The Jack Miller Center Announces Inaugural 2026 Revolutionary Legacies First Book Prize Winner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Philadelphia, PA – The Jack Miller Center is pleased to announce the inaugural winner of our Revolutionary Legacies First Book Prize, which honors the most distinguished first book by a new author that significantly enhances our understanding of the American Revolution, the Founding Era, and their enduring legacies.

Cara Rogers Stevens has been awarded the prize for her excellent work, *Thomas Jefferson and the Fight against Slavery* (University Press of Kansas, 2024). The title has been widely recognized for its thoughtful examination of what Jefferson did—and did not do—to end slavery and bring equality to America. In addition to winning the Revolutionary Legacies First Book Prize, Rogers Stevens's work won the Herbert J. Storing Book Prize, was a finalist for the Center for Presidential History's Book Prize, was runner-up for the Journal of the American Revolution's Book of the Year award, and was a finalist for the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History's George Washington Prize.

"We are launching the Revolutionary Legacies First Book Prize to celebrate the work of authors who are keeping the story of our nation's origins alive in a new generation, and there couldn't be a more fitting inaugural recipient than Cara Rogers Stevens," said JMC President Hans Zeiger. "Professor Rogers Stevens sets the example for future prize selections, which we anticipate awarding for many years to come."

"The Prize Committee is delighted to award the Jack Miller Center's Revolutionary Legacies First Book Prize to Cara Rogers Stevens of Ashland University, for her book *Thomas Jefferson and the Fight against Slavery*," said the Prize Committee. "Stevens took on a broad, significant topic centered on a figure critical for the American founding. By deploying rigorous research, she generated a helpful new perspective on Thomas Jefferson. In particular, her investigation of the draft of the *Notes on the State of Virginia* helped readers understand not only the process of creation but the goals Jefferson was pursuing. Further, the book extended the consideration of Jefferson's legacy through the careers of several of his anti-slavery proteges. With direct and effective prose, the book helps readers consider central questions of slavery and freedom in the American founding and beyond. We believe *Thomas Jefferson and the Fight against Slavery* embodies the ideals of both the Jack Miller Center and of the Revolutionary Legacies First Book Prize."

Cara Rogers Stevens is an Associate Professor of History at Ashland University, where she also directs the Archer School of Civic Education and Leadership. Her research focuses on race and slavery in the Jeffersonian Age. Responding to the award, she said "Writing a first book is a grueling task, overshadowed by the ever-present question: will anyone ever read this? This prize recognizes the unique challenges of writing a first book, and it is such an honor and joy to receive it."

Rogers Stevens will be formally presented with the prize this October at the Jack Miller Center's 2026 History Conference in Washington, D.C. This year's conference theme is “The American Revolution and Its Legacies: Independence and a Candid World.”

Distinguished honorable mentions for the prize included:

Lauren Duval, *The Home Front Revolutionary Households, Military Occupation, and the Making of American Independence*

Alec Zuercher Reichardt, *Roads to Power, Roads to Crisis: The War for the American Interior and the Infrastructural Routes of Revolution*

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ABOUT THE JACK MILLER CENTER

The Jack Miller Center is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advancing the work of scholars who teach and study the ideas, documents, and history we hold in common as Americans. We seek to grow the talent pipeline of university educators who teach the American political tradition, to forge new models for university-based training of K-12 civics and history teachers, and to build a diverse coalition of Americans to ignite a civic education renaissance.

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