

# The *Traveller*

A Newsletter of the Bartram Trail Conference

Summer 2012

## Early Visions of Florida: A History of the Imagination ([earlyfloridalit.net](http://earlyfloridalit.net))

One of the difficulties facing those who teach early American studies is the immense size of the field. In some iterations, the field spans from 1492 to 1865, covering nearly four hundred years of cultural production. Under such circumstances, anthologies must necessarily sacrifice depth for breadth, the local for the global. How, then, might we develop resources that allow us to easily and efficiently tailor our course materials to the diverse locales and student populations that we teach? Thomas Hallock's "Early Visions of Florida: A History of the Imagination" ([earlyfloridalit.net](http://earlyfloridalit.net)) offers an exciting answer to this question.

"Early Visions of Florida" had its genesis in Hallock's efforts to develop an early Florida literature course (check out Hallock's "Think Globally, Dig Locally," linked on the site's front page for more information.) The site serves both as a resource for similar courses and a model for how materials might be developed for other

regional or local archives. "Early Visions of Florida" organizes a wide selection of Floridian texts across seven time periods, ranging from "Explorers/Invaders (1528-75)" to "Imagining Florida (1801-36)." Each section contains several texts, each of which is accompanied in turn by informative and well-written headnotes that contextualize and provide background for the text at hand, as well as suggestions for further reading. As such, the site is a flexible and engaging critical anthology that makes available in one place texts that would otherwise be difficult to locate.

The site is still growing (an update is scheduled for Fall 2013) and in further updates and revisions it would be interesting to see Hallock take greater advantage of the possibilities afforded by the electronic medium. For instance, the site might profitably explore hypertextuality, making it possible to click on the name of a place or a person and track that figure across texts. Such a move would grant

scholars another avenue by which to explore and examine the early Floridian archive.

As it stands, however, "Early Visions of Florida" is a testament to the potential and possibility inherent in early American studies. Hallock has constructed a useful, easy-to-navigate, and critically rigorous electronic resource. One can only hope that other scholars in other locales will heed his call and develop complementary resources that enrich our understanding of the early American world. ✿

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