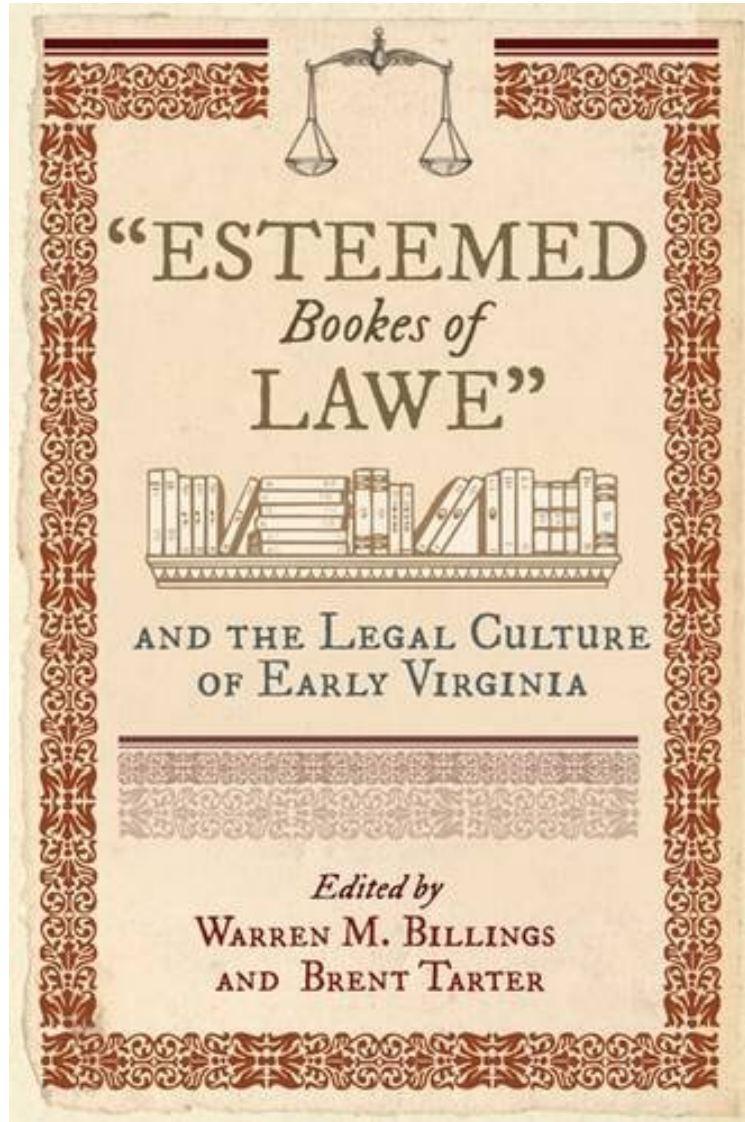


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Virginia men of law constituted one of the first learned professions in colonial America, and Virginia legal culture had an important and lasting impact on American political institutions and jurisprudence. Exploring the book collections of these Virginians therefore offers insight into the history of the book and the intellectual history of early America. It also addresses essential questions of how English culture migrated to the American colonies and was transformed into a distinctive American culture. Focusing on the law books that colonial Virginians acquired, how they used them, and how they eventually produced a native-grown legal literature, this collection explores the law and intellectual culture of the Commonwealth and reveals the origins of a distinctively Virginian legal literature. The contributors argue that understanding the development of early Virginia legal history—as shown through these book collections—not only illuminates important aspects of Virginia’s history and culture; it also underlies a thorough understanding of colonial and revolutionary American history and culture.

This splendid essay collection brings to life the richness of Virginia's colonial legal culture—a necessary book for anyone interested in colonial Virginia lawyers. (Mary Sarah Bilder, Boston College Law School, author of *Madison's Hand: Revising the Constitutional Convention*) This is much more than a book about books. It takes the reader into the world of lawyers and statesmen in the formative years of American law. We sit by the side of George Wythe, Patrick Henry, St. George Tucker, and other eminent figures as they draw upon English law to give a distinctive shape to life and law in colonial and early republican Virginia. The respected contributors to this collection have themselves produced an ‘esteemed booke’—and, in doing so, they have enlarged our understanding of how law lies at the very base of American government and society. (A. E. Dick Howard, University of Virginia, author of *The Road from Runnymede: Magna Carta and Constitutionalism in America*) "For anyone doing research into the legal culture of early Virginia, this volume is a source with which to begin." (David Thomas Konig, Washington University in St. Louis *Virginia Magazine*) About the Author Warren M. Billings, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History at the University of New Orleans, is author of *Magistrates and Pioneers: Essays in the History of American Law*. Brent Tarter is author of *A Saga of the New South: Race, Law, and Public Debt in Virginia* and *Daydreams and Nightmares: A Virginia Family Faces Secession and War* (both Virginia).