies (published in partnership with the McNeil Center for Early American Studies), edited by Daniel K. Richter and Kathleen Brown, which explores aspects of early American history and culture (circa 1650–1850).

Art in a Season of Revolution presents Professor Lovell’s intricate weaving of recent revisions of five well-known articles from the last decade with two new essays. The lead chapter introduces the concept of portraits as consumer products—“handmade, unique, bespoke objects” (p. 10)—a key point for the book as each of Lovell’s deliberations involves explications of market conditions in British colonial America and the ways in which artists’ negotiated their positions and devised strategies for the desired reception, sale, and display of their products.

Lovell likes to focus on individual objects and expand outward to the artist and patron, the family, the community, and New England at large, employing

complex arguments for works of art as not merely reactive to circumstances and taste, but primarily as agents in the development of cultural practice. For example, Matthew Pratt's conception for the *The American School* (1765, The Metropolitan Museum of Art) may explicate an academic method in traditional British practice, but is certainly not so straightforward. Even Pratt, the underdog of Lovell's book—a one-notable-work-wonder—knew that the portraitist's job was to “describe a truth that is simultaneously recognizable and invented” (p. 48).

What Pratt conveyed once in his lifetime, John Singleton Copley expressed over and over again, fueled by self-knowledge and, despite his legendary complaints, profound understanding of the cultural project to which he contributed. While Lovell makes it clear that her book intends neither chronological narrative nor monographic treatment, she has spent many years studying Copley with intensity. Three chapters devolve from his genius: the first about a woman and a dress (principally Mary Turner Sargent and her blue gown); the second about a man and his money (Joshua Henshaw); and the third about a family, that of Sir William Pepperell. In these three chapters, Lovell gives enhanced meaning to the tried and true dual functionality of portraiture: for the present and for posterity.

A chapter on drawing—a new and welcome study of John Smibert's *The Bermuda Group* (1729, Yale University Art Gallery)—and on Newport furniture close and round out a book primarily about painting. With these final chapters, Lovell suggests that despite her intensive readings of colonial society through its finest primary source documents—the works of art—uncovering the “continuities and disjunctions between parent culture and (rebellious) progeny is a project only just begun” (p. 270).

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

CARRIE REBORA BARRATT

Old Dominion, Industrial Commonwealth: Coal, Politics, and Economy in Antebellum America. By SEAN PATRICK ADAMS. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004. xiv, 305p. Figures, maps, tables, notes, essay on sources, index. \$45.)

Historians have recently compared Pennsylvania and Virginia to test questions of regional divergence in the early republic and antebellum periods. Sean Adams adds to and extends this trend with his richly detailed, highly contextualized, tautly written, and closely reasoned study of governmental policy affecting the coal trade in the two states from the 1780s through the Civil War. Noting that both states sat on massive reserves of coal and that Virginia's coal-mining industry began with a significant head start, Adams argues that Pennsylvania's colliers eventually dominated the United States coal trade not because of superior entrepreneurial energy, but through a distributive political