

# Redrawing History: Decolonization through Artistic Reinterpretation



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*The Library Company of Philadelphia*

# The Paxton Massacres of 1763



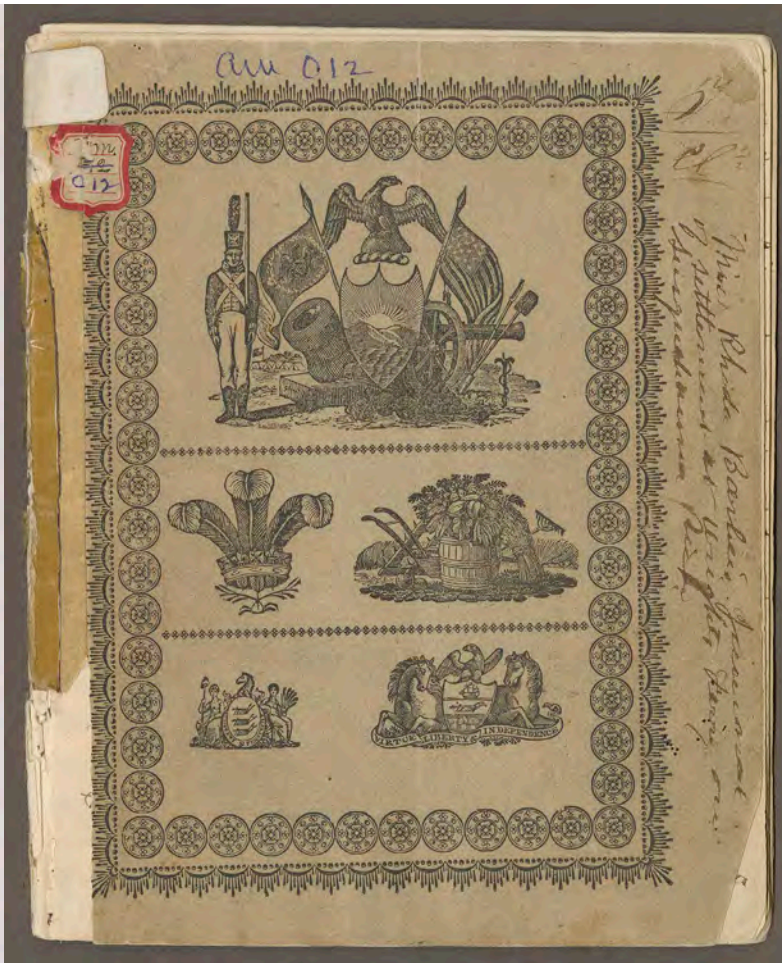


# Letters, Diaries, & Treaty Minutes

*The Apology*  
of the Boston Volunteers  
Addressed to the candid & impartial World.

As our conduct at the Siege of Mamar & Lancaster has occasioned much Speculation, & a great Diversity of Opinions in this Kingdom, Government, some approving, others condemning it, some charitable allowances, the true, & others maliciously painting it in a most odious & detestable Colours, we think it our Duty to lay before the Publick, if what hath as it appeared & still appears, to us.

But in order to have a just Idea of our Conduct, it is necessary to recollect a few Things, which are secret in the Memoirs of thousands in this Province, & which they will, we have reason to conjecture, when I Province of Pennsylvania was flourishing in Peace, & its peaceful Inhabitants unsuspected and Danger from the Invasions of their savage Neighbours, all their just Expectations were suddenly exchanged for scenes of most melancholly Distress & Horror. By the breaking out of an Indian War, of State of four Frontier Counties in this Province became wretched & despicable beyond Description. The Indians set Fire to Houses, Burnt Corn, they in short to every thing that was combustible, so that a whole Country seemed to be in one general Blaze, great Numbers of it both Men and Women were massacred, scalped, butchered in the most shocking Manner, their dead Bodies inhumanly mangled, some having their Heads divided from the Stem with a Tomahawk, others left expiring in a most exquisite Torment, with their Eyes & Limbs broken, their Skulls fractured, & their scalps on the ground, many Children were either put to death or carried



1761/12/11

A Message from the Governor to the Chief of the Munsey Indians at Wyomung. Or to the Three Munsey Indians now at Wyomung, being the Muncie & Relatours to the Indian lately killed near Fort Allen in Northampton County. to be deliver'd and distinctly explain'd to them by Mr Isaac Greenleaf & Mr Isaac Tauxer or either of them.

Brothers By this string I wish your Eyes, that you may see clearly, and open your Ears, that you may listen attentively to what I have about to say to you. a Thing.

Brothers Some little time after the late Treaty at Boston in the Month of August last, I was much grieved to hear, that an Indian Man, in his return from that place, was unfortunately killed by a white Man, One of our People.

As soon as I was inform'd of this bad News, I order'd the Man, who had committed the Fact to be taken up and put into Prison, where he now is, and shall remain, until the matter can be particularly enquir'd into and try'd by our laws, in the same manner as if he had killed One of our own Peoples.

Brothers I will tell you, in few Words, all that I yet know with certainty relating to this unfortunate accident.

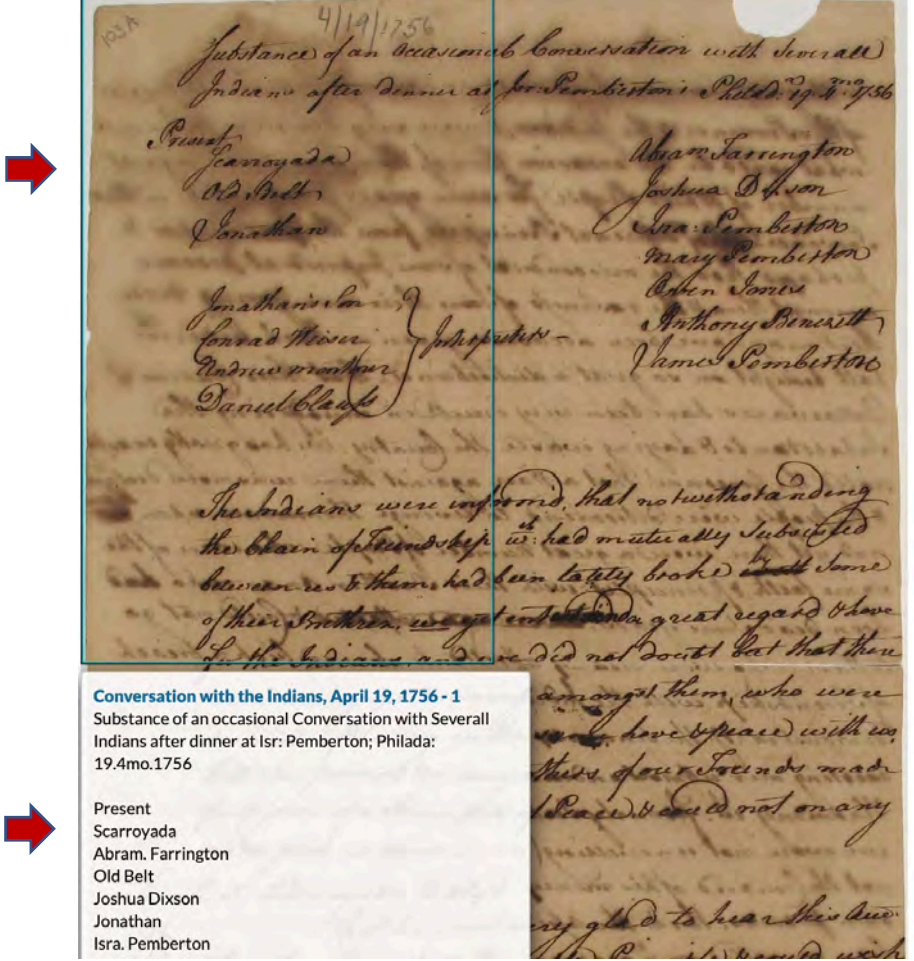
The Indian was found dead, near the House of the person who is now in Prison on that account. — This man does not deny that he killed him. — But says, in his own Justification, that he was oblig'd to do it in defence of his wife and Child, whom the Indian was about to murder with his scalping knife: after coming, several times before, to his House in the night time, disturbing him and affrighting him very much. — notwithstanding, that at all these times, he had been very kindly and civilly treated and entertain'd by him —

# Digital Paxton (digitalpaxton.org)



- i. *Digital Collection*  
2500+ scanned pages of art, books, broadsides, newsprint, pamphlets, political cartoons
- ii. *Interpretative Materials*  
a dozen historical overview, conceptual keyword essays
- iii. *Educational Materials*  
half a dozen high school and university lesson plans

# i. Digital Collection



DIGITAL PAXTON: DIGITAL COLLECTION, CRITICAL EDITION, AND TEACHING PLATFORM

## Search Results

scarroyada Search Search:  title & description (fast)  all fields & metadata (slow)

Conversation with the Indians, April 19, 1756 - 1	(annotation)	Matched: content
Conversation with the Indians, April 19, 1756 - 2	(annotation)	Matched: content



# iii. Educational Resources

This lesson is appropriate for mid- to high-performing history students. The assignment will require one 45-minute period with homework, or one 90-minute period with additional closure on another day. This assignment pairs well with [An Interview with the Paxton Boys](#).

## Relevant Standards

- CC.8.1.9.B through 8.1.9.D.
- CC.8.5.9-10.B.
- CC.8.5.9-10.D.
- CC.8.6.9-10.C.
- CC.8.6.9-10.E.

## Questions

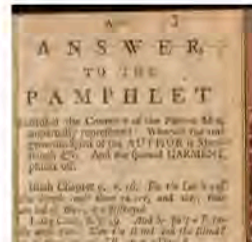
- How do we analyze and evaluate sources?
- How do we interact with historical memory?
- How do we navigate and interpret archives and the sources they contain?

## Learning Objectives

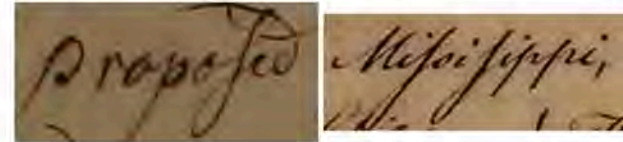
- Students will decipher the literal and practical meaning of eighteenth-century [printed text](#).
- Students will analyze and evaluate bias in primary sources.
- Students will successfully navigate a digital archive.

## Differentiation

Allow students to phase from guided practice into independent work. Engage with struggling students until they demonstrate ability to reliably transcribe and interpret a



- Upper case letters were used to for nouns, as well as to begin sentences.
- The lower case s was written in elongated form at the beginning of a word, in the middle of a word, and when written twice, as in pass. The elongated s can be mistaken for an f, and ss can look something like a p. See the examples, “propossed” and “Mississippi” below.



- Shortened versions of words were indicated by beginning the word in regular-sized letters and ending with superscript letters, maybe with a line underneath where the missing letters would be. Some writers simply shortened words and left no other indication of the missing letters. In the example below, you see a shortened version of “which.”



- Spelling was not standardized. Writers would spell words differently in different documents or even within a single document. Many writers spelled phonetically, using the way the words sounded as a guide. Although challenging to read, such spelling tells us much about pronunciation before sound recordings existed.
- In words like the, y could stand for the th and the e was added in superscript. The y was pronounced as we pronounce a th today. Here's an example:





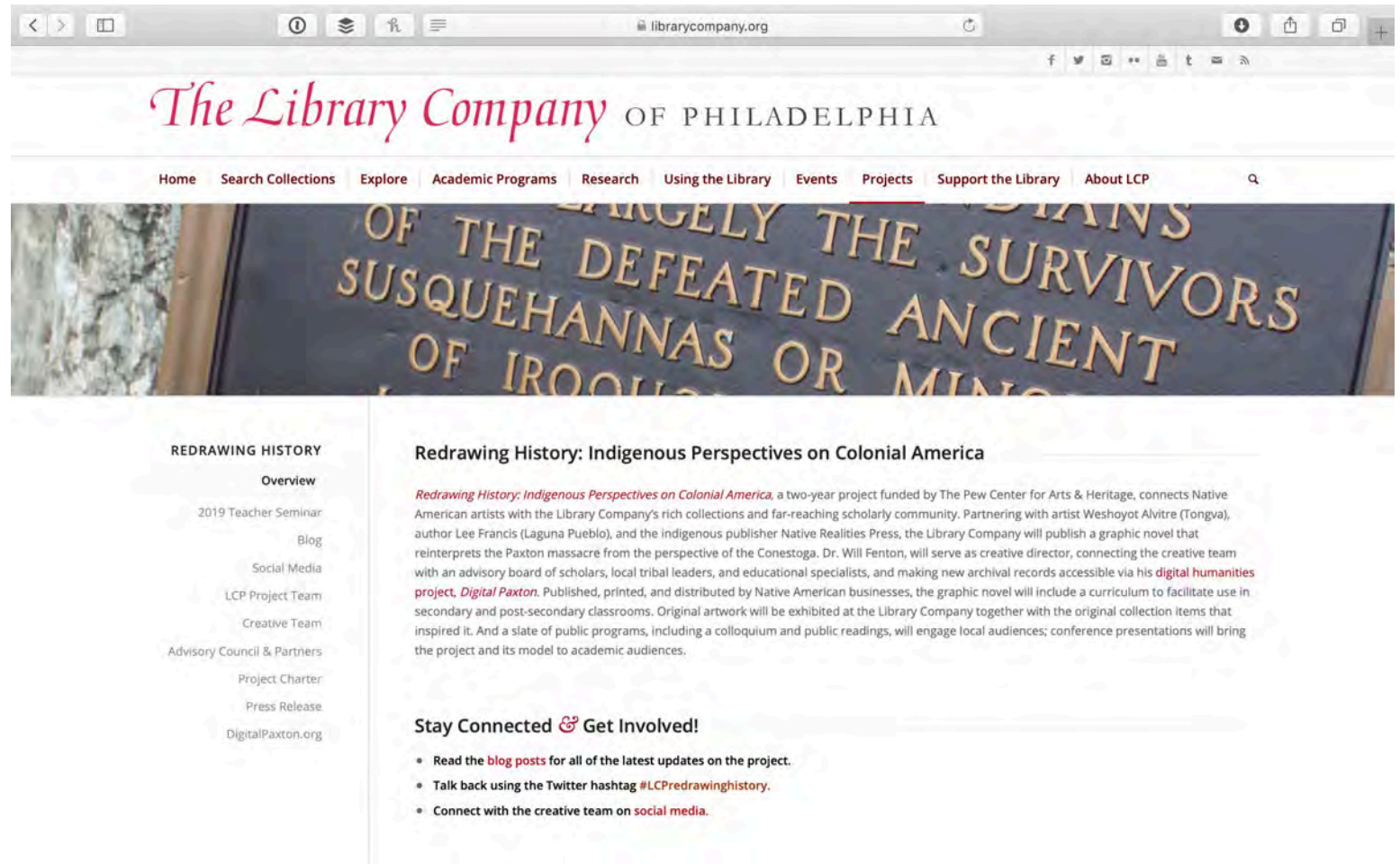
# The Limits of a Digital Edition

When thoughtfully structured, digital editions can accommodate a constellation of material forms, voices, and perspectives. Unfortunately, many indigenous records have been lost or systematically excluded from collections.

- How do we tell the story of a colonial massacre, mediated through colonial documents, in a manner which doesn't simply reproduce colonial biases, assumptions, & erasures?
- What if we could imagine a perspective on the Paxton massacre that, given the genocide of the Susquehannock, could not be retrieved?
- What if, instead of telling a story about the Paxton vigilantes, we told a story about the Conestoga, their resilience, and their central role in the history of colonial Pennsylvania?

# Redrawing History: Indigenous Perspectives on Colonial America

- i. *Teachers' Institute*  
National institute co-sponsored with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History
- ii. *Educational Graphic Novel*  
Written, illustrated, & published by Native American partners
- iii. *Public Art Exhibition*  
Presented at the Library Company of Philadelphia
- iv. *Digital Edition*  
Free, open-access enhanced edition of graphic novel



*Funded by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage*

## i. Teachers' Institute

- Led by Dr. Daniel Richter (MCEAS) and Justin Enrich (GLI)
- Convenes 35 educators from across the nation
- Furnishes new educational materials for digital edition

*Programs & Events*

## 2019 Teacher Seminars

[‹ back to main Teacher Seminar page](#)

[APPLY HERE](#)

### **Native Peoples, Settlers, and European Empires in North America, 1600–1840, July 28–August 3, 2019**

#### **DIRECTOR**

Daniel K. Richter, Roy F. and Jeannette P. Nichols Professor of American History and Richard S. Dunn Director of the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania

#### **OVERVIEW**

A many-sided contest for control of the continent defined early American history. Placing the struggle among Native peoples, settlers, and empires center stage, this seminar explores new ways for students to understand the multicultural origins of the United States. Dozens of rivalrous Native peoples contended with equally rivalrous English, French, Dutch, and Spanish empires. In the meantime, the aims of imperial officials in London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Madrid frequently clashed with those of colonists on the ground, particularly when it came to relations with Native Americans and the role of enslaved labor in agricultural expansion. The kaleidoscopic struggles came to a head in the era of the American Revolution, in which settler colonists simultaneously rebelled against British imperial rule and fought with Native Americans for dominance in the trans-Appalachian west. The contest continued through the period of the War of 1812 and the era of Indian Removal in the 1830s, which saw the aggressively expansionist new nation that settlers had created seemingly triumph over both its indigenous and imperial rivals.

This seminar is presented in partnership with the Library Company of Philadelphia as part of the project Redrawing History: Indigenous Perspectives on Colonial America. Support for Redrawing History: Indigenous Perspectives on Colonial America has been provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

*The Library Company* OF PHILADELPHIA

## ii. Educational Graphic Novel



### *Ghost River: The Fall & Rise of the Conestoga*

Graphic Novel (60 pp.)

- Script by Dr. Lee Francis (Laguna)
- Hand-painted art from Weshoyot Alvitre (Tongva)

Interpretive Materials (60 pp.)

- Artist statements
- Sources
- GLI lesson
- Contextual essays
- Annotated script

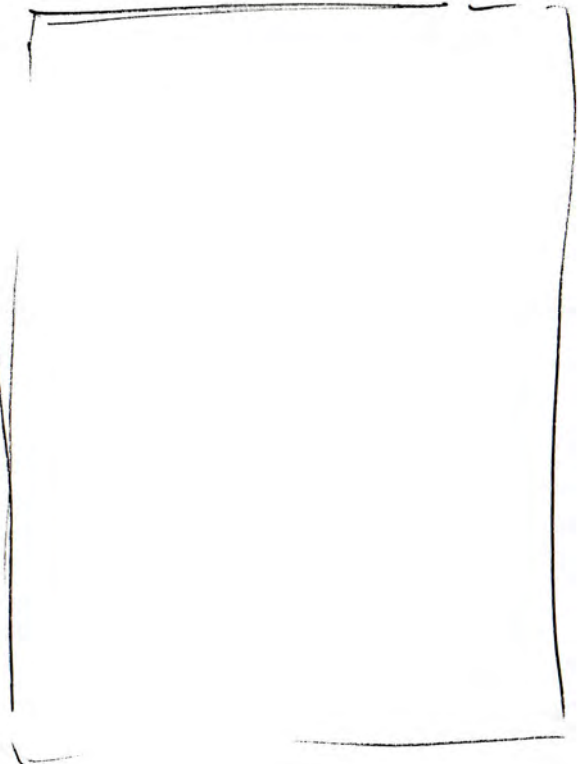
Published by Native Realities Press (October 2019)

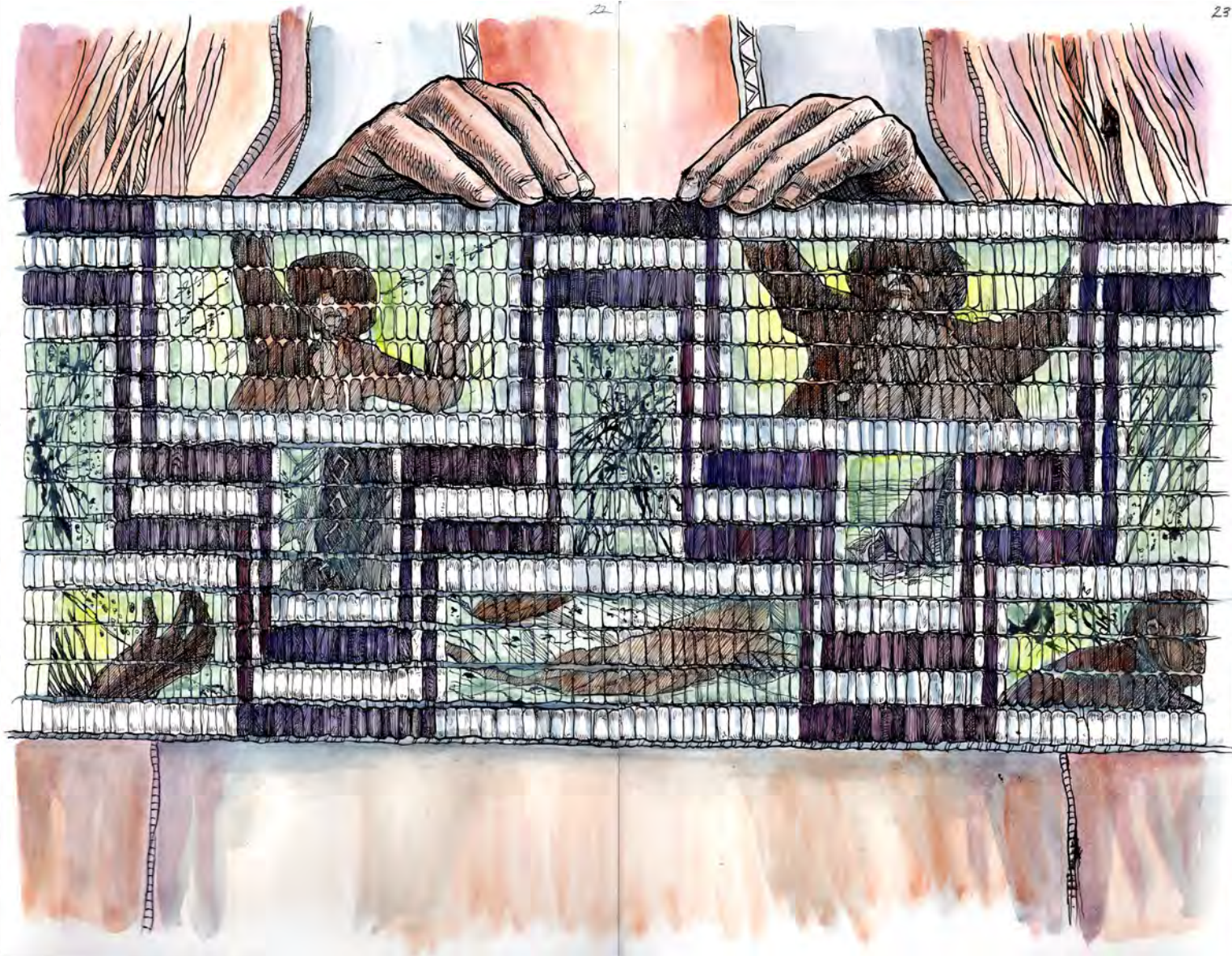
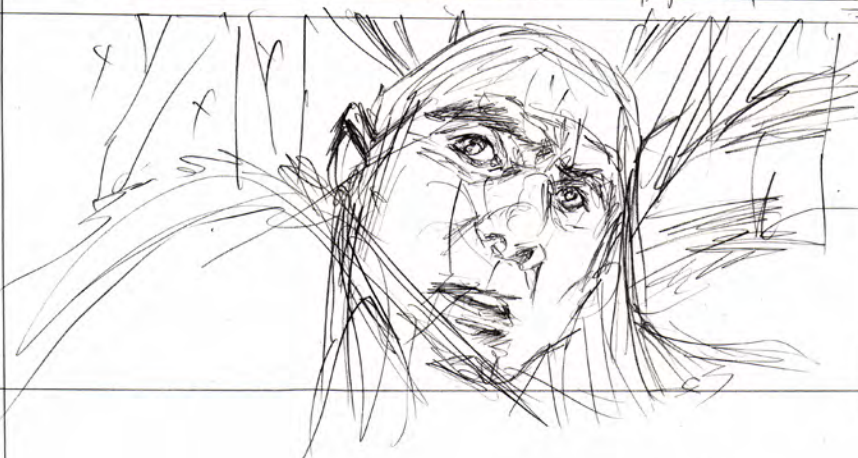
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" HISTORY IS COMPLICATED.  
VIOLENCE IS EASY. "

PG 2 (SPREAD)





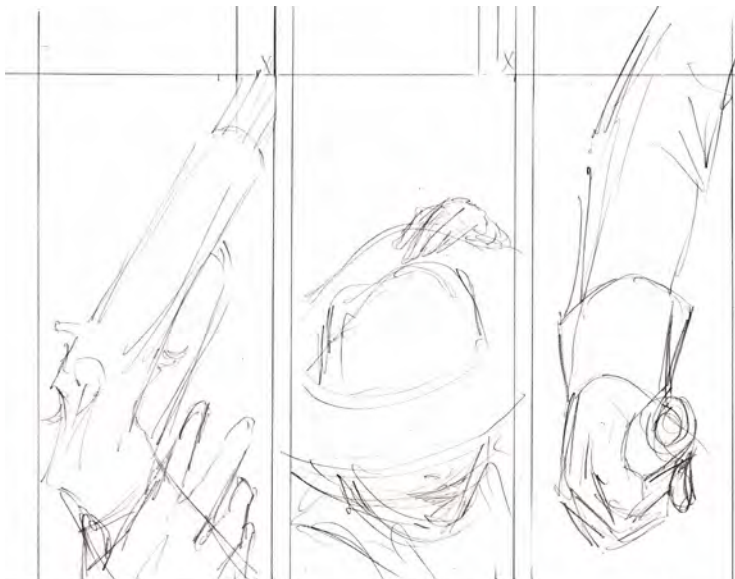
### iii. Public Art Exhibition



#### *Redrawing History*

- Places *Ghost River* art into conversation with the library's historical records
- Invites patrons into the scholarly-creative collaboration that made *Ghost River* possible

Nov. 11, 2019 – Apr. 10, 2020

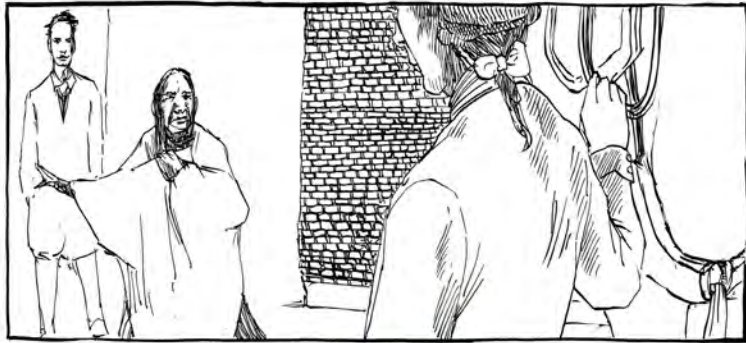




## iv. Digital Edition

- Curates essential primary & secondary source material
- Makes explicit connections between art & collection items
- Accommodates additional educational materials
- Offers readers a free, open-source edition of *Ghost River*





An Indian Guarling-Kempum-pun  
Which makes his lustful passions rise.  
But while he darts his friendly Kibb  
He darts his hand into his Fol.  
And thence conveys us areoled.  
His Mith, whose Cass were of Gold.

When Dangers threaten to mere Nonsense  
To talk of such a thing as conscience  
So arms to Arms with one Accord  
The sword of Quakers and the Lord  
Fill Dampas, then of Swam or Arack  
We'll drink success to the new Barrack.

Light Day, light Day you're all my Friends  
By you I shall attain my Ends  
For I can never be content  
Till I have got the Government.  
But if from this Attempt I fall  
Then let the Lord take you all.





# Learn More

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*Digital Paxton*

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*Redrawing History: Indigenous Perspectives on Colonial America*

[librarycompany.org/redrawing-history](http://librarycompany.org/redrawing-history)

[#LCPredrawinghistory](#)

