

United States History I-Honors Summer Assignment Reading

In addition to the assignment from the Foner textbook, you will read an excerpt from a book by a notable scholar of Early American history. There are FOUR options for this secondary source reading. While we would recommend that you at least "take a look" at all four choices, the brief descriptions below might help to direct you to the readings that would interest you most.

1. [Anthony S. Parent, *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660-1740.* \(UNC Press, 1996\).](#)

Virginia was England's first colony in North America and would grow to be its wealthiest and most populous as well. Tobacco was the source of colonial Virginia's great wealth, but tobacco required far greater amounts of land than other cash crops. Learn how Virginia's elite planters ruthlessly manipulated the colony's government and economy and brutally exploited both European and African labor in a relentless drive to acquire land, wealth and power.

2. [Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675.* \(Knopf, 2012\).](#)

In Bernard Bailyn's study of Early America, the "Americans" are the indigenous Indian peoples of eastern North America while the newly arrived white colonials are the "Europeans." In his chapter on the Americans, Bailyn provides an overview of the political structure, trade networks, social norms, gender roles and culture of the Indian nations who, for thousands of years, claimed as home the places we know as New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia...

3. [Jill Lepore, *Book of Ages: The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin.* \(Knopf, 2013\).](#)

Everyone knows about Benjamin Franklin, one of America's most celebrated founding fathers. Less well known is that Ben had a younger sister with whom he maintained a close correspondence throughout his long life. Jane Franklin, as Jill Lepore explains, was **an average eighteenth-century woman** which means that she did NOT have the unlimited opportunities for self-improvement that helped make her famous brother famous.

Ben Franklin was a politician, diplomat, scientist, inventor and writer who traveled throughout the American colonies and spent years in Europe, mostly in Britain and France. His sister Jane was highly intelligent, but as a grown woman she felt very self-conscious about her lack of formal education. She was a wife and a mom who struggled on the edge of poverty and who cooked, cleaned and managed a house full of kids. With all that responsibility she probably never had the time or the opportunity to travel much farther than a few miles outside the city limits of her native Boston.

4. Graham Russell Hodges, *Root & Branch: African Americans in New York & East Jersey, 1613-1863*. (UNC Press, 1999).

In most books about African Americans and the settlement of Early America, the emphasis is on the enslaved people who labored on the *English* tobacco plantations of the Chesapeake and the rice plantations of the Carolinas. In this excerpt, you will learn that the first Europeans to settle in the region we call home (northeastern New Jersey and greater New York City) came from the Netherlands and that they and the African people who lived here with them spoke the *Dutch* language. While legalized racism and the enslavement of human beings create a cruel and brutally unjust environment no matter where and when they exist, Dutch culture and religion accommodated African people and African ways in a manner not found in English colonies.