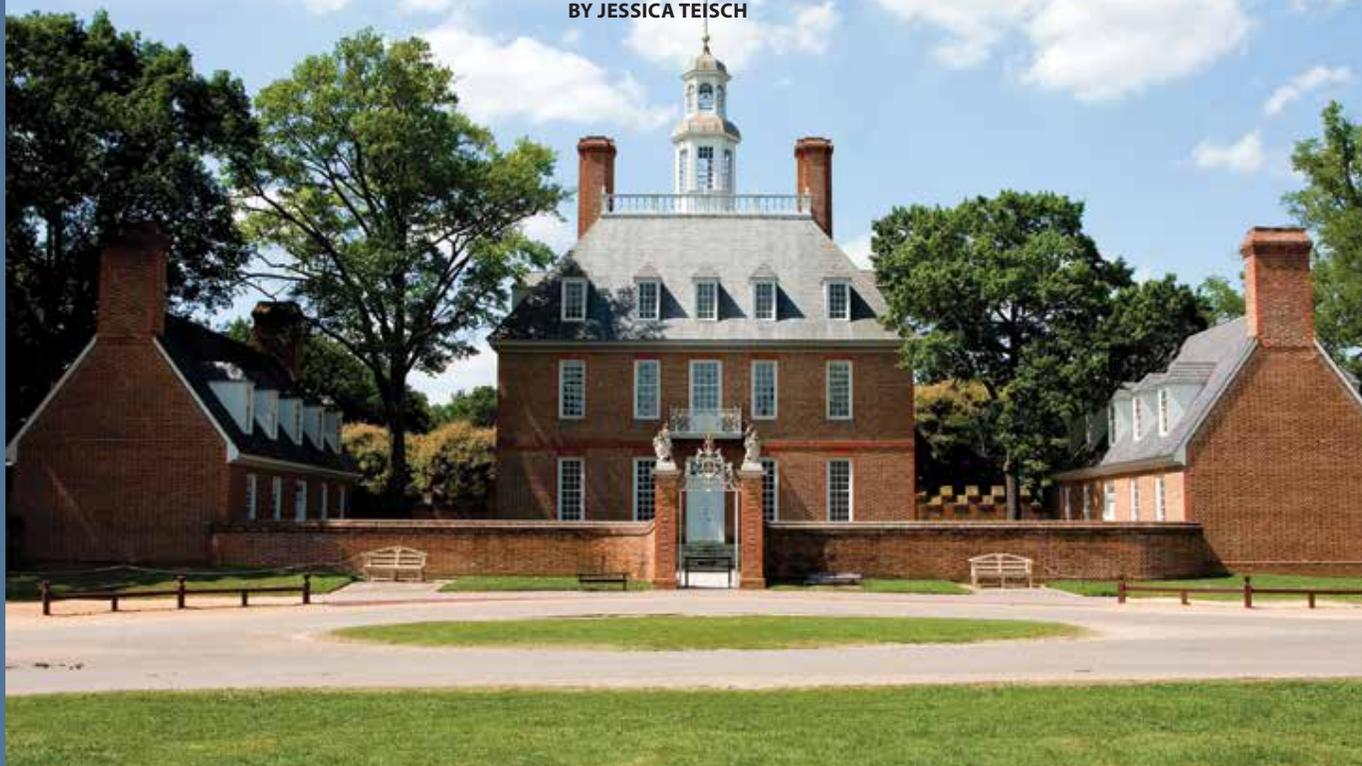


Colonial America

BY JESSICA TEISCH



**“In fourteen hundred ninety-two,
Columbus sailed the ocean blue.
And found this land, land of the Free,
beloved by you, beloved by me.”**

Columbus did few of the things outlined by Winifred Sackville Stoner’s classic poem, including setting foot on the land that would become the United States. His voyages did, however, introduce Europeans to the New World, which inaugurated a period of exploration, cultural exchange, commerce, and colonization. The global exchanges further initiated by the ensuing tide of European emigration—primarily from England—to North America in the early 1600s set in place shaky systems of governance, an economy based on slavery, and encounters with diverse natives that would lead to the establishment of the American colonies and, eventually, the United States.

The following selection of fiction and nonfiction books, some classics and others new interpretations of key events, relationships, and figures, portray the European colonization of North America in all of its racial, economic, political, social, religious, and ecological complexities. They also, of course, clear up some of our legendary origin stories.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEWS

FICTION

Outlander series

By Diana Gabaldon (1991–2014)

Blending rich historical fiction with adventure, mystery, romance, and science fiction/fantasy, Gabaldon’s eight epic, best-selling novels (the ninth shortly forthcoming) feature time traveler and Army nurse Claire Randall, who, from post World War II-era England, engages in romance and adventure with valiant 18th-century Scottish Highlander James Fraser. The series takes place across France, Scotland, England, and the West Indies, with a few novels



set in colonial North America. The third, *Voyager* (1993), concludes with Jamie and his wife Claire (a moral woman attempting to live two lives) shipwrecked on the Georgia coastline in 1765; in the fourth, *Drums of Autumn* (1996), they attempt to build a homestead in 18th-century Charleston. *The Fiery Cross* (2001) ends with political unrest in the colonies.

The Sot-Weed Factor

By John Barth (1960)

◆ TIME MAGAZINE'S ALL-TIME 100 NOVELS

In this satirical, postmodern picaresque of late 17th-century London and colonial Maryland, the English-born poet and virgin Ebenezer Cooke (author of “The Sotweed Factor, or A Voyage to Maryland. A Satyr. In which is describ'd, the Laws, Government, Courts and Constitutions of the Country; and also the Buildings, Feats, Frolics, Entertainments and Drunken Humours of the Inhabitants of that Part of America”) travels to Maryland to run his father’s tobacco plantation but finds himself in danger from pirates and Indians, prostitutes and insurrectionists. “The plot itself is a parody in its incalculable complexity; a tissue of intrigue and counter-intrigue, ludicrous mock-heroic adventure, masquerades and confusions of identity,” wrote the *New York Times*. “[Barth’s] version of the Pocahontas story and other events is truly Rabelaisian and marvelously executed.”



WINNING OF AMERICA SERIES | ALLAN W. ECKERT (SIX VOLUMES, 1967—1988: *The Frontiersman*, *Wilderness Empire*, *The Conquerors: A Narrative*, *The Wilderness War*, *Gateway to Empire*, *Twilight of Empire*)

MASON & DIXON | THOMAS PYNCHON (1997)

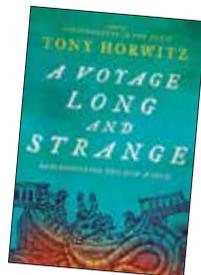
NONFICTION

A Voyage Long and Strange

Rediscovering the New World

By Tony Horwitz (2008)

In this irreverent history, Horwitz (*Confederates in the Attic* [1998]) discovers just how much he doesn’t know about the events that occurred between 1492 (the time of Columbus) and 1620 (the time of the Pilgrims). He focuses on the outrageous adventures of pre-Mayflower French and Spanish conquistadors (“armed entrepreneurs”) slaughtering both Indians and themselves by tracing their footsteps from Plymouth Rock to Newfoundland, Florida, the Dominican Republic, the Southwest, and Roanoke. Learning from the locals, Horwitz fills in his gaps in knowledge and myth. “The result is popular history of the most accessible sort,” commented the *New York Times*. “... [It] has the immense value of injecting the past into the present—showing us history as an element of contemporary life, something that still surrounds us and presses in on us, whether we know it or not.”

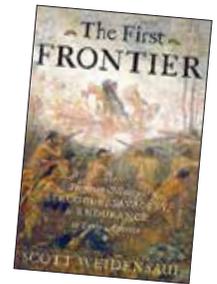


The First Frontier

The Forgotten History of Struggle, Savagery, and Endurance in Early America

By Scott Weidensaul (2012)

Weidensaul, a naturalist, charts the history of the frontier—not of the West, but of the shifting intersections along North America’s Eastern Seaboard between the great colonial empires and the various Indian tribes 250 years prior to the American Revolution. Drawing on individual narratives, Weidensaul explores the origins and interactions of these diverse peoples, showing how they adopted others’ customs while vying for control over a lush but harsh landscape. Their interactions forged a society both peaceful and violent, linked by trade, intermarriage, and tolerance but also by barbarism. “Credit Weidensaul with proving once again that history does not have to be dull in order to be comprehensive,” noted the *Seattle Times*. “It would be difficult to find a work of either fact or fiction more filled with excitement and suspense than *The First Frontier*.”



ALBION'S SEED: FOUR BRITISH FOLKWAYS IN AMERICA | DAVID HACKETT FISCHER (1989)

AMERICAN COLONIES: THE SETTLING OF NORTH AMERICA, VOL. 1 | ALAN TAYLOR (2001)

FACING EAST FROM INDIAN COUNTRY: A NATIVE HISTORY OF EARLY AMERICA | DANIEL K. RICHTER (2001)

CHANGES IN THE LAND: INDIANS, COLONISTS, AND THE ECOLOGY OF NEW ENGLAND | WILLIAM CRONON (1983)

MAJOR EVENTS IN COLONIAL AMERICA

The Lost Colony of Roanoke (1585)

NONFICTION

A KINGDOM STRANGE: THE BRIEF AND TRAGIC HISTORY OF THE LOST COLONY OF ROANOKE | JAMES HORN (2010)

ROANOKE: SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF THE LOST COLONY | LEE MILLER (2001)

The Founding of Jamestown, Virginia

(1607)

NONFICTION

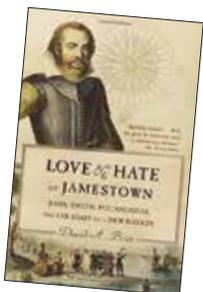
Love and Hate in Jamestown

John Smith, Pocahontas, and the Start of a New Nation

By David A. Price (2003)

♦ NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK

Captain John Smith and Pocahontas “crossed into one another’s cultures more than any other Englishman or native woman had done,” writes Price, a journalist and historian living in Virginia. Although he focuses on Smith (who averted total doom for the first permanent English settlement in the New World), his book ranges much farther to relate the founding of Virginia. Price extends his cast to include the natives, especially Chief Powhatan, and the Chesapeake’s growing African slave population to reveal the interactions between different cultures as well as the disease, hunger, and mutual hostility that threatened the fragile Jamestown. “This is a splendid work of serious narrative history” (*Publishers Weekly*).



A LAND AS GOD MADE IT: JAMESTOWN AND THE BIRTH OF AMERICA | JAMES HORN (2005)

THE SHIPWRECK THAT SAVED JAMESTOWN: THE SEA VENTURE CASTAWAYS AND THE FATE OF AMERICA | LORRI GLOVER (2008)

SEA VENTURE: SHIPWRECK, SURVIVAL, AND THE SALVATION OF JAMESTOWN | KIERNAN DOHERTY (2007)

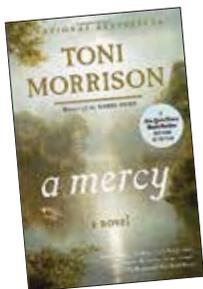
The Incipient Slave Trade (1619–)

FICTION

A Mercy

By Toni Morrison (2008)

Slavery wasn’t simply a black and white matter in colonial America. Africans were sold, women came from Europe as mail-order brides, whites served as indentured servants, and American Indians faced a hostile society. Two centuries before *Beloved* (1987), such characters interact on a small Virginia farm. Florens, a young black girl, narrates her and other females’ fates in relation to their Anglo-Dutch owner, who accepted Florens as repayment for a debt. His own moral conundrums emerge from a misty world where the racial rules that would govern the



culture had yet to be written. “What [Morrison] emphasises here is a sort of grim equality based on suffering,” wrote the *Guardian*. “[S]laves are white as well as black, women of all races are at the mercy of men.” (★★★★ **SELECTION** Jan/Feb 2009)

MY NAME IS RESOLUTE | NANCY E. TURNER (2014)

The Mayflower, the Pilgrims, and Plymouth Colony (1620–)

FICTION

THE PILGRIM | HUGH NISSENSON (2011; ♦ NATIONAL BOOK AWARD AND PEN/FAULKNER AWARD FINALIST)

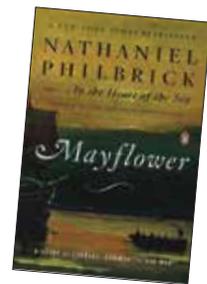
NONFICTION

Mayflower

A Story of Courage, Community, and War

By Nathaniel Philbrick (2006)

“In the American popular imagination,” Philbrick writes, “the nation’s history began with the Pilgrims and then leapfrogged more than 150 years to Lexington and Concord and the Revolution.” American identity, however, formed in between. The Pilgrims, after their perilous sea journey, arrived with pious ideals that barely survived the obstacles posed by a disease-ridden land, Indian tensions, rapacious land grabs, and military endeavors. An uneasy alliance with Massasoit, chief of the Wampanoag people, largely saved them. But after 50 years of shaky peace, King Philip’s war decimated thousands of colonists and Indians alike—and paved the way for further European colonization. Philbrick tells a story of ethnic cleansing, bloody wars, environmental ruin, and the deterioration of English-Indian relations. (★★★★ July/Aug 2006)



MAKING HASTE FROM BABYLON: THE MAYFLOWER PILGRIMS AND THEIR WORLD—A NEW HISTORY | NICK BUNKER (2010)

MANITOU AND PROVIDENCE: INDIANS, EUROPEANS, AND THE MAKING OF NEW ENGLAND, 1500–1643 | NEAL SALISBURY (1982)

OF PLYMOUTH PLANTATION, 1620–1647 | WILLIAM BRADFORD (1630–1651)

THREE VISITORS TO EARLY PLYMOUTH | SIDNEY V. JAMES JR., ED. (1997)

The Puritans and Massachusetts Bay Colony

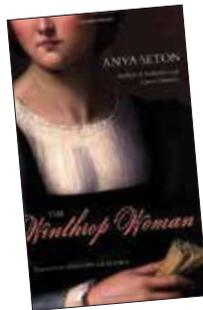
(1630–)

FICTION

The Winthrop Woman

By Anya Seton (1958)

In 1631, the widowed Elizabeth (née Fones) Winthrop and her baby accompanied her uncle John Winthrop's family from England to the New World. Seton's epic historical novel explores the hotheaded Bess's life—from her three marriages to her tremendous losses, her experiences with the Indians, and the era's political turmoil and religious divisions—all against the expansion of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Bess's life as presented here illustrates the vicissitudes and spirit of early American settlement—as well as one untraditional Puritan woman's search for love. "An absorbing story in which the happenings grow out of the characters—there is much here that will be wholly new to most readers," wrote *Kirkus Reviews*. "A novel of permanent worth."



THE SCARLET LETTER: A ROMANCE | NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1850)

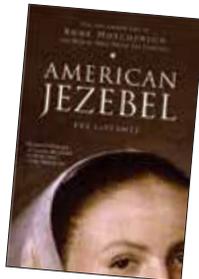
NONFICTION

American Jezebel

The Uncommon Life of Anne Hutchinson, the Woman Who Defied the Puritans

By Eve LaPlante (2004)

"In the paper record of early America," writes LaPlante, who traces her ancestry back to Anne Hutchinson, "it is almost as though women did not exist." In this first-rate biography, LaPlante restores the legacy of the Puritan spiritual advisor whose parlor teachings threatened both Puritan theology and the leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Portrayed as a feminist pioneer, Hutchinson stood trial and was banished as an enemy of the state and church, only to become one of Rhode Island's founders and a lasting symbol of religious freedom. "At the dawn of the nation, Hutchinson set the tone for American religion; faith would be the source of furious controversy and hot accusations, a power that binds our people together and a force that tears us apart," noted *Salon*. "Since then, everything—and nothing—has changed."



THE WORDY SHIPMATES | SARAH VOWELL (★★★★ Jan/Feb 2009)

THE UNREDEEMED CAPTIVE: A FAMILY STORY FROM EARLY AMERICA | JOHN DEMOS (1994; ♦ NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST, ♦ FRANCIS PARKMAN PRIZE)

The Founding of New Amsterdam

(1624–)

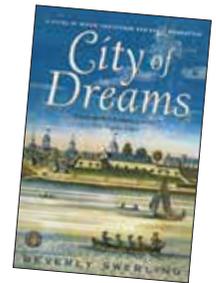
FICTION

City of Dreams

A Novel of Nieuw Amsterdam and Early Manhattan

By Beverly Swerling (2002)

This historical novel chronicles six generations of a clan of surgeons, physicians, and apothecaries, starting with brother-and-sister team Sally and Lucas Turner, who leave England for New Amsterdam in 1661. A feud eventually dominates the Turners and the Van der Vries family (into which Sally marries), but both branches of the family pioneer art and medicine, as well as representing Manhattan's transition from fledgling colony to a metropolis—Jews, patriots, privateers, former slaves, all—on the brink of revolution. See also *City of Glory: A Novel of War and Desire in Old Manhattan* (2007); *City of God: A Novel of Passion and Wonder in Old New York* (2009), and *Shadowbrook: A Novel of Love, War, and the Birth of America* (2005).



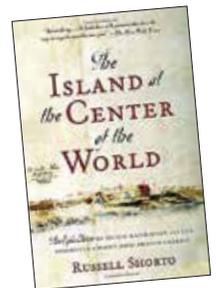
NONFICTION

The Island at the Center of the World

The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony That Shaped America

By Russell Shorto (2004)

The Pilgrims may have founded New England, but Manhattan established our diverse, open nation. Mining recently translated sources, Shorto (*Gospel Truth: The New Image of Jesus Emerging from Science and History, and Why It Matters* [1997]) argues that New Netherland inspired modern American values. Defined by its free trade, ethnic diversity, interracial marriages, and half-dozen languages and currencies, the Dutch colony privileged "frankness, piety, a keen business sense, an eye on the wider world, and a willingness to put up with people's differences." This unique blend of traits created a prototype for American society. In short, the author claims, America "was Manhattan ... right from the start." "All of this is done with relish, wit, imagination," wrote the *Guardian* (UK), "... a subtle grasp of larger historical and cultural movements, a dramatist's or a screenwriter's sense of narrative suspense, a portraitist's sense of character." (★★★★ **SELECTION** July/Aug 2004)



NEW YORK BURNING: LIBERTY, SLAVERY, AND CONSPIRACY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MANHATTAN | JILL LEPORE (2005)

King Philip's War (1675–1678)

FICTION

FLIGHT OF THE SPARROW: A NOVEL OF EARLY AMERICA | AMY BELDING BROWN (2014)

NONFICTION

NARRATIVE OF THE CAPTIVITY AND RESTORATION OF MRS. MARY ROWLANDSON | MARY ROWLANDSON (1682)

KING PHILIP'S WAR: THE HISTORY AND LEGACY OF AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN CONFLICT | ERIC B. SCHULTZ AND MICHAEL J. TOUGIAS (1999)

THE NAME OF WAR: KING PHILIP'S WAR AND THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN IDENTITY | JILL LEPORE (1998)

Quaker Pennsylvania (1681–)

FICTION

THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM | JAN DE HARTOG (1972)

NONFICTION

INTO THE AMERICAN WOODS: NEGOTIATIONS ON THE PENNSYLVANIA FRONTIER | JAMES H. MERRELL (1999)

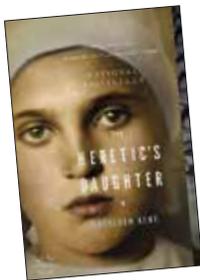
The Salem Witch Trials (1692–1693)

FICTION

The Heretic's Daughter

By Kathleen Kent (2008)

Kent—an ancestor of a condemned Salem witch—presents familiar material from a new angle through her young narrator, who relates her tale from the perspective of old age. Sarah Carrier, 10, lives with her mother, Martha, on their family farm in Andover, Massachusetts. As petty tensions fester in the tight-knit community, reports of supernatural activity in nearby Salem Village lead to mass hysteria and violence. Sara, who witnesses the mayhem, relates the tragic effects on her family. “Above all, this novel is about a child coming to understand the hidden virtues of her parents,” wrote the *Guardian* (UK). “*The Heretic's Daughter* is a beautiful and profoundly moving novel, stripped of sensationalism or heavy-handed parallels about tolerance for our age.”



THE LAST WITCHFINDER | JAMES MORROW (2006)

I, TITUBA, BLACK WITCH OF SALEM | MARYSE CONDÉ (1986)

NONFICTION

THE WITCHES: SUSPICION, BETRAYAL, AND HYSTERIA IN 1692 SALEM | STACY SCHIFF (★★★★ **SELECTION** JAN/FEB 2016)

IN THE DEVIL'S SNARE: THE SALEM WITCHCRAFT CRISIS OF 1692 |

MARY BETH NORTON (2002)

THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS: A DAY-BY-DAY CHRONICLE OF A COMMUNITY UNDER SIEGE | MARILYNNE K. ROACH (1997)

The French and Indian War

(The Seven Years' War) (1754–1765)

FICTION

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS | JAMES FENIMORE COOPER (1826)

NORTHWEST PASSAGE | KENNETH ROBERTS (1936)

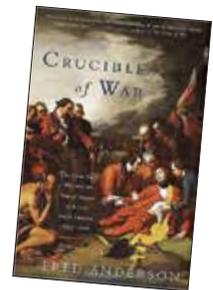
NONFICTION

Crucible of War

The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766

By Fred Anderson (2000)

♦ FRANCIS PARKMAN PRIZE



“Unlike every prior eighteenth-century European conflict,” writes Anderson, “the Seven Years' War ended in the decisive defeat of one belligerent and a dramatic rearrangement of the balance of power, in Europe and North America alike. In destroying the North American empire of France, the war created a desire for revenge that would drive French foreign policy, and thereby shape European affairs, for two decades.” Complex and clear, wide-ranging, and action-packed, Anderson's book, which argues that American independence would have been delayed without the war, is one of the quintessential books on its subject. “Anderson carries his mastery of a vast scholarly literature lightly,” reported the *New York Times*. “This book will be read by many people and will be in print for a long, long time.” See also *The War That Made America: A Short History of the French and Indian War* (2006).

MONTCALM AND WOLF: THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR | FRANCIS PARKMAN (1884)

BLOODY MOHAWK: THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR & AMERICAN REVOLUTION ON NEW YORK'S FRONTIER | RICHARD BERLETH (2010)

WHITE DEVIL: A TRUE STORY OF WAR, SAVAGERY, AND VENGEANCE IN COLONIAL AMERICA | STEPHEN BRUMWELL (2004)

THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR: DECIDING THE FATE OF NORTH AMERICA | WALTER R. BORNEMAN (2006) ■