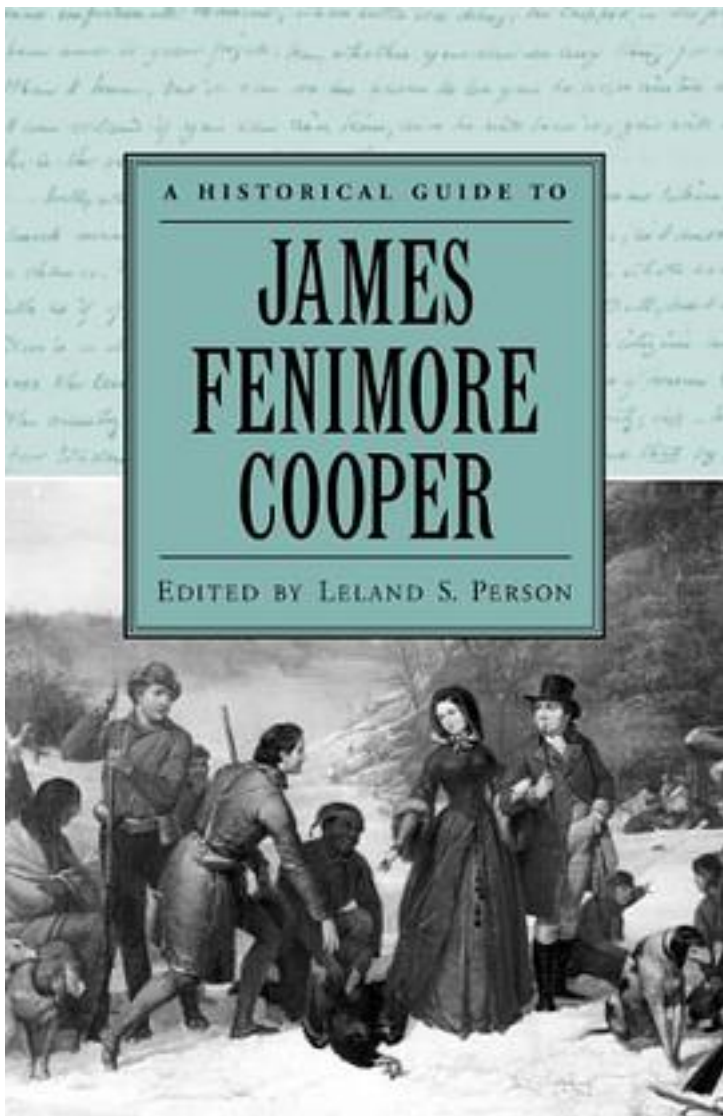


A Historical Guide to James Fenimore Cooper



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A Historical Guide to James Fenimore Cooper features new critical essays by noted American literature scholars, Gerald Kennedy, John P. McWilliams, Dana Nelson, and Barbara Mann, as well as a brief biography by authorized Cooper biographer Wayne Franklin and a survey of Cooper scholarship and criticism and bibliography by Jeffrey Walker. Kennedy examines Cooper's five-volume Gleanings in Europe as the most ambitious effort by an antebellum American author to scrutinize the new nation from a critical, transnational perspective. McWilliams challenges the critical and scholarly neglect of Cooper's women, by analyzing the four Revolutionary War novels in which young women play critical roles in furthering political debates about loyalty, independence and family upon which America's new republican culture depends. Examining the five Leatherstocking novels, Nelson shows how groupings of male and female characters across lines of class, habitude and race foreground the problems of creating new identities that can support the democratic aims of the early United States. Mann defends Cooper from nineteenth-century as well as twentieth-century attacks that he was a "race traitor" and argues provocatively that Natty Bumppo is a mixed-race character. Wayne Franklin offers a preview of his forthcoming two-volume biography of Cooper. Editor Leland S. Person provides an introduction and an illustrated chronology of Cooper's life and nineteenth-century historical events.

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