Though it may seem like an academic cliché to begin a list of acknowledgments by invoking your book's topic, I can’t imagine a way through these paragraphs without suggesting that several friendships and friendship circles have been instrumental to this book's production. While I was still conducting research for the dissertation that preceded this book, friends in New York gave me a place to sleep, sometimes for several weeks at a time over consecutive summers. Lane Twitchell, Adriana Velez, John Rothermich, and Shelley Turley fall into that first category. This circle extends to Brian Aitken, Andrea Evers, Shar Taylor, and Lisa Dickey, who provided hospitality (often for my family as well) during research or conference trips to Washington, D.C. Along with Dave Barber, who has since become a New Yorker himself, they have been collectively known as “the DC crew.” In Boston, where I was completing my degree, the friendship of Mark and Pandora Brewer sustained us through times when Stephanie and I weren’t sure whether the investments we were making in graduate school would ever pan out. I could not have been happier, after we had moved to New York, when Farrell Lines and Rebecca Maury moved to Philadelphia and became more fully integrated into this widening cohort. As the manuscript neared completion they put me up for the good part of a summer and gave me a room in the attic for writing and for the two hundred pounds of books and files I had sent there. Rachel Poulsen and Missy Bradshaw, whom we had known as long as anyone, gave our family a place to stay in the weeks following September 11, 2001, when we could not yet return to our apartment downtown; earlier they had provided lodging and fellowship in Chicago during an early run at the academic job market. At least since the enormous Thanksgiving party Karen Slade threw in New York in 1999, the bulk of this group, with additions and removals here and there, has referred to itself as the Northeast Corridor Social Club, at least a partial reference to the research I had undertaken.

Another, more widely scattered group, partly overlapping with the
first, has enjoyed near-annual reunions since the mid-1990s. Known to members as the Friendly Order of the Olympic Flask, again partly in homage to the club I was writing about, this friendship circle also provided intellectual and emotional fellowship: Elbert Peck presides, and additional members include Brian Kagel, Eric Jones, and Jeremy Zitter along with several people named in the previous paragraph. These overlapping circles—doctors, lawyers, artists, writers, editors, economists, academics, and more—have given me repeated occasions to think about what happens when friendship turns into intellectual and cultural collaboration (and vice versa), how conversation works as an institution of culture, and how the emotional bases of friendship—and its limits—can force you into productive moments of self-examination. These friends have put up with several years of walking tours of lower Manhattan, gory recitals of New York’s yellow fever epidemics, and convoluted plot summaries of Charles Brockden Brown’s fiction. They have also enriched a significant portion of my life through their exchanges, which I anticipate will continue long into the future. We could not have asked for better friends.

Living in downtown New York for the last five years, I have claimed membership in two other circles with strong eighteenth-century antecedents, and whose fellowship has been key to maintaining my sanity through this project. Thanks to Dan, Julia, Meg, Wolf, Tim, Sarah, and especially Derick Melander and Sacha Jones for letting me into Record Club (a modern Anacreontic Society of sorts) after an extended stint as visitor. I wrapped up the final draft of the manuscript in 2004–2005 at Fresh Salt (146 Beekman Street, between Front and South). Thanks to Fresh Salt’s regulars, staff, and proprietors—especially Jason Connolly and Sara Williams—who all made the end of the work day something to look forward to. Oyster outings with Jason, Nicole, Dave, and Steph were especially rewarding. It seemed especially appropriate to finish writing this book in a tavern of sorts in lower Manhattan during the last days of the Fulton Fish Market.

Academic friendships, many of which have long since transcended pedagogical or professional affiliation, have assisted materially and emotionally at every stage as this book took shape. My greatest intellectual debt is to Susan Mizruchi, who oversaw not only the dissertation but the process of turning it into a book. Jill Lepore served as an early reader and mentor. They, along with Richard Wightman Fox, set the high standard of historical scholarship and writing to which
I continue to aspire. Several mentors and friends have supported this project by writing recommendations on my behalf for fellowships or teaching positions: Nancy Bentley, Richard Fox, Chris Grasso, Virginia Jackson (who also generously provided a place to stay one summer in Princeton), Jill Lepore, Chris Looby, Susan Mizruchi, Saundra Morris, Cyrus Patell, and Mary Poovey. Thanks to John Brooke and Seth Cotlar for sharing unpublished work.

A number of people deserve my thanks for reading individual chapters or sections of chapters, sometimes in multiple drafts, or for offering advice on book or fellowship proposals: Jennifer Baker, Dave Barber, Mark Brewer, John Brooke, Caleb Crain, Cynthia Davis, Robert Dimit, Niki Eustace, Elaine Freedgood, Marilyn Gaull, Jenni Green, Robb Haberman, Phil Harper, Catherine Kaplan, Jon Klancher, Chris Looby, Sam Otter, Mary Poovey, Jeff Richards, Laura Rigal, Nancy Ruttenburg, David Shield, Eric Slauter, Gabi Starr, and John Waters. One of my longest-standing intellectual co-conspirators, Joanna Brooks, braved the entire manuscript, after having provided valuable advice on many smaller details over several years. She has been a model, mentor, and close friend for fifteen years, since we were undergraduates publishing an independent college newspaper, and I count myself very fortunate that we both wound up as early Americanists.

The English Department at New York University has offered me the opportunity to live in the city—and neighborhood—I have spent so long researching; it has also provided me with a terrific cohort of colleagues and wonderful students on whom I could test ideas. Special thanks to Elisabeth Shane for research assistance at a crucial juncture and Jessie Morgan Owens for help with illustrations and permissions. I have benefited from audience feedback at the University of South Carolina, University of California at Santa Barbara, University of Memphis, Penn State–Harrisburg, the New York Academy of Medicine, and the Library Company of Philadelphia, as well as at meetings of the Society of Early Americanists, Modern Language Association, the Atlantic History Workshop at NYU, the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism, BU’s Americanist Forum, and NYU’s Americanist Group.

I offer special thanks to my colleagues at the Charles Brockden Brown Society and participants in its biannual meetings, especially to Phil Barnard, Elizabeth Dillon, Michael Drexler, Fritz Fleishmann,
Acknowledgments

Jared Gardner, Sean Goudie, Janie Hinds, Mark Kamrath, Bob Levine, Sam Otter, Jeff Richards, Nancy Ruttenburg, Stephen Shapiro, Ezra Tawil, Evert van Leeuwen, Wil Verhoeven, and Ed White, many of whom have offered years of intellectual fellowship on multiple continents. Thanks to John Holmes for sharing electronic files of Brown’s correspondence.

Several institutions and their donors made research for this book possible: the New-York Historical Society, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, the Boston University Humanities Foundation, Princeton University Libraries, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Library Company of Philadelphia, and the New York Academy of Medicine. I thank librarians at all of these institutions, especially Jim Green at the Library Company, Arlene Shaner at the New York Academy of Medicine, and Al Bush at Princeton’s Firestone Library, the last of whom has been nudging me in the right direction for a very long time indeed. I appreciate permission to publish materials from these libraries’ collections. I also appreciate the fellowship and assistance of Marvin Taylor and Mike Kelly of the Fales Library and Special Collections at New York University. Toby Appel at Yale’s Cushing/Whitney Medical Library answered questions about Elihu Smith’s manuscript diaries over several years. Karie Diethorn, the Museum Curator at Independence National Historical Park, provided helpful information about James and Ellen Sharples’s portraits of club members and helped me track down “my” William Johnson.

A Goddard leave for junior faculty at NYU gave me time for final revisions to the manuscript. Thanks to deans Richard Foley, Mary Carruthers, and Catherine Stimpson for that support. Additional thanks to deans Carruthers and Stimpson and to the Humanities Council at NYU for partially funding the 2004 Charles Brockden Brown Society meetings, “Circles and Circulations in the Revolutionary Atlantic World,” and an accompanying library exhibit and catalog.

Early versions of chapter 2 and chapter 5 appeared in the William and Mary Quarterly and American Literary History, respectively. I thank the editors of those journals, Chris Grasso and Gordon Hutner, as well as their anonymous reviewers for suggestions that helped me refine my arguments. I thank the publishers of these journals, the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and Oxford University Press, respectively, for permission to incorporate previously published material.
At the Johns Hopkins University Press I have been very fortunate to work with Bob Brugger and Howard Brick and appreciate the suggestions—stylistic and substantive—I have received from each and from the Press’s anonymous reviewer. Thanks to Michael Baker for eagle-eyed copyediting and to Carol Zimmerman for efficiently moving the book through production.

I have reserved my final paragraph for my friendliest circles. My parents, Dennis and Lois Waterman, gave me a love of reading and writing that has served me well. They and my parents-in-law, Jack and Marlene Smith, have been extraordinarily supportive of my academic endeavors. My daughters, Anna and Molly, are older than my interest in the Friendly Club, but just barely. They have been patient as I took much time away from them to write. I rejoice with them that I’m finally finished. Stephanie has been patient, too, through more than I care to admit. She has been my best friend, virtually from the moment I met her in 1991. I couldn’t think of dedicating this book to anyone else.
This page intentionally left blank
Republic of Intellect
This page intentionally left blank