

## **ANNOUNCING: A BOOK CLUB FOR EDUCATORS ON BOOKS RELATED TO AMERICA 250**

**Sponsored By: The Association for the Study of Connecticut History, The New England History Teachers Association**

### **Description**

The Association for the Study of Connecticut History (ASCH) and the New England History Teachers Association (NEHTA) will be sponsoring a book-study program related to America250 themes; the series will begin in the upcoming fall and continue until July of 2026. This series will be designed for teachers, high school and university students, and all others who are interested in analyzing the time period of the American Revolution and the creation of the Constitution.

These sessions will focus on topics such as the principles of the Declaration of Independence, the role of Indigenous peoples, women and Blacks in the era of the American Revolution, and the impact of the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution over time. We will be reading and analyzing recent scholarship on these topics. Sessions will be led by scholars and others deeply knowledgeable about the topics being discussed. Each meeting will be highly interactive; we want to create “book discussions” rather than “book talks.”

We sincerely hope that you will be part of our book series! You are invited to attend one or all of these sessions.

### **Schedule:**

October 14, Tuesday: *The Boston Massacre, A Family History* by Serena Zabin

December 4, Thursday: *Liberty Is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution* by Woody Holton

January 29, Thursday: *The Long American Revolution and Its Legacy* by Lester D. Langley

March 19, Thursday: *The Memory of '76: The Revolution in American History* by Michael D. Hatter

May 7, Thursday: *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* by Danielle Allen

**How to Sign Up:**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-1776-book-club-tickets-1652737013899?aff=ebdsshcopyurl&utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp>

**For additional information contact Stephen Armstrong: [stevearmstrong512@gmail.com](mailto:stevearmstrong512@gmail.com)**

**Session 1:**

***The Boston Massacre: A Family History* by  
Serena Zabin**

**Moderated by: Charlie Newhall, History Teacher at St. John's Preparatory School  
&  
Steve Armstrong, National Council for the Social Studies,  
NEHTA, Past President ASCH**

**Tuesday 14 October 2025 @ 7:00 - 8:15PM**

We begin this series with a masterwork of New Social History. Carleton College Professor Serena Zabin's "family history" of the Boston Massacre challenges and complexifies the traditional narratives of the Boston Massacre as a simple clash between outsider British soldiers and insider Boston laborers. Here the soldiers are in Boston from Ireland with their wives and children, attending local churches to get married and baptize their children, shopping and befriending local merchants, taking side jobs and making Boston their home. The British Empire is a kind of family, and the coming Revolution is unimaginable in 1770. Personal relationships, domestic arrangements, and various work all entangled soldiers and Bostonians in a civil society that became rife with tensions. The "deadly riot" was a signal that the imperial family was fracturing.

Suggested Reading: Chapters 1 "Families of Empire", Chapter 4 "Under One Roof", Chapter 7 "A Deadly Riot."

Charlie Newhall is an historian of 18th and 19th century American culture and an AP United States history teacher at St. John's Preparatory School in Danvers, Massachusetts. He chairs the Education Committee of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, for which he runs a Summer Institute on Early America and the Revolution. He is also a past president of the New England History Teachers' Association.

**Session 2:**

***Liberty is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution* by Woody Holton**

**Moderated by: Robert Naeher, Avon Old Farms School**

**&**

**Steve Armstrong, National Council for the Social Studies, NEHTA, Past President ASCH**

**Thursday 4 December 7:00 - 8:15PM**

In *Liberty is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution*, Woody Holton looks more closely at the roles of Indigenous peoples, women, and Blacks in both the move from protest to a fight for independence and in the fighting of the war itself. While this in itself is not new, Holton stresses that these groups were not simply victims or beneficiaries of the Revolution, as has often previously been argued, but that they were rather active agents who played decisive roles in pushing the Revolution forward. The genius of the book is in Holton's interweaving of the experiences and contributions of each of these groups, with numerous specific examples, into a broader narrative integrating social, economic, and political history. Traditional topics are not short-changed but rather given a fuller context. This book is eminently readable, rich in new insights about such mainstays as the Stamp Act or the Boston Tea Party and sets the standard for current thinking about this seminal event in American history. At a time when American identity has been particularly contested, this detailed look at the ways a multiplicity of Americans helped move us to revolt and win independence is timely.

Robert Naeher has taught history at independent secondary schools since 1978. He has also taught as an adjunct at the college level and has led workshops for teachers in the US as well as in Volgograd, Russia, and Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. He currently teaches AP US History at Avon Old Farms School. His special interest in the American Revolution stems from the inspired teaching of Glenn Weaver at Trinity College and Richard D. Brown at the University of Connecticut.

**Session 3:**

***The Long American Revolution and Its Legacy* by Lester D. Langley**

**Moderated by: Linda Morse, New England History Teachers Association**

**&**

**Steve Armstrong, National Council for the Social Studies, NEHTA, Past President ASCH**

**Thursday 29 January 2026 @ 7:00 - 8:15PM**

*The Long American Revolution and Its Legacy* by Lester D. Langley addresses three broad themes first by exploring multiple concepts beginning at the French and Indian War and including expansionism and ideals during the America of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The second theme examines the American Revolution as a hemispheric war that connects events with the French, Haitian, Latin and Canadian peoples while also drawing in the end of slavery as a result of independence wars. His final theme discusses the “relationship between the Revolution, the person, and nationhood,” focusing on the 132 years beginning from the foundation and ending after the Great War of 1914-1918. Lester Langley was a history professor at the University of Georgia and unfortunately died on January 22, 2025. I look forward to reading and discussing this book with everyone as I am fascinated with the ripple effect of the American Revolution.

Linda Morse taught a variety of history courses at the Foxborough Regional Charter School for 18 years, retiring in August 2024. History courses included U.S. History I & II, Civics, Anthropology, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Africa, APUSH, AP HUG and AP African American Studies. Linda earned an A.B. in Anthropology from the University of Georgia, an M.Ed. from Framingham State University, an M.A. from Providence College in history, and a Teaching Africa certificate from Boston University.

#### **Session 4:**

***The Memory of '76: The Revolution in American History* by Michael D. Hattem**

**Moderated by: Jeffrey O’Leary, PhD, Mitchell College  
&**

**Steve Armstrong, National Council for the Social Studies, NEHTA, Past President ASCH**

**Thursday 19 March 2026 @ 7:00 - 8:15PM**

This work examines how the understanding of the American Revolution has changed over time and that its meaning has always been continuously debated. Hattem argues that the Revolution is this nation’s origin story and Americans have attached to it a narrative linked primarily to a “hero’s journey.” As explored in this text, myriad voices since the late eighteenth century have jockeyed for position to control the Revolution’s meaning. Ultimately, Hattem concludes that the memory of the Revolution has often done more to divide Americans than to unite them.

Jeffrey O’Leary is Associate Professor of History at Mitchell College. His areas of academic focus include U.S. and Irish history (19th and 20th centuries), world’s fairs, culture, memory studies, and transatlantic history. He is the author of *Beware of Imitations: The Display of Irishness at World’s Fairs and Expositions, 1893-2000* (Cork University Press, 202

**Session 5:**

***Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* by Danielle Allen**

**Moderated by: Allison Norrie, The Association for the Study of Connecticut History  
&  
Steve Armstrong, National Council for the Social Studies, NEHTA, Past President ASCH**

**Thursday 7 May 2026 @ 7:00 - 8:15PM**

*Our Declaration* by Danielle Allen brings fresh urgency and clarity to the Declaration of Independence, revealing its language as a call to shared commitment to equality as the foundation of liberty. With a teacher's care and a philosopher's precision, the text unfolds line by line to illuminate the document's radical promise through a civic lens. This text serves as an essential reading for reimagining social studies as a space of empowerment and participation.

Allison Norrie is a Social Studies teacher at Fairfield Warde High School in Fairfield, Connecticut and co-author of the Connecticut State Social Studies Standards. She is currently the President of the Association for the Study for Connecticut History.