This list of books provides a basic grounding in early American and Antebellum U.S. history, circa 1500 to 1865. It is by no means comprehensive. Students are strongly encouraged to develop topical and temporal specialties within the expansive period that this field covers. A modest number of appropriate book substitutions (with my advanced permission) may also be made. Note that my conception of “early America” expands well beyond a colonial prehistory of what became the United States to encompass hemispheric, transnational, multicultural, and Atlantic approaches toward America’s past. Alan Taylor’s *American Colonies* and Donald Meinig’s *Atlantic America* provide good introductions to this more geographically expansive vision of early America prior to 1776. Students taking this exam field with me are strongly encouraged to TA for or audit U.S. survey I (HIS 160) or my Early America (HIS 162) and Democratic America (HIS 164) courses to help prepare.

**Books**


Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood* (New Haven, 1979)

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (New York, 1983)


James Horn, *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake* (Chapel Hill, 1994)

Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper’s Millennium* (New York, 1979)


Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic* (Chapel Hill, 1980)

John McCusker and Russell Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607–1789* (Chapel Hill, 1985)

Forrest McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seculorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution* (Lawrence, 1985)


Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War* (Chapel Hill, 1979)


David Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill, 1997)


Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York, 1999)


Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1830* (Chapel Hill, 1994)


Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford, 1982)

Articles


Nicholas Canny, “The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* XXX (1973), 575-598


Alison Games, “Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities,” *American Historical Review* CXI (2006), 741B757


Jesse Lemische, “Jack Tar in the Streets,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser.,
James Merrell, “The Indians’ New World: The Catawba Experience,” *William and Mary Quarterly* XLI (1984), 537-565


Neal Salisbury, “The Indians’ Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans,” *William and Mary Quarterly* LIII (1996), 435-458


**Primary Sources**

The Declaration of Independence (1776) and U.S. Constitution (1787)

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845)


George Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All!, Or Slaves Without Masters* (1856)

Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography* (1771 et. seq.)

Richard Hakluyt, “A Discourse Concerning Western Planting” (1584)

Alexander Hamilton, “Report on Manufactures” (1791)

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1860)
Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787)

British Navigation Acts of 1651, 1660, and 1696

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776)