

## Paper/Presentation Title

“Of Region and Resistance: Approaching the Southern Federalist Temper”

### Abstract

Historical treatments of the intellectual traditions emanating from the “Old South”—broadly conceived—have, with few exceptions, characterized them as decrepit and/or otherwise overwhelmingly marred by the institution of slavery. On the one hand, such treatments are understandable. The South’s increasingly ossified reliance upon a distinctly racialized conception of slavery served to compress virtually all attempts at (white) southern independent thought—political, economic, social, and legal—within a framework that situated the “peculiar institution” and the civilization it engendered as legitimate, or, at most, problematic only to the extent that it created obstructions and contradictions to the meaning and implication of American liberty and republican government. Such hindrances were routinely overcome by increasing emphasis upon the essential otherness of blacks as a collective, whether enslaved or free, as the nineteenth century advanced. On the other hand, the progressive tilt of the humanities and social sciences in the academy has produced a canon—truthfully, a steadfast way of *perceiving* the southern intellectual tradition—that has preemptively dismissed or largely discounted the profundity and multifaceted nature of southern political ruminations and articulations. This reception has brought critical discourses in southern U.S. and American intellectual history to something of a standstill.

In particular, how elite southern Federalists negotiated their politics and place within a burgeoning national party system—before the South became “sectionalized” as a political, geographic, and psychological entity—has escaped the attention of most historians specializing in the Early American Republic. My paper, “Of Region and Resistance: Approaching the Southern Federalist Temper,” thus investigates the writings of select southern Federalists, among them, Samuel Chase (MD), Ralph Izard (SC), Henry William DeSaussure (SC), and Edward Carrington (VA), in order to address the foregoing historiographical lacuna. It analyzes their collective interest in virtuous men in government and explores what—for these figures—constituted republican virtue, the perils of human nature and the conflict it presented with respect to democracy, and who was fit or unfit for the American experiment in democracy. Necessarily, it also engages southern Federalist perspectives concerning the African slaves with whom they were obliged to contend, suggesting an early ideological sectionalism that has been overlooked in southern U.S. studies. The paper ultimately showcases the idiosyncratic political ideology of these men and emphasizes the need to expand scholars’ understandings of the early Atlantic South so as to approximate a more nuanced and thorough assessment of the region’s most vigorous minds.

## **Brief Biography**

Jonathan Anthony Hanna was born in Los Angeles, CA, and reared in Los Angeles, Baltimore County, and Greater Boston. He is a Ph.D. candidate in the History Department at the Claremont Graduate University. He earned the B.A. in International Studies from the University of West Florida, the M.A. in American Studies from the University of South Florida, and a Certificate of Completion from the School of Criticism and Theory at Cornell University. His principal areas of research include early national American political and intellectual history, the history of the American South, and modern European and American political thought. His work has been supported by the North Caroliniana Society, the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina, and the Maryland Historical Society. He will be defending his dissertation, "Friends of Order: The Southern Federalist Persuasion in the Age of Jeffersonian Democracy," in fall 2019.