

## Thomas Jefferson, Legal History, and the Art of Recollection

In this innovative book, historian Matthew Crow unpacks the legal and political thought of Thomas Jefferson as a tool for thinking about constitutional transformation, settler colonialism, and race and civic identity in the era of the American Revolution. Thomas Jefferson's practices of reading, writing, and collecting legal history grew out of broader histories of early modern empire and political thought. As a result of the peculiar ways in which he theorized and experienced the imperial crisis and revolutionary constitutionalism, Jefferson came to understand a republican constitution as requiring a textual, material culture of law shared by citizens with the cultivated capacity to participate in such a culture. At the center of the story in *Thomas Jefferson, Legal History, and the Art of Recollection*, Crow concludes, we find legal history as a mode of organizing and governing collective memory, and a way of instituting a particular kind of legal subjectivity.

MATTHEW CROW is an assistant professor of History at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York.

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# Thomas Jefferson, Legal History, and the Art of Recollection

MATTHEW CROW

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*For Sarah*

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*Forms of the Land, the flow of water, the occurrence of what us'd to  
be call'd Miracles, all are Text,— to be attended to, manipulated,  
read, remember'd.*

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## Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page</i> ix
1 Introduction, “ <i>in the course of human events...</i> ”	I
Jefferson in Pieces	3
Jefferson’s Histories	8
Law and History	11
Jefferson’s Uses	26
2 Jurisdiction and British Legal Memory in Colonial Virginia	35
Contexts of Legal Knowledge	39
Histories in Play	48
Organizing Legal History	62
Jefferson in Practice	69
Conclusion	80
3 New-Modeling and Rewriting in Revolutionary Virginia	82
Law, Empire, and Equity	87
New-Modeling and the Common Law Mind	104
Modeling Constitutional Text	112
Conclusion: Equitable Use	124
4 Labor, Language, and the Legal Subject of the <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i>	132
Usage, Propriety, and History	137
The Jeffersonian Subject	145
Language, History, and Empire	162
Conclusion	178
5 Governing the Usufruct of the Living	181
Property, Constitutionalism, and Representation	188

Commerce and Empire	198
Commerce and Translation	206
Jurisprudence, Empire, and Jurisdiction	216
6 The Discipline of Recollection	233
Institutions of Assembly	235
History in the Assembly	238
Scissors and Paste	250
Spaces of Recollection	262
Conclusion	272
<i>Index</i>	277



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xi

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