

**“Leather-Stocking Redux.”** Jeffrey Walker is also editing this collection of essays which will contain ten new essays by leading nationally- and internationally-known Cooper scholars, complemented by a critical introduction, a bibliography of works cited, and an index to themes and characters. The volume (approximately 250 projected pages in print) will address such broad issues as our concern with race, gender, and ethnicity in Cooper’s world and its relationship to ours; our reaction to, and our understanding of, the politics and economics of the early republic; and a glimpse into the frontier society of the first half of the nineteenth century in America as portrayed in the five novels. Novels will be treated individually and collectively over the span of the ten essays. Potential contributors will ask a series of more specific questions designed to generate discussion of many of the ideas and issues that arise from a close reading of the Leather-Stocking tales. For instance, how did any one—or all—of the Leather-Stocking tales reveal Cooper’s reputation between the appearance of the first story in 1823 and the last in 1841? How might a reading of the reviews of those five works articulate his readers’ response to them and tell a tale? What were Cooper’s relationships with his publishers, his proofreaders, and his printers, and how might Cooper’s practices as the author of five American bestsellers—*The Pioneers*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Prairie*, *The Pathfinder*, and *The Deerslayer*—provide contemporary readers with a portrait of Cooper as a developing author, sensitive to (and in support of or in opposition to) many of the cultural events taking place in America over an eighteen-year period? How did his penmanship—at best, difficult for his compositors to read—and the procedure he followed of proofing and reading copy leave a heavy toll of corruptions that resulted in his reputation as a careless, slipshod author (and Mark Twain as an astute and nimble literary critic)? In fact, what were Cooper’s relationships to contemporary authors? What do Cooper’s own writings about the five novels—in his prefaces and letters—tell us about his own intentions? Does Alexander Hay Ritchie’s engraving of Thomas Hick’s “Authors of the United States” and Cooper’s placement at the commanding center of this group portrait of major American authors such as Bryant, Hawthorne, Irving, and Poe really reflect the high esteem many held for him as a major writer in mid-nineteenth-century America? In comparison with those authors, what were the material and economic conditions under which Cooper wrote? How did the Leather-Stocking tales as a whole, or as individual documents in the case, reveal and inform Cooper’s opinions on race and ethnicity, the environment, and abolitionism? How sophisticated a reader was Cooper, and how do the epigraphs to his novels and his reading of their poetry reveal his knowledge of belles-lettres, both in America and in Europe? How then does each of the Leather-Stocking tales help provide a history of the book in the first half of the nineteenth century in America? And finally, did Fenimore Cooper ever seriously contemplate writing a *sixth* Leather-Stocking tale?