

Welcome to
Caribbeana:
The Journal of the Early Caribbean Society

The Early Caribbean Society (ECS) came into being informally in 2002 at the annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies (ASECS). For the next decade, the Society arranged panels at meetings of ASECS and the Society for Early Americanists (SEA) to ensure venues for Caribbean topics. The Society was more formally established in 2011 at the first ECS Symposium in St. James, Barbados. Other symposia in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 2012, and at Kingston University London in 2014 helped the Society decide on what structures and platforms were needed to carry on our collective work, including digital archives and a volume of essays on the subject of early Caribbean literary history. *Caribbeana* is the next step in the development of professional scholarly attention to a region of the world that has tended to be orphaned by the structures of literary studies that have been split between nations, chronologies, and languages. The rapid increase of interest in issues revolving in and around the Caribbean makes this step a natural one.

Caribbeana is designed to be a forum for the study of all that the Early Caribbean represents in the centuries preceding the 20th. Due to the origins of the Early Caribbean Society (ECS) among members of the American Society for Eighteenth- Century Studies (ASECS) and the Society of Early Americanists (SEA), the focus began with English language works. However, the founders of the ECS recognized, from its beginnings, the need for richer critical engagements across languages, cultures, races, temporalities and geographies in the Caribbean region. In creating *Caribbeana*, we aim to offer multiple

fields a welcoming space to further comparative literary and cultural analyses of the vibrant multi-lingual territories collectively referred to as the Caribbean.

The work of early Caribbeanists differs from that of 20th- and 21st-century Caribbeanists in that the work of specialists in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries tends to arise from a wide community of writers born in or having settled in the West Indies. As such, a wealth of perspectives complement and challenge prevailing ideas about the region that may appear in far-flung metropolises or in other sites in Caribbean or Latin America. In addition, while the early Caribbean has many examples of verse and prose literature in traditional genres, much of what is interesting about the period and region appears in other forms, such as slave narratives, agricultural treatises, sermons, political polemics, and crime narratives.

Further, the bloody history of the Caribbean region, including widespread and nearly constant warfare, means that the region demands more attention to international politics and the literature and culture of a diverse range of empires, beyond those represented by the British. Few other regions of the world can claim to have a more turbulent history than the Caribbean, with its nearly complete genocide of the original inhabitants and its deforestation and replacement with the imported cash crop of sugar cane.

In expanding ideas about the Caribbean, the ECS builds upon the critical questions that have emerged regarding how early, colonial, paracolonial, postcolonial or hemispheric literatures are defined and takes into consideration the deep routes and perspectives that have characterized the interdisciplinary nature of Caribbean studies. The ECS was founded to explore these links, themes and questions and to provide a

professional forum for the advancement of literary and cultural studies of the Early Caribbean region.

The area's history of protest, profit, violence, and plantation economies makes it a compelling and complex site for literary and cultural study. *Caribbeana* welcomes your work, your thoughts, and your energies as we work together to comprehend the history of the region through its literature.

Karen Salt, President (2014-), *Early Caribbean Society*
Thomas Krise, past President (2002-2014), *Early Caribbean Society*