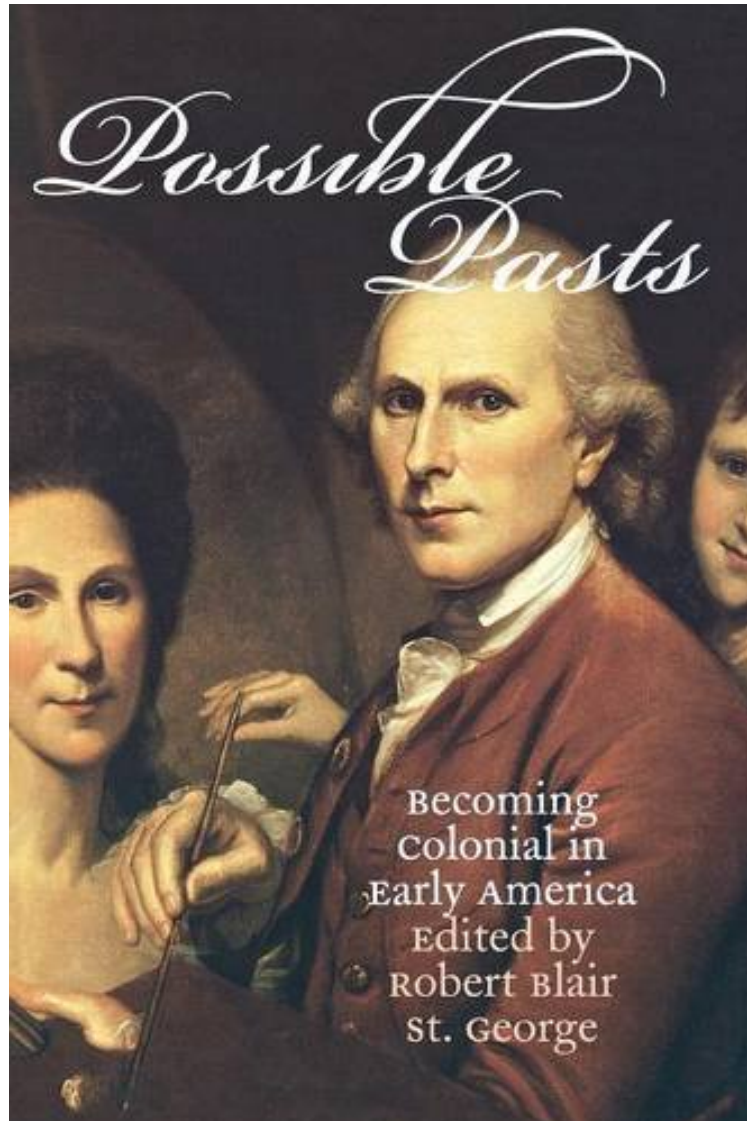


[Library ebook] Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America

Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America

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Possible Pasts represents a landmark in early American studies, bringing to that field the theoretical richness and innovative potential of the scholarship on colonial discourse and postcolonial theory. Drawing on the methods and

interpretive insights of history, anthropology, history of art, folklore, and textual analysis, its authors explore the cultural processes by which individuals and societies become colonial. Rather than define early America in terms of conventional geographical, chronological, or subdisciplinary boundaries, their essays span landscapes from New England to Peru, time periods from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, and topics from religion to race and novels to nationalism. In his introduction Robert Blair St. George offers an overview of the genealogy of ideas and key terms appearing in the book. Part I, "Interrogating America," then challenges readers to rethink the meaning of "early America" and its relation to postcolonial theory. In Part II, "Translation and Transculturation," essays explore how both Europeans and native peoples viewed such concepts as dissent, witchcraft, family piety, and race. The construction of individual identity and agency in Philadelphia is the focus of Part III, "Shaping Subjectivities." Finally, Part IV, "Oral Performance and Personal Power," considers the ways in which political authority and gendered resistance were established in early America.

"An impressive collection of essays on early American history and culture. . . The anthology is a useful and welcome addition to historical discourse. . . A review this brief cannot justly convey the richness of the work. The seventeen contributors to the volume have given us a multifaceted work that draws on history, art history, folklore, anthropology, and textual analysis. . . The work deserves to be read, absorbed, and discussed." Don Duhadaway, *History*, Fall 2000

"One of the wonderful things about good essay collections is the way in which their introductions richly overview the collection's field of study. St. George's opening essay in *Possible Pasts* stands as vivid testimony to just how rewarding introductory material can be. . . This is a collection that will richly reward the reading of a wide range of scholars, particularly those interested in postcolonial and interdisciplinary studies whether those studies be concerned with the early Americas or not." Paul Gutjahr, *Indiana University. American Literature*, March 2001

"Precisely because so much work went into it, and precisely because the essays contained here are so well-polished, *Possible Pasts* asks to be considered as more than another conference book. . . It is a bellwether for the progress, achievements, and limitations of an early American history attentive to what St. George names variously as 'recent critical theory,' post-structuralism, and cultural studies." David Waldstreicher, *University of Notre Dame. William and Mary Quarterly*, October 2001

"One of the book's main achievements is to make important contributions to our understanding of colonial identity writ large while also emphasizing the varieties of experience in the Americas. . . It is a brilliant collection throughout, carefully conceived and edited, that should direct scholars of early America toward further conceptual research on the nature of colonialism and identity formation." Carolyn Eastman, *University of Texas. The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. CXXVI, No. 1 (January 2002)

"A significant addition to the literature on early American history and culture. . . The most striking feature of this impressive volume is not the quality of its components but how those components relate to the central question of postcolonial theory and early American studies." Eliga H. Gould, *University of New Hampshire. Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2001

"Offers such a diversity of topics, ranging from Incan witches to Roger Williams, that it will appeal to historians and literary scholars with interests throughout the Americas and the Atlantic world from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries." Troy Bickham, *Southeast Missouri State University, The Journal of American History*, September 2002

"*Possible Pasts* is required reading for all historians and literary scholars interested in textual analysis, critical theory, and the cultural construction of reality, and it is highly recommended for everyone in the field of early American studies. Provocative in tone and approach, the succinctly written essays in Robert Blair St. George's volume suggest the transformative potential of the new scholarship; the very best of them advance new and exciting interpretations, particularly with respect to women's lives and gender identity." James A. Henretta, *University of Maryland*

"'Early America' is greatly enlarged both geographically and conceptually by *Possible Pasts*, a richly diverse set of ethnographic studies of past life and expressive forms from both continents and the islands of the New World. The theme of 'colonization' addresses the most powerful and pervasive shaping processes in the history of the last half millennium." Rhys Isaac, *LaTrobe University*