

Flavell, Julie. **When London was capital of America.** [Yale](#), 2010. 305p bibl index
afp; ISBN [9780300137392](#), \$32.50. Reviewed in March 2011 *Choice Reviews*
Online.

Flavell describes a colorful cast of Americans who resided in London prior to the Revolution. Southern planters could be especially at home among the city's elite, and readers follow Carolinian Henry Laurens as he finds schools for his boys, manages a household that includes a black slave, and encourages his eldest son to study law at Middle Temple. Rustic Yankees--likened to Scots--were less welcome, and some of them were ready to join the Wilkite agitation in their protests against royal governors. But colonists from both south and north came to pursue London heiresses, and Flavell's subjects--their lives marked variously by bankruptcy, broken engagements, illegitimacy, and suicide--invite allusions to Fielding and Austen. Final chapters treat the ambitions and political missteps of Benjamin Franklin during his long London residency before 1776, and also remind readers that many Americans after 1783, like Franklin's son William and a number of blacks, fled the new republic for the ancient kingdom and its cosmopolitan capital. One could have wished for a chapter on an Atlantic merchant's business life, but even without it, this is an engaging group portrait of colonials in the metropolis. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. All levels/libraries. -- *G. F. Steckley, Knox College*