

# *Contents*

Introduction, 3

1

Information and Authority  
in Samuel Sewall's Boston, 1676–1729, 16

2

William Byrd II and the Challenge of Rusticity  
Among the Tidewater Gentry, 42

3

Rural Clergymen and the Communication  
Networks of 18th-Century New England, 65

4

Lawyers, Public Office, and Communication Patterns  
in Provincial Massachusetts: The Early Careers  
of Robert Treat Paine and John Adams, 1749–1774, 82

5

Communications and Commerce: Information Diffusion  
in Northern Ports from the 1760s to the 1790s, 110

6

Information and Insularity: The Experiences  
of Yankee Farmers, 1711–1830, 132

7

Daughters, Wives, Mothers:  
Domestic Roles and the Mastery  
of Affective Information, 1765–1865, 160

*8*

William Bentley and the Ideal of Universal  
Information in the Enlightened Republic, 197

*9*

Choosing One's Fare:  
Northern Men in the 1840s, 218

*10*

The Dynamics of Contagious Diffusion:  
The Battles of Lexington and Concord,  
George Washington's Death, and the Assassination  
of President Lincoln, 1775–1865, 245

Conclusion, 268

Appendix, 297

Notes, 303

Index, 363