Murray equivocated about hierarchies. Commitment to class distinctions and a desire to preserve some traditional social arrangements prevented Murray from offering the radical critiques that made Wollstonecraft’s writings so compelling and controversial; indeed, after *The Gleaner* appeared in print, Murray’s writing became “even more bland and unobjectionable and, as a result, completely forgettable” (p. 319). The reader senses that Skemp, even as she persuasively explains the beliefs and experiences that limited Murray’s ability to be bold, nevertheless regrets Murray’s unwillingness to take greater risks in essays such as “On the Equality of the Sexes” (1790) and “Observations on Female Abilities” (1798). Carefully attending to how the politics and debates of the Revolution informed Murray’s writings and experiences, Skemp conjures up the unresolved issues and deeply ambivalent impulses that inspired and constrained her subject.

This brief review only scratches the surface of a very fine biography, one that is not only an excellent work of scholarship but is also highly readable and engaging. In mining and analyzing new materials, Skemp has turned the historical spotlight on an author and critic worthy of ongoing consideration; Murray would no doubt be delighted.

Patricia Cleary, Professor of History at California State University, Long Beach, is the author of *Elizabeth Murray: A Woman’s Pursuit of Independence in Eighteenth-century America* (2000), *a biography of another entrepreneurial New Engander (no relation to Judith Sargent Murray).*


Firsthand accounts of American captives held in North Africa go back to the mid–seventeenth century, with Abraham Browne’s description of his brief enslavement in Morocco in 1655 and Joshua Gee’s *Narrative*, a record of his involuntary servitude in Algiers from 1680–87. (Although these two Bostonians’ narratives were not published until the twentieth century, one can presume that their oral histories were well known along the New England coast.) It was not until 1785, however, that the dilemma took on national significance, as the new republic first confronted the challenge posed by the Barbary states’ ongoing capture of unprotected American citizens. How would a nation with little diplomatic experience, no navy, and few trading
options resolve a threat so perilous to its new identity and its role in the world? What role would American captives play in defining that story and drawing attention not only to their personal plight but also to the country’s vulnerability in the Mediterranean? Centering on a close examination of captives’ letters, Lawrence Peskin’s Captives and Countrymen brings us toward a nuanced answer to these questions.

One of this book’s greatest services is its exploration of how these letters propagated among government officials and in newspaper accounts. Paying close attention to letters that no longer exist but were recorded in diaries as having been written, as well as letters that were published and republished in newspapers and journals, Peskin, with his forensic skills, is extremely helpful in establishing the legitimacy of particular letters and their likelihood of having been received and read. Taking everything in sum—the actual letters, clues about missing letters, and circulation evidence—we obtain a greater sense of the unofficial (and sometimes public) communications made by these captives in the midst of their ordeals.

As the letters of captains Richard O’Brien and Isaac Stephens (both of whom were taken into captivity in July 1785) demonstrate, late-eighteenth-century American captives engaged in two distinctly different public relations strategies. Keeping contact with other captives and European diplomats, O’Brien reported his findings to Jefferson, then minister to France, and the American chargé d’affaires in Madrid, William Carmichael, and relayed home advice and information about his captors. He presented himself as a kind of spy or diplomat, feeding strategy and intelligence back to the government in a bid to focus attention on the plight of the captives. Stephens, on the other hand, dipped into the sentimental tradition, pleading for pity and Christian understanding. Blaming Congress for a lack of will—a charge we read in several other captivity narratives—he advertised publicly for charitable subscriptions to ransom American captives. Whereas Stephens issued a private call for immediate personal relief, O’Brien, who also sought redemption, framed his writing in terms of national honor and a strategic alliance in the Mediterranean.

Commenting that “Stephens had in effect emasculated himself” (p. 33) with his supplications and emphasis on personal suffering, Peskin smartly outlines the distinctions between these approaches, and he returns to these dividing categories of masculinity and emasculation in his discussion of the captives taken during the Tripolitan War (1801–5). Masculinity, independence, and an aggressive defense (mastery over fear) were closely associated with each other, while...
victimization, capitulation, and passivity delimited a weaker category. These poles help Peskin organize his presentation of the diplomatic sparring and intrigues surrounding the negotiations for the USS Philadelphia’s 307 sailors, who were captured when the frigate went aground off Tripoli on 31 October 1803 (the ship was later destroyed in the amphibious assault led by Stephen Decatur).

The war marked a pivotal moment in the arc of national identity. America had begun to exert itself on an international stage—and indeed, Peskin claims that his study is as much about globalization and the United States’ interaction with the world as it is about the situation with the captives. Although the Algerian captivities of the 1780s and 90s occurred prior to the advent of American seapower (America’s first deep-water fleet would not be launched until 1797), or even a reliable diplomatic network, by the time of the Tripolitan War, the fledgling navy was taking its first actions and committing its first missteps, and diplomatic channels, though contested, had begun to be formalized, often with the help of former captives. By the end of the war (which was followed by a skirmish in 1815), the American naval presence had grown in strength and reputation, the question of national masculinity had diminished, and a concomitant need for diplomatic captives had been eliminated.

Postwar captives like James Riley, Archibald Robbins, Judah Paddock, and Robert Adams—who wrote what Peskin calls “shipwreck narratives”—would face different and sometimes harsher obstacles. Unfortunately, simply because these men were not captured by corsairs nor ransomed by the Barbary states, Peskin considers their accounts as something other than Barbary captivity narratives. Certainly he cannot mean that they were “not treated as slaves” (p. xx), since they clearly underwent abhorrent conditions and were eventually sold out of their captivity. This peculiar differentiation between narratives also overlooks the long history of British, French, and Italian Barbary captivity narratives, which show a wide variety of situations and treatments and depict authors who often ended up in private hands. Given that Peskin refers obliquely to this tradition in his chapter on empire, such an omission seems to create an odd pivot in logic; and excising these narratives from the larger number does little to advance his argument.

To be fair to Peskin and all the good work he has accomplished, his project is less about defining the captivity form—though there are moments when he is quite insightful about the genre—and more about the role of particular captive voices in shaping the new nation’s
public sphere. His aim is specific: to examine the influence of North Africa upon an emerging national identity within the United States. Peskin largely achieves his goal, and he tells a compelling story with a thorough examination of letters and newspaper accounts. In addition to fulfilling his task, Peskin’s work should be welcomed as providing an important piece to the larger, unfolding story of Western interaction with the Arab world. That history, when it is fully written, will include works like Nabil Matar’s *Europe through Arab Eyes, 1578–1727* (2008), and it will look at the complex interaction among European, American, and North African states.


The Arts and Crafts Movement (1860–1920) has left a rich legacy that still attracts scholars, collectors—and consumers. Large chain stores such as Target, Crate and Barrel, and Home Depot, using evocative names such as “Craftsman” and “Mission Style,” carry lines of furnishings or hardware that draw on Arts and Crafts design motifs and characteristics. Intentionally or not, “Arts and Crafts” has become yet another look in which to decorate our homes. *The Craftsman and the Critic,* Beverly Brandt’s new book, makes a welcome addition to the literature on the movement, as it reminds us forcefully that the Arts and Crafts movement promoted not a style but an attitude.

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, factories had reduced the role of the individual craftsman to that of an assembly line worker; at the same time, consumers, inundated by the quantity of easily replaceable objects, had lost the ability to discern quality. Arts and Crafts advocates hoped to reform design and, in the process, elevate the humanity of the artisan and the buying public. William Morris famously exhorted his audiences to “have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful,” fine words that left open the question of style but raised another: how did one define usefulness and beauty?

As Brandt’s handsomely produced book makes clear in its opening and closing sections, the answer to this vexing question is as relevant
Churches in eighteenth-century America came in all sizes and shapes, from the plain, modest buildings in newly settled rural areas to elegant edifices in the prosperous cities on the eastern seaboard. Churches reflected the customs and traditions as well as the wealth and social status of the denominations that built them. 

An Early Episcopal Church. St. James Church, built in South Carolina's oldest Anglican parish outside of Charleston, is thought to have been constructed between 1711 and 1719 during the rectorate of the Reverend Francis le Jau, a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. 

Elizabeth Murray Campbell Smith Inman (July 7, 1726 – May 25, 1785) was a shopkeeper, and teacher, philanthropist in Boston, Massachusetts, before, during, and after the American Revolution. Murray spent much of her adult life teaching her nieces and female friends the importance of personal financial autonomy through shopkeeping and other traditionally female domestic duties.

Elizabeth Murray: A Woman's Pursuit of Independence in Eighteenth-Century America. Bibliographic Details. Main Author: Cleary, Patricia, 1962-. Other Authors: Murray, Elizabeth, 1726-1785. Format: Book. E-ZBorrow is the easiest and fastest way to get the book you want (ebooks unavailable). Use ILLiad for articles and chapter scans. Make an ILLIAD request. If your book is not available on E-ZBorrow, you can request it through ILLiad (ebooks unavailable). You can also use ILLiad to request chapter scans and articles. Tags: Add Tag. No Tags, Be the first to tag this record! Holdings. Description. Start by marking as Want to Read: Want to Read saving... Want to Read. This biography chronicles the life of this extraordinary "ordinary" woman who tried to make a place for herself and other women in the world by asserting her own independence inside and outside of the home.