

HCC&M Readers 2026

May 19 – **A Perfect Frenzy: A Royal Governor, His Black Allies, and the Crisis That Spurred the American Revolution** by Andrew Lawler

In the spring of 1775, dramatic events in Virginia proved every bit as decisive as the battles of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill in uniting the Colonies. Virginia, the largest, wealthiest, most populated province in British North America, was led by Lord Dunmore who counted George Washington as a close friend. But when patriots imperiled the capital of Williamsburg, Dunmore threatened to free and arm enslaved Africans – two of every five Virginians – to fight for the crown. As enslaved people flocked to Dunmore’s camp, the patriot army marched on Norfolk port and hostilities culminated in the burning of Norfolk on January 1, 1776. Chronicling these stunning and widely overlooked events, *A Perfect Frenzy* offers a striking new perspective that reorients our understanding of the causes of the Revolution and highlights the radically different motivations between patriots in the North and South. [Andrew Lawler comes to HCC’s Speaker Series on July 8.](#)

July 21 – **A Revolution In Color: The World of John Singleton Copley** by Jane Kamensky

Celebrated historian Jane Kamensky (seen in Ken Burns’ film *The American Revolution*) paints an intimate portrait of the artist who came to prominence against the backdrop of the Revolutionary period. Known for his portraits of future Americans such as Paul Revere, John Hancock and Samuel Adams, John Singleton Copley did not share their revolutionary zeal. He feared the onrush of the colonial rebellion against Great Britain and called the rebels’ revolution a civil war. After the Boston Tea Party, Copley left Massachusetts and continued his prolific art career in the more elevated genres of history, religious art and classical allegory until his death in 1815. To explore Copley’s work and his story is to treat the American Revolution and its world with fresh eyes – where allegiance came in many shades.

Sept 22 – **Exploring the Myth of the South’s ‘Lost Cause’ through excerpts and essays**

“The statues that once lined Monument Avenue, were, in many ways, quintessential Confederate monuments. They were part of the rewriting of history known as the ‘Lost Cause,’ a shared set of beliefs or narrative tropes about the past used to justify the present ... [and] uniting White Southerners with a shared memory of the past.” – from *The Buried Cause: Unearthing the Hidden History in the Lee Monument Cornerstone*, ed. Katherine Ridgway et al. Using this book plus others (*Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* by David Blight), we will examine the meaning and manifestations of the Lost Cause.

Nov 19 – **Angelica: For Love and Country in a Time of Revolution** by Molly Beer

Author and educator Molly Beer presents a women-centric view of revolution through the life of Angelica Schuyler Church, a woman of great influence in a time of influential women (Catherine the Great and Marie-Antoinette were contemporaries). Angelica was Alexander Hamilton’s ‘saucy’ sister-in-law and the heart of Thomas Jefferson’s ‘charming coterie’ of artists and writers in the Paris salons. Her transatlantic network of friends spanned the political spectrum, and her brilliant letters kept them well-informed. The eldest daughter of one of the most important New York families, she was raised to be a domestic diplomat responsible for hosting indigenous chiefs or enemy British generals at dinner. Across the divides of war, grievance, and geography, Angelica wove a web of soft-power connections that spanned the War for Independence and the post-war years of tenuous peace. [Join us after the discussion for a tasting of colonial fare – and Punch!](#)