

WHAT IS "REVISIONIST HISTORY?"

Insights from the event
"Revising Early America"
hosted by the Albert LePage Center
for History in the Public Interest

Historical scholarship relies on revision.

Scholars of Early America continually revise through:

- 1 New Sources**
Including women, Native Americans, Revolutionary War soldiers, and enslaved peoples in the story presents a more complete picture of life in Early America.
- 2 Expanding Interpretations**
Beginning American history in 1619, as opposed to 1492 or 1620, shifts the timeline and foregrounds different historical actors.
- 3 Increasing Diversity**
Recognizing what the Omohundro Institute calls "vast Early America" extends the story far beyond the original 13 colonies to include the present-day American West, Mexico, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Canada.
- 4 Opening up the Conversation**
The *New York Times* 1619 Project highlighted how a discussion on Early America can include activists, journalists, and readers.
- 5 Shifting Scholarly Understandings**
Interpreting the history of Early America as a violent struggle for freedom was difficult then and remains difficult today.
- 6 An Evolving Process**
Each revision of the scholarship also shifts the language we use, for example using "enslaved person" as opposed to "slave" to acknowledge the agency, dignity, and empathy of those forced into bondage.

"One must balance the moment in which we exist, and the purpose of our history, with the historical moment that we're trying to understand."

- Maghan Keita, Professor of History and Global Interdisciplinary Studies,
Villanova University

Part one of a larger series

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