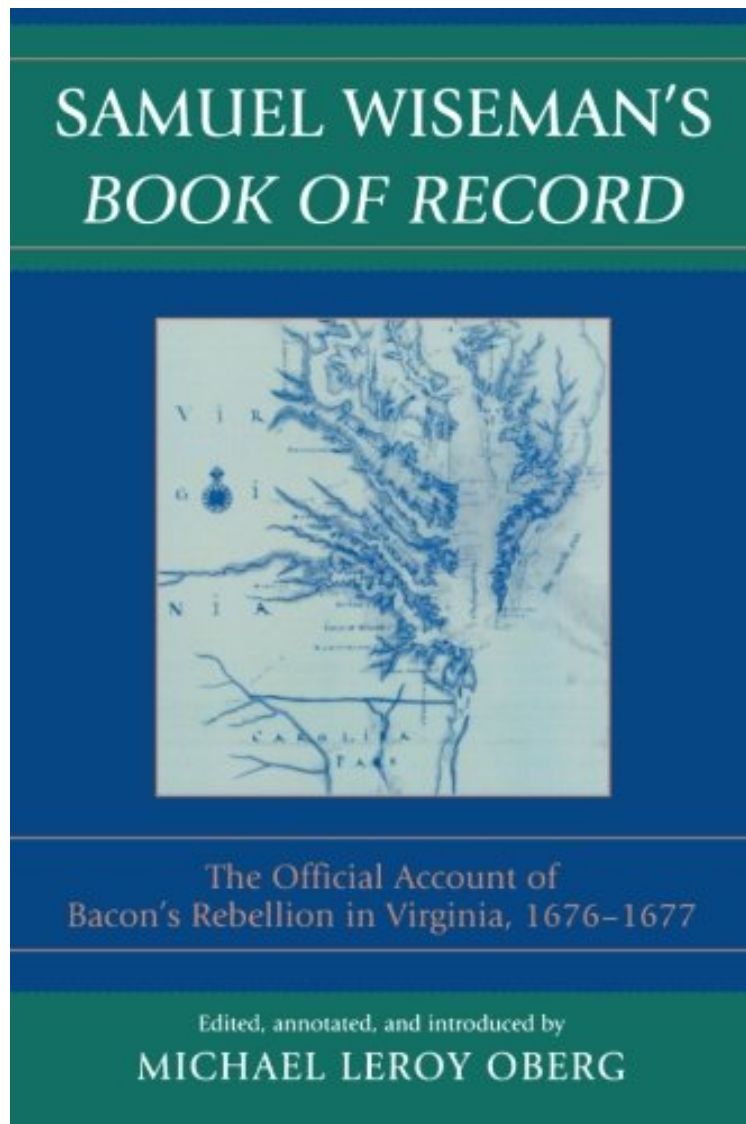


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## Samuel Wiseman's Book of Record: The Official Account of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia, 1676-1677

*Samuel Wiseman*

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**Samuel Wiseman : Samuel Wiseman's Book of Record: The Official Account of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia, 1676-1677** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Samuel Wiseman's Book of Record: The Official Account of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia, 1676-1677:

19 of 19 people found the following review helpful. A real eye-opener on an enigmatic moment in American

historyBy Justin T. MooreTo be perfectly honest, I don't expect anybody to read this review. This book is about as obscure as it gets. Even American history professors aren't exactly lined up to get this volume. That said, this rare primary source is an enlightening look at Bacon's Rebellion. Today, people tend to read all sorts of modern political agendas into the facts of the rebellion and most domestic primary sources are a bit too far after the fact to be reliable. Out of an intense curiosity regarding the true events and circumstances of the rebellion, I purchased this book to get the story unfiltered by centuries of historians' commentaries or half-truths parroted through generations of textbooks and historical compilations. I was not disappointed. Though most of the record is unintelligible to a lay reader (agonizing details regarding the specific grievances of individual counties of the Virginia Colony, etc.), the narrative is chilling in its detail. This is not the story as told by Governor Sir William Berkeley, nor is it from the perspective of Bacon's apologists. Rather, it is the official report to the English Crown of an investigation into the events conducted by the Royal Privy Council within weeks of the end of the insurrection. The narrative is interesting in that it damns Bacon for his actions at the same time that it paints a not-unsympathetic picture of Bacon. One gets the sense that the author was somewhat hostile toward Berkeley for reasons explained elsewhere in the record. Still, it chronicles Bacon's brutal transgressions against peaceful Native Americans with unflinching honesty and one sees the event as far more complex than most present-day students of history are likely to be taught. Is this book worth the \$80 I paid for it? Well, not if you can find it in a library. But the best most libraries have to offer on the subject is Washburn's somewhat tainted *The Governor and the Rebel*, so if colonial-era history is your professional specialty or just a beloved hobby, it very well may be your only option to get the story right from the horse's mouth.

In 1676, Nathaniel Bacon led a well-known colonial uprising against the authority of King Charles II, in the person of Virginia's governor Sir William Berkeley. Bacon's Rebellion dramatically altered relations between Chesapeake colonists and Native Americans, and also induced late Stuart imperialists to crack down on colonial autonomy. Michael Leroy Oberg has transcribed, edited, and introduced the official record left by Samuel Wiseman, King Charles II's scribe assigned to this uprising's investigation, making this history widely available for the first time in book form.

Michael Oberg's edition of Samuel Wiseman's 'Book of Record' makes available to student and scholar what may well be the most important and wide-ranging document of early American history hitherto unpublished. The crisis of Indian relations, the beginnings of African slavery, the roots of popular politics, even the origins of the American Revolution, all are illuminated here. (Stephen Saunders Webb, Syracuse University) Michael Oberg has performed an invaluable service for historians by transcribing and editing Samuel Wiseman's never-before-published 'Book of Record.' Oberg's introduction deftly situates the text within the history and historiography of seventeenth-century Virginia. Anyone writing on Bacon's Rebellion will benefit from Oberg's edition. (Erik R. Seeman, State University of New York, Buffalo) By making accessible Samuel Wiseman's lengthy, contemporary investigation of Bacon's Rebellion, Michael Oberg makes a signal contribution to our understanding of a critical event in early Anglo-American history, whose meaning and legacy has long divided historians. Wiseman's account goes beyond the rebellion and its suppression to shed light on Anglo-Indian relations, pre-existing political and social tensions, subsequent imperial strategies to more closely integrate Virginia within an emerging English Atlantic, and the personal cost of revolt to many ordinary Virginians. Oberg's edition provides ample new material for students and scholars alike to debate the course and significance of Bacon's Rebellion... (Michael J. Jarvis, University of Rochester) Samuel Wiseman's 'Book of Record' provides unparalleled insight into the conflict known as Bacon's Rebellion, an event that altered the course of American history. Michael Oberg's excellent edition of the text makes this a must read for anyone with a serious interest in the Anglo-American colonies in the seventeenth century, particularly those concerned about relations between Native Americans and European colonists. (Peter Mancall, University of Southern California) Samuel Wiseman's manuscript 'Book of Record' is essential reading for all who would comprehend Bacon's Rebellion and its consequences. Oberg deserves congratulations for bringing this invaluable source within easy reach of students and scholars alike. (Warren M. Billings, University of New Orleans; author of *Sir William Berkeley and the Forging of Colonial Virginia*) By making accessible Samuel Wiseman's lengthy, contemporary investigation of Bacon's Rebellion, Michael Oberg makes a signal contribution to our understanding of a critical event in early Anglo-American history, whose meaning and legacy has long divided historians. Wiseman's account goes beyond the rebellion and its suppression to shed light on Anglo-Indian relations, pre-existing political and social tensions, subsequent imperial strategies to more closely integrate Virginia within an emerging English Atlantic, and the personal cost of revolt to many ordinary Virginians. Oberg's edition provides ample new material for students and scholars alike to debate the course and significance of Bacon's Rebellion. (Michael J. Jarvis, University of Rochester) About the Author Michael L. Oberg is professor of history at the State University of New York, Geneseo.