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- [Events: Historical Content](#),
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New England Horses, Sugar & Slavery in the 18th Century

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay's (FOMB) seventh presentation of their 29th annual Winter Speaker Series: New England Horses, Sugar & Slavery in the 18th Century features Charlotte Carrington-Farmer, professor of history at Roger Williams University. Winter Speaker Series presentations are held via Zoom and accessible via hyperlink at the top of the FOMB web page: www.fomb.org. This event takes place Wednesday, April 8th at 7 pm.

New England horses, sugar & slavery in the 18th Century formed something of an equine empire, with horses dominating every aspect of the early modern Atlantic world in a way that is almost inconceivable today. Horses were central to trade, labor, war, mobility, structures of power, and empire building. The breeding of riding and draft horses for exportation to the West Indies was an integral part of New England's economy throughout the long eighteenth century. New England's landscape was naturally well-suited to raising horses, and the region was perfectly poised geographically with pre-existing provisioning connections. Whilst local markets were significant to the industry, the primary driver was the sugar plantations in the West Indies. By the turn of the eighteenth century, horses were at forefront of the trading markets which dominated the busy aquatic highway between New England and the West Indies. In the West Indies, equines were not only essential for riding, travel, and fertilizing the fields, but most importantly as draft animals on sugar plantations whose product formed one leg of the trans-Atlantic triangular trade in rum and slaves between New England, Europe, West Africa and the Caribbean. New England's horse trade was part of the competing chain of supply and demand for animal labor, and rival empires fiercely guarded equines that powered their sugar mills and profits. For New Englanders, shipping equine cargo was a risky business, but a profitable one.

Dr. Charlotte Carrington-Farmer is a Professor of History, specializing in early American History. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge in 2010, and has a keen research interest in dissent in seventeenth-century New England. Her book, *Roger Williams and His World*, sets Roger Williams in his wider Atlantic world context. Carrington-Farmer also has an active research interest in non-human animal history, specifically equine history. Her research examines the breeding and export of horses from New England to the West Indies in the eighteenth century, and its intersection with enslaved lives and labor. Carrington-Farmer has published extensively on the subject of equine history. Her chapter in "Trading Horses in the Eighteenth Century: Rhode Island and the Atlantic World," entitled *Equine Cultures: Horses, Human Society, and the Discourse of Modernity, 1700-Present* won the Association of College and Research Libraries "Outstanding Academic Title" award in 2019. Carrington-Farmer's most recent research in the field of equine history, centers on mules with her chapter: "Shipping Mules

in the Eighteenth-Century: New England's Equine Exports to the West Indies," in the book "Agents of Empires: Companies, Commerce, and Colonies 1500-1800."

FOMB hosts their Winter Speaker Series October-May, on the second Wednesday of each month. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic and ability for participants to attend from out of the area, the series continues via Zoom. The FOMB May13th 2026 presentation, Indigenous Maritime Culture in North America features maritime historian Lincoln Paine.

Speaker Series presentations are free, open to the public. Visit www.fomb.org to see speaker biographies, full event schedules, video recordings of past presentations, become a member, and learn more about how you can help protect beautiful Merrymeeting Bay and the Gulf of Maine.

For more information contact FOMB at 207-666-3372 or edfomb@comcast.net.

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
07:00 PM - 08:00 PM on Wed, 8 Apr 2026