

Open Access for the Humanities:
A View from the *William and Mary Quarterly*

(Working Paper)

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Readers: We thank you in advance, and look forward to hearing your thoughts and suggestions.

This essay does not represent the positions of the OIEAHC Council or the *WMQ* Editorial Board, or even necessarily and in every case the views of both authors! This is a first effort at grappling with a complex set of issues and their implications for the humanities more broadly and for the *WMQ* particularly.

We deeply appreciate the contributions and hard work of the *WMQ* staff, particularly Kelly Crawford, in generating circulation, citation and other information, including the *WMQ* graphs and charts.

If we could put the fine essays and reviews in the *William and Mary Quarterly* into the hands of every potential reader around the globe, immediately and without cost, why wouldn't we want to? This is the question we heard from a librarian, a leading advocate for Open Access, and we have heard versions of it from many others alternately enthused about and concerned about Open Access. Of course the presumptions here about a vehicle for making scholarship available without barriers are great. It is broadly recognized that Open Access has roots in the research and publication structures of STEM disciplines; there have been few but accumulating calls to clarify what Open Access of, by, and for the Humanities could look like. As Johanna Drucker commented recently in an essay on digital publication, it is critical to "cut through the pixel dust-induced illusion to the practical realities....Every aspect of the old-school publishing cycle—acquisition (highly skilled and highly valued/paid labor), editing (ditto), reviewing, fact-checking, design, production, promotion, and distribution (all ditto) remains in place in the digital environment."¹

But the questions that have framed discussions of Open Access at the *Quarterly* this year are not about the infrastructure for delivery, the capacity for reception, or the financial constraints, all crucial and complex issues to be sure. These real world factors are important to understand. We have focused, however, on whether and how Open Access can serve humanities scholarship, and in

¹ For example, Donald Waters, "Open Access Publishing and the Emerging Infrastructure for 21st-Century Scholarship," *Journal of Electronic Publishing* 11: 2 (Winter 2008) and Peter Mandler, "Open Access for the Humanities: Not for Funders, Scientists or Publishers," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 18:4 (2013), 551-557. Johanna Drucker, "Pixel Dust: Illusions of Innovation in Scholarly Publishing," *LA Review of Books* January 16, 2014.

particular the kind of scholarship we cultivate, edit, and publish. What are the factors influencing and the benefits of freely circulating scholarship, and do the latter outweigh the structural, including financial challenges that Open Access poses to the longstanding models for producing humanities journals? Are there other considerations that should encourage us, or give us pause? Are there models of accessibility that might better suit humanities scholarship than the options generally offered in the mandates and policies of governments, funders, and universities? As Peter Mandler has very recently noted in regard to Open Access, “it is now incumbent on us in the humanities to take initiatives of our own.”²

This essay reports on conversations about Open Access at the Omohundro Institute about the *William and Mary Quarterly*, starting with a summary of the issues and developments that have coalesced around Open Access and journal publication generally, and then moving to a close look at how the *Quarterly* is produced, read, and cited. We close with some suggestions about how we might shape an Open Access policy that would best serve the development and readership of scholarship in our field.

For those already deeply versed in the discussions, debates, and policy decisions surrounding Open Access, a primer may be unnecessary but for many of us it will be useful. The concept of Open Access has circulated for decades, while its more recent purchase in the policies of funders and universities has raised its profile and

² Peter Mandler, “Open Access for the Humanities,” 556.

potential impact. The history of its development is important to grapple with as we consider what Open Access could offer to the field of early American scholarship.

A key thing to understand about Open Access is its parallel origins in an ideal of scholarly communication and in the practical challenges, exacerbated by a colliding trio of economic, technological, and organizational factors, to traditional models of scholarly publishing. Perhaps there are already more subtle historical analyses of the Open Access movement, but in general it began as early as the 1970s with an understanding of the communications potential of new computing technology and a desire to harness this technology to share research for educational and scholarly purposes. The increasing costs of science journals in particular lead to a variety of Open Access experiments in the 1990s, and the reductions in and pressures on library budgets accelerated interest in Open Access as an alternative to the “barriers” produced by subscriptions (and, for online access, paywalls). University librarians, with the institutional structures of their schools as well as professional organizations, have increasingly supported the use of Open Access repositories, which they sponsor and run, where faculty deposit their scholarship. Universities and funders, prompted by both ideological/political and financial considerations have created Open Access policies to guide or govern the publication of scholarly research; in the UK in particular the aggressive stance of the UK Research Council, the Wellcome Trust and the British Parliament prompted an organized response from humanities scholars about the inapplicability and negative impact of proposed OA requirements. As we hit print on this essay, we recognize that this nested set of issues is fast moving—conversations and consultations are

convening at the NEH, for example, which like other federal agencies must respond to President Obama's directive on Open Access to federally funded research.³

The Open Access movement, experience, and policies are all structured by their origins in STEM disciplines. It is no accident that one of the earliest adopters and proponents of Open Access was the National Academies Press. And that at one of the first major public discussions of the federal US Open Access requirement, hosted by the National Academies, humanities scholarship was, perhaps naturally, woefully under-represented. Examples of the unintended humanities victims of Open Access abound—Margaretta Lovell's statement to the University of California committee that was developing the UC system-wide Open Access policy about the impossibility of any of the OA models for scholars working with embedded copyright, images of objects, texts, music, stills and innumerable other types of materials that are owned by others ultimately shifted the policy, but it was a last ditch effort and could have failed. But this is the point. The humanities are not the primary audience for or target of Open Access. The conduct and funding of research, the circulation of scholarship, and the structures and financial arrangements for research and publication all differ dramatically and importantly between STEM and humanities disciplines. Thus it is not surprising that arguments

³ See the OA timeline started by Peter Suber, a very early and leading proponent of OA, at [http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/Timeline before 2000](http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/Timeline%20before%202000). SPARC, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, was founded in 1998 as a project of the Association of Research Libraries and is a key advocate of and resource for promoting Open Access in the US. <http://www.sparc.arl.org>. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scholarly_Publishing_and_Academic_Resources_Coalition) For the RHS responses to the Finch Report and other key documents in the exchange: <http://www.royalhistsoc.org/royalhistsocnews.php> For the White House memo on Open Access to federally funded research: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp_public_access_memo_2013.pdf and for the NEH chairman Jim Leach's brief statement, including his assertion that "there may be no 'one size fits all'" OA policy: <http://www.neh.gov/news/press-release/2013-02-26>

for the necessity and the benefits of Open Access usually implicitly if not explicitly invoke presumptions based in scientific research and publication.⁴

One of the most obvious and contentious differences between the sciences and the humanities is the “author pay” model of publication, in which authors provide an “Article Processing Charge” (APC) to the journal to cover some or all of the costs of open access publication. Paying for publication is not new in the sciences, and was generally funded through research grants, but the practice has picked up steam as Open Access has become one answer to the collision of rising subscription pricing and shrinking library budgets. The extraordinary subscription or reader fees charged by and revenues accumulated by some for-profit scholarly publishers have long impelled conversations about Open Access, with Elsevier and other European-based publishers the clear villain in the tale. When these publishers adopt Open Access, usually a “hybrid” publication of a single Open Access article within a closed-access journal, the APC can be as high as \$5,000. As one recent analysis suggests, authors can now compare the prestige or selectivity of the journal with the price they pay to publish in it. There are obvious opportunities for

⁴ See the public comments and the accompanying presentations during the first National Academies planning meeting on Open Access devoted to scholarly publishing: http://sites.nationalacademies.org/DBASSE/CurrentProjects/DBASSE_082378. Margaretta Lovell and others to Chris Kelty, October 12, 2012 (shared by email with Karin Wulf, February 10, 2014). As Lovell pointed out, the costs of reproduction of these images, which can run into the thousands of dollars for a single article, are born by the scholars alone. Open Access license to publish would make the costs and likely the use impossible. For a recent study of the slow adoption of Open Access to copyrighted images, Kristin Kelly’s study for the Mellon Foundation, “Images of Works of Art in Museum Collections: the Experience of Open Access,” April 25, 2013. Clearly there are variations among different science disciplines, biology and chemistry, for example, versus computer science (where most research has been OA from the beginnings of the discipline in the 1960s and 1970s), and humanities disciplines, even our own disciplines of English and history. Still, the commonalities are more marked and the impact of Open Access thus greater across the STEM/ humanities divide than within these two rough clusters.

corruption in a pay to play model; the national media recently reported several stories about journals that essentially have no peer review and simply publish in exchange for fees.⁵

The APC is now a key feature of Open Access science journals, and has become a standard in Open Access policies adopted by funders, governments and universities. “Gold” Open Access provides immediate access to the work in question, either through self-archiving or on a host (usually publisher’s) site, almost always funded by an APC. “Green” Open Access, a variable category, offers access with a few more hurdles—whether self-archiving after an embargo period, or within an institutional repository which handles that embargo.⁶

For humanities journals, an APC model would be a terrific challenge, although some UK journals have recently committed to offering this option so that scholars may comply with funder and government OA policies. The structure of

⁵ For the *Guardian*’s take on for-profit publishers: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/aug/29/academic-publishers-murdoch-socialist>. For Elsevier APC: <http://www.elsevier.com/about/open-access/sponsored-articles>. For a comparative analysis of publication costs, assessed to authors through the APC and presumed revenues to shareholders of for-profit publishers, Richard Van Noorden, “Open Access: the True Cost of Science Publishing,” *Nature* March 27, 2013: <http://www.nature.com/news/open-access-the-true-cost-of-science-publishing-1.12676#/rise>. For the APC for PLOS journals, ranging from \$2250-2900 (PLOS is an OA response to steep science journal pricing), see <http://www.plos.org/publications/publication-fees/>. On the relationship of STEM journals pricing to library budgets (the “serials crisis”), Lee Van Orsdel, “Periodicals Price Survey, 2009: Reality Bites,” *Library Journal* April, 2009: http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=lee_vanorsdel. Just this month, the AAAS announced a new, open access journal *Science Advances* as “an outlet for papers that [authors] are willing to pay to make immediately free to the public.” <http://news.sciencemag.org/people-events/2014/02/aaas-launches-open-access-journal>. This NPR story reported the efforts of *Science* to catch and out fee for publish scam journals: <http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2013/10/03/228859954/some-online-journals-will-publish-fake-science-for-a-fee>.

⁶ Definitions of “Gold” and “Green” access vary a bit, but the key difference is that gold is immediate, free and absolute access, while green is not necessarily all three. For our purposes the point is that the APC has become intrinsic to gold OA despite the funding and other structural challenges to humanists.

publication in the sciences, particularly the presence of large for-profit publishers, simply does not exist for the humanities. Most humanities journals are society publications—published by a scholarly group such as the American Historical Association or French Historical Studies, for example—and although many are now published by and through university presses, they remain non-profit. Or, as we like to say about the *William and Mary Quarterly*, we put the “non” in non-profit.

Individuals typically but not always subscribe to such society publications as a feature of membership. A recent Mellon-funded study on “The Future of Scholarly Journal Publishing among Social Science and Humanities Associations” concluded that the transition to Open Access for such publications, “in which the costs of publishing research articles in journals are paid for by authors or a funding agency, and readers have access free online, is not currently a sustainable option.”⁷

That study underscored the very different kinds of production investment between humanities journals and the sciences, in particular the role of editors and copyeditors. For science journals, the publisher’s “value added” is almost exclusively in the management of the review process (the costs of which can be more significant per published essay the more selective the journal), and in production of the article/journal (typesetting, proofing, file conversion, tagging metadata), rather than in editing (humanities journals have manuscripts “read”

⁷ Mary Waltham, “The Future of Scholarly Journal Publishing among Social Science and Humanities Associations: Report on a Study Funded by a Planning Grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation,” *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 41, 3 (April 2010), 257-324. For an earlier assessment that considers some of the same factors but without the depth of research John Willinsky, “Scholarly Associations and the Economic Viability of Open Access Publishing,” *Open Journal System Demonstration Journal* 1 (1). For another view urging the adoption of Open Access on theoretical economics, Stuart Scheiber, “Why open access is better for scholarly societies” <https://blogs.law.harvard.edu/pamphlet/2013/01/29/why-open-access-is-better-for-scholarly-societies/>

rather than “refereed,” and then assessed and responded to by editors—as well as substantive editing and copyediting).⁸

Most analyses see these structural differences as the primary challenge for humanities publications moving to Open Access. But the organization of scholarly exchange in the sciences has also driven presumptions about Open Access and the development of currently advocated Open Access models in ways that are critical to recognize. Librarians and others have long used bibliometrics, particularly citation indices and now online analytics, to assess the importance of scholarly publications. Bibliometrics are used for a variety of purposes, including library collection development and for evaluating the significance of faculty research. In some cases these quantitative measures are not used at all for the humanities, and in some cases they are—but not well. These metrics are now shaping how we are encouraged to understand the significance and impact of humanities scholarship, too. The number of downloads is now referenced as an important indicator of research impact alongside numbers of citations, neither index unproblematic (or even entirely reliable data to collect).⁹

There is, for one thing, a problem of scale. None of the top 100 journals on Google Scholar Metrics is from a humanities field, for example. And the h-index assessed by Google Scholar or the impact factor assessed by Thomson-Reuters is, at best, extraordinarily weak for evaluating the significance of a particular journal—

⁸ Van Noorden, “the True Cost of Science Publishing.”

⁹ The potential use of impact factors for the UK REF, for example, or in US tenure and promotion. For some critical attention to the collection and analysis of citation data, Peter Jasco, “Deflated, inflated, and phantom citation counts,” *Online Information Review* 30, no. 3: 297-309. A recent summary flatly notes that bibliometrics in the humanities “is rather limited when compared with the sciences.” Jordi Ardanuy, “Sixty Years of Citation Analysis Studies in the Humanities,” *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 64, no. 8: 1751.

particularly those in a subfield. The h-index only measures the past five years—a presumption about the speed and duration of scholarly digestion that is itself profoundly distorted. The h-index for a top science journal will exceed 350, for example, while the highest rated article in the *William and Mary Quarterly* achieved a 23—not surprisingly for an article published in 2008 that is thus about to fade from the h-index window of measurability.¹⁰

A final feature of Open Access that should alert us to the shaping role of the sciences is the very fact of journals as the prime target for OA policy. Although there are discussions and movements toward Open Access for all scholarship, books, one of the primary vehicles for disseminating humanities scholarship, are generally not covered. The predominant role of journals in OA is a direct result of the steep price of science journals, the role of journals in circulating STEM research,

¹⁰ Although one can produce a version of the h-index from GSM and impact factor numbers out of the Journal Citation reports from T-R, they do not officially provide those for arts and humanities journals. From the JCR team at T-R: “The primary reason that there is no Journal Citation Reports (JCR) in Arts & Humanities (A&H) is because the key metric used in JCR, the Journal Impact Factor, is not an appropriate measure for A&H publications. The JCR is a report of journal-to-journal citation metrics based on a single citing year of data and incorporating two or five years of prior years' data into a set of performance metrics. In the Arts & Humanities, the whole profile of literature use is different - both in type and in time. Type: A&H depends less exclusively on journal communications than Social Sciences. Social Sciences, in turn, depend less heavily on journal literature than Science. The publication of books and the citations in and to these books are a critical part of how scholarly communication takes place in A&H. To exclude books, citations in books, and citations to books from a performance metric in A&H would under-represent the network of scholarly communications in these fields. Time: A&H citations span far more than two or five years - the two time frames used in Journal Impact Factor calculation. Scholarship on a subject can go through long phases of non-recognition - until some new scholar picks up a subject and re-invigorates it. The net result is that A&H journals will have, on the whole, very low Journal Impact Factors – and very low 5-Year Journal Impact Factors. Even a 10-year Journal Impact Factor will be very low for these materials. A Journal Impact Factor, by all its current definitions, is not the proper way to assess A&H publishing. As the metrics offerings and Thomson Reuters expand, we'll have more data and analyses to bring to bear on the question of performance assessment in A&H.” Email, Nathan Sutton, T-R technical support to Mary Molineux, William & Mary's Swem library, Jan. 31, 2014. The top rated *WMQ* article from the past five years is Eric Slauter's essay on the “trade gap” between history and literature. We agree that in this case the h-index must be a valuable and accurate tool.

and the perceived need for immediate access to such research (born out by the quick burn factor as measured by citations).¹¹

Leading humanities organizations and publications have responded somewhat differently to Open Access. Within our respective disciplines, the American Historical Association and the *American Historical Review* and the Modern Language Association and the *PMLA* determined different paths. Their experiences are reflective of the struggle to manage access and circulation with online presence and revenue. They also reflect a very different assessment of their readership, authorship, and scholarship circulation.

As Robert Townsend has described the AHA's "Online Journey," the role of Open Access has been particularly tricky. An early and brief experiment with fully open content, coinciding with the creation of the History Cooperative (an online platform that included at its inception the *Journal of American History* and the *WMQ*, in addition to the *AHR*), also coincided with the largest single year drop in subscriptions. In 2005 the AHA launched another experiment—making article content open, but keeping the book reviews gated. After another steep decline in institutional subscriptions (librarians could calculate the added benefit of not paying for what their users could access for free), the AHA Council tried a few

¹¹ Note that the MIT policy excludes books—the assumption is that the “article” as a form is about conveying research findings <http://libraries.mit.edu/scholarly/mit-open-access/open-access-at-mit/mit-open-access-policy/working-with-the-mit-faculty-open-access-policy/>. However, the National Academies Press went entirely open access with their books as well as journals and reports, and MIT Press offers many of their books as a free PDF. For a close analysis of the NAP before their move to entirely Open Access, see P.K. Kannan, Barbara Kline Pope and Sanjay Jain, “Pricing Digital Content Product Lines: A Model and Application for the National Academies Press,” *Marketing Science* 28: 4 (July-August 2009). 620-636. We know that the move to Open Access demands for monographs is developing.

approaches and currently has a three year paywall for the journal, offers authors a link to their published article that they may post on their own website or within a repository after a 24 month embargo. Townsend's analysis of Open Access focuses almost exclusively on the revenue implications of Open Access for scholarly journals, though the AHA Council has weighed in on some of the perverse disincentives of Open Access models for humanities authors, particularly regarding the APC.¹²

The Modern Language Association announced an Open Access breakthrough in June of 2012, offering its authors copyright on articles in MLA publications including the *PMLA*. Shifting copyright from the publisher to the author allows authors to place copies of articles in their university repositories, or to circulate them through posting on websites (their own, those of an academic department, or elsewhere). The MLA also launched a new site, *MLA Commons*, to "facilitate the development of new forms of scholarly communication and support scholars in creating, aggregating, editing, and evaluating academic writing online." The MLA's position, however, may be open in one regard, but is closed in another: only members of the organization may submit manuscripts to the society's publications, including the *PMLA*. Only members may join the conversations on the *MLA Commons*. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, the MLA's Director of Scholarly Communication has said that the old rules of society memberships are out: "rather than joining in order to receive the society's journal, one instead joins a society in

¹² Robert Townsend, "From Publishing to Communication: the AHA's Online Journey," *Perspectives* (May 2013), 21-23. The policy is available here: http://www.oxfordjournals.org/access_purchase/self-archiving_policye.html

order to get one's own work out into the world, surrounded by and associated with the other work done by experts in the field.”¹³

The variety of publishing and labor arrangements at different journals make the calculations about how to participate in Open Access quite different. Journals in our field are typically published by university presses (*Early American Literature* by UNC Press, *Early American Studies* and the *Journal of the Early Republic* by Penn Press, for example). Publication by a university press means that the journal is bound up with the collective decisions about an online aggregator (JSTOR or Project Muse, for example), and may share in the benefits of scaled pricing (the press may have negotiated a single price for converting journal files to HTML, for example) and even enjoy greater net revenues. Issues of bulk pricing may apply to other materials and services. And policies such as Open Access may require coordination.

As the publisher of the WMQ the Omohundro Institute does everything from soup to nuts. We pay every last cost of production. We have an in-house editorial staff. We select the paper and ink grade and pay an independent typesetter and printer. We pay directly for the polybags and the bagging and labeling. Our independence surely deprives us of some of the benefits of working within a larger organization such as a university press, but it also gives us a lot of flexibility. And for the purposes of assessing the potential impact of Open Access our independence

¹³ Scott Jaschik, “MLA Embraces “open access” writer agreements for journals,” *Inside Higher Ed* June 6, 2012. The MLA brief statement on policy: http://www.mla.org/news_from_mla/news_topic&topic=596 and the MLA Commons: <http://commons.mla.org>. Fitzpatrick, “Statement on Public Access to Federally Funded Research” National Academies, May 14-15, 2013: <http://scholcomm.commonsmila.org/statement-on-public-access-to-federally-funded-research/>

also allows us to, for example, see not only our subscription figures over time and the impact of online access, but also compare our revenue stream and absolute costs over this same period.

The *WMQ* has three missions: to nurture, publish, and review new work in the field of early American history and culture. That field has changed significantly in chronology, geography, and in the number of disciplines studying it since the beginning of the Third Series in 1944. So too, more recently, has the way that readers arrive at and experience the journal online. Both of these changes—one editorial, another technological—challenge the *WMQ*'s ability to collect the field in its pages and to represent it to readers. Statistics on citations and online access reveal (in a limited way) some of the challenges, but they also suggest real differences in the way in which the work we publish is read and used compared to the scholarly publication of work in the sciences.

The people who bring you the *Quarterly*—known as Team *Quarterly* around the Omohundro Institute—include a five-member editorial board, a staff of six part- and full-time employees, six graduate students who serve as editorial apprentices, an independent designer and typesetter, a printing company in Maryland, and a webmaster who prepares our files for JSTOR. But in a real sense the *Quarterly* is not simply a product of an office but the work and ambition of the field. The *Quarterly*'s community includes the authors who contribute articles and write reviews of new books as well as the scholars around the world who agree to evaluate manuscripts for us. All of their labor is uncompensated and—since many of our authors, book reviewers, and manuscript evaluators are also subscribers—these crucial members

of our intellectual community are not only our readers but our financial supporters as well.

The *Quarterly* seeks to use its review process to improve all manuscripts, not simply the very small number we are able to print. The *Quarterly*'s editor typically sends out for review between 70 and 80% of all submitted manuscripts, even though (in the end) we can publish no more than 10 to 15% of what comes to us. But all manuscripts that fall within our scope receive some substantive comments. We send manuscripts out to as many as five readers, using this larger-than-typical number in a way that generates responses not simply from sub-field specialists but from scholars of different geographies and time periods and of different disciplines. *Quarterly* reviewers typically offer substantive and lengthy reviews. Some reviewers are themselves *Quarterly* authors, scholars who have experienced the intellectual intervention of a manuscript review at the *Quarterly*. Others work outside of the *Quarterly*'s traditional range; their generosity is perhaps a function of the esteem for the journal in the profession at large. But most are *Quarterly* readers who have a vested interest in ensuring that the journal is as innovative and creative as the field itself.¹⁴

Once the readers' weigh in on a manuscript, the editor weaves the individual reports together to make suggestions for revision. The editor must reject most

¹⁴ We have assessed our community's investment in peer review as a valuable form of scholarly exchange, but we understand the broader debate about alternatives and the role that peer review might take either separate from or post-publication. We have read about experiments in crowd-sourced peer review, for example. An interesting essay, the conclusions of which are directed almost exclusively to the sciences, is Thomas H. P. Gould, "Scholar as E-Publisher: The Future Role of [Anonymous] Peer Review Within Online Publishing," *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 41: 4 (July 2010), 428-448. See also the report of the Center for Studies in Higher Education on "Open Review: A Study of Contexts and Practices" <http://mcpress.media-commons.org/open-review/>

submissions at this point, but the hope is to do so in a way that makes good use of the time our readers have spent in their evaluations and maximizes encouragement for authors. Many who are reading this paper probably have friends, colleagues, students, or advisors whose submissions have been rejected by the *Quarterly* and have subsequently appeared in other journals. Indeed, many of our best evaluators have had their work rejected by the journal at some point, though of course we always hope in a way that has been helpful to them and has made them in turn want to serve the journal and help others. Very few submissions ultimately become *Quarterly* articles, even on resubmission, but our evaluators are often willing to take a second look at revised manuscripts and to produce new reports based on those revisions. Is there high quality, important work that doesn't make it into print? Of course there is. Readers are imperfect. Editors are imperfect. Both, and together, they may miss the significance of an essay, or overestimate or underestimate the value of another. But this is human endeavor, and thus by its nature flawed in some respect.

The *Quarterly* operates this way because it is part of our editorial tradition and because members of the field allow us to do so by their generosity. But it is part of our tradition because we believe (and we believe the field believes) an important function of a journal like the *Quarterly* must be to serve the profession not simply by publishing accepted work or by commissioning reviews of new books but by evaluating and encouraging the work of new scholarship (and especially new scholars) regardless of the ultimate decision on publication.

But even manuscripts accepted for publication involve revisions, and the editorial intervention is significant. The editor works with authors to respond to the multiple, sometime contradictory voices from the reports in ways that strengthen the argument and differentiate it from other contributions. As an article moves from the submission-side of the *Quarterly* to the production-side authors will have the assistance of other members of the editorial team who continue to help shape articles. Editorial assistants (known in Williamsburg as “apprentices”) check all quotations against available published sources before turning the piece over to either the Managing Editor or the Assistant Editor for copyediting. Meg Musselwhite has reminded us more than once that the burden for “getting it right” has only increased in the world of digital publication. Text, and errors, can be replicated geometrically at the speed of a click.

James Merrell’s work on textual exegesis is something of an allegory about the careful work of editors. His 2006 essay on the 1756 treaties is a work that, with online supplements, required an extraordinary investment of editorial (as well as authorial) time and expertise, even by *WMQ* standards.¹⁵ The OIEAHC website has hosted, openly accessible, the supplement to the essay with Merrell’s line by line comparison of two versions of the treaty language.¹⁶ And Merrell’s very recent essay in *Early American Studies* on the disasters in transcription committed by Oscar Handlin and his team underscores the problems in historical analysis that result

¹⁵ He is something of an allegory is another respect, too—a pdf of that article is hosted on a website, free to all, as of early February (presumably from the string information, for a Teaching American History seminar):

<http://www.etc.net/tah/Reading%20Assignments/Merrill,%20I%20Desire%20All%20that%20I%20have%20Said,%20WMQ%2010-06.pdf>

¹⁶ http://oieahc.wm.edu/wmq/Oct06/merrell_final.pdf

from carelessness—or worse.¹⁷ None of this sort of rigorous editorial work is mechanical in the way some outside of the guild imagine journal editing must be. All of it contributes to produce scholarship that is accurate, clear, and registers its specific scholarly contribution for the widest audience possible for our field and beyond.

But what exactly is our field, and how does and can the journal best collect, reflect, and represent it? Today's readers of the *Quarterly* no doubt hear the phrase “early American history and culture” differently than authors and readers did at the beginning of its Third Series in 1944, when the journal first adopted the descriptive subtitle “A Magazine of Early American History, Institutions, and Culture.” (“Institutions” and “Culture” dropped out in 1947, and from then until 1980 we were simply known as “A Magazine of Early American History”; beginning in January 1981 we assumed our current subtitle: “A Magazine of Early American History and Culture.”) Unlike some historical journals that receive comparable citations, ours is bound by time and place; nevertheless, those boundaries have shifted over the past two decades and so has the journal.

Our authors and readers expect us to keep current with agendas and practices in the field by pushing on both sides of the chronological borders of “early” America. In the recent past, the *Quarterly* has significantly transgressed our traditional endpoint of 1815 or 1820 in order to explore (in a special issue) the

¹⁷ James Merrell, “Exactly as They Appear”: Another Look at the Notes of a 1766 Treason Trial in Poughkeepsie, New York, with Some Musings on the Documentary Foundations of Early American History,” *Early American Studies* (Winter 2014).

international consequences—what we called the “Ironies and Reverberations”—of the first governmental efforts to abolish the Atlantic slave trade. And we have also pushed in the other direction, taking readers to moments and periods of Native American history often well before Old World-New World contact. Our desire to reflect and direct the energies of the field’s own attempts to offer new schemas of periodization, and new accounts of what constitutes “early” American history is well represented by our ongoing annual partnership with the USC-Huntington Library Early Modern Studies Institute to bring together midcareer scholars whose work collectively represents new trends in our field: the 2013 WMQ-EMSI Workshop was entitled “Before 1607,” but some of the papers fell well before that date; and the 2014 Workshop on the “Age of Revolutions” includes papers that invite us to reconsider 1815 or 1820 as an appropriate endpoint for “early” American history.

Scholars in our field have not simply changed their minds about the earliness of early America, they have fundamentally rethought what “American” history was, is, and should be. Articles in the *Quarterly* embrace the field’s new geographic scales and locations, using the rubrics of the Atlantic, the continent, and the hemisphere to help us reframe and re-evaluate traditional commitments to certain areas over others. The *Quarterly* now routinely showcases work on colonial Spanish, French, and Dutch America as well as English America, connecting the histories of “mainland” colonies with the Caribbean and Latin America. But in embracing a truly Atlantic history and increasingly thinking in terms of the continent and hemisphere, the *Quarterly* has tried to keep pace with scholars who can help us better integrate

the histories of European colonizers with the histories of African descended and native American people.

Making space in our pages for different and new disciplinary voices may ultimately be of equal importance to the health and excitement of the field as new chronologies, rescaled geographies, and a focus on different historical actors. The *Quarterly* should perhaps be thought of as a small-“h” history journal, a space where readers will encounter contributions in cultural history, economic history, ethnohistory, the history of gender and sexuality, family history, intellectual history, legal history, literary history, military history, political history, the history of political thought, religious history, social history, transnational history—and many other modes of historical . Laborers in our field share a basic commitment to the description of the past and to the innovative use of different methods and sources. Historical work is obviously at the core of our journal, but historical work is now done by practitioners from many disciplines: in the past few years the *Quarterly* has published work by scholars from departments of anthropology, art history, economics, law, literary studies, political science, religious studies, and sociology, as well as from history. While respectful of disciplinary differences, traditions, and approaches, our field models a uniquely integrated approach to the study of the past.

We’re also proud of the diversity in rank in our pages, and believe that a range in both rank and discipline is the sign of an exciting journal and a healthy field. “The field” younger scholars have entered is—because of the changes in chronology, geography, and disciplinary orientation—appreciably different than the one senior scholars entered or encountered two, three, or four decades ago. It is not easy to speak

to or for this new expanded field, as opposed to the various subfields that constitute it, but the *Quarterly* must try to do so. The articles and reviews of any single issue, for instance those appearing in July 2013, invite us to reflect on how best to help readers manage field diversity: Do readers of essays on race and slavery in the English colonies of the Caribbean read articles about child labor in New England? Do scholars who study New England read about Spanish slaves in Florida, or the Natchez uprising in New France? And do any of these historians care about the comparative work of scholars of early American literature?

Perhaps online access patterns might help us partially answer such questions, but here a striking paradox emerges—a point where our desire to expand the intellectual reach of our journal confronts the new technologies for delivery: the journal now represents and collects the scholarship of the expanded field at exactly the moment that online access allows readers to avoid encountering the field in its newly rich diversity. With a physical copy of the *Quarterly*, readers may have consented (and may continue to consent) to care about far-flung topics, may have indulged the pleasures of juxtaposition, but the new media environment discourages them from doing so. At least that is what the online access statistics suggest. And the online attenuation of the centering-function of our journal, the ability to collect and promote what we consider to be the most innovative and original work in the field and (just as importantly) to bring that work to the attention of the field, compromises what we think we're supposed to do and be. It may also contribute to the belief among some of our readers that the field of early American history is now hopelessly fragmented.

The metrics for access and downloads of online files for the WMQ on JSTOR demonstrate that readers easily resist and circumvent the strategies *Quarterly* editors have traditionally used to call attention to individual articles, to connect topics across a collection of articles, and to highlight different voices in forums on important themes. Readers of the printed *Quarterly* no doubt resisted (and continue to resist) these strategies too, but they did so (and do so) with greater difficulty. How we interpret the data about online reading is obviously open to debate, both about what exactly the data is and what it is for. But at the very least it is apparent that online readers have a much greater degree of freedom to self-select and self-curate articles from our issues and a much greater ability to ignore the basic curatorial interventions *Quarterly* editors have employed to help manage the diversity of the field for readers of our printed and bound journal.

Most online readers of the *Quarterly* do not read whole issues. They do not read all of the essays we collect in our typical issues; they do not read all of the essays in special issues; they do not read all of our forums equally and they do not read all of the pieces of any one forum. Again, this may have always been true for readers of the printed journal, but records of user-sessions on JSTOR make those patterns visible and appreciable to us for the first time.

The early numbers for user sessions for our 2013 issues show remarkable variation in traffic to different essays and parts of the journal. For January 2013 (11 months of user-session data), the most-accessed article (with 873 views) was viewed 6.5 times more than the least (134), and a “Correction” was viewed less than any other piece in the issue (24 times). For July 2013 (5 months of data), the most-

accessed article (386) was viewed nearly 5 times as much as the least (81), and a review of a single book (155) was accessed more than three of the five essays. For October 2013 (2 months of data), the most viewed article (242) was seen 4 times as often as the least (61). Access to the individual articles in the special issue on “Centering Families in Atlantic History” in April 2013 (8 months of data) went as high 482 views for one essay, but 259 users looked at the “Introduction,” and six of the eight articles had 206 views or less. No more than 122 readers, the number of user-sessions for the least accessed piece, “read” the contents of this special issue online; but of course it is impossible to tell if even that many did since individual users might engage in multiple user-sessions. For a “Critical Forum” on a new book in October 2013 consisting of twelve individual pieces—and also freely available on the WMQ website—no more than 10 users possibly examined all of the pieces, and nearly twice as many users viewed the most-accessed contribution (36) as the least (19). With readers “using” one essay in an issue so much more than most of the others; bypassing our attempts in a special issue to think across the great geographic and temporal range in our field; and selecting certain voices to hear in a forum it is certainly tempting to question if a single field even exists and (if it does) if the *Quarterly* is failing in its basic responsibility to represent it.

The problem of online user-selection continues over time to circumvent the *Quarterly*’s ability to manage conversations and bring attention to certain voices, arguments, and methodologies. Articles in an annual volume of the *Quarterly* (January-October) typically find more absolute users in the year after publication (when they have 12 months rather than a partial year of user-sessions), but then

fewer in subsequent years. Most essays published in April, July, and October reached more absolute users in 2013. Most essays published in April, July, and October 2011 found more users in 2012 and then less in 2013. But the same trends visible in the first year remain apparent in subsequent years. And in the case of forums, our attempts to stage and to represent debates in the field, the online usage data suggests that readers resist our efforts.

In the case of article forums, the lead essay is always the most-accessed segment, generally followed by the author's reply to her or his critics. The lead essay by Steven Pincus in a forum on "Rethinking Mercantalism" in January 2012 had 798 user-sessions in 2012 (11 months of data) and 857 in 2013. In 2012 the responses by five other scholars to this piece generated between 208 and 269 views (average at 243); and in 2013 the responses generated between 183 and 240 views (average 209). In both years the author's reply to these responses generated more views than any of the individual responses (335 in 2012; 373 in 2013). For another article forum in July 2012 centered on an essay by James H. Merrell, by the end of 2013 over 8 times as many users (3,205) had viewed Merrell's essay as viewed the least-accessed response (391). Merrell's own reply to these responses generated 612 views, while his commentators averaged 438 views and none rose above 488. Throughout 2013 at 1,278 views Merrell's essay was the second most-accessed essay from the 2012 volume (the most-accessed was available for free), and it was accessed 31 times more frequently than the least-accessed essay (41 user-sessions).

Over a short time span, the comments on the lead essay in a forum typically become less accessed. While both Pincus's essay and his reply to his commentators

saw more absolute user-sessions in 2013 than in 2012, all of his commentators saw less. And while the lead essay by James Sidbury and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra in the forum on “Ethnogenesis” in April 2011 had more views (absolutely) in 2012 than in 2011 (9 months), all other contributions had fewer views. After 33 months, 1,827 had accessed the lead essay, 440 the reply to comments by the authors, and between 389 and 827 had looked at the comments. It is unusual that an author’s reply has fewer than the comments, but in this case segment titles may have effected the choice of readers to view different pieces; the more capacious the title, the more users seem to have accessed it. One must also consider how author or keyword searches on JSTOR direct readers to individual segments of a forum: in all but the first two months, Gordon S. Wood’s 4 page reply (under the capacious title “The Problem of Sovereignty”) has generated more views (565 total by the end of 2013) than the essay by Eric Nelson (542) at the center of a forum on “Patriot Royalism” in October 2012. By the end of 2013, Wood’s response had been viewed nearly three times as often as the least viewed response (189). Conversely, Jack N. Rakove’s reply to Staughton Lynd and David Waldstreicher’s essay in the October 2011 forum on “Economics and American Independence,” initially the most-accessed response in 2011 with more than 1 view for every 2 of the Lynd and Waldstreicher’s essay, is now the least-accessed segment of that forum and averages 1 accesses to every 8 of Lynd and Waldstreicher’s essay. Although access to Rakove’s comment is not all that far behind the others, the playful non-specificity of his title (“Got Nexus?”) may have contributed to its fall from first to last.

The JSTOR access data for our “Critical Forums” on new books (also available for free on our website) suggest certain patterns of reading: the first contribution in these segmented sections typically has the most users among the reviewers, which decline with each successive review; usage picks back up with the author’s reply; then decreases with subsequent comments by the reviewers; if the author has a final reply usage may rise again. In many cases the author of the books under review typically have the most accessed pieces. For a “Critical Forum” on Pauline Maier’s *Ratification* in April 2012 consisting of 12 segments (five first-round comments, the author’s reply, five second-round comments, and a final word from the author), the five first-round essays generated between 54 and 125 views in 2012 (9 months); Maier’s first response garnered 148; their second-round replies had between 37 and 68 views; and her final response 103. So four times as many people (148) read Maier’s middle piece online in 2012 as read the entire forum (37). By the end of 2013 (21 months of data), nearly five times as many (327) had looked at Maier’s piece on JSTOR as at the least viewed segment (69); and nearly two and a half times as many (244) had read the most-accessed initial comment as the least-accessed initial comment (100).

Such data hardly measures the value of individual contributions and may ultimately prove meaningless for helping us estimate the intellectual impact of the work we publish, but it clearly reveals that the *Quarterly* accessed online is a *Quarterly* of parts over wholes, of fragments over totalities. In print, where different voices in these various article and book forums appear on facing pages, it is more difficult—but not impossible—to avoid seeing and hearing them. But online, the

segmentation of forums into tiny parts arranged by author enables and even encourages online readers to select some voices to listen to more closely and to tune out the rest. Since the editors design forums as opportunities for scholarly conversation on important topics of broad interest, and routinely try to include the voices of emerging alongside established scholars and representatives of different disciplines and methods, the data can serve as a challenge to find better ways to manage online access in order to avoid confusing the reality of online fragmentation with the specter of intellectual fragmentation for the field as a whole.

But if we must treat online-usage data with caution, we should nevertheless look to other metrics—especially citations to our articles over time—to help distinguish the work we do and the way journals like the *WMQ* differ from journals in the sciences. Compared to the scale of the sciences, the absolute number of citations for the most-cited articles in the *Quarterly* is very small. According to Google Scholar Metrics for the last five years at least seven journals in the sciences contain articles that have been cited, on average, more than 200 times. But by the end of 2013, only a single article published in the *Quarterly* (since 1892) had more than 200 citations on Web of Science (James A. Henretta’s “Families and Farms: Mentalité in Pre-Industrial America,” from 1978 at 216). And only three had over 100 citations (Robert E. Shalhope’s “Republicanism and Early American Historiography,” from 1982; and Jan Lewis’s “The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early American Republic,” from 1987). To crack the top ten, an article must have had at least 72

citations; a top twenty article needed 48; a top fifty article must have had 30; and to be in the top 100 currently requires at least 22 citations.

It takes our articles a significant amount of time to reach those kinds of numbers and to register a sustained impact on the field: only 14 articles published since 1990 appear in the top 50. In all, 9 of the 100 most-cited articles were published in the 1960s, 26 in the 1970s, 34 in the 1980s, 25 in the 1990s, and 7 since 2000. No article published after October 2003 (essays by David S. Jones and by Brett Rushforth, both with 23 citations) makes the Web of Science list of the top 100. But different databases produce different metrics. A forum article by Eric Slauter published simultaneously in the *Quarterly* and *Early American Literature* in 2008 also has 23 citations, but the citations are split between the two journals; Google Scholar Metrics aggregates them by article title, while Web of Science distinguishes them by place of publication. Online access may yet encourage a trend (visible in the sciences) toward greater and quicker citation of recent scholarly articles, but the impact of *Quarterly* articles will most likely continue to be measured in decades rather than in years or months.

There are some clear differences in the ways that humanities scholars and scientists understand the role of journals in that life cycle of their research and publication. Other differences, some of them less obvious, are also important. The cost differential between scientific research and humanistic research is profound, but in the humanities the cost of producing scholarship—maintaining the publication—is often higher than the cost of the research itself, whereas the reverse is true for the sciences. And of course much more scientific research is

government-funded.¹⁸ Among factors specifically related to journals, the urgency of time to publication is one aspect that distinguishes science from the humanities; the role of co-authorship (ubiquitous in the sciences, rare for historians) is another. For scientists, the journal article is the primary venue for circulating research, whereas for historians articles and books are both important (the latter often more so for tenure).¹⁹

Humanists and scientists also consume journals differently. Whether citations reflect influence—that is, whether a citation to an article indicates that it has influenced the development of another piece—is another matter. But at least the citation patterns that are recoverable suggest the much longer and slower influence of humanities publications. The figure below reflects data from the Web of Science pulled for articles published in 1988 and their citation histories from 1995-2013. These charts compare the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* with the *AHR*. Aside from the obvious point that citations to the *PNAS* are measured in the tens of thousands and to the *AHR* just in the tens, the patterns are striking (and were similar for every science/humanities combination we searched). A further visualization of the citation patterns of the ten most-cited WMQ articles published since 1988 shows great variation from the citation patterns for the sciences.²⁰ Science moves very quickly, humanities more deliberately, making

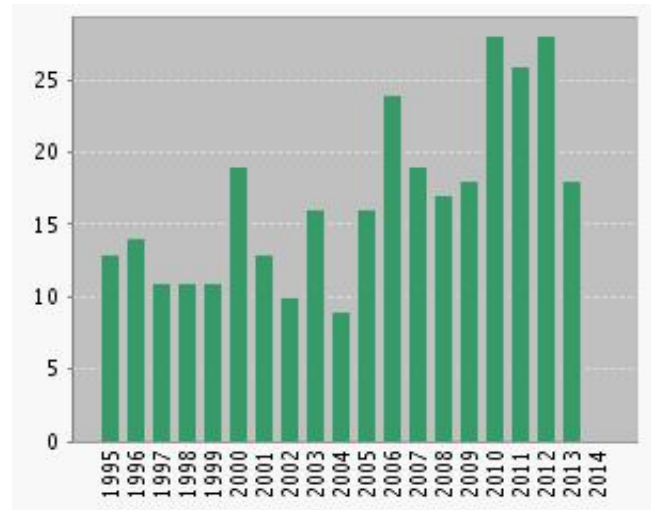
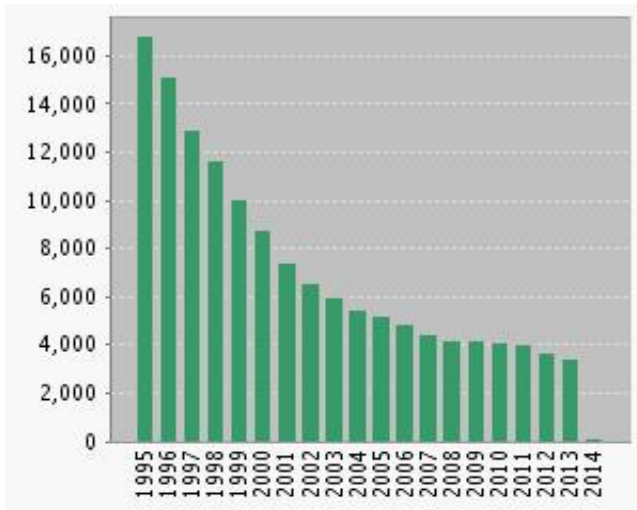
¹⁸ Waltham, "The Future of Scholarly Journal Publishing Among Social Science and Humanities Associations," 37-38.

¹⁹ Waters, "Open Access Publishing and the Emerging Infrastructure for 21st Century Scholarship." On historians and speed of publication and co-authorship see Harley, et al, "Assessing the Future Landscape," 434, 469-77.

²⁰ The ten articles are: 1. Allan Kulikoff, "The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America" (Jan. 1989; 93 citations; overall rank: 5); 2. Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America" (Jan. 1990; 83 citations; overall rank: 7); 3. Benjamin Braude, "Sons of

citation analysis a somewhat dubious science but also making the question of appropriate potential embargo periods for articles a difficult one to answer.²¹

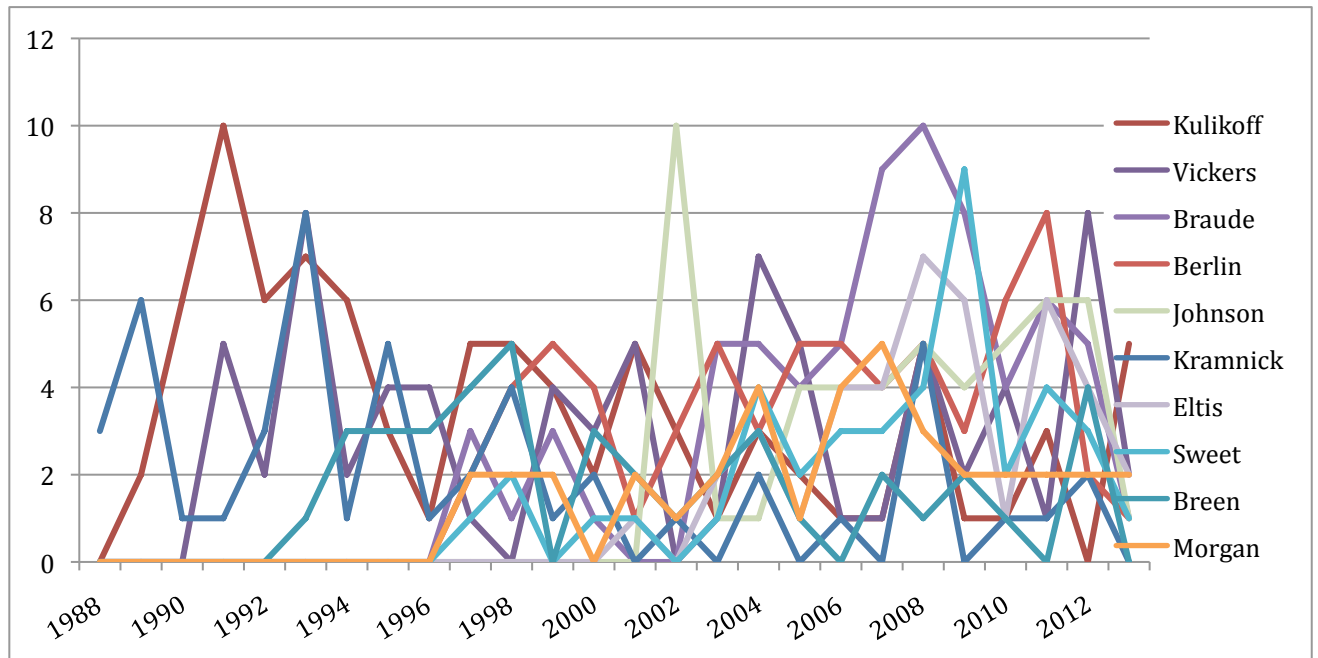
Citation history of articles published in 1988 in the *Proceedings of the National Academies of Science* and the *American Historical Review*



Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods: Origins of Economic Racism" (Jan. 1997; 75 citations; overall rank: 8); 4. Ira Berlin, "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America" (April 1996; 73 citations; overall rank: 10); 5. Michael P. Johnson, "Denmark Vesey and His Co-Conspirators" (Oct. 2001; 57 citations; overall rank: 16); 6. Isaac Kramnick, "The Great National Discussion: The Discourse of Politics in 1787" (Jan. 1988; 53 citations; overall rank: 17); 7. David Eltis, "The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade" (Jan. 2001; 45 citations; overall rank: 25); 8. James H. Sweet, "The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought" (Jan. 1997; 43 citations; overall rank: 26); 9. T.H. Breen, "Narrative of Commercial Life: Consumption, Ideology, and Community on the Eve of the American Revolution" (July 1993; 42 citations; overall rank: 29); and 10. Jennifer L. Morgan, "'Some Could Suckle Over Their Shoulder': Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1700" (Jan. 1997; 39 citations; overall rank: 31).

²¹ For an example of the conflation of citation and "research impact," Kristin Antelman, "Do Open-Access Articles Have a Greater Research Impact?" *College and Research Libraries* (Sept., 2004), 372-381. Looking at four disciplines at different stages of Open Access embrace—Philosophy, Political Science, Electrical Engineering and Mathematics--Antelman concludes that "as measured by citations in the ISI Web of Science database," "open access articles have a greater impact than articles that are not freely available." (379, 372) Antelman acknowledges that there is no "impact factor" for philosophy, that because philosophers primarily publish books not articles, that most of the journals are not open access so some freely available articles are on faculty websites and that the difference in citation among open access and gated content was minimal. It was, unsurprisingly, much greater for the political science as well as the others.

Citation history of top 10 WMQ articles according to Web of Science, 1988-present



The *Quarterly* staff and Editorial Board have been discussing open access issues for years. In the Fall of 2008 Pauline Maier and Chris Grasso, then the *Quarterly's* Editor, exchanged emails about the new policy on Open Access MIT was proposing, and then adopted, requiring its faculty “automatically to give MIT license in any scholarly articles faculty members complete.”²² At the time Pauline was serving on the faculty committee considering the policy, modeled on Harvard’s.²³ Her concern was for the subscription revenues necessary to support humanities journal operations. She took Chris’s reply to the MIT committee in arguing forcefully for the

²² <http://libraries.mit.edu/scholarly/mit-open-access/open-access-at-mit/mit-open-access-policy/working-with-the-mit-faculty-open-access-policy/>

²³ https://osc.hul.harvard.edu/authors/policy_guide

need for policy waivers for humanists in particular. As Chris wrote then, OA policies would affect the journal's explicit and implicit contracts with History Cooperative, with JSTOR, and with subscribers. "I...embrace, as an abstract ideal, the open flow of scholarly communication. But the antidote proposed to deal with the problem of commercial houses squeezing library budgets would prove poisonous to journals in the humanities produced by small non-profits like the Omohundro Institute."²⁴ And as Pauline observed, one day an author would ask the *WMQ* to waive copyright to comply with their university's OA policy and "the fat will be in the fire."²⁵ It isn't exactly that dire, but we do know that our current policies need refinement—if only because they are not working as well as they should for authors, readers and for the journal itself. The charts at the end of the essay show subscription data that indicate one aspect of the challenges we face.

As we continue to reflect on the costs and benefits of further opening access to our journal it is important to note that the *WMQ* is already a hybrid journal online. The *Quarterly* has taken some important steps toward open access, most crucially by making the Reviews of Books section available on its website but also by making one article tied to an online interactive exhibit available for free from JSTOR. In 2012, the year that article appeared, a quarter of the *Quarterly* was officially made available for free through our website and JSTOR and it continues to be so. But, as we write this essay, another quarter of that volume of the *Quarterly* circulates for free without our consent and in violation of our copyright—available for easy access to anyone. As we contemplate how to address the challenge of

²⁴ Grasso to Hoffman, Maier, Casper, and Wulf, email October 7, 2008.

²⁵ Maier to Hoffman, email October 8, 2008.

further opening access we must be aware of how these different modes of circulation either enhance or impede our central missions.

In 2008 this open online content represented 21% (183 pages) of the journal, and for the last five years it has fluctuated between 14% (142 pages in 2009) and 20% (153 pages in 2011; 172 pages in 2012) with a five-year average of 17%. Increasingly our website also hosts online-only supplements to essays—interactive maps and diagrams, teaching supplements, bibliographic appendixes, and historiographical notes that cannot be included in our print issues or among our files on JSTOR. In addition, we participate in JSTOR's Register and Read program, which allows free access to up to 78 articles a year. The initial figures suggest that we do lose revenue, but as of mid-January 1,649 readers had registered to access *Quarterly* articles. Among these readers are an increasing number of students and K-12 teachers.

An interactive online exhibit about Jonathan Edwards launched in October 2012 became the occasion for the *Quarterly's* first experiment with opening access to content from the journal beyond our reviews. The results are startling, if inconclusive. Available for free on JSTOR, "The Material and Social Practices of Intellectual Work: Jonathan Edwards's Study," an essay by Wilson H. Kimnach and Kenneth P. Minkema, generated 5,821 views in the last two months of 2012. This open access article was viewed 44 times more often than the second-most accessed article (132 views) and 243 times more often than the least-accessed article (24 views) in this issue during the same period. And the article was accessed 6 times as often as the interactive exhibit on our website (956 accesses for November and

December 2012). The numbers fell significantly and quickly: access for the article dropped to 1,368 in 2013; and access to the exhibit fell to 577 for 2013. In other words, the monthly average dropped from 2,910 JSTOR accesses per month in 2012 to an average of 114 per month in 2013. The Edwards essay is the only one from the October 2012 issue with fewer absolute accesses in 2013 (12 months) than in 2012 (2 months), but all essays from that issue were viewed less in relative terms per month. At 1,368 views it was our most-accessed article from 2012 in 2013, but Merrell's closed-access forum essay is a close second at 1,278 (though with 3,205 user-sessions by the end of 2013, compared to 7,189 sessions for Kimnach and Minkema). Whether the open-access essay will continue to rank first among views for this volume year remains to be seen; the access records are well above the records for other essays, and all essays fall in use from their second to their third year after publication, but there is still a good chance that Merrell's essay will be at the top of the JSTOR rankings for this volume by the end of 2014.

Part of what makes it a possibility that Merrill's essay will catch and surpass Kimnach and Minkema's on JSTOR's access statistics is the fact that a blog about Jonathan Edwards has made a PDF download of Kimnach and Minkema's essay available on its own site rather than linking to the essay at JSTOR. This already freely available essay has the dubious honor of joining three essays from January 2012, one from April 2012, two from July 2012, and another from October 2012 as PDF downloads from JSTOR that currently reside on a variety of websites against agreements with authors and the *Quarterly's* copyright. Some are self-archived by the authors on their Academia.edu pages; one sits as a Google Doc; three are essays

assigned for courses, made more conveniently available to users who already have JSTOR subscriptions (but then also made freely available to everyone); one is available on the website of the Appalachian Cherokee Nation. Aside from our authors who signed contracts, and perhaps even including them, the illegal postings of our material are most likely done with little or no knowledge of wrong-doing—indeed, we believe all of these postings have been made for the convenience of readers, to help promote the work of our authors, and to help disseminate the scholarship in our journal. But all of them—adding an additional 230 pages to the 219 pages already available from a volume of 885 pages—deprive the *Quarterly* of revenue and compromise its ability to continue to perform its central missions for the field.

So where are we headed—or, more importantly, where do we *want* to be headed? There are some obvious options, among them the most expansive Open Access: absolutely free, un-gated circulation. We could hold to the status quo, in which the journal is already a hybrid, with much content either freely available or pretty easily accessible. We could pull back from some of what is already Open Access. Where we *want* to be headed is where we think our readers and authors want us to go—toward a more carefully articulated policy that allows the journal to be part of healthy and vigorous intellectual discussions, and that also sustains the journal itself.

Deep scholarship requires time not only to produce, but to consume. The things one might want to quickly know about an essay or a book, to include that

item in a citation about recent work, for example, are available through reviews and abstracts. The evidence-based argument that is the hallmark of humanistic scholarship does not carry the urgency of scientific data, nor is it easily and quickly digested.

If we focus exclusively on article publication and the challenge of Open Access to the health and sustainability of journals, we miss an important opportunity. Open Access has to be considered in light of a broader initiative to understand, develop and support scholarly exchange in our field. What position does the journal article hold in the ecology of early American scholarship? What is the role of the article vis-a-vis books, conference papers, and reviews—or, more increasingly, other venues such as blogs, websites and DH projects? How important and productive is free and immediate access to any or all of these articulations of historical research and argument? Perhaps we ought to encourage more *selectively* accessible presentation of each/all of these.

In terms of assisting scholars who are committed, either personally or by their institutions, to an OA policy, there is already a probable path forward for our journals that would mesh some of the approaches taken by our UK colleagues and take advantage of the waiver policies that responsible universities have made an author/scholar's right. As it stands in the US, university Open Access policies offer a freely available waiver to faculty who choose to publish in non-OA journals (either because OA is not the standard in their field, or for any other reason).²⁶

²⁶ See for example the Harvard "Model Open-Access Policy" authored by OA advocate Stuart Shieber with a "freely waivable rights-retaining license and a deposit requirement." <https://osc.hul.harvard.edu/modelpolicy> and the Harvard law school's summary of best practices for

Twenty-one UK history journals, including for our field the especially relevant journals *Past and Present* and *Gender and History*, have committed to 1) accepting “gold” APCs, 2) an embargoed “green” option, 3) publication decisions made regardless of gold or green author choices and 4) a CCBY NC ND license in either scenario.²⁷ It is unlikely that this precise configuration would be suitable for US-based journals for a variety of reasons, but there are features of the UK structure, with some modification, that could provide immediate service to authors.

This could include the following:

- Provide clearer guidance about Open Access to authors on our website’s information about submissions, making them aware of resources about Open Access, what the typical requirements are, how waivers can be located, and why we hold the position(s) that we do. We have been startled to learn how little even colleagues at the most progressive OA universities understand about the implications and implementation of these policies. We need to be educating.

- Emphasize, for those journals that are stored and available on JSTOR, the Register and Read program.

- Emphasize the importance of seemingly minor but in fact quite consequential decisions such as posting PDFs on Blackboard, as opposed to a link that allows statistics and revenue to be generated.

university Open Access policies states that universities should “always grant waivers, no questions asked” so as to remove the burden from faculty of publishing in journals less appropriate to their work simply by virtue of their being Open Access.

http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/hoap/Drafting_a_policy

²⁷ “Statement on Position in Relation to Open Access: An Open Letter from the Editors of 21 UK History Journals,” Institute of Historical Research, University of London. December 10, 2012.

<http://www.history.ac.uk/news/2012-12-10/statement-position-relation-open-access>

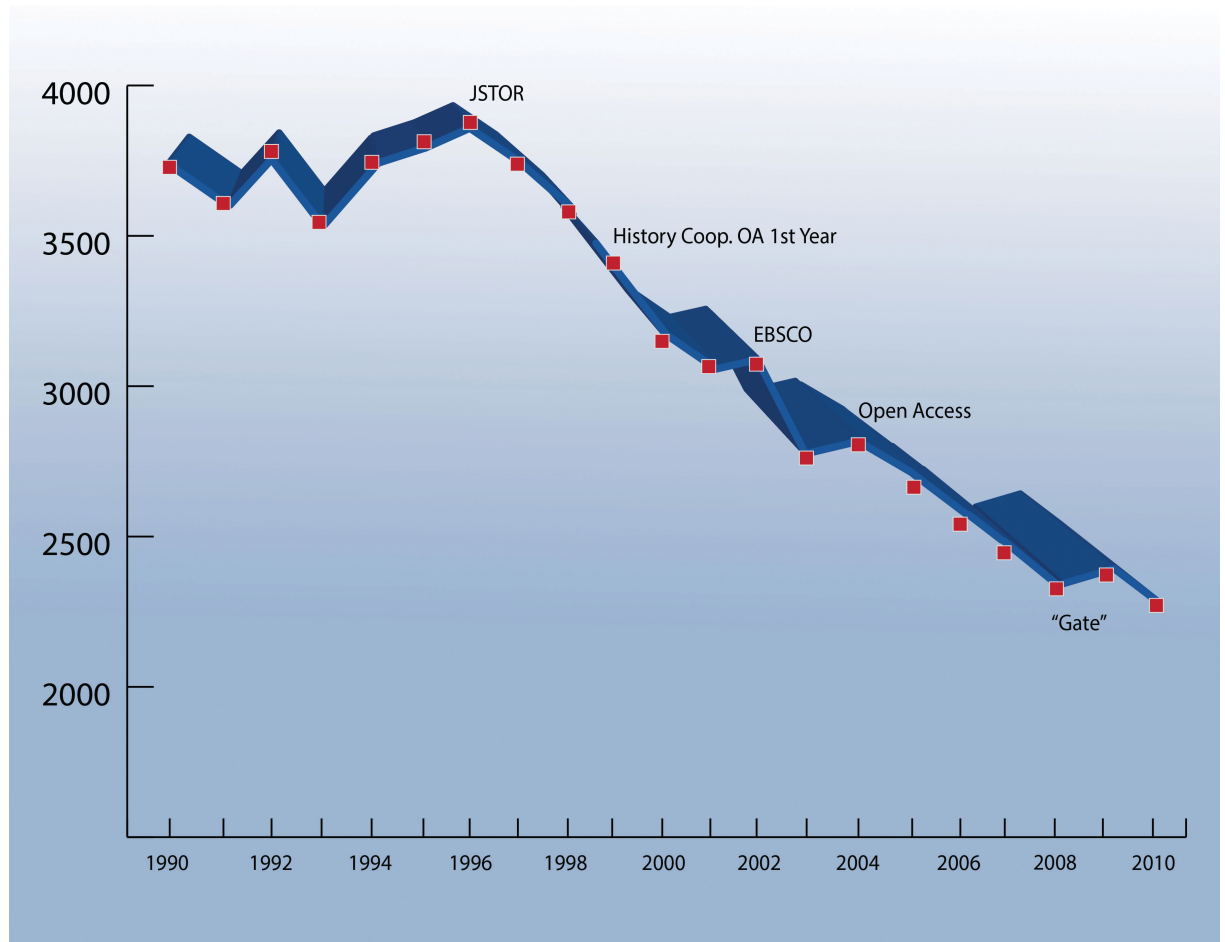
-Consider an embargo period of 3 years (rather than the current 5 on JSTOR) that would accord with many (though not all) OA policies, after which authors may archive the final copy with their institution.

Perhaps the most important thing we could do is to continue to write and to speak to our readership about the labor and financial requirements of scholarly journal production. If our colleagues understood more clearly the implications of their choices, from something as seemingly benign as posting a pdf as opposed to a link on Blackboard, they might be more inclined to make choices that support in this way, as they do in so many others, the journals that publish the scholarship they value. Certainly the commitment that is shown to reading and reviewing manuscripts, often multiple times, indicates that our community values the work of the journal; by extension, its continued health and viability is of collective interest.

It is ultimately critical for the humanities to articulate what will serve scholarship, rather than simply respond to either the idealistic or the politico-economic pressures. We need to “focus strategically and on the full life cycle of scholarly communications and ask hard questions such as: open access for what and for whom?” MLA has chosen one route. Early Americanists need to choose ours.²⁸

²⁸ Waters, “Open Access Publishing and the Emerging Infrastructure for 21st Century Scholarship.”

Comparing *AHR* and *WMQ* subscription patterns



Courtesy of the AHA, and published online:

<http://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2013/from-publishing-to-communication>

