



OMOHUNDRO INSTITUTE

William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 79, no. 4 (October 2022): 563–94

Hilliard d'Auberteuil's *Mis Mac Rea*: A Story of the American Revolution in the French Atlantic
By Blake Grindon

In 1784 a short novel set in North America, *Mis Mac Rea*, appeared in Paris. Its author was Michel-René Hilliard d'Auberteuil, a lawyer and former colonial administrator, and its subject was the death of Jane McCrea during the American Revolution. McCrea had become a popular figure of patriot propaganda following her death at the hands of British-allied Native warriors in 1777. Patriot versions of McCrea's story had focused on demonizing Native Americans, but *Mis Mac Rea* presented a different racial reading, portraying Native people as honorable innocents led astray by the British military. Hilliard d'Auberteuil's choice to write a sentimental novel about the American Revolution was a departure from his usual writing style; he remains best-known for his treatise *Considérations sur l'état présent de la colonie française de Saint-Domingue*, which attracted controversy due to his proposals for reforming the French Caribbean colony. Nevertheless, an examination of Hilliard d'Auberteuil's treatment of McCrea's story reveals a distinctly French interpretation, one that was consistent with his political writings, embedded in debates about the origins and definitions of race, and tied to anxieties about the proper management of French colonies in the Americas.