

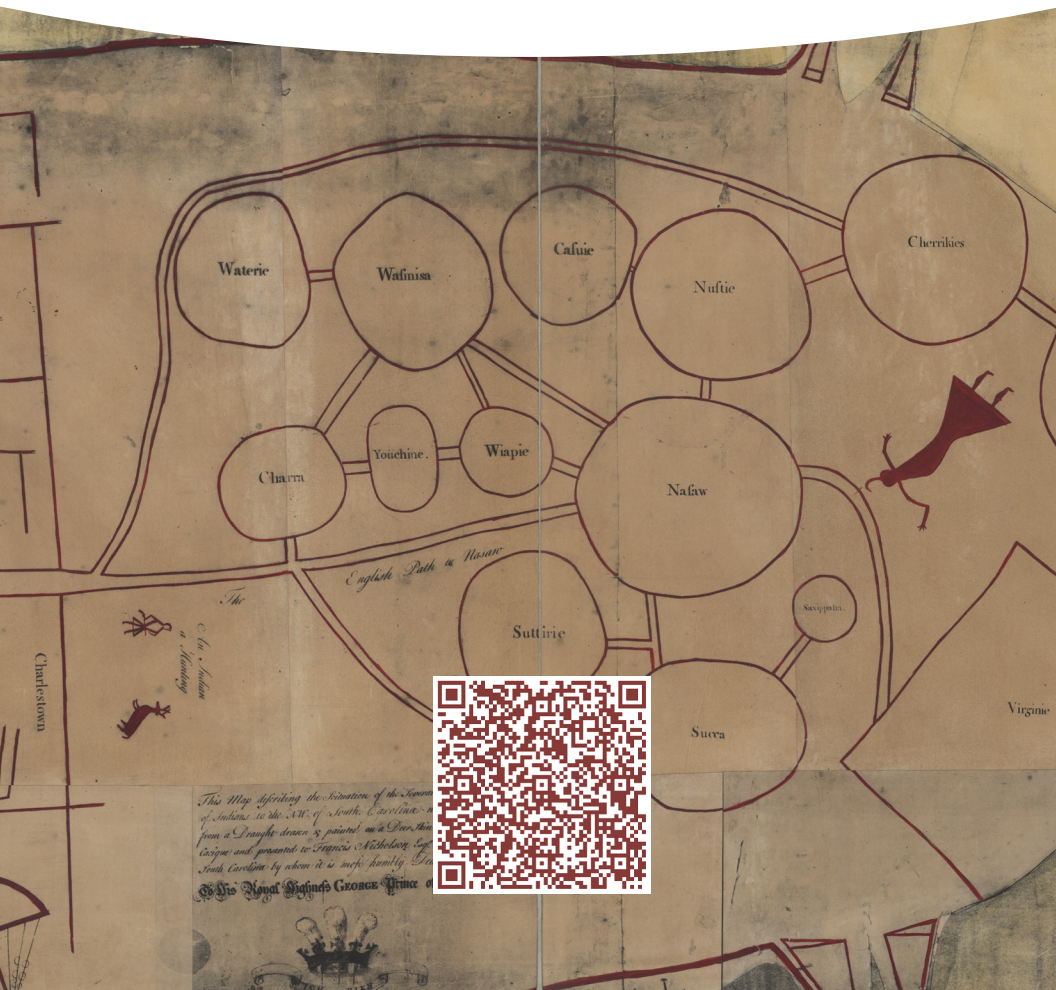
SMALL NATIONS, BIG HISTORIES

2025 WMQ–EMSI Workshop

June 20 - 21, 2025

The Huntington Library in San Marino, California

Sponsored by the *William and Mary Quarterly* and the
USC–Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute



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The WMQ-EMSI Workshop Series is designed to identify and encourage new trends in our understanding of the history and culture of early North America. It fosters intellectual exchange among scholars working on thematically related topics that may be chronologically, geographically, or methodologically diverse. The participants are primarily mature scholars working on second or subsequent book projects; they share their work in progress with the aim of deepening and enriching their perspectives, their approaches, and ultimately the final products of their research. Subsequently, the convener may write an essay elaborating on the issues raised at the workshop for publication in the *William and Mary Quarterly*.

The WMQ–EMSI Workshops are sponsored by the University of Southern California–Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute (with financial support from the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, the Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Carole Shammas) and the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture and are hosted by the Huntington Library and the University of Southern California.

From the Call for Proposals

In early America, did the size of a nation or polity matter? Smaller political units were not powerless, and recent work has highlighted how Indigenous, African, and colonial actors from small polities transformed the continent between 1450-1850. But how did they gain and retain power in an age of imperial competition?

The history of “small nations” is a big subject. This WMQ-EMSI Workshop aims to bring together scholars from history and related disciplines whose work considers the place of small nations in early American history (1450-1850). The workshop will take a broad view of the subject matter. We welcome proposals from scholars working on topics such as the history of the United States and Haiti, as well as the polities constructed by maroons, refugees, borderlands inhabitants, Indigenous and settler migrants, freedom seekers, and exiles. The “small nations” framework allows us to resituate the histories of nation states that dominate the historiography as well as communities that have historically been marginalized within the literature or dismissed because of their small populations or scant archival records. It also invites us to reconsider the history of polities such as the Muscogee Nation and the early American republic, often described as “nations” but that were themselves unions or associations of smaller political units that each had their own histories and agendas. We are particularly interested in exploring connections and exchanges between the different iterations of the histories of small nations.

Participants will discuss a pre-circulated, unpublished chapter-length portion of their current work in progress along with the work of other participants. Audience members will then be invited to join the conversation.



Friday, June 20, 2025

The Huntington Library

9:00 – 9:30 am

Coffee

9:30 – 10:00 am

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome

Julia Gaffield, *William and Mary Quarterly*

Convener's Introduction

Elizabeth N. Ellis, Princeton University
and Eliga H. Gould, University of New
Hampshire

10:00 – 11:00 am

SESSION 1

Emilie Connolly, Brandeis University

***“Tribute, Tolls, Taxes: The Politics of Internal
Revenue in Small Native Nations”***

Comment: Alexander Haskell, University of
California, Riverside

Chair: Peter C. Mancall, Early Modern Studies
Institute

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

SESSION 2

Lori Daggar, Ursinus College

***“Lenape Sovereignty and the Treaty of Fort
Pitt”***

Comment: Chelsea Stieber, Tulane University

Chair: Julia Gaffield, *William and Mary
Quarterly*



12:00 – 1:30 pm

Lunch

1:30 – 2:30 pm

SESSION 3

Ryan Hall, Colgate University

“Small Nations, ‘Indian Rings,’ and the Kansas Plunder System, 1829-1859”

Comment: Jessica Roney, Temple University

Chair: Joshua Piker, Omohundro Institute

2:30 – 3:00 pm

Afternoon coffee

3:00 – 4:00 pm

SESSION 4

I Have Avenged America: Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Haiti’s Fight for Freedom

A conversation with Julia Gaffield, *William and Mary Quarterly* and Scott Wagner, University of Southern California



Saturday, June 21, 2025

The Huntington Library

9:00 – 9:30 am

Coffee

9:30 – 10:30 am

SESSION 5

Alexander Haskell, University of California, Riverside

“Virginia Britannia as a Small Nation”

Comment: Lori Daggar, Ursinus College

Chair: Julia Gaffield, *William and Mary Quarterly*

10:30 – 11:30 am

SESSION 6

Cristina Soriano, University of Texas at Austin

*“The Making of a New Colony: Legal Innovations,
‘Colonos’ and Slavery in Spanish Trinidad During
the Age of Revolutions”*

Comment: Ryan Hall, Colgate University

Chair: Joshua Piker, Omohundro Institute

11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Lunch



1:00 – 2:00 pm

SESSION 7

Chelsea Stieber, Tulane University

“Routes of Protest: Free People of Color in the French Revolutionary Diasporic Caribbean”

Comment: Cristina Soriano, University of Texas at Austin

Chair: Peter C. Mancall, Early Modern Studies Institute

2:00 – 2:30 pm

Afternoon coffee

2:30 – 3:30 pm

SESSION 8

Jessica Roney, Temple University

“The Problem of Small Nations Within: Self Determination as a Crisis of US Democracy”

Comment: Emilie Connolly, Brandeis University

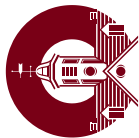
Chair: Julia Gaffield, *William and Mary Quarterly*

3:30 – 4:30 pm

Final discussion

Moderators: Elizabeth N. Ellis, Princeton University, and Eliga Gould, University of New Hampshire

Image Credit: *[Map of the several nations of Indians to the Northwest of South Carolina], 1724.*
Image provided courtesy of the Library of Congress.



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