of the court records are written, remained in Salem Village until 1697, and moved to a half dozen other communities before his death in 1720. He never publicly apologized for his role in the frenzy of accusations. Chapter eleven gives a more thorough overview of the subsequent reassessment of the events, leading to a “Day of General Fasting and Prayer,” in January 1697 that affirmed the injustice of the trials, and featured a public apology by Judge Samuel Sewall.

Ray’s book is a clearly written and compact recounting of the major events of the Salem witch crisis. Its focus on the participants’ fear that their religion was under attack by Satan adds an important dimension to the on-going scholarly debates about this seminal event in seventeenth-century New England.

Nancy Lusignan Schultz, Salem State University

**Book Notes**


Readers of *Nova Religio* can approach this collection of 27 relatively short essays in two distinct ways. Those interested in enriching their own pedagogical possibilities or simply learning what all the fuss has been about in “contemplative pedagogy” will find both passionate endorsements of contemplative approaches to teaching (not restricted to meditation) and some specific classroom exercises that they might consider adapting. In general, the contributors argue that contemplative pedagogies (which they conceive broadly and not entirely precisely) can help students achieve some of the classical goals of a liberal education and acquire “new confidence as learners and moral freedom as humans” (59). The co-editors’ introduction and chapters 10, 11, and 26 provide the most useful overviews and the most careful appraisals of the potential pitfalls of contemplative pedagogies.

Alternatively, readers can trace another, largely unintended, story through these pages. With a few exceptions, the authors appeal to practices and ideas from the Indian subcontinent, China, and Japan among other places. Some are very direct in claiming that they have “adapted” certain practices for their classrooms (see 85, 87, 92) and apparently do not see any problems with that. Others, however, including one of the students cited, raise thorny questions about cultural appropriation and decontextualization (see 101, 112, 117, 165). Thus, this volume also indirectly provides evidence about, and diverse justifications for, the
reception and transformation of “Eastern” religious practices and ideas in the contemporary West, a topic that has long interested students of new religions.

Eugene V. Gallagher, Connecticut College

_The Mormon Church and Blacks: A Documentary History_. Edited by Matthew L. Harris and Newell G. Bringhurst. University of Illinois Press, 2015. xii + 217. $85.00 cloth; $25.00 paper; ebook available.

Two historians of Mormonism and American history bring together in one volume key texts documenting the history of the priesthood ban for men of African descent in the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints. The authors assert, and the book clearly shows, that the ban came from a racist cultural context rather than divine revelation. The last document in the book, “Race and the Priesthood,” issued by the Latter-day Saint church in 2013 attributes the ban to Brigham Young, who was a product of “racial distinctions and prejudice” (140–41).

An introductory chapter presents a good summary of the history of the ban, in which black men were denied ordination to the priesthood and consequent leadership roles. Subsequent chapters follow a clear chronological order. An overview precedes each reading in order to provide the historical background for understanding the texts, while extensive footnotes furnish the scholarly apparatus necessary for digging deeper. Although the readings are greatly excerpted (with lots of ellipses), bibliographic source information appears immediately before the text, if a reader wants to locate the complete version. An index and bibliography make the book user-friendly. All in all, a welcome addition to Mormon Studies.

_Women and Mormonism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives_. Edited by Kate Holbrook and Matthew Bowman. University of Utah, 2016. x + 354. $34.95 paper; ebook available.

The theme of this well-edited and engrossing volume is agency and the extent to which Mormon women have it within, and without, the institutional structures of the Latter-day Saint church. The contributors problematize the concept of agency as solely a form of resistance by examining the manifold ways in which women participate, and have participated, in Latter-day projects. The strength of the book is the way in which the essays demonstrate that agency exists along a spectrum of options. What makes the book engaging are the biographical and first-person narratives that show women doing, acting, and being in very