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THE REBELS AND THE ANCIENTS: THE USE OF THE ANCIENT CLASSICS IN AMERICAN POLEMICAL LITERATURE, 1763-1776

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
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Chapter I: The Classics and the American Revolution

How important were the ancient classics in the formation of the ideology of the American Revolution? This question has always been considered to some degree by the historians of the Revolution, but the answer in recent years has become the subject of debate. Anyone who has perused the private and public records left by the generation of the Founding Fathers is aware that the classics did form an essential part of the wisdom and traditions employed by them, both to justify their demands for fair treatment in the early days of the controversy with Great Britain, and later to support their declaration of independence and establishment of a new government. Speeches, pamphlets, petitions, newspapers, letters, and diaries, as well as semi-official documents, such as the debates of the Convention of 1787 and the Federalist Papers, are full of classical quotations, allusions, examples, and principles. The difficulty arises when historians attempt to ascertain how genuine and how important this classical flowering is. Did the American colonials derive the classical information from their own reading and experience in the ancient authors, or did they cull it from secondary sources, political writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with
whom they had an ideological affinity? Were the classics a primary source of political and constitutional principles, or were they merely a fund of clever aphorisms and didactic illustrations with which to bolster arguments based on English liberal theories and the premises of the French Enlightenment? In response to these questions, a disagreement among historians is receiving more attention as the Bicentennial of the Revolution approaches.

For most of the two hundred years of scholarly discussion on the causes and origins of the War for Independence, the issue of the place of the classics has been generally noted but ignored in detail. Economic and social causes have captured the interest and imagination of the great historians, and those who examined the intellectual origins traced them back to other theories, ideas, and principles. The classics were always in the background, but they never seemed to be as important as English common law, Puritan doctrines, Enlightenment philosophy, or a variety of other potential founts of ideology. Perhaps this is because most of the historians interested in the origins of the American Revolution have been, understandably enough, American historians whose training was exclusively in the various stages of American history. If they strayed far afield at all, they studied modern European history, usually with fields of English history in the Tudor-Stuart and later periods and in continental European history of the
French Revolution and the nineteenth century. Often, these historians had no interest or experience in the ancient classics, so they tended to note briefly their presence in the intellectual baggage of the American colonials and then pass on quickly to whatever evidence intrigued them more. Most had no competence in classical literature anyway and were in no position to analyze the quality or use of the classics by the colonials. With the advent of the Bicentennial, however, and the recent proliferation of studies on the intellectual origins of the Revolution, some classicists, ancient historians, and historians with training in both the classics and American history, have begun a reappraisal of the place of the classics in the ideology of the Revolutionary generation. These efforts are increasing in frequency and coherence. From an area of study which had been ignored by most historians, the evaluation of the classics in Revolutionary ideology has become one of the most important and rewarding fields of original inquiry in a relatively short time.

The several anniversaries of the founding of the American republic have been the occasions for an intensification of interest in the situations and motives that stimulated the American colonials to take such drastic steps in 1776. The fascination with the thoughts and ideas of the Founding Generation is always high but increases even more on these occasions and will reach an unparalleled peak at the
Bicentennial. Still, the interest in ancestral ideologies and deeds does not often result in a further appreciation of the role of the classics as a Revolutionary influence. For example, at the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Constitution (1787-1937), Gilbert Chinard noted that among all the orations delivered and papers read for the occasion, none mentioned the debt of the Founding Fathers "to the opinions and reasonings of the philosophers, politicians and historians... whose writings were in The contemplation of those who framed the American constitution." He found this omission quite understandable because the philosophy of the eighteenth century was still so close, and American society so transformed by the thinkers of the eighteenth century, that it was a natural tendency to attribute to English liberals and deists, to French philosophy, and to the American founders, an originality that they themselves would not have claimed. While tracing the transfer of these ideas and estimating the debts of different countries to one another has become a sport and a livelihood for historians, it has often been forgotten that some ideas, for which credit is given to a particular country or political theory, have a clear origin in a common treasure house and a common tradition: the ancient classics.  

The historian who has done the most to repair this lapse of memory in American intellectual tradition was the
late Richard M. Gummere who agreed in 1963 that "It is insufficiently recognized that in the third quarter of the 18th century America, like England, was at the height of her classical period. . . . the period when statesmen, poets, and painters most deliberately and successfully imitated the examples of the ancients . . . ."  

His collection of essays published that year did help to recall much of the forgotten debt. It was probably not enough to justify his sanguine statement four years later that both historians and the general public were aware that the classical heritage of Greece and Rome had played a large part in the ideas and activities of colonial America, and certainly not enough to claim that "the evidence is so convincing that the case may be stated rather than defended." He felt it was clearly proven that, next to the Bible and the common law, the classical tradition was the most vital in provincial life and thought.

Gummere did make American historians and classicists aware of the general lack of investigation in the area of the classics and the Revolution, but earlier, Douglass Adair had noted that same lack, and writers like Louis B. Wright, H. Trevor Colbourn, Robert Middlekauff, Howard Mumford Jones, and others did treat the role of the classics as a part of the general culture of the colonies. There is no history of American classical scholarship. What appears of American scholarship in survey studies such as Sandys' A
History of Classical Scholarship, Peck's History of Classical Philology, or Gudeman's Grundriss der Geschichte der Klassischen Philologie is cursory and focused mainly on the nineteenth century. Almost nothing appears on the study of the classics in the eighteenth century. Part of this lack, once again, was repaired by Gummere, but his approach was largely biographical so that a comprehensive appreciation of the importance of the professional study of the classics, or philology, in the eighteenth century has still to be made. Some tentative movements in that direction are now being made with the stimulus of the Bicentennial. "The Conference on Classical Traditions in Early America" held at Ann Arbor in October, 1970, helped to develop a more sophisticated historical perspective on the classics in early America and is gathering momentum with the "First Summer Institute on the Classical Humanities in the American Republic" held at the University of Idaho at Moscow, June 23-July 6, 1974. The historians responsible for the latter have a series of projects under way to develop the investigation of the classics in the early Republic that should flourish in the interest generated by the Bicentennial and are designed to culminate in 1976.5

Some American historians are oblivious to the importance of the classics as a contributory source for the concepts of the Revolutionary ideology; some are aware of their importance, but give them only a passing glance in their
discussions of other topics; and some are actually hostile to the idea of the classics having any importance at all. Fortunately the first group is a minority and growing smaller, but many general treatments of the formative period of the Republic fall into the second category. While H. Trevor Colbourne in *The Lamp of Experience* mentions that the colonials were familiar with the events of the ancient past and peppered their writing and oratory with classical allusions and similes, he finds that their experience with the ancient authors tended to be secondary, that is, to be derived from other sources, and he limits his treatment of the subject to a few pages. The same ambivalent view is present in Gordon Wood's *Creation of the American Republic*, where Wood maintains that antiquity appealed to the colonial Americans, but he finds that their appreciation of antiquity was "not always original or unglossed," and his discussion is also limited to a few pages. As editor of an American Problem Series booklet on *The Role of Ideology in the American Revolution*, John R. Howe, Jr., selected articles by the best modern American historians that represented the latest and most important views of that topic. According to these historians, the colonials derived their ideas and ideals from English constitutional law, the writings of British Whigs, American religious rhetoric and belief, the European Enlightenment, and their frontier republican experience. The only mention of "the political
tradition deriving originally from republican Greece and Rome" is in the suggestions for further reading, and the editor presents only three citations for this obscure topic.

Those historians who declare that the classics were not important are fewer and, currently, are probably echoing the sentiments of Bernard Bailyn. One who does not, for his own reasons, is Howard Mumford Jones in *Strange New World*. He affirms that classicism remained a powerful force from the agitation over the Stamp Act through the years of the Revolution and the Constitution and later. It appears in propaganda, in arguments from historical precedent, and in the theory of government, but, since it was a force principally among an elite minority and not among the people, as in the French Revolution, he suggests that the friends of classical studies have overestimated its influence in the eighteenth century. Bailyn, in his extremely influential *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, has a more hostile attitude. He found that although, "the classics of the ancient world are everywhere in the literature of the Revolution, they are everywhere illustrative, not determinative, of thought. They contributed a vivid vocabulary but not the logic or grammar of thought, a universally respected personification but not the source of political and social beliefs." He felt they heightened the colonials' sensitivity to ideas and attitudes derived from other sources. The other source that Bailyn argues for is a
group of early eighteenth-century English radical writers which included Trenchard, Gordon, Hoadly, and several others. It is because he has, in his view, discovered the major source of colonial ideas in this group of radical authors that Bailyn reduces all other contributory sources of ideology to secondary roles. He maintains that while the classics might have been the most "conspicuous" source of ideas for the colonials, they were one of the least important.11 In general, Bailyn asserts that the use of the classics was derivative, superficial, and decorative.

This harsh evaluation of the colonials' use of the classics does not take into consideration the spirit of the Americans or of the eighteenth century. Their viewpoint was different from the modern outlook in regard to history in general and the classics in particular. There is a tangible dissimilarity between the modern, "scientific" idea of history and the eighteenth-century, "humanistic" interpretation of the purpose of history. Certainly, utilitarianism and empiricism were gaining importance as a consequence of the new learning, but the men of the Enlightenment had a different idea of what "practicality" meant. The generation of the Enlightenment, both European and American, thought of history not as a reconstruction of the past, but as a moral enterprise. As Henry Steele Commager has said, "Perhaps it was not history at all; let us call it philosophy and be done with it." They would have had no use for
the dreary pedantry of the annalists or the bloodless
research of a Niebuhr or a Ranke, whose interests were in
what actually happened. They thought and perceived in an
older historical tradition of writing that stretched from
Herodotus to Gibbon: history as philosophy. History
appealed to Americans as philosophy, and not as fact. It
was especially in America that morality was important, not
facts. History was important because it was a source of
wisdom, justice, and virtue, and not isolated names, dates,
and events.12 The men of the eighteenth century saw them­selves in the ancients, as does every century, whatever the
degree of its archaeological knowledge. This is why the
classics have in fact survived so long; they speak to every
generation. It is possible to know more about an age and
actually move further away from it in spirit. Daily,
modern archaeology adds more to the modern factual knowledge
of the ancients, but whether it contributes to a better
comprehension of their genius and daimon is another question.
The eighteenth century did not know as much about the Greeks
or even about the Romans as this century does, but classical
literature appealed more directly to it.13

One of the major criticisms of those who find fault
with the colonials' attitude towards the classics is that
many of them preferred reading the ancient authors in other
forms than in the original language and length. This is
taken as an indication of superficiality and dilettantism,14
because genuine scholarly analysis and appreciation can only take place when the savant is able to plunge into the source in its original form and language. Colbourne mentions that in spite of their early exposure to the originals, Americans preferred translations, popularizations, and secondary surveys. He gives the example of Jefferson, to whom reading Latin and Greek authors in their original tongue was a sublime luxury, "but it was a luxury he managed frequently to resist, as the many uncut pages of his personal copies of the Latin and Greek classics bear witness." It should be observed that, for the most part, only college graduates could read Latin and Greek with facility, and there were not that many of them in the American colonies. Men who had attended secondary schools in their childhood had learned the rudiments of the ancient languages, but that knowledge would decay over the years. Since a heavily classical education was almost the only type available on the secondary or college level, it is significant that so many people, other than the relatively few college graduates, were interested enough in the ancient classics to purchase them in other forms. The second point, which is a pernicious one because it seems to suggest that even the most devoted classicists among the colonials merely made a show of their learning and used the venerable tomes in their collections simply to decorate their bookshelves, can be countered by the observation that
Jefferson owned more than one copy of the authors he read most often.

Adding to the confusion about the nature of the colonials' appreciation of the classics is the fact that many, if not most, Americans who did read translations, epitomes, and surveys used those written and edited by the radical Whigs. Some of the most popular were Thomas Gordon's *Sallust* and *Tacitus*, Basil Kennel's *Roman Antiquities*, and Edward Wortley Montagu's *Reflections on the Rise and Fall of the Antient Republicks*. Because the aim of the popularizations and translations was didactic, the Americans' view of antiquity was highly selective and refractive. They were interested in those parts of the classics that seemed to speak most clearly to them, and they saw the classical past as the Western world since the Renaissance had seen it. Once again the observation must be made that the classics speak to every age, and it is not surprising if each age emphasizes those authors and subjects which are most germane to its needs and interests. The colonial Americans are surely not at fault if they shared in the common humanistic traditions of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. America had not yet grown intellectually separate from Europe, but that process would start in the 1760's. It can be traced, for instance, in the growing differences in interpretation of passages from the classics used in the transatlantic and internecine debates and disputes in those years leading up to 1776.
The real confusion arises in connection with the English Whigs and the classics, because Bailyn has found in that radical group the colonials' source of inspiration, argument, and ideal. If most of the reading done by Americans in the classics was from the hand of the radical Whigs, it would be difficult to distinguish two separate sources if only one or the other could be accepted as the primary fountainhead. Fortunately, it is possible to eschew such a Gordian dilemma by the realization that both the Americans and the radical Englishmen were dipping into a common well of classical inheritance and the Englishmen were acting as only one conduit for the Americans.

The spirit of the eighteenth century again enters the discussion in relation to the use of translations and secondary sources by the Americans. Whenever the classics are disseminated to a large audience it is necessary to translate them into the vernacular. It is true that a portion of the spirit, skill, and feel of the original is lost, but the great classical authors are great enough to take such a transformation in stride and still have enough weight and pith to be profoundly valuable and moving. In the mid-twentieth century, for example, a rebirth of many college classics departments is taking place because they have offered courses for study in translation. Many students, piqued by the glory and grandeur of the ancients in reflected form, have advanced to studies in the original
languages. If modern classics and history departments are using translations and commentaries more freely, it is difficult to censure the forefathers for the same "sin." This condescending attitude towards the use of secondary sources is peculiarly "nineteenth century" anyway. Modern pundits are subject to it, but the eighteenth-century universal man was not. Moses Hadas noted the change in scholarship in the nineteenth century. Erudition, accuracy, and critical acumen had always been ideals of scholarship, but it was a means to a fuller life to the humanists and their successors. However, in the nineteenth century, scholarship was dehumanized because it tried to adopt the methods of the exact sciences. Since the goal was the establishment of truth for its own sake, any implications its findings might have for the fuller understanding of man were really incidental. "Those who sought to make the new knowledge relevant were suspect to the esoteric, and anyone who could write readable prose forfeited his standing as a scholar."17

If the Americans of the 1760's and 1770's were closer in spirit to the ancients, and if especially the intellectual elite, those who graduated from college and those who educated themselves through the study of law and history, were steeped in the classical tradition, to what use did they put their learning? There was no more widespread theory in the Enlightenment than that idea that history was a
lessonbook for statesmen, and indeed, an augury for anyone who wished to know the future. It was for the men of the
Enlightenment that Thucydides set down the words of his
history so that they might be "judged useful by those who
want to understand clearly the events which happened in the
past and which, human nature being what it is, will, at some
time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the
future." His work was written with them clearly in mind,
a piece of writing not for his immediate public but for many
generations, forever. Thucydides meant his investigations
to be a handbook for statesmen, and the American colonials
in fact employed his work in that capacity as well as many
of the other classical authors available to them. The
lessons they derived were several and varied. They acquired
a conception of the universality of the difficulties of
forming and maintaining human governments. They saw that
the same factors that caused the failure of the Greek city-
states were not peculiar to ancient Hellas, but could exist
in all times and all places. They read in the abuses and
corruption of the crumbling Roman Republic signs and portents
of their own role in the British Empire. They learned from
ancient statesmen and writers that power is a corrosive
influence on individuals and cliques, and the best way to
dilute it is with a mixed constitution. They discovered the
impermanence of political systems, subject as they are to
the natural cycles of growth and decay. They were involved
in the death of a senescent, oppressive system and the
birth of a fresh, free experiment in government and
liberty. Finally, they were aware of the elements hostile
to a free state and people and the steps which would have
to be taken to establish and protect that freedom. 19

In the period before the Revolution, one of the most
prominent ideas garnered from the classics concerned the
treatment of ancient colonies. Throughout the years of
debate before 1776, the treatment of Greek, Roman, and
Carthaginian colonies was a constant source of discussion.
Parallels between the treatment of the American colonies
by Great Britain and the generous association of the ancient
mother cities and their daughter colonies are everywhere
in the early orations and writings. This interpretation
was challenged later by those who knew a different story
about the colonies, especially in the Roman Republic and
Empire, but the colonials' early use of the classics to
formulate a theory and practice in regard to colonialism
indicates both their familiarity with the ancient sources
and their enthusiasm in employing them for practical
purposes. For instance, in competition for a prize medal,
students from the College of Philadelphia wrote essays on
the topic of the reciprocal advantages of a union between
Great Britain and the American colonies in 1766. John
Morgan, one of the essayists selected for publication in
a pamphlet that same year, held up for emulation: "The
city of Tyre which was like Great Britain, situated upon an island, and like Great Britain, maintained the dominion of the sea by her commerce. The principal seat of her trade, and great source of her wealth, was the noble colony of Carthage, which she founded; the power and naval strength of which was carried to such a height, by means of commerce, that forty years were spent by the Romans, before they were able to subdue this mighty people." 20 Who could miss the point that the road to both peaceful union and powerful riches lay along the trade routes between Great Britain and America? Joseph Reed, another essayist, in his effort entitled, "Divide et impera" was also hortatory but his remarks contained a slight touch of admonition as well.

Rome the mistress of the world and arbiter of nations, by her wise policy and prudent conduct to her allies and colonists, raised herself to an astonishing pitch of grandeur and power; she encouraged, she incorporated, and never deprived them of any essential privileges. By these rules she gained their affections, and of factious turbulent citizens, and often of inveterate enemies she made faithful, zealous, and useful subjects. 21

His fellow students of Roman history might question the accuracy of his analysis of Roman imperial policy, but few would dispute the point he made. It was probably not the result the merchant of Bristol expected when he had offered the money for the prize medal to Provost William Smith during his fund-raising trip to Great Britain. In case the point was missed, however, Reed said later in his essay, changing his simile to America, that "Rome, in its early ages, was
poor in every thing but the public spirit and bravery of her people, while she was the dread and terror of the nations around her . . . ." 22 This practical use of the classics by two colonial college men testifies to Gummere's observation that the American approach to the classics was "flexible" and "human." It was a process that sought not to imitate or reflect the classics but to internalize them in a manner that he calls "refraction." They did not seek a logical order to theory among the classics but selected whatever was relevant at the time of their needs. The treatment was often informal, and often, the same passages could be quoted by different sides, perhaps cited from memory, and sometimes altered to suit the circumstances. 23

From their knowledge of ancient and modern history the Americans were conscious of the potentially dangerous position they occupied as colonists. Especially from parallels in ancient history, they could trace the predicament of colonies when the mother country grew oppressive and the plight of the colonial residents when they were refused full citizenship rights as a prelude to more tyrannical proceedings. Recent American scholarship has established that the colonials really did fear the attacks on their traditional rights and privileges by the British imperial government and it was the dread of what would happen after these bulwarks had fallen that drove them to revolt. They became convinced that there was an active
conspiracy on the part of a cabal in Parliament to reduce them to conquered provinces, and to install a harsh regime over them that would drain the colonies dry economically and politically. They found this easy to believe because their basically Calvinist theology told them that human nature was essentially evil and weak. They knew from their fairly recent experience with the Great Awakening that individuals and groups tended to drift into immorality, and especially those exposed to the insidious corruption of power. Terrified by the picture they had drawn for themselves, the colonials responded to British maneuvers with mob violence, petitions, boycotts, and extravagant rhetoric drawn from any source that seemed to suit the need for vigorous eloquence. They were growing dissatisfied with the form of government imposed on them and felt their old English rights were being subverted and their natural rights were being legislated away.

Several sources of this rhetoric and theory were extremely important to the colonials, but none was more important than the ancient classics. As I have noted above, however, the significance of the classics is generally ignored or allowed only slight influence by the majority of American historians of the Revolution. This attitude has brought about a reaction on the part of a few more enlightened scholars and soon, perhaps, the classics will resume their rightful position among the sources of the
Revolution. The hostility to the classics is nothing new, and in fact almost every generation undergoes a dispute between the "ancients" and the "moderns." Among the Romans themselves there were anti-Hellenists like Cato, and many of the early Christians were determinedly anti-classical. There were many anti-pagan Churchmen during the Middle Ages and even some anti-humanists during the Renaissance. The "Battle of the Books" in England was actually a paradigm of many struggles before it and after it, even into the twentieth century. The opponents of classical learning generated their strongest attacks in the seventeenth century with the development of the new science. The anti-classicists demanded that useful science should be the subject of study and investigation and not the dead languages and philosophies of the ancients. By 1600 most classical authors could be read in translation and people in general were infused with a thirst for the new scientific learning. The classics did survive the assaults of the seventeenth century and were still the major element of education and culture all through the eighteenth century. In every age, the classics have had their opponents who denigrate their importance. American historians of the twentieth century downgrade their significance for the Founding Fathers in spite of the fact that, "It may be doubted that any group of statesmen anywhere in the world was more conscious of the lessons of antiquity and more determined to profit from them." It is appropriate now, at the two hundredth
anniversary of the birth of the Republic, to reassert the significance of the classics to the American colonials in general and their statesmen and leaders in particular.

In his corrective effort of 1963 Gummere established the value of investigating the extent to which the classical tradition affected the education, the statecraft, the church, the literature, and later the art of the North American colonies. He believed the classical tradition penetrated deeply into the speeches and writings and the formal and informal language of provincial Americans, from the first settlement to the birth of the nation. In his studies, Gummere covered the whole colonial period and concentrated on selected individuals whose devotion to the classics was exceptional. One of the most significant forms of literature in the colonial period was the pamphlet. It was often used to develop constitutional arguments and so appealed often to the intellectual elite. It was also a propaganda device for them. In fact, it was the main mechanism for that purpose, along with the newspaper, and thus appealed also to the general reading public. The outstanding thinkers of the Revolution published their more important works as pamphlets, and the basic elements of American political thought appeared first in pamphlet form. "Each step in the development of the constitutional argument was taken in the pamphlet." The American pamphlet writers were almost all men heavily engaged in other
professions. They were lawyers, ministers, merchants, and planters who turned to polemical writing only out of public spirit and necessity. Until the crises of the Anglo-American disputes reached them, they had no occasion to turn out open letters, tracts, and pamphlets, and so the quality of the prose is not remarkably high, at least in comparison with the professional polemicists of Great Britain and Europe. However, precisely because this literature is unprofessional and produced from the heart of a provincial elite, it is a valuable indicator of the level of cultural attainments and interests among the colonial Americans. If the classics were important to them, they should certainly appear in these pamphlets. If the pamphlets are a glance into the intellectual milieu of the Americans, and if the classics occupy a prominent place in the ideology and arguments presented in the pamphlets, then an analysis of them would go a long way towards proving that the ancient classics were indeed an integral part of the thought of the American Revolution and not just secondary, derivative, and decorative.

Thomas R. Adams has provided a convenient selection of important political pamphlets in his bibliographical study, American Independence: The Growth of an Idea. In collecting the material for his bibliography of 231 pamphlets, Adams followed several criteria that restricted the type of work included in the list and which appear to be
worthy of imitation in a study of the use of the classics in the pamphlets. His study is confined to the essays that discuss the issues and events that occurred between the passage of the Stamp Act and the Declaration of Independence. In the dozen years between 1764 and 1776 these occurrences changed the loyal and newly victorious English provincials into disgruntled and rebellious American patriots. The pamphlets that concern the most important issues and events caught the interest of all the colonials and reflect the spectrum of their opinions and dogmas on these subjects. Adams selected a specific class of these pamphlets for study. To be included in his bibliography, a pamphlet had to be American: that is, written by an American and published in America, or written by an Englishman and reprinted in America, or even written by an Englishman and never reprinted in America, but so familiar to Americans that some of them published replies to it. The pamphlet had to concern a question that led directly to the Declaration of Independence. It also had to be a political essay and to have appeared in the form of a pamphlet. These criteria narrowed the field of pamphlets from several hundred to only 231, but for a study of the classics in the pamphlets further winnowing is necessary. In this study, only pamphlets written by Americans (with one exception) and published in America will be considered. This study will be concerned only
with political pamphlets published first in pamphlet form. Therefore, sermons, orations, and public prayers, and essays published first in newspapers will not be considered. This restricts the material to purely political issues and maintains the distinction of the literary form.

If the classics were important to the colonial writers, they will show up in a random sample of the pamphlets. For this purpose, two groups of pamphlets were selected for study. The first group, consisting of forty pamphlets, were part of a series. They were important and controversial enough either to cause a series of pamphlets to be written in response to them, or they were part of that series. The second group of thirty-eight pamphlets was not part of any series, although that does not mean they were not considered significant by the colonials. All seventy-eight pamphlets met the criteria outlined above and were selected from the two different groups in order to provide a truly random sample of both important and less important examples of American pamphlet writing. Of the total number of pamphlets, thirteen had what must be considered a significant amount of classical material. This means that the pamphlet contained a large quantity of classical thought and factual data that the quality of that use was high. Of the thirteen, seven were written by Whigs, four by Tories, one was an open letter from the Boston merchants, published in London. Seven other pamphlets had
less, but still significant, material: six penned by Whigs and one by a Tory. Eighteen pamphlets had a little classical material, perhaps a paragraph or two, and ten others had at least a classical aphorism on the title page. Thirty of the seventy-eight contained no discernable classical content at all. Of the thirteen pamphlets with the most classical material, ten came from the group of important pamphlets that were part of a series, and only three came from the group of random pamphlets.

It is not enough, however, simply to analyze the classical content of a selected group of pamphlets in order to demonstrate the colonials' use of ancient ideals. Both the quantity, or frequency, of that use and the quality of it is important. How well did the colonials understand the classical authors they were using? How did they gain their knowledge of the classics? How pervasive was familiarity with classical matters among the colonials? Were only the economic and intellectual elite comfortable among the Greeks and Romans, or did the common people also have an acquaintance with them? How can the classics as a source of ideology for the Revolution be distinguished from the other streams of thought and theory flowing into the colonials? These and other questions must be anticipated and answered before an evaluation of the content of the pamphlets themselves can take on its fullest significance. The pamphlets as an isolated facet of the colonial intellec-
tual culture are not enough to make the case for the importance of the classics to the colonials. Against the background of the entire American environment, however, they add a weighty stone to the scale in favor of the classics. In order to appreciate the direct and indirect influence of the classics on the ideology of the Revolution, it is necessary to survey the various other ideologies that affected the Americans and to see how the classics is both a column and the stylobate in the structure of American political theory. To establish the credentials of the colonial elite as critics and connoisseurs of the lessons of the ancient past, the beginning of their familiarity with the classics must be traced back to their education in the secondary schools and colleges of eighteenth-century America. It was there that they first plunged into the deep spring of classical learning and emerged with the cultivation and schooling that stayed with them for the rest of their lives. Finally, some appreciation of the role of the classics in American cultural life in general is essential to comprehend the spirit in which the pamphlets used the classics and the atmosphere in which they were disseminated. Then a discussion of those pamphlets which use the classics most frequently will complete this attempt to demonstrate the primacy and vitality of the classics in the ideology of the American Revolution.
Notes for Chapter I


5 Meyer Reinhold and John W. Eadie, "Research on the Classical Influences on Early America," *The Classical World* (Oct. 1973), 1-3. See also "Digest of Conference" published by Center for Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, July, 1971). It was a limited publication but photostatic copies may be purchased from the Center.

The historians interested in this area plan to publish a collection of monographs and to sponsor a series of lectures in 1976.


14 The Dilettante Society was founded in 1733 by a group of eighteenth-century English gentlemen who were seriously interested in ancient history and the archaeology of the classical civilizations.

15 Colbourne, p. 22.

16 Wood, Creation, p. 50.


18 Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War, Bk. I: 23.


21 Joseph Reed, "Divide et Impera," Four Dissertations, . . . . , p. 82.
22 Ibid., p. 86.

23 Gummere, Colonial Mind, p. viii.


26 Burns, p. 142.


29 Bailyn, Pamphlets, p. 13.


31 Ibid., p. xi.
peremptory question, as Syme puts it, concerns the colonial notables: do they secede from the mother country, and, if so, for what reasons? In regard to the Americans, there is a close correlation between the reasons they chose to secede or rebel and the ideology they developed to justify that decision.

Why would provincial Americans, and particularly the elite, feel left out of the benefits of empire? The answer is that in colonial America there were few institutions in which to develop a vested interest. In Great Britain, on the other hand, almost the entire upper class, aristocrats and commoners, had their choice of a variety of institutions to enter, which would insure their identification with and loyalty to the imperial system. The majority of members of the mid-eighteenth-century House of Commons entered politics to obtain public distinction and to advance their already high social status. Because politics was not the essential means to advance their private interests through public legislation or to establish and maintain a high status in society, most of them felt little reason to oppose the Crown very often. The same was not true in provincial America. "In a land with no peerage to aspire to, few knighthoods to be hoped for, no college of heralds to establish and defend the status of armigerous gentry, and even regular British army commissions for . . . Washingtons not to be counted on--in a land where the King
did not act as the fountain of honor—there could be no class of English country gentlemen and thus no widely and deeply felt, status-prompted rhetoric of obedience to the British crown."

If there were few rewards for Americans to aspire to, there were even fewer means of earning them. The opportunities for the unfolding of talent in an undeveloped society were scarce and most of them were in the public arena. American society was rural and undifferentiated and its economy agricultural and parochial. The opportunities for an American man of talent were decidedly limited. Henry Steele Commager believes Henry James' observation of the "negative spectacle" facing Hawthorne was even more accurate for the generation of Jefferson and Adams. There were almost no institutions from which to choose a career and provide a scope for the unfolding of ambition and talent.

No State, in the European sense of the word, and indeed barely a national name. No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country houses, nor personages, nor thatched cottages, nor ivied ruins, no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities, nor public schools... no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class.

As if this sere panorama were not enough, Commager adds that during the youth of the Founding Fathers, no capital, no cities, no manufactures, no newspapers, no journals, no libraries, and few professions existed. Not
only were the opportunities for leadership and distinction confined almost wholly to the public arena, but those opportunities were numerous, urgent, and inviting. This provides some explanation for the depth of genius in public affairs evident in the generation that fought free of the British Empire and founded a nation and government that exists two hundred years later. Americans may not have been completely aware of the deficiencies of their society, but they were conscious of a resentment and frustration that flourished as Great Britain made their inferiority more obvious in the contentious duodecade before the Revolution.

As Americans became more cognizant of their predicament, ideology became more important to them. It may be that ideas are less meaningful to a people in a politically and socially stable situation. In a stable society, ideology becomes a conventional habit which provides answers when no one is asking serious or searching questions. However, in an unsettled, troubled society where many difficult, critical questions arise, ideas became vital and popular. Since ideas and beliefs are ways of perceiving and explaining the world, they say as much about the people using the ideas as they do about the situation that causes them. "Out of the multitude of inherited and transmitted ideas available in the eighteenth century, Americans selected and emphasized those which seemed to make meaningful what was happening to them." There was some sort of
elective affinity between the Americans' interests and their beliefs, for only the most revolutionary social needs and circumstances could have sustained such revolutionary ideas. When the rhetoric utilized to pronounce these selected ideas is examined, its predominant characteristics are fear and frenzy, exaggeration and enthusiasm, and a general sense of social corruption and disorder out of which would grow a new, better system where Americans would become the paragons of civic virtue. 6

The most important vehicle for the expression of this ideology in terms of both propaganda and constitutional arguments was the pamphlet. It was supposedly written by and for the elite, 7 both the intellectual and the economic elite which oftentimes in the eighteenth century consisted of the same individuals. The classics also were theoretically the special domain of this elite since the lower classes had neither the education nor the leisure to pursue their study. 8 However, many of the pamphlets published during the controversies of the years preceding the Revolution did appeal to the general public and, in fact, the common people accepted many pamphlets so eagerly that they went through several editions. The undisputed bestseller was Thomas Paine's Common Sense, which went into twenty-five editions. The closest competitor was Bishop Jonathan Shipley's A Speech . . . On the Bill for Altering the Charters . . . of Massachusetts Bay which had twelve edi-
tions. Several other pamphlets had issues of seven and five editions, which indicates that the audience of the pamphleteers was not restricted to the limited numbers of the elite. At first glance it might appear that only the educated elite could appreciate the esoteric allusions to classical authors and ancient history, but this apparently was not the case. Only college graduates could understand or even read the texts quoted in the pamphlets in Latin or Greek certainly, but the large number of translations, epitomes, and commentaries circulating within the colonies among literate people of all classes suggest that many colonials who did not have the benefit of a college education could still understand and appreciate those allusions and quotations in the pamphlets that were rendered in English. It appears that even among relatively unlettered folk, enough classical knowledge of a second-hand variety filtered down from the more educated individuals around them to provide them with at least a vague comprehension of the common elements of the classical heritage. If people could not read or could not understand a given passage in a public document, they could always turn for exegesis to a more educated or experienced member of the community, and indeed such public reading and discussion was a tradition in colonial America. Individuals who could listen with approbation to a play of Shakespeare and follow the thread of bombastic revivalist sermons were capable of fathoming the
complexities and asides of a political pamphlet that analyzed issues which concerned them deeply and with which they were long familiar.11

If ordinary colonial citizens were able to follow most of the arguments concerning the controversies with Great Britain, it was the elite who made those arguments and it was their developing frustration and bitterness which caused them to turn away from the British Crown and Parliament and to lead their fellow colonials with them. One of the reasons the colonial elite in the Anglo-American colonies decided to secede was that their personal ambitions were frustrated. The only area really open to them was in public service, but even there, they were not allowed free rein to their ambitions and aspirations. The highest political posts in the colonies were generally closed to the colonials. The governors, in consultation with their councils or with royal officials in Great Britain, selected individuals for positions in the upper hierarchy in the royal colonies and the proprietor had the final voice in filling executive offices in the proprietary colonies. Those provincials who did attain office tended to come from a small, select number of established families who had contacts in Great Britain and who had already acquired a high economic and social status in the colonies. New men either had to cultivate friendships and contacts with the right people, or they were permanently consigned to the
colonial assemblies with no hope for higher advancement. This was because "the channels to high office were clogged with colonial favorites and non-native placeman interlopers who took more than their share of offices (plural office-holding) over extended periods of time (unchecked tenure)."¹² Many of the men who moved up into the late colonial executive hierarchy had served in the colonial assemblies, but they were almost invariably individuals who supported the imperial viewpoint in controversies with Great Britain and were members of the Establishment.

In his study of the executive officeholders in the periods before and during the Revolution, James Kirby Martin found certain clear differences between those who held posts in the colonies under the British Empire and those who held them after the Declaration of Independence. Executive officeholders of both types tended to come from families that were well off. However, Martin found that while 50 percent of the individual officeholders were personally wealthy and 40 percent were well-to-do, only 34 percent of their families were wealthy, only 32 percent were well-to-do, and 34 percent had average means. This indicates that as a group, the executive officeholders tended to increase their economic worth in their lifetimes. The distinction appears when the officeholders are analyzed in subgroupings of "late colonial," "loyalist," and "Revolutionary" leaders. While 40.3 percent of the late colonial officeholders came
from wealthy families and only 26.4 percent of the revolutionary leaders came from wealthy families, 49.5 percent of those who became loyalist executives came from wealthy families. Most revolutionary leaders grew up in families with average income (40.7 percent). Since 89 percent of these men had attained wealthy or well-to-do status by the outbreak of the Revolution, their aggressive upward economic mobility is clear. In comparison, the late colonial executives did not display such an upward tendency but many of them started higher in an economic sense. The revolutionary executives were more often men of personal initiative and drive who had a less favorable position to start from but who were hungry and eager to increase their wealth and social standing. High offices in the colonial government were one way of achieving high social and economic status, but for men from average family backgrounds, it was difficult if not impossible to compete with individuals from established families.\textsuperscript{13}

Even religious affiliation appeared to mark off those who could hope for a high executive appointment and those who were stuck in the elected assemblies. Those who were late colonial executives and those who became loyalists were more often Anglican while the revolutionary leaders tended to be old line Congregationalists and Presbyterians or to subscribe to one of the evangelical sects. A more pertinent source of distinction was education because it
provoked greater tension between the higher and lower leadership in the colonies. Individuals who had attained a college education felt they were marked for positions of leadership, and, for those with the proper connections in Great Britain or America, the expectation was often fulfilled. For those young men in America who had come from a lower socio-economic background and who especially cherished hopes of advancement and reward, there was often bitter disappointment for their rising expectations. These highly talented, ambitious, successful men advanced to short of the highest colonial and intra-colonial offices and were left nursing their resentment and frustration as the offices went to others. The degree of their education made them all the more sullen towards the higher officeholders. Educated people who are systematically frustrated and denied opportunities may turn to violence to sweep away the organization or the individuals that stand in their way.¹⁴

Often economically successful and socially prominent, the educated elite found themselves stymied for political advancement and immobilized in the elective legislatures. There, however, they met other men like themselves and they fed and grew on each other's anger and frustration. They formed into opposition factions devoted to protecting the charters of the colonies and the rights of the English colonials, and, incidentally, to harassing as much as
possible those favored few in the highest offices they could never expect to reach. Clearer to these men than to anyone else in the colonies was the danger of any new or further imperial restraints and demands on the colonies. Sharply conscious of the disabilities under which they already labored, they were determined not to suffer meekly any additional impositions. When the higher officials in the colonies were required to implement new restrictive policies of the imperial government, they became open targets for the venting of the frustration and wrath of the lower officials. The hostile dichotomy that grew up between the American leaders and the imperial officeholders boded ill for the incorporation of the native colonial aristocracy into the upper class of the Empire. As the bitterness and antagonism grew between the two types of officials and leaders, it grew more apparent that the bulk of the native "aristocracy" was not going to be allowed, ever, into the upper echelons of imperial society. The peremptory question about the colonial notables was being answered, and the Americans gradually came to realize that they were going to have to secede from the Empire if their needs and ambitions were to be satisfied.

By the time of the French and Indian War, the Americans had developed a view of the origins and rights of the British colonies. Imperial administrators were mostly unaware of this interpretation of the causes and origins of
the colonies and probably would have been disturbed by it. As early as the Stamp Act crisis, the colonials had studied their seventeenth-century origins and had investigated their provincial history in order to establish who they were and how they had come to be there. The conceptions and interpretations they developed made it increasingly difficult for the Englishmen on either side of the Atlantic to understand what the other was talking about. The Americans used the whole history of human colonization and their interpretation of constitutional propriety to elevate their disputes with Great Britain to the level of universal justice. In Great Britain, conversely, the imperial bureaucrats viewed the machinations of the devious colonials with contempt. "By 1763 it was manifest . . . in London that colonization was somehow a subversive process . . . . Just as Americans were coming to glorify colonization as a great era in the history of freedom, Britons were regarding it as a period of waste, suffering, and tyranny over heathen natives."

By 1775, the two concepts of colonization were wholly opposite; the noble purposes of emigration against the ignoble processes of settlement.

As the disputes between the colonies and mother country escalated, American leaders became convinced that they faced a deliberate conspiracy to eliminate their rights and freedoms and bind them to Great Britain as vassals. The conviction existed at the beginning of the controversy and
grew steadily everywhere in the colonies, especially where confrontation politics had grown most violent and colonial leaders felt most secure in declaiming the intentions and plots of the imperial conspirators. For their part, the bureaucrats of the imperial administration were also convinced that they were faced by an active conspiracy of radicals who were intriguing to split the colonies from the mother country. With both sides certain of a conspiracy by the other to attain ends that were detrimental to their best interests, the lack of communication and understanding increased yearly as both words and actions were routinely misinterpreted and misunderstood on the two shores of the Atlantic. As the Americans grew more convinced that the higher officials in the colonies were the willing tools of a conspiracy on the part of imperial officers in London, they launched bitter attacks on the words, deeds, and persons of the colonial officials and sought to establish and amplify their theories of the origins and rights of the colonies. The best vehicle for the attacks and for the theoretical arguments was the pamphlet. Much of what is known about the Revolution comes from these partisan documents as both sides sought to establish principles, uncover plots, and demolish enemies. Much of the revolutionary propaganda from the colonial side helped to develop a feeling of nationalism and solidarity and to stimulate the ideals of a new democratic republic. The
pamphleteers gave expression to ideas that had been germinating for decades and release to frustration that had been building for years. The pamphlets appealed to a common history and a common destiny and presented ideas that had been floating around for a long time.\textsuperscript{17}

The citizens of the thirteen British colonies were a heterogeneous, unlikely set of allies. Each colony was separate and jealous of its identity. The colonies individually were divided along many lines: the coast from the interior and the frontier, the large from the small farmers, the city dwellers from the rural inhabitants, the merchants from the agriculturalists. There were other social, political, and economic divisions within the colonies, but what is remarkable about all this diversity is that much of it was submerged in the Revolutionary ideology developed in the preliminary forays before 1775. "This ideology, like ideologies generally, was neither cause nor effect but both—the effect of accumulated grievances and an instrument for mobilization of a heterogeneous society behind a political movement."\textsuperscript{18} It was derived from many different sources, but, while the sources might appear disparate, they had certain themes in common. The authors and thinkers employing them also had certain qualities in common with each other and with the original authors of those traditions. The American elite which led the colonials was part of the American Enlightenment in that it found support in experience as well as philosophy and
vindicated itself by reference to environment and circumstances as well as to imagination and logic.

Besides the common denominators of participation in the ideas of the Enlightenment and an appreciation of the realities of the environment, these intellectuals were touched by the growing secularism of society in general and the upper classes in particular. They had rediscovered the Stoic doctrines of an obligation to posterity and a duty to society. Almost all the leading men of colonial America appear to have studied the same texts, absorbed the same maxims of conduct, and subscribed to the same philosophical precepts. All knew Plutarch, Thucydides, and Tacitus in school and studied Locke, Bolingbroke, Hume, and Montesquieu later. Many of them would have enthusiastically agreed with Jonathan Mayhew when he said, "Having been initiated in youth in the doctrines of civil liberty, as they are taught in such men as Plato, Demosthenes, Cicero and other persons among the ancients, and such as Sidney and Milton, Locke, and Hoadley among the moderns, I liked them; they seemed rational." The American leaders drew the same lessons from their study of the classics of Greece and Rome and from the literature of English liberals. They learned that the same rules of morality operated at all times, in all places, and in all societies. They believed that the affairs of men were controlled by undeviating laws of Nature and that there was "an indissoluble union between
virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxim of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity," as Washington phrased it. It was an article of faith to them that the first duty of a good citizen was service to the common good, or, as Benjamin Rush said, "Every man in a republic is public property. His time and talents, his youth, his manhood, his old age, nay more, life, all, belong to his country." \(^{20}\) To the men of the Enlightenment who had not learned to distrust all analogies from remote times and alien societies, history, all history but especially Greek, Roman and English history, could confidently be drawn upon to provide lessons that would be relevant for their own times and their own problems."\(^{21}\) Philosophy was a search for scientific laws, and laws are true in all societies and all times. The obvious place to search for the laws of the operation of human society was in the records of past and present societies and civilizations without regard for their outward differences and peculiarities. Thus, Americans seeking to establish the laws of Nature and to uncover violations of those laws on the part of Great Britain could with confidence brandish the practices and theories of other times and other nations.

Because they were philosophers of the Enlightenment and because their own past supplied them with only 150 years of history, the Americans delved into historical
traditions wherever they found kindred souls. To nourish the glimmerings of a nascent nationalism, they immersed themselves in several pasts to provide for their new people on appropriate cultural and psychological foundations.²² The most conspicuous source of inspiration and thought for the American thinkers and writers were the ancient classics. Very influential also were the ideas and attitudes of the authors of the Enlightenment, such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Beccaria, and Montesquieu. The American pamphlets constantly refer to the traditions of English common law, particularly those authored by colonial lawyers. Another major source was the political and social ideas of New England Puritanism, especially the theories associated with covenant theology. However, the sources that the majority of modern historians believe were the most important for the Americans were the Old Whig radicals and the anti-Stuart republicans of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Great Britain. As the best authority on the pamphlets, Bailyn has stated that all the sources of the colonials' miscellaneous learning were brought together and shaped by this last group of writers.²³ However, Bailyn admits that the classics were the most conspicuous source for the writers of the pamphlets and that knowledge of the classics was universal among colonists with any degree of education. He still maintains that the colonial display of classical learning in the pamphlets was superficial window-dressing.
The classics were, however, an essential, primary source for the colonials who knew them from school and from later adult reading. They were also an indirect source since many of the other sources themselves relied upon the ancient authors, especially the Old Whig writers and the thinkers of the Enlightenment. If the Old Whig writers did help the colonials shape and phrase their understanding of the classics, there is no shame or inferiority in accepting and using the commentaries and translations of a previous age and sentiment. Even modern classical scholarship builds on the work of past students. Of all the sources engaged by the authors of the pamphlets, none is more important than the classics and few could match the ringing phrases and immortal principles transmitted from the minds and hearts of the ancient authors.

The memory among the colonials of the anti-Stuart traditions was a mixture of their own and British history. They recalled the terrible excesses of Stuart despotism and the persecution that had driven some of their ancestors to emigrate to America. Since it was part of the history of their origins, they remembered clearly "when prerogative was unlimited, and liberty undefined and arbitrary power, under the shelter of unlimited Prerogative was making large strides over the land." Throughout the eighteenth century this vivid memory and attendant fear was with the colonial
legislators as they watched each governor as a potential despot. Coupled with the personal situation of many of the frustrated men in the assemblies, the memory of the royal use of prerogative insured that the legislatures would assiduously play their role as "the main barrier of all those rights and privileges which British subjects enjoy." Parliament had successfully imposed explicit restrictions upon the use of prerogative in Great Britain but no limits had ever been placed on it in the colonies. As a result, the fear of unrestrained prerogative was always with the colonials and when Great Britain began to impose restrictions and curtail their rights as Englishmen, some colonials turned to the writings of the opponents of the Stuarts. In Great Britain the struggle had been between Crown and Parliament in the seventeenth century, and in their day, it was to be a struggle between a corrupt, arbitrary Parliament and the bastion of liberty, the colonial legislature. The writers in this anti-Stuart tradition were Milton, Harrington, Henry Neville, and Algernon Sidney. They had fought against the extension of arbitrary power on the part of the executive at the expense of the legislature and the constitution. Many colonials saw their struggle in the same terms and used these writers to protest similar innovations by Parliament.

Because most talented men in the colonies were channeled into the public arena in search of opportunities for leadership and distinction, many of them turned to a career in law
as a livelihood and as a preparation for public service. To study law is to study its history and many lawyers were familiar with the ancient origins of common law and some of them wrote pamphlets. The great figures of British legal history are referred to repeatedly in the pamphlets, especially Sir Edward Coke, Francis Bacon, Sir Matthew Hale, and Sir John Holt. The colonials made frequent use of the standard commentaries, trial reports, and treatises on English law, but if they wished to discuss the origins of common law they had to recover the Anglo-Saxon constitution of the ancient Britons. Such a Gothic constitution is fictitious, but many lawyers and historians believed in its existence and followed Blackstone's advice to investigate the "fountains" of law in "the customs of the Britons and Germans, as recorded by Caesar and Tacitus." Caesar's Gallic Wars testified to the bravery and virtue of the Germans, especially in the figure of Vercingetorix, for he knew that to praise your enemies is to increase your victory over them. The Germania of Tacitus was a study of the politics and society of the Germans, and Englishmen and their American descendants liked to partake of his praise for the virile, pure Germans and their institutions. Their government was monarchical, but it was an elective kingship limited by a Council of clan elders and the leaders of war bands, and by the Assembly of all male warriors in the tribe. The German king ruled by example and justice, as
did the leaders of the war bands, for his power was limited by his success and by both the jealousy of the nobles and the scrutiny of the free warriors. Such a natural mixed government appealed mightily to the American colonials as it had to the Roman Tacitus. Tacitus had made it clear, and his Whig translator Thomas Gordon had underlined it, that a corrupt nation ruled by arbitrary power could never govern a virtuous nation subject to the rule of law. Colonial lawyers and writers could trace the origins of common law to these treatises by Caesar and Tacitus, thus mining a vein of classical information even in the midst of legal arguments and constitutional debates.

Thoughts and trends from their own past provided a source of ideology in the struggle with Great Britain on two disparate levels: politics and religion. By 1763, the colonial legislatures had developed political maturity and a considerable control over local affairs, had found capable leaders, and had developed a rationale to support their demands for political power within the colonies and the Empire. As Great Britain tried to cancel their accomplishments, the colonial leaders made clear the wide gulf between imperial theory and colonial reality. Through the years of colonial wars and imperial neglect, the assemblies had gathered the reins of power into their hands and had no intention of releasing them. After the last great war with the French, they had emerged with growing
confidence and an increased sense of their power and importance. As the power in the colonies shifted from the governors to the legislatures, there arose a group of extraordinarily able politicians within them. They were men confined to the legislatures by their lack of patrons and contacts and they used the disputes with the imperial administration to develop their leadership abilities and to attack the system they found restrictive.

Many Americans brought a religious perspective to the difficulties with Great Britain. As Calvinists, they were certain that mankind was easily given to corruption and vice. To avoid such pitfalls they practiced the virtues of simplicity, industry, and frugality, but these very virtues, they felt, were being attacked by various British measures. British insistence on such unholy purposes was a sure indication that "the British government had fallen into the hands of a luxurious and corrupt ruling class." It was the connection with Great Britain that brought wealth to the colonies and it in turn encouraged idleness, extravagance, and luxurious living: sure threats to saintly living. The only safe course open to them was to sever all connections with Great Britain, especially commercial ties, and return to a life of self-denial and industry. Indeed, some colonials felt that the oppressions of the British government were a direct result of declension and sin on the part of the Americans. Many believed that it was not just British
degeneracy but their own growing corruption that was causing all their difficulties.²⁸ It was an old tenet of covenant theology that when a people break faith with God, He inevitably sends an oppressor as an instrument of His punishment. Americans were sure they were a chosen people, but they were a little uneasy about their worthiness. To break with corrupt Great Britain and to cleanse their own impure souls were the means of returning to their rightful place as a special people.

The heavy influence of the Enlightenment is profoundly illustrated everywhere in the pamphlets. Locke, Vattel, Beccaria, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire were the spiritual godfathers of the American Revolution. Their insights and ideas about natural rights and social and political contracts were a basic source for the pamphlet writers and for the whole colonial elite. Americans were not just the passive recipients of the thought of the European Enlightenment, or of the English Whigs either. They did not accept ideas predigested and prepackaged and laid at their doorstep ready for use. The American colonials read the philosophes, but they also read what the philosophes had read. Both the Americans and the Europeans acquired their well-known respect for the practical from a close reading of the classics, especially Cicero, who was for them a model of the thoughtful statesman. If the Americans were enthusiastic about the philosophy of the men of the Enlightenment, some of the reason was that they were
familiar with the classical material upon which many of the **philosophes** based their "new" ideas. The "handful of European thinkers" to whom the American intellectuals went to school, themselves went to the same teachers as the Americans.\(^{29}\) Voltaire's appreciation of the ancients went beyond a hero worship of Cicero and the quotation of Latin and Greek aphorisms. He placed modern over ancient science and had contempt for both ancient and modern metaphysical systems. However, in his concern for practical ethics, his reverence for intellectual activity, and his insistence on the sovereign rights of criticism, he was synthesizing the ancient ideas of the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the Skeptics and melding them with the doctrines of modern science. The classics guided and informed Voltaire in everything he wrote. The ancient world "speaks through his criticism of authority, his skepticism of the miraculous, his admiration for men who suffered nobly without hope of heaven or fear of hell, his program for a humane, tolerant society, and his plea for a religion without priests, without ritual, and without nonsense." When Voltaire refers to an article of his as a "chapter taken from Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch," he is not boasting, but citing his authorities. Plutarch was Rousseau's favorite ancient author, and he wrote in his memoirs that as a youth he was ceaselessly preoccupied with Rome and Athens, living the part of a Greek or Roman. He, like many of the **philosophes**, was well-educated in the classics, although, he, unlike the others, was self-educated.
He found an exciting affinity with the critical philosophers like Cicero and Lucretius and the philosophical pragmatists like Epictetus and Seneca. He glorified Spartan simplicity, Roman dignity, and Stoic courage and independence, although he did not accept them uncritically. The American colonials could read Voltaire, Rousseau, and the other philosophes and reverberate to their calls for reform and humanity. They had plumbed the same authors and surfaced with the same moral lessons and viewpoints. History as philosophy showed the way life should be and could be if only the natural laws were obeyed. The ancient thinkers first knew these laws and the man of the American and European Enlightenment were setting them up again in the marketplace where they had lain forgotten and trampled for a millennium.

Bailyn's band of early eighteenth century Whig writers supposedly pulled all these strands of thought together for the American colonials. It was these coffee-house radicals and opposition politicians who synthesized the revolutionary theories and reform ideals of the classics, the Enlightenment, English history, and the anti-Stuart tradition into manageable form for the provincial Americans. They themselves, however, were not original thinkers but borrowed much from their immediate liberal predecessors like Sidney, Locke, Harrington, and Neville, and, in fact, were dismissed in their own time as mere popularizers. Bailyn allows that the evidence for the profound influence of these writers on the
Americans is "more often . . . implicit." When he mentions three explicit examples to demonstrate the reverence of the Americans for these authors, one of them is Jonathan Mayhew's observation about his initiation in youth to the great thinkers, in which Bailyn deletes his reference to the ancient writers. However popular some of these men—Hoadley, Molesworth, Price, Priestly—were with the colonials, some of the reason for the admiration of others among the republican writers is clearly their connection with the classics. The most frequently cited authority in matters of principle and theory in the pamphlets is Cato's Letters, a series of radical essays named after the Roman martyr to liberty and composed by John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon. Gordon was also well known in the colonies for his liberal republican translations of Sallust and Tacitus, which he prefaced with introductory "Discourses" of great length to lay out in blinding clarity the moral and political meanings of the two ancient historians. He was not the only classicist and historian of the ancient world among the radical Whigs. Several of them combined an extremist political view with a passion for the literature of Greece and Rome and exercised both in lengthy studies of the constitutional history of the ancient republics and democracies.

That the study of the ancient world was a potent force for the reformation of the contemporary world was an undisputed fact to the thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Anyone who read Machiavelli and his
successors among the political scientists was aware how much truth and guidance could be found in the writings and examples of the classical past. Thomas Hobbes early noted what an unfortunate influence, in his view, the study of the ancients had on the men who were responsible for the English Civil War. Later radicals realized the same as Walter Moyle turned from attacks on the standing army to studies on the Roman republic and the Spartans; Gordon left active journalism to translate and write commentaries upon ancient authors which were admired by Jefferson, Franklin and Adams; Conyers Middleton upset his readers with the radical liberalism evident in his studies of Cicero and Livy; and Edward Wortley Montagu drew pessimistic parallels between the ancient republics and the British empire. All this made interesting reading to the Americans of a later day and one Englishman, Thomas Hollis, undertook to make sure that they would have an opportunity to know these authors well. His efforts even led Samuel Johnson to blame him for the American Revolution. After a fire destroyed Harvard's library, which had contained many gifts from the Hollis family, and the Americans became involved in the imbroglio with Parliament over the Stamp Act, Hollis decided that the colonials could benefit from books with the "right political principles."
He sent hundreds of them to Harvard at his own expense, selected to show the advantages of Protestantism, the necessity for toleration and freedom of thought, the virtues of the parliamentary system, the horrors of tyranny, and the
science of politics. Obviously, many of them were the classics and the work of the Whig classicists. His connection with the colonial cause and avocation as the pollinator of republican principles went further as he wrote letters everywhere to support his donation scheme and reprinted pro-American works in Great Britain, often at personal expense. He organized and promoted propaganda there favorable to the Americans and encouraged and supported the developing Revolutionary ideology in America. Perhaps no other Englishman shows the connection so clearly between the European and American ideological sources of the Revolution.

Walter Moyle in two essays on Greek and Roman government pointed out how in Sparta and Rome constitutional power was distributed "into several branches, in the whole . . . composing one great machine . . . each branch was a check upon the other; so that not one of them could exceed its just bounds, but was kept within the sphere in which it was circumscribed by the original frame." He used the history of Lacedaemonia to demonstrate the value of government by consent of a free people and the history of the Romans to show the political decay wrought by luxurious living and unlimited tenure in office. The Romans were impatient of insolence or oppression in their rulers because they had instituted early the rule of law. Thus monarchy gave way to aristocracy which in turn fell to democracy, although
elements of all three forms of government were retained in the Roman constitution. Popular government rose and grew strong through the establishment of the tribunes of the people, the publication of the laws, agrarian legislation, a generous, even "promiscuous" policy of naturalization, a gradual weakening of class distinctions, and finally, the right of all to hold office. This remarkable government began to deteriorate when the Romans failed to adhere to their first principles. They allowed magistrates to stay in office too long and they failed to impeach men who had harmed the state. Corruption, vice, and easy living spread in this atmosphere and sumptuary laws were unable to stop the decay.

Edward Wortley Montagu in his Reflections on the Rise and Fall of Antient Republicks (1759) demonstrated that the Greeks and Romans, who had once been brave and free people, had been "reduced into abject slavery . . . by a degeneracy of manners . . . ." Corruption was the major cause of the collapse of Athens and Rome. Athens fell because of the luxury and immorality of her citizens who attended to "venal orators, who encouraged that corruption to maintain their influence." Montagu warned that citizens had to pay close attention to military affairs or they would fall victim to wealth and luxury. A militia was essential to the protection of the commonwealth, but it had to be an army of the gentry, and not the proletarii. The Roman republic stayed strong as long as it naturalized foreigners and
introduced them to the citizen army led by a militant aristocracy. Conyers Middleton traced the decline of Rome and compared it with what could happen in any republic, but specifically Great Britain. He felt the Roman people had a vigorous part in the government because the Tribal Assembly was the court of last resort. The Senate and magistrates could act without their approval, but a citizen could always appeal to the people. Even this protection against tyranny failed, however, as the Roman character and interests declined "from virtuous industry to wealth; from wealth to luxury; from luxury to impatience of discipline and corruption of morals; till by a total degeneracy and loss of virtue, being grown ripe for destruction, they fell prey at last to some hardy oppressor." James Burgh in *Britain's Remembrancer*, a book popular in the colonies, also detected in a proclivity to luxury, vice, and corruption the reasons for the collapse of empires. Since a sybaritic people are not inclined to fight for themselves, they hire others to do it for them and leave themselves open to the imposition of a military despot. Oliver Goldsmith noted that Rome rose "by temperance and . . . fell by luxury." He felt that the conquest of wealthy Carthage and its rich possessions was the worst thing that could have happened to the Romans for they then began to feel smug and safe and invincible. They felt they could abandon "their ancient modesty, plainness, and severity of
life" and fell victim to luxury and oppression. The military dictators backed by the mercenaries of a hireling army found it easy to overawe and bribe the Roman people in the degeneracy. The citizen militia made Rome great and the sanding army brought its ruin. Throughout the translations, commentaries, and studies of the ancient world, these Whigs wove a thread of moralizing and admonishment. It was this element, with the familiarity of the lessons drawn from the classics, that explains their appeal to the American colonials. They found in the Whig classicists a handy reference and a sympathetic support for their theories of history and politics. The Americans were capable of researching for themselves in the history of ancient and modern republics but it was reassuring to have a group of liberal republicans who agreed with their conclusions and assertions.

The final source of the ideology of the Revolution was the direct influence of the ancient classics themselves. Familiar with the most important authors from secondary school and college, many educated men could speak Latin with facility and read Greek. Individuals without the benefit of a higher education could buy and read translations and commentaries. Almost every patriot took a classical pseudonym at one time or another and its connotations were presumably understood by nearly everyone. Classical references abound in American writings of all kinds, for
the people and the elite. Few writers failed to enhance their works with an allusion to ancient practices and origins. In more significant terms, the classics were vital in shaping the ideals and values of the Revolution. Politics, and, indeed, life was a struggle in the classic mode between virtue and reason, and vice and passion. Pastoral living was the finest and leading men hoped to retire to a Horatian villa after the wars of their youth. Americans admired and emulated the classical virtues: restraint, temperance, fortitude, dignity, independence, and devotion to duty. Because of the situation in which they found themselves and because of their religious and political heritage, they tended to focus on those classical authors who deplored decline and decadence. The classical authors who spoke most clearly to them were those who had lived in times similar to theirs, when empires crumbled and rights and virtue were under attack by the forces of corruption and oppression. These authors knew the key to a great people and a glorious nation. The rustic traits of frugality, industry, temperance, and simplicity made a people strong and virile; and the martial qualities—scorn of ease, contempt of danger, and love of honor—made a nation grand and mighty. Americans took the classics seriously. As a young people, trained in liberty, they found there "a kindred voice speaking of similar aspirations, similar resolves, similar trials." For all the
importance of the other traditions available to them, "it was to Athens and Rome that . . . [the] Founding Fathers looked for the model, the idea, of a republic." 38

The American elite especially were imbued with the spirit of the classics. They particularly cherished the Horatian ideal of patria. The Latin word refers both to fatherland or country and one's rural home or village. Many of the men of the Revolution had a devotion to both interpretations of the concept since, in addition to being national patriots, they harbored a love of their farms, plantations, and country villages. Washington is the archetypal example of the farmer-patriot, and he was honored often with the sobriquet of "Cincinnatus." He wrote in 1797, "I am once more seated under my own vine and fig tree, and hope to spend the remainder of my days, which in the ordinary course of things (being in my sixty-sixth year) cannot be many, in peaceful retirement, making political pursuits yield to the more rational amusement of cultivating the Earth." 39 The poems of Horace, Ovid, and Virgil, to name a few among the Romans, were full of patriotic devotion to the good of the country. They speak of a nostalgic longing for a temporary respite from the cares of the world in order to return to the rustic setting of one's youth, and for the time when a man could retire permanently to his lands and estate to end his days in peace and tranquility. In general, the Americans tended to look with more favor
upon the Romans than the Greeks because they saw in the thousand year history of Rome a record of success, and in the repeated rise and fall of tyrants and demagogues in Greece a dismal register of failure. Although there were elements in the Roman character which they did not approve, it was Rome's long history of civilization and government that impressed them. As well as _amor patriae_ and the staunch personal virtues of the Romans, they admired their emphasis on order and discipline, their respect for law, and, above all, their practicality in developing an effective, viable constitution. Perhaps because they did not have as good a command of Greek, they were more suspicious of the example of the Hellenic states. Surely there were great apolotists for the Greek states among the ancient Hellenic writers but the Americans chose to read them primarily as indicators to what not to do.\footnote{40} To them, the Greek states seemed to alternate between the tyranny of the oligarchs and the anarchy of the demagogues. In the early period of the confrontation with Great Britain, they relished the Greek principles of independence, individualism, and service to the state. The Melian Dialogue, between the democrats turned tyrants and the brave Melians who refused to succumb meekly to Athenian power and arrogance, must have made Thucydides stimulating reading to the Americans as the clash with the British Empire drew nearer. By time of the constitutional convention in 1787, however, some Americans
had soured on unrestrained individuality and democratic independence and looked with jaundiced eye at the attempts of the Greek leagues and amphictyondies to form a commonwealth without the aid of the principle of representative government.

In his study of the classical authors employed in all the revolutionary literature, Charles F. Mullett found an impressive array: Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Aristotle, Strabo, Lucian, Dio Cassius, Polybius, Plutarch, and Epictetus among the Greeks; and Cicero, Horace, Virgil, Tacitus, Lucan, Seneca, Livy, Cornelius Nepos, Sallust, Ovid, Lucretius, Cato, Pliny, Juvenal, Curtius, Marcus Aurelius, Petronius, Suetonius, and Caesar, among the Romans. While many of these writers contributed little to the American ideology, some of them had no less influence than the other major sources of revolutionary theory. The important writers contributed principles of political philosophy, illustration of particular situations and ideas, and window dressing to decorate a page or a speech. It is the last use which Bailyn chooses to emphasize to the denigration of the two other, more important functions of the classics. Mullett found that the colonials used the classical authors again and again to establish the existence and validity of a natural law, superior to all positive law, and to praise the values of individual freedom and its implications. "Whether
used in the indicative sense of Greek philosophy or in the imperative sense of Roman law, the concept of a higher law imparted no small dignity to colonial pleas for more self-government. There is a great deal of discussion in the literature of the Revolution, including the pamphlets, on the treatment of colonies in the ancient world. The interpretations were disputed repeatedly in the pamphlets as writers displayed their ignorance or knowledge of ancient history. Roman colonial policy was alternately portrayed as generous and humane by authors who wished America to share in the benefits of British citizenship, and as brutal and repressive by those who hoped Great Britain would follow the Greek example. Greece founded colonies as independent city-states which had only religious and customary ties to the metropolis. Thucydides' rendition of the dispute between Corinth and her daughter city Corcyra was the standard citation of Greek policy. Late in the dispute with Great Britain, this precedent seemed more and more meritorious to embattled and exasperated Americans. The most popular historians were Cicero, Plutarch, and Tacitus, and to a lesser degree, Livy and Polybius. While Plutarch and Polybius were Greeks, it was the former's Roman biographies and the latter's Roman history that the colonials found interesting because those topics, theories, and statesmen coincided so closely with the issues and requirements of their own day. The classics
gave to the colonials, as they had to the English Whig and Enlightenment writers, clear evidence that a corrupt republic inevitably fell to the power of a military despot. When the Romans failed to enforce their constitution, a military tyrant with a hired army at his back overthrew the republic. The Americans could see the same thing happening to them as Great Britain installed a standing army on their soil with the announced policy of protecting them but with the covert purpose of enforcing Parliament's arbitrary acts of oppression.

Not to be despised is the ornamental and decorative use of the classics by the Americans, for the very assumption that public speeches and documents should contain an element of classical elegance, and immortality speaks clearly of the attitude towards the thought of the ancient world in the eighteenth century. Even if a phrase or aphorism is only a garnishment, its employment means that the colonials felt that any thought or idea worthy of consideration could or should trace its ancestry back to an ancient philosopher or historian. The majority of American leaders were, after all, not lower class anarchists, but middle and upper-middle class capitalists with property to protect and rights and privileges to defend. They were not really trying to establish a completely new order but were trying to secure the ancient rule of Natural Law and reaffirm the ancestral rights of Englishmen. What they wanted was not new and
revolutionary in their minds, but old, honorable, and just. Of course, what they did institute was revolutionary in practice, but they thought they were setting up a government and society that had many precedents in the republics of old. Thus, they pointed often and irritably to the republics of the ancient world to demonstrate how an empire should be run and quoted the ancient authors often, at length and in passing, to show that theirs was only a plea for a just and proven form of government. It is no accident that most of the authors admired by the colonials had oligarchic sympathies or at least distrusted the extremes of democracy. These authors deplored the scheming demagogue as much as the debauched aristocrat. The Americans had to agree that the middle way, a government of the alert and learned natural aristocracy, was the best way. If the Americans paid most attention to a few authors who responded to their interests, it is not remarkable or erroneous because, while the classics speak to all ages, each age listens most closely to the author who answers its questions and holds its interest. In their demand for citizenship rights, the fair treatment of the colonies, and the propriety of Natural Law, they knew they were making classical appeals, so it was manifest that they should rely on the classics to make them. Since they studied history in its moral and philosophical mode and not in the nineteenth century factual manner, it was natural for them
to look upon the history of Greece and Rome as part of their own history. They were classical humanists in spirit and in mind.
Notes for Chapter II

1 See Hopkins' pamphlet in Chapter V.


5 Ibid., pp. 654-55.


8 Jones, 251.

9 Adams, p. xii.

10 See Chapter IV below.

11 In the pamphlets selected for this study a striking anomaly appeared. Some writers, well known for their knowledge of the classics, did not cite them in their pamphlets. In the thirteen pamphlets that contained the most classical material, only two well known classicists appeared: James Otis and Josiah Quincy, Jr. The men who knew the classics and who used them in other works but failed to use them much here were: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Thomas Hutchinson, Jonathan Boucher, Daniel Dulany, Joseph Galloway, Alexander Hamilton, and James Wilson. Some, like Galloway and Hamilton, refused to admit the pertinence of the classics. The failure of the others like Adams and Jefferson is puzzling, unless they were trying to appear unpretentious.

13 Ibid., pp. 94-97.

14 Ibid., p. 138.


16 Bailyn, Pamphlets, pp. 86-88.

17 Davidson, p. 410.


19 Commager, Daedalus, p. 659.

20 Ibid., pp. 659-60.


22 Ibid., 24.

23 Bailyn, Pamphlets, pp. 21-29.


26 Colbourne, pp. 45-26.


28 Greene, Reinterpretation, pp. 41-42.


31 Bailyn, Pamphlets, pp. 29-30.


33 Ibid., pp. 103-07.

34 Colbourne, p. 22. Robbins, p. 293.

35 Robbins, pp. 292-94.

36 Colbourne, p. 23.

37 Woods, Creation, pp. 49-53.


39 Jones, pp. 251-52.

40 Burns, pp. 145-47.


42 Ibid., pp. 94-95.

43 Ibid., pp. 97-99.
Chapter III. Education in Colonial America

Education in the eighteenth century meant primarily a classical education. When the Americans founded their colleges, they based them on the systems and curricula of the great English universities, Oxford and Cambridge, which is not surprising since many of the founders were themselves graduates of the English institutions. When the colleges were founded, their main purpose was to educate the American clergy so that the people would not be at the mercy of an ignorant ministry. Gradually, the sacerdotal orientation of the colleges was lost and they opened their doors to anyone with the time, money, and interest to pursue their course of study. From the earliest period, the colleges taught classical languages and literature almost exclusively, because their main purpose was to train ministers to be competent in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew literature of the Bible. An educated man, however, also knew the pagan classics as well, and when the importance of the clergy declined along with the importance of training the clergy, the study of the classics assumed a primary role in the colleges. Its undisputed position was compromised by the introduction of the new, scientific, practical learning into the curriculum around the mid-eighteenth century. Knowledge
of the classics did remain the mark of an educated gentleman, while scientific knowledge was an indication of a modern, educated gentleman. Americans were ambivalent about the propriety of reading pagan, sometimes atheistic, authors in schools dedicated to godliness. The Puritans were able to reach a compromise between the philosophy of the ancients and the theology of Calvinism as early as 1650, and thereafter the classics were an essential part of every curriculum. In the eighteenth century, other Americans objected to the classics on non-religious grounds. Their attempts to oust or de-emphasize the classics in education also met with compromise, and the classics held sway until the nineteenth century. Efforts to modify the educational standards of the schools had limited success because the classics had been the traditional form of education in Europe and Great Britain since the Renaissance and, in fact, even back into the Middle Ages. It was difficult to change that long tradition overnight. Many schools were still administered and supported by the clergy in the eighteenth century and these men could not admit or understand that the classics were no longer important or relevant. The individuals attending colleges also felt that they were being short-changed if they did not receive a worthy classical education. Courses in mathematics and natural science were interesting and informative, but the true mark of an educated man was still his command of Latin and his familiarity with classical
literature. Without them, even intelligent and witty men felt at a loss in discussion or debate with those who had that background. For these reasons, the classics remained as the core curriculum in most schools—secondary and higher—through the eighteenth century, in spite of spirited and well-intentioned attempts to oust them.

The provincial Americans of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century were almost completely dependent on Great Britain for all things cultural. Their educational outlook and methods were determined by their experience at the English universities. Even after Harvard and later Yale and other colleges were founded, some Americans travelled back across the ocean to receive their degrees.¹ Those American intellectuals who called for reform in the teaching methods and curricula of the American schools based much of their theory on the writings of Englishmen. An educated English gentleman knew the classics with casual familiarity; so, Americans felt, if they were not to feel bumptious and provincial, they had to know the classics also. When republican writers in Great Britain demanded reform in education they meant getting it out from under the influence of the clergy with their deadening insistence on rote learning and memorization. They felt that the proper education of youth was the foundation of liberty. Robert Molesworth, one of the radical Whigs, tended to condemn the English school system, not because of what was taught, but how it was taught. He felt that priests,
whether Catholic, Anglican, or Lutheran, inculcated slavish obedience, stifled the search for truth, and frustrated the growth of independent virtues. Englishmen should be taught by philosophers, like the Greeks and Romans, rather than by priests as was the situation in colleges of his day. Along with Locke's *Letters on Education* and Milton's essay on education, Molesworth's *An Account of Denmark* was one of the most important sources of ideas for educational reform in Great Britain and America. Benjamin Franklin freely admitted that a large part of his inspiration for the Academy of Philadelphia derived from Molesworth.² The writings of Whig reformers and various conditions in America contributed to stimulate a change of attitude and atmosphere in the American colleges during the second quarter of the eighteenth century. The study of antiquity gradually passed from the complete control of the more hidebound clergy and into the hands of individuals with a secular outlook. Many causes, "... the ending of Queen Anne's War... a slow increase in the latitudinarian spirit of American Protestantism, an imperceptible growth in Socinianism, Arminianism, Arianism, and natural theology, private tutoring... library societies... reading, easier communications with Europe, emigration..."³ all contributed to a steady, gradual growth in America of an educational system secular in outlook but classical in content. Some of these were native causes, but there were
some direct influences from Great Britain. Aside from the
importation of Whig writers and the matriculation of
Americans at English schools, occasionally British teachers
were employed in the colleges of the colonies. Most of
these itinerant scholars were Scotsmen who brought with
them innovative ideas and methods in the classics and
installed them in their new positions. The most prominent
example was John Witherspoon at the College of New Jersey,
but two others were William Smith, the first provost of the
College of Philadelphia, and William Small, an instructor
of Thomas Jefferson, who were both graduates of Aberdeen.
This combination of indirect and direct influences on
education in America changed its religious outlook to one
interested in worldly morality and utility.

Some modern historians question the depth and validity
of colonial classical learning. Using various isolated
examples, it appears to them that even the most educated
Americans had only a superficial knowledge of the more
important authors and that there was no detailed, or pro-
found, appreciation of the meaning or spirit of the classical
age. Bailyn, for instance, demeans the colonial under-
standing of the classical authors by citing Mullett's
remarks about the Americans' poor comprehension of Plato.
Bailyn takes his remarks to mean that the colonials read
little if anything in detail and that their interest in
the ancients was confined to finding only those passages in
an author which would help them in a debate, as though the Americans read the ancients by consulting an index and perusing only what was pertinent to them. However, the Americans used those authors which were most familiar to them, from school, and which were most significant to them in content. They did not use all the ancient authors equally, because not all were available to them or germane to the topic under discussion. They did not understand some authors, and it is in this vein that Mullett mentions the misunderstanding of Plato by the colonials. Some authors were, then as now, more difficult than others, and Plato is one of the more difficult. Mullett did not deride the entire colonial comprehension of ancient history and literature by noting their perplexity with regard to Plato, but merely indicated that the philosopher was not particularly popular with the colonials and that those who did cite him often did so incorrectly. Probably they did not read Plato, or, since he was Greek and they did not have as much facility in Greek as in Latin, they did not read him well. Because they did not grasp Plato well does not mean they did not understand the whole pantheon of Greek thinkers, and, in fact, Plutarch and Aristotle, an historical biographer and a philosopher, were more popular and more understood by the Americans. Aristotle was not a democrat, but he promulgated the rule of law and the existence of a Natural Law and so his more undemocratic ideas were over-
looked by the colonials. Plutarch moralized at length in his Greek and Roman lives about the value of honor and courage and about the decline of nations as a result of cowardice and vice. The Greeks in general were not as popular with the Americans, perhaps because of the language, perhaps because of their supposed failure in statecraft. Cicero and Tacitus were the most popular of all the ancient writers because they were in familiar Latin and because they spoke another language the colonials understood: moral indignation and civic disintegration. They understood and admired those writers who lived in the twilight of the Roman republic and who mourned its passing. To comprehend the spirit of an author, the reader must have an interest in the content of that author as well as his style and expression. The eighteenth-century Americans appreciated the manner and the means of these particular ancient authors, but they could also identify strongly with their subject and sentiments.

Education was important in the American colonies and to the American Revolution. Almost from the beginning in the seventeenth century, the leaders among the American colonials were committed to providing an education for their successors in the upper class. Education was not the right of all men, but it was the duty of the natural aristocracy to provide itself with the best training and background for their role as leaders of the communities. The earliest leaders were educated, literate men and their followers
had respect for scholarly learning in their religious and secular leaders. Most of the men who made their reputations before and during the Revolution were individuals who had acquired an upper class education of some kind, whether from college or from private tutors. College-educated men were an elite minority in the colonies because very few families could afford to send their sons to college. There were perhaps 3,000 college graduates in the colonies at the time of the Revolution in a population of about two million. There was one college graduate for every 700 people in the colonies. College-educated men were even a minority among the American class of leaders, if such a designation can be given to the generally upper class group of individuals from the thirteen colonies who assumed leadership of the Americans during and after the Revolution. Of the almost 1,500 Americans born between the years 1700 and 1760 and important enough in their leadership abilities to be listed in the Dictionary of American Biography, only 328 graduated from college or some equivalent and fully 1,172 had no college education. This is not to say they were ignorant, for, more than likely, they attended and graduated from some form of a secondary school in the colonies. If the signers of the Declaration of Independence are accepted as the elite of the leadership of the American Revolution, it is interesting to note that only one half of them, twenty-eight, had some college education in the colonies or in
Great Britain, and the other half had no college training or their education was unknown. Twenty attended college in the colonies, thirteen in Great Britain, and the remaining five somewhere in Europe. While they were a minority even among the elite, these college men had a disproportionate influence on the thoughts and minds of other Americans. They were respected as the American intelligensia and they were able to communicate their ideas and opinions articulately in written and oral form. Trained in college to think and to argue their opinions forcefully and persuasively, they assumed the theoretical leadership of the Revolution from its inception in the 1760's. The education these men received was largely classical, as a survey of the curricula and books of the secondary schools and colleges indicates. As "liberi liberaliter educati," they were gentlemen educated in the liberal arts, which prepared them for a career in any profession. In terms of the reality of American society, it meant they would turn most often to law and public office to utilize their highly developed, though generalized, talents.

A student entered the Latin grammar school at the age of eight or nine, or later, and stayed until his master decided he had learned enough of the rudiments of Latin and Greek to pass the entrance requirements of the college which the student wished to attend. For those who did not attend secondary school, elementary schooling that taught basic
reading, writing, and counting skills had to be sufficient. Many colonials had even less education and had to be satisfied with what they could learn from their families or what they could pick up as they grew older. Most Americans in the eighteenth century lived on the farm and so did not find an advanced education necessary or desirable either for work or recreation. Others received an education as apprentices to the various trades and crafts, and it was a lucky boy among the apprentices who was allowed to complete a secondary school course which was primarily for college preparation. A student, depending upon when he entered the secondary school and how quick he was at Latin and Greek, stayed until he was from fourteen to eighteen years of age and then took the entrance exams at the college of his choice. He stayed at the college for about four years to earn his bachelor's degree and another year or two if he intended to be a scholar and earn a master's degree. There were no minimum age requirements for entrance or graduation and some individuals entered and graduated by the time they were eighteen or nineteen. As a proven elite, they were then able to move into the professions of law, medicine, business, or scholarship. The work of the secondary school was to prepare the student for college. The minimum aim of most schools was to provide their students with the ability to read Cicero and Virgil at sight, the mastery of Latin grammar and simple authors. The curriculum, the textbooks,
and the teaching methods were all tried and true and gauged to the purpose of getting a student past the college entrance examinations.

Harvard established its requirements in 1655 and determined what would be taught in secondary schools for almost one hundred and fifty years thereafter. "When any scholar is able to understand Tully, or such like classical author 'extempore'; and make and speak true Latin in verse and prose, 'suo ut aiunt Marte'; and decline perfectly the paradigms of nouns and verbs in the Greek tongue; let him then, and not before, be capable of admission into the college." This standard was not altered during the eighteenth century. Harvard mentioned Virgil as an example of an ordinary Roman author in Latin verse and Isocrates, later Xenophon, and the New Testament as examples of ordinary Greek authors. Yale added, "the rules of common . . . arithmetic" in 1745, Rhode Island College in 1783, and Princeton in 1760. Because the examining tutors sometimes gave other authors on the entrance examinations, the masters of the Latin schools often introduced their students to a variety of other classical authors—Ovid, Horace, Homer, and especially Erasmus, the Renaissance humanist. To learn all this material, students attended school throughout the year with infrequent holidays. The classdays were long and punishment often corporal and severe. The main techniques of teaching still required prodigious memorization
and precise recitation by the young scholars in spite of attempts to reform the methods of teaching in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. English educational reformers like Locke, Brinsley, and Hoole were followed, up to a point, in the colonies. The reformers felt students remembered more and learned better when they understood what they were doing. The old technique was to have students memorize and repeat the rules of Latin grammar before they understood a word of Latin. The new idea was to furnish the student with a translation in his own language so that he at least knew what he was memorizing. Locke wanted students to learn Latin the same way they learned their own language, by hearing it over and over again until they gradually came to understand it. Through speaking and reading Latin, a student would become familiar and comfortable with it, and inadvertently, pick up some of the grammar and syntax rules that have proven so troublesome to generations of linguistic neophytes. Few American teachers read Locke on education, but some were familiar with his disciple, John Clarke, and used his textbooks. He also discounted the need for rote memorization, but he suggested that students begin reading only after they had some idea of how to decline nouns and conjugate verbs.\(^8\)

American schoolmasters treated innovations in the methods of teaching gingerly. They accepted Clarke's textbooks and some of his ideas, but they still relied a
great deal on memorization and required students to commit to instant recall whole textbooks of Latin grammar. The most popular book of grammar or "accidence" in New England was Ezekiel Cheever's *A Short Introduction to the Latin Tongue* . . . (1709) which contained all the important rules of grammar and short explanations of them in English. To help themselves master these rules and examples, students filled notebooks and exercise books with the rules written out over and over and practice exercises for declining nouns, adjectives, and pronouns, and conjugating verbs. John Barnard was one of those students fortunate enough to have the great teacher Ezekiel Cheever in his school days. In his eighth year, he says in his autobiography, he was sent to the grammar school, "under the tuition of the aged, venerable, and justly famous Mr. Ezekiel Cheever." He left the school after a few weeks and took up with another tutor, lately arrived from England, but after a year and a half, returned to Cheever. Barnard was apparently intelligent but given to mischief, for the schoolmaster used an age-old ploy on the young troublemaker to bring him into line. Cheever's words should be familiar to anyone who attended a traditional school with emphasis or discipline and academic subjects.  

"You Barnard, I know you can do well enough if you will; but you are so full of play that you hinder your classmates from getting their lessons; and therefore, if any of them cannot perform their duty, I shall correct you for it."

The form of correction was a beating, so the master's ploy worked and Barnard the mischief-maker became the
effective enforcer of other students' study in order to avoid a beating himself. Barnard says he was seldom "corrected," or beaten, but one time he incurred the punishment three days running was when, "having no poetical fancy," he failed in an exercise to turn Aesop's Fables into Latin verse. Cheever, however, eventually accepted his plea that "it was in vain to strive against nature any longer," and never again required it of him. Barnard was sometimes a difficult student for the old man in other ways too. He once employed an obscure syntax in the use of a Latin word in a composition and the master found fault with it. Barnard insisted he had used it so purposely and when the teacher grew angry, the student pulled out his grammar book, perhaps Cheever's own book, and showed him the rule that covered the usage. The old man smiled and said, "Thou art a brave boy; I had forgot it." As Barnard adds, "And no wonder; for he was then above eighty years old..."

After a student had mastered the accidence, or perhaps while still struggling with it, he turned to a book of nomenclature which was really a list of words, phrases, and sentences which could be memorized and used in speaking and composition. The book most often used was Francis Gregory's Nomenclature Brevis Anglo-Latino... (London, 1675) which had columns of words and phrases in Latin and English. A more attractive book was John Comenius' Orbis Sensualium Pictus... (1658), which contained not only English
translations of the Latin words and phrases but also pictures to help the student remember his lessons. Comenius, a Moravian bishop, sub-titled his work, the first illustrated school book (other than a primer) ever printed, "a Nomenclature, and Pictures of all the chief things that are in the World, and of Men's Employment therein; in above an 150 Copper Cuts." A more difficult book, which substituted sentences for words, was Leonhard Culmann's Sententiae Pueriles Anglo-Latino (1702, Hoole trans.). As with Comenius, students memorized and recited out loud, singly or in pairs. Most of the sentences in Culmann were short moral dictums like "Obey the rules," "Be honest," and "Offend nobody." No doubt the idea was that students would absorb some of the morality along with the Latin. The young scholars got their first real test when they reached the stage of Mathusius Corderius' Colloquia Scholastica, Anglo-Latina... (1657) referred to commonly as Corderius' Colloquies. When the boys worked in Corderius and the Sententiae Pueriles, they were required to construe and parse. Parsing a sentence meant describing each part of the sentence according to its grammar and syntax and construing was a similar exercise in which a sentence was analyzed in order (predicate first, then subject, etc.) to reveal its meaning. This was done orally, since the exercise does not appear often in the students' notebooks. It was the cause of much misery, fear, and pain for the students because they
were punished when they could not recite. The boys were not without the courage and ingenuity to retaliate occasionally against a teacher who failed to bridle completely their lively spirits. Alexander Graydon attended the Latin school in Philadelphia in the 1760's and recounts this episode about the Scotch schoolmaster named Beveridge.

"He was diligent and laborious in his attention to his school . . . . Though not perhaps to be complained of as intolerably severe, he yet made a pretty free use of the rattan and ferule, but to very little purpose. He was, in short, no disciplinarian, and consequently very unequal to the management of seventy or eighty boys . . . . Various were the rogueries they played upon him; but the most audacious of all was the following. At the hour of convening in the afternoon . . . the bell having rung, the ushers being at their posts, and the scholars arranged in their classes . . . . He arrives, enters the school, and is permitted to proceed until he is supposed to have nearly reached his chair at the upper end of the room, when instantly the door and every window-shutter is closed. Now, shrouded in utter darkness, the most hideous yells that can be conceived are sent forth from at least three score of throats; and Ovids and Virgils and Horaces, together with the more heavy metal of dictionaries, are hurled without remorse at the astonished preceptor, who, groping and crawling under cover of the forms, makes the best of his way to the door. When attained, and light restored, a death-like silence ensues. Every boy is at his lesson: no one has had a hand or a voice in the recent atrocity. What then is to be done? and who shall be chastised?"

This outrage, from its succeeding beyond expectation, and being entirely to the taste of the school, had a run of several days, and was only put a stop to by the interference of the faculty. 13

After a thorough acquaintance with the accident and nomenclature, the students were introduced to the classics.
Most often the first author they met was Cicero in his Epistles or some of his Orations and later they knew Virgil's Aeneid. They were still allowed to have books which had the Latin on one page and the English translation across from it. Some masters gave their students editions with no translations, but they allowed them a free use of their dictionaries. Later they read Ovid, Horace, Lucius Florus, Erasmus, Justin, and others. Heading privately and in class was only part of the training. The students translated aloud one day, the next wrote out their translations, and on the third day returned their translations to good Latin. All this time they were required to construe sentences, parse words, and complete the memorization of the Latin grammar rules. After they had some facility with translation, the students began to write their own Latin prose. Gradually advancing from making up their own sentences, the students hopefully ended with the composition of their own Latin essays. They were aided by manuals like J. Garrettson's English Exercises... to Translate into Latin (13th ed. London, 1712) and later John Clarke's An Introduction to the Making of Latin... (17th ed. London, 1757). When they were handling their Latin exercises fairly well, and starting to breathe more easily no doubt, the students were presented with Greek. Greek had a different alphabet, different syntax, and a similar though different grammar which inevitably make it more difficult. However, the
introduction to Greek was limited and the students had
acquired the process of learning a language by now. Not as
much work was done in Greek as in Latin, but the student
still had to know a Greek grammar, like William Camden's
Institutio Graecae Grammaticae Compendiaria . . . (London,
1629) and used a Greek lexicon such as Cornelius Schreve-
lius' Lexicon Manuale Graeco-Latinum, et Latino-Graecum
(London, 1665). These Greek texts provided the explanations
in Latin so the students had to be accomplished Latin
scholars before they could hope to move on to Greek. As
they were digesting the Greek grammar, they were reading,
translating, parsing, and construing the Greek Bible,
Isocrates, Homer, Xenophon, Hesiod, or some other favorite
of the schoolmaster's. When the individual student had
accomplished a mastery of Latin and had a good knowledge
of Greek, the master pronounced him ready to try the
entrance examinations at a college and in effect graduated
him from the Latin grammar school.15

During the eighteenth century the Latin grammar school
felt some competition from a new type of school that
responded more to the demands of utilitarian Americans.
Some felt that in their new country there was a need for
young men trained in such practical subjects as surveying,
navigation, and bookkeeping, all of which required a
knowledge of mathematics. As lawyers became more important
to American society and ministers less important, reformers
suggested that the curriculum of the schools be changed to provide the public with an education more suited for the courtroom and assembly hall and less for the cloister and rectory. The lawyer wanted to know history, geography, and political science. Enlightened men in general wanted to have access to the seminal thinking of France and wanted to have French taught instead of, or alongside, Latin and Greek. Others felt that the new developments in natural philosophy—the physical sciences of chemistry, physics, and biology—should be presented in the secondary schools. The Great Awakening contributed an attitude of suspicion towards intellectual pursuits so that schools founded in the atmosphere of revivalism called for a broader education than was offered in the Latin grammar school. Linguistic training was still valued, and as a matter of fact, the classics remained the dominant element even in the new academies because the entrance requirements and curricula of the colleges were slower to change. The academies, usually of denominational origin, did not question the value of the classics but only the wisdom of offering them as the sole course of study to a population of students who were no longer all destined to the ministry or to college. Some idea of the course of study at an academy is communicated by the announcement of the Richmond Academy that "On Monday last, the annual public examination of the Richmond Academy was held here. In the forenoon the Students were
examined in their progress in the different branches of English, Latin and Greek; Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, Astronomy, Mathematics and Roman Antiquities. In the afternoon, a number of the young gentleman delivered selected pieces of oratory. The students who delivered the orations were probably going on to college or to study law and those who took their examinations in the more practical subjects were probably going directly into business. Although they were interested in a utilitarian education, they kept their perspective. "Concerned as the colonials were about vocational training, they did not delude themselves into substituting it for education. It remained for the twentieth century to achieve that confusion." Colonial grammar schools remained schools of classical instruction to teach youngsters who might go on to college.

The teachers of the Latin grammar schools and the academies, and the private tutors, were a diverse group. There were roughly three kinds: the professional teachers who were sometimes scholars, the ministers, and the itinerants. The professional teachers were the best, although, of course, not all were competent or devoted. Gamkridge for fifty years is a good example of this type of teacher at its best, and Ezekiel Cheever, who devoted seventy years to teaching, most of it at the Boston Latin School, was an outstanding teacher who had a great influence on his many students.
Sometimes in small towns, the minister himself taught at the grammar school, but more often the teachers were older ministerial students or assistants to the minister who were waiting "to take orders." The third group was composed of more dubious characters who were adverse to a settled life and who moved around from town to town and colony to colony. Many were redemptioners who had sold their service as teachers to pay off debts in the colonies or the mother country or who had contracted for a number of years' service in return for ocean passage to the colonies. Sometimes they were fleeing unpleasant situations and consequences in the old country and soon got themselves into the same trouble in the colonies. Advertisements concerning fugitive schoolmasters who had absconded with money or valuables were frequent in the colonies. Not all were really capable of teaching, but many were honest men who taught with great power and influence. A large number of these itinerant scholars were Scotsmen or Scotch-Irish. These Ulster Orangemen, a hard-bitten, tough breed of men, made good frontiersmen who preferred exterminating the Indians to Christianizing them. They were notorious Presbyterian bigots who endeared themselves little to the other Protestants in the colonies and had an unsavory reputation for sharp dealing in business in more civilized parts. Sometimes they were resident teachers and sometimes they were itinerant scholars. They helped civilize the
isolated regions of the frontier, for often the peripatetic Scotsman and the circuit-riding Scotch Presbyterian minister were the only means for frontier children to receive the slightest education. During the mid-eighteenth century, Scotch-Irish teachers almost monopolized private and public teaching in Virginia and Maryland. The greatest cultural contribution of the educated Orangemen was their dogged insistence on the necessity of a classical education. They placed a high value on an educated ministry and almost equated "godliness with a knowledge of Latin and Greek." The College of New Jersey, later Princeton, was founded by the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians with this ideal in mind. If the classics were not the password to get by St. Peter, he would at least be more interested in conversing with a learned man than with an ignorant heathen. The worth of all these teachers, good and bad, was decided when their students stood before the president and tutors of the various colleges and applied for admission. The major purpose of the secondary schools was to get their graduates into college and their success in the entrance examination determined how popular and prosperous the secondary school would be in the future.

Because in too many instances students could not satisfactorily pass the entrance requirements, some colleges maintained their own grammar schools. There was constant criticism of the secondary schools for the poor preparation of students for college work, just as there is still today
a constant refrain of carping about the material provided by the modern high school. The colonial colleges did something about their criticism, however, and, in the course of establishing their own grammar schools, steadily reduced the number of independent secondary schools, especially in the middle and southern colonies. John Witherspoon complained in 1780 that "Nothing is more common than to meet boys who say they have read Virgil or Horace who yet cannot speak three sentences in Latin." He entreated grammar masters to be thorough in their work, for if boys who were "ill-founded in classic learning entered college, it was impossible to remedy fully the defect." He said it was more important to drill them in grammar and structure than to go on to translate prose or poetry. He considered an easy mastery of Greek and Latin syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation the prerequisites for success in college, and students who did not do well were held back until they had accomplished their lessons. That often-times students appeared before examiners improperly prepared is implied in the admonitory tone of the rules concerning entrance requirements of some colleges. The College of Virginia warned that, "It should be scrupulously insisted on that no youth can be admitted to the university unless he can read with facility Virgil, Horace, Xenophon, and Homer; unless he is able to convert a page of English at sight into Latin; unless he can demonstrate
any proposition at sight in the first six books of Euclid, and show an acquaintance with cubic and quadratic equations." In spite of this, few applicants were sent home, mainly because colleges needed the students' tuition. If a student were not well prepared, he would be admitted to the freshman class but required to repair his lack with extra work.

In 1745 there were only three colleges in the colonies: Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary, but by 1776 there were ten, including Dartmouth; the College of Rhode Island, later Brown; King's College, later Columbia; Queen's College, later Rutgers; the College of New Jersey, later Princeton; the Academy and College of Philadelphia, now the University of Pennsylvania; and Newark Academy, later the University of Delaware. The interest in founding colleges was stimulated by both religious and non-sectarian motives. The original colleges were founded to provide educated ministers for the colonies. After the Great Awakening, other colleges were founded to provide an education for the public at large with a denominational flavor and to raise the cultural standard of the community. Later the colleges were considered a source of capable public servants and well-trained professional men who would serve their communities well. In drafting their charters, as well as in establishing their entrance requirements and curricula, the newer colleges generally imitated the older American colleges which in
turn had imitated English models. King's, Dartmouth, and Queen's used the charter of the College of New Jersey as their model and Rhode Island drew on New Jersey, Yale, and Harvard's charters, but Newark imitated the charter of Pennsylvania. The president usually administered the entrance examination to the hopeful freshman and its requirements were usually based on Yale's, which was in turn based on Harvard's. Most students were only fifteen or sixteen when they entered college, and eleven and twelve year old freshmen were not unusual. John Trumbull, the painter, satisfied the entrance requirements for Yale when he was seven years old. Colleges could have become grammar schools if the trend continued, so some schools, like King's, stated that they would accept only students fourteen or older unless an individual had extraordinary qualifications. 22

Whether the college entrance examinations were as fearsome as the grammar school boys believed or as perfunctory as the college critics charged, they were the requirement for admission to college. Perhaps they were in practice more a placement examination than a qualifying test. For the president, who gave the examination and who determined how strictly to evaluate it, which passages to use, and how formal or informal the atmosphere of the examination would be, it was probably difficult to turn away a potential tuition-payer. Some schools, like New Jersey under Witherspoon, were more strict in this matter than
others. In fact, there is some question as to just how demanding the course of study was at the college after entrance had been gained. One critic of the colleges wrote, "Ignorance wanders unmolested at our colleges, examinations are dwindled to mere form and ceremony, and after four years dozing there, no one is ever refused the honors of a degree, on account of dullness and insufficiency." This writer might be dismissed as a carping oldster with a grudge against the youth of his day, but some support for his disgust can be found in the autobiography of John Barnard, who, although he ended his life as a pious minister, showed little of his vocation in college life.

"Upon entering into college, I became a chambermate, the first year, to a senior and junior sophister; which might have been greatly to my advantage, had they been of studious disposition, and made any considerable progress in literature. But, alas! they were an idle pack, who knew but little, and took no pains to increase their knowledge. When therefore, according to my disposition, which was ambitious to excel, I applied myself close to books, and began to look forward into next year's exercises, this unhappy pair greatly discouraged me, and beat me off from my studies, so that by their persuasions I foolishly threw by my books, and soon became as idle as they were. Oh! how baneful is it to be linked with bad company! and what a vile heart I had to hearken to their wretched persuasions! I never, after this, recovered a good studious disposition, while I was at college."  

While Barnard mourns the death of the youthful drudge who was himself, he was still able to garner enough knowledge to graduate and become an important and famous
minister. The same might well be true of the majority of college students who, to the jaundiced eye of their suspicious elders, seemed to have spent their college years in frolic and idleness yet who, somehow, learned enough to become successful businessmen, lawyers, ministers, and teachers in later life. The same charges are made against the apparent confusion and dilution of modern college life, yet there seems to be no shortage of qualified, educated graduates to fill occupations throughout society.

The standard for the maligned entrance examination was set by Harvard with its requirement to read Cicero and Virgil in Latin and the New Testament and Isocrates or Xenophon in Greek. Entrance to Yale also depended wholly on a reading knowledge of the classics until 1745 when arithmetic was added as an entrance requirement. Until then the Rector, or a neighboring minister if one were handy and willing, examined the candidates that offered themselves at various times during the year to see if they were "duly prepared and expert in Latin and Greek authors, both poetic and oratorical, as also [In] making good Latin." In 1748 the trustees of Princeton based admission entirely on the knowledge of Latin and Greek. The president or tutors were to examine all candidates and reject those who could not "render Virgil and Tully's Orations into English... turn English into true and grammatical Latin," and translate "any part of the four Evangelists" from Greek into either
Latin or English. By 1760 the incoming freshmen had to "compose grammatical Latin, translating Virgil, Cicero’s Orations, and the four Evangelists in Greek" and also understand the principal rules "of vulgar arithmetic."^{26} John Jay, when he entered King’s College in 1760, had to give a "rational account of the Greek and Latin grammars," read three orations of Cicero and three books of the Aeneid, and translate the first ten chapters of the gospel of St. John into Latin. In arithmetic, he had to show that he was "expert as far as the Rule of Reduction." When Horace Mann entered Brown as late as 1816 he had to satisfy these requirements: "Upon examination of the President and Tutors, the candidate must read accurately, construe, and parse Tully and the Greek Testament and Virgil, and shall be able to write true Latin prose, and hath learned the rules of Prosody and Vulgar Arithmetic, and shall bring suitable testimony of a blameless life and conversation . . . ." That a young man could have accomplished all this at a tender age is demonstrated by John Smith, the son-in-law of James Logan, who probably did not have the advantage of other than private schooling. Although he did not attend college, by the time he was sixteen he was translating the Colloquies Corderius and reading French translations of Plato, Middleton’s Cicero, Seneca, and Epictetus, Gordon’s Tacitus, Savage’s Select Collection of Letters of the Ancients, Dacier’s Life of Pythagoras, Whiston’s Josephus,
and Kenneth's *Antiquities of Rome*. While the majority of young scholars were probably no better than they had to be, some individuals showed a real enthusiasm for classical learning. Most of the students who attended the colleges apparently received enough of an education of some kind to justify their later employment and subsequent success in life and profession.

In the early colleges, the curriculum was fundamentally similar to that of a late medieval university. About one half of the college students' time was spent on the various branches of philosophy, including logic, ethics, metaphysics, and some theology. The rest of his time was divided among rhetoric, Greek, and some oriental languages like Syriac, or, more commonly, Hebrew. Mathematics and the sciences appeared, if at all, as minor subjects late in the course of study. Latin was not taught at all, since theoretically students had proven their competence in it before they were admitted. They read Latin literature, not to master its form, but rather its content of the wisdom of the ages. Most textbooks, including the Greek and Hebrew grammars, were written in Latin and students were required to converse in Latin at certain times during the day. While this rule was on the books, it is uncertain how well it was enforced. Probably most were mediocre or competent in forming Latin conversation, while a few most likely enjoyed it and practiced it enthusiastically. Students
did keep notebooks and diaries in Latin and compositions and public orations were often delivered in that language. All the colleges followed a similar curriculum. The first year covered Latin authors, Greek, logic, Hebrew, and rhetoric. The second year presented students with logic, Greek, Hebrew, and in later years, some form of natural philosophy, usually physics. Juniors studied more natural philosophy, metaphysics, and moral philosophy. In their last year, the seniors reviewed Latin and Greek, logic, natural philosophy, and were introduced to some mathematics.29 With variations, this general curriculum prevailed throughout the colonial colleges. John Witherspoon described Princeton's curriculum in 1770 when he was in Jamaica raising funds for the college. The first year students studied Latin and Greek authors, classical antiquities, and rhetoric. Sophomores limited themselves to one ancient language, but studied geography, philosophy, and mathematics. Juniors were responsible for one language, mathematics, and natural and moral philosophy. In their fourth year, students dabbled a bit more, for they had a selection of courses in the "higher classics," mathematics, natural and moral philosophy, history, literary criticism, and French.30 The classical authors studied in college were all those commonly available in the colonies at that time. Tutors had their favorite authors and most of the ancient writers, especially the Roman, were familiar and
accessible in some form or other by the eighteenth century. In a letter written in 1774, a student advised his brother what he would have to know in order to be admitted to the junior class.

"The studies you will be examined on . . . are Virgil, Horace, Cicero's Orations, Lucian, Xenophon, Homer, geography and logic. Four books of Virgil's Aeneid together with the Bucolics and Georgics and four books of Xenophon are only looked for; but I would advise you if you come to college to study the whole of Xenophon . . . . Try to accustom yourself to read Greek and Latin well as it is much looked to here and be accurate in geography; study if you can the five common rules of arithmetic . . . ."31

The College of William and Mary founded its own grammar school to make up for the lack in the vicinity and to supply itself with college students. Boys first entered the grammar school where they spent four years learning Latin and two years on Greek. During this time they were expected to learn to speak the ancient languages from Corderius, Erasmus, and Aesop. When the students passed their examinations, offered to them around the time they were fifteen, they moved to the "philosophical" school where the professor of moral philosophy taught them rhetoric, logic, and ethics and the professor of natural philosophy instructed them in mathematics, physics, and metaphysics. The statutes of 1727 required that the students exercise themselves regularly in "disputation," declamation, and themes chosen by the professors. The third school at William and Mary was the divinity school where one professor
taught Hebrew and explained the Old and New Testament and the second expounded upon "the common places of divinity and the controversies with heretics."  

The colleges reacted slowly to the change in thought in the eighteenth century, but once they altered their curricula in favor of the new sciences, the move away from the old scholasticism of the medieval university was assured. Gradually some of the time allotted to logic and rhetoric and the other staples of the Scholastic curriculum was devoted to courses in chemistry, physics, botany, astronomy, surveying, navigation, and mathematics. As early as 1659 Harvard scholars rejected the Ptolemaic system of astronomy and taught the ideas of Copernicus, although they had to wait until 1672 before they procured a telescope to begin a study of the Solar System. The Hollis Professorship of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, in honor of the school's English benefactor, was created in 1727 and filled by John Winthrop in 1738 who was Harvard's first real physical scientist. He developed the first physics laboratory in America and proved that earthquakes were a natural phenomenon. In 1761 he persuaded the Massachusetts General Court to finance America's first astronomical expedition to Newfoundland to witness the transit of Venus. Yale got its telescope in 1734 along with a microscope and a barometer and a number of books so that Yale students were soon exposed to the work of Locke, Newton, and Copernicus.
Mathematics and natural science gradually edged into the curricula of the colonial colleges at the expense of the more arcane medieval disciplines. King's College established a professorship of mathematics and natural philosophy in 1757 and Yale in 1771. The classical authors were still the primary course of college study and the new sciences were secondary. Mathematics replaced Scholasticism in the colleges but it did not replace Latin and Greek. By 1766 six of the eight colonial colleges supported professors of mathematics and natural philosophy. Newtonian empiricism challenged revealed Christianity and induction was ousting deduction, but few in the eighteenth century challenged the worth of the classical literature.

Scholasticism or the old medieval philosophy was most clearly revealed in the disputatio or quaestio that was an integral part of the colonial curriculum. The disputation was employed throughout the year by both faculty and students as the ordinary manner of scholarly discussion. It was the most important part of the commencement exercises of the colleges, for it allowed the students to display their knowledge and skill acquired over the four-year course. Two students, one serving as disputant and the other as questioner, confronted a thesis which they proceeded to attack and defend in turn in a display of their abilities in deductive logic, rhetoric, philosophy, and Latin. The theses were printed on broadsides, which were distributed to
anyone in the commencement day audience who wished to participate in the discussions. The thesis and the disputation were all in Latin so audience participation was limited to the faculty and those college graduates who had kept up their acquaintance with conversational Latin. At best, the disputation was an impressive display of scholastic philosophy, facility in Latin, and public presence. At worst, the script was all worked out in advance and the students memorized the questions and answers in a mendacious display of what should have been the deductive method. Scholasticism in its overwhelming concern with morality and good conduct was pervasive in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century theses, but it was gradually reduced to partnership with the natural sciences as the eighteenth century wore on. It was not eliminated until the nineteenth century and continued throughout the eighteenth to have an important influence on considerations of ethical conduct. In 1693 Harvard students considered whether "Prudence is the most difficult of virtues" and "Death is to be undergone than any sin committed." Even as late as 1769 someone disputed "Human reason alone does not suffice to explain how the true religion was introduced and built up as firmly in the world." Other causes were "Did Adam have an umbilical cord?" and "is a comet which reappears after many years, more a foreboding of divine wrath than a planet, which rises daily?" These on physics, astronomy, and the other
natural sciences tended to replace these questions of moral philosophy, but the colonials always asked political questions in their debates and especially as the revolution drew near. In 1725 at Harvard one student asked "Is civil government originally founded on the consent of the people?" and another in 1733 "Is the voice of the people the voice of God?" By 1760 the question was more pointed, "Is an absolute and arbitrary monarchy contrary to right reason?" In 1769 a senior offered for debate the question "Are the people the sole judges of their rights and liberties?" and a fellow graduate at Rhode Island wondered, "Whether British America can under present circumstances consistent with good policy, affect to become an independent state."  

It is possible to go too far and claim that the colonial colleges followed very closely the medieval trivium and quadrivium "with only slight modification" as a consequence of the development of "knowledge down the centuries." Scholastic philosophy was not the vital issue at the colonial colleges, but the new science and thought of the Enlightenment were. As long as a distinction is made between the moribund doctrines of Thomistic deduction and theology and the eternal, vibrant classical authors who continued unmolested in the curriculum, it is clear that a change took place in the colleges and in the interests of the students. Much of the ethical and moral content of the curriculum and the concerns of the students as evidenced in
the *quaestiones*, still centered around Scholastic philosophy. However, other theses that appear to concern a medieval topic actually discuss post-Renaissance grammar, *amean logic*, Newtonian astronomy, *neo-Platonic ethics*, and Cartesian mathematics, not medieval subjects. Metaphysics was still a Thomistic preserve, but the natural sciences had moved on to other philosophies. The *trivium* consisted of grammar, rhetoric, and *logic*, and the *quadrivium* the other liberal arts of arithmetic, music, *geometry*, and astronomy. The colonial colleges left out music and slighted *geometry*, emphasized natural, ethical, and *metaphysical philosophy*, and included *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *history*, which were post-Renaissance subjects. However, the purpose of the Scholastic university was retained. It trained the student’s mind, formed his character, and acquainted him with the classical works of the past through reading, lectures, declamations, and the fellowship of scholars.³⁷

College training apparently did not much influence which side the college graduates picked in the controversy with Great Britain. All colleges sought to train their students in the arts of abstract reasoning and clear expression which helped them in the controversies of the 1760’s and 1770’s.³⁸ The educated leaders of the colonies were exposed to a variety of ideas in college, had the training to apply these ideas to practical situations, and
had the persuasive skill to convince their countrymen to follow their designs and plans. These prerequisite attributes of a statesman were the product of the colonial curriculum when it worked the way it was meant to. Although college-educated men learned how to think in college and how to express those thoughts, it appears that the material presented to them in college, or the manner in which it was presented, did not determine whether they would be Whigs or Tories. Perhaps the adjusted medieval curriculum, so heavy with Scholasticism in philosophy and weighted to empiricism in science, produced individuals who were able to think for themselves. Neither which college they attended nor the political leanings of their professors influenced to a large degree the decisions of the graduates or students to become Loyalists or Rebels. Ignoring tutors, there were forty-six professors and presidents active in the twelve years before the Revolution in the colonial colleges. Of them, twenty-eight were Rebels, ten were Loyalists, and eight were either neutral or their politics unknown. After 1770 when eight of them had died or resigned, twenty-six were Rebels, nine Tories, and three were neutral or unknown. Four college faculties, at Rhode Island, Dartmouth, Queen's, and New Jersey, were unanimously in favor of the Revolution and only two were actually divided into hostile camps. King's employed five Tories and four Whigs and William and Mary, four Tories and five Whigs. Both colleges were
Anglican and this influenced the political affiliation of the professors. Of the thirty-eight, twenty-four were humanists and fourteen physical scientists, but their discipline seemed to make little difference in politics for sixteen humanists were rebels and eight were Tories, and ten of the scientists, most of them, were rebels. The Tories had little effect on their students because most of them turned out to be rebels. Although some college presidents tried to influence the public with speeches and writings, the group of forty-six generally had little effect. Even though they were the acknowledged intellectuals of the colonies, they were few in number and unorganized: forty-six out of a population of two million. More importantly, they were teachers and scholars and thus considered thinkers and mumblers rather than doers and sayers. Their purpose in life was to pass on the wisdom of the ancient giants to their temporary charges and then release them, full of ideals and purpose, to change the world. The scholar inhabited a quiet, private universe where the emotions of politics and war seldom intruded. Such is certainly not the case, of course, in any academic community, but that was the face the faculties presented to the world. Few, therefore, thought to ask the erudite though foggy, abstracted professors for advice in a time of crisis. Action and decisions were left up to those they trained: lawyers, politicians, merchants, doctors, planters.
The lessons these individuals learned in college were not so much slanted towards a particular political ideology as oriented to an awareness and approbation of the finest civic qualities and virtues. The ancient classics could be used by different sides in a political argument, but the reason they were used repeatedly, with veneration and conviction, was that the classics distilled in pristine, ringing words the highest nobility and ethics available to men of any time. The Greeks and Romans had invented and examined the important forms of government, declaimed on the nature of man—his failings and triumphs, and pointed the way for succeeding generations in all the branches and disciplines of politics, morality, and philosophy. Loosea on the world after graduation, the educated elite determined where their interests lay in economic, political, and social terms, but when they wanted to explain to themselves and others what they desired or what their rights were, it was natural and inevitable for them to return to that fount of first principles and primal causes that was the ancient classics. Americans learned at college from the ancients all about moral and political philosophy. When their rights were transgressed and their interests ignored, they knew it, and turned to the classics to learn what to do and how to do it. They had a practical as well as philosophical interest in the classics and sought to put their learning to good use. The attitude is characterized by
this introduction to a pamphlet of 1776.

We are told of a certain man among the Greeks, who being candidate for some office in the state, it was objected against him that he had not learning: he smartly replied, "Altho' I have not what you call learning, I know how to make a poor city rich, or a small city great."39

Their Latin stayed with them, more or less, and if public occasions were the only opportunity for the majority to exercise their memories, many kept up a facility with the language as well as the major authors in translation. The ancient authors contained too much of obvious worth to forget completely or lay aside. Even those who were actively hostile to the continued homage to the classics were forced to admit that, for some reason they could not completely fathom, the classics maintained an honored place in the education and the hearts of thinking men. Benjamin Franklin complained that "Everything worthwhile in the Classics is available in translation . . . . But there is in Mankind an unaccountable Prejudice in favor of ancient Customs and Habitudes which inclines to a Continuance of them after the Circumstances, which formerly made them useful, ceased to exist."40
Notes for Chapter III


3 Jones, p. 241.

4 Baily, Pamphlets, pp. 21-22. In his study of education in early America, Education in Forming American Society (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960), Baily gives little credit to the influence of the classics. He barely mentions them but emphasizes the utilitarian, practical approach of the Americans.

5 Wullett, pp. 99-100.


10 Some schools still teach this curriculum and employ this discipline. St. Ignatius College Prep in Chicago, Illinois, requires its better students to complete four years of Latin, two of Greek, three of French, four of English, a year each of chemistry, physics, geometry, trigonometry, algebra, and one year of differential and integral calculus.


13 Ibid., pp. 42-43.

14 The Loeb Library editions of all the major classical authors are the friends of all classics and ancient history students for they still follow this format.

15 Middlekauff, pp. 82-84.


18 Monroe, p. 156.

19 Wright, pp. 69-70.


21 Gummere, Colonial Mind, p. 57.


23 Ibid., p. 30.

24 Barnard, p. 27.


26 Wertenbaker, p. 93.

The Jesuit novitiates in their first years of study are still required to communicate with each other and their teachers in Latin only. Some learn to do so well; others put up with it until they are released from the requirement.


Gummere, *Colonial Mind*, p. 64.

Wertenbaker, p. 93.

Lyon G. Tyler, *The College of William and Mary in Virginia: Its History and Work, 1693-1907* (Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1907), pp. 28-29. William and Mary also had a school for Indians.

Hudolph, pp. 28-29.


J. J. Walsh, *Education of the Founding Fathers of the Republic* (New York, 1935), p. 50. Walsh maintains that the colonial colleges taught a purely Thomistic, medieval curriculum. He bases his assertion on the theses and quaestiones but he overestimates the importance of Scholasticism in the late eighteenth century.


Martin, p. 137.


Chapter IV. The Place of the Classics in Eighteenth Century America

No history of the study of classics, or philology, in America in the eighteenth century has yet been written. Those treatments of American scholarship that do exist dismiss the eighteenth century and concentrate on the beginnings of professional scholarship in the universities in America after the turn of the century. Some of the problem in examining the colonial development of classical studies is that the American intellectuals were non-specialized enthusiasts in many fields. They were Renaissance men with all the humanistic interests of that period and also Enlightenment men whose interests turned to all the new sciences and discoveries of that age. They hoped, some of them even tried, to know everything there was to know. A well-rounded man could speak as well on the Latin gerundive as on the phenomenon of electricity. Their wide range of interests left little time or energy for specialization. The most exciting fields of study were, of course, in the new sciences because new discoveries were turning up all the time. Work in the scientific, inductive method paid rewards in new knowledge and experience; so many intellectuals spent a good deal of their time dabbling with the novel apparatus of the new sciences. Work in philology
was not as rewarding in terms of electrifying discoveries and novel processes but still most educated men turned to the classics for their cultural reading and inspiration. In many, the ancient comfort of the classics well complemented the vernal mysteries of the fledgling sciences. Some were extremists and tried to throw out all classical knowledge and learning and substitute the sciences completely. They were not allowed to prevail and the eighteenth century closed with the classics and the sciences in easy partnership both in the school curricula and the interests of the learned public. Because scholars and educated men continued their interest in the classics, books on classical topics were available in the colonial period and after Independence. For instance, James Otis, the firebrand patriot, published a book on Latin prosody in 1760 and wrote another on Greek prosody which was destroyed in a fire before it could be published. Teachers in the secondary schools and colleges continued to teach Latin, Greek, and the classical authors all through the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth before the influence of Germany changed the methods in the schools. There were large numbers of unprofessional gentlemen who kept up an interest in the classics, some even in the original languages, but who were not scholars and who did not publish books.

In a population that had reached only two million by
the eve of the Revolution, it might be expected that there would be a limited market for books and texts, but judging from the records of colonial booksellers and from the catalogues of various colonials' libraries, such was not the case. Colbourne has assembled a convenient listing of a few libraries and catalogues of the book trade. He found that, while theology texts constituted a large proportion of colonial reading, history and classics was actually the most popular area. In college catalogues from Harvard, Yale, Rhode Island, and New Jersey, public libraries and library societies, and private libraries, these topics usually headed the list in number of books. Most of these had to be imported from Great Britain and Europe at no little trouble and cost, but colonials were still willing to buy them, and presumably, after such expense, read them. The publication of books on the classics in America was limited. The first important work on the classics in America was recorded in 1623 when George Sandys translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses* on the banks of the James in Virginia. He went back to Great Britain and published it there, but perhaps the inspiration of the wilderness helped him, for he was described by Dryden as "the best versifier of the former age." Not until one hundred years later was the first Latin poem actually published in the colonies when *huscipula: The House Trap, or the Battle of the Cambrians and the Mice* was printed in Maryland in 1728. The Latin poem was written
by Edward Holdsworth and translated by A. Lewis who proclaimed "This first Essay of Latin Poetry in English Dress, which Maryland hath publish'd from the Press." In 1729 S. Keimer printed the first translation of a Greek or Latin classic in America with Epictetus his Morals, done from the original Greek, and the Words taken from his own Mouth by Arrian. Benjamin Franklin published James Logan's translation of Cato's Moral Distich's, Englished in couplets in 1735. The first translation and publication of a classic was also due to the same team. James Logan translated and annotated Cicero's Cato Major, or his Discourse of Old Age and Franklin printed it in Philadelphia in 1744. John Parke, a lieutenant-colonel in Washington's army, translated The Lyric Works of Horace and dedicated it to his former leader in 1736. Other textbooks and schoolbooks like Otis' Prosody and Cheever's Accidence came off the presses in the colonies in the eighteenth century but the production of translations and studies of the classics was fairly limited.

Those men, and some women and girls who happened to be raised in exceptionally liberal and progressive households, and who studied the classics seriously, were a curious mixture of zealous amateurs and bookish professionals. No prominent scholars of the classics appeared in the United States until the nineteenth century, but in colonial America there was no shortage of individuals who had made Latin and
Greek and the classical authors their lifetime study. Most of the professionals, those who earned their living from the classics, were masters of secondary schools or professors at the provincial colleges. An example of these masters is Samuel Moody, who was at the Drummer Academy from 1763 to 1790. A graduate of Harvard in 1746, he combined work as a minister and a justice of the peace with teaching Latin and Greek and earned a reputation as a superb teacher who developed affection for himself among his charges as well as competence in the languages. While he was master at Drummer, the Academy contributed fully one-fourth of Harvard's freshmen class every year as well as numbers to other colleges. Apparently a devotee of the old school, Moody wasted little time on mathematics and the sciences although he did hire a Frenchman to teach his students dancing. He boasted that in thirty years of teaching he had never to depend on the rod to keep discipline but used the modern didactic device of praise to encourage and check his students. He often dismissed classes on warm summer days so that he could lead his pupils on a charge to the nearest swimming hole. During his lifetime he was highly respected by the community and his graduates whose numbers included a Harvard president, a governor of Massachusetts, and scores of teachers, lawyers, ministers, merchants, and politicians. The most famous schoolmaster in the eighteenth century, however, was Ezekiel Cheever. "Corderius Americanus" was
the name his pupil Cotton Mather bestowed on him. He attended Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and then emigrated to the colonies where he taught for seventy years, finally dying in harness at an alert ninety-two in 1708. From 1670 to 1708 he taught at the Boston Latin School where he established a solid program of Latin and Greek education which thereafter supplied Harvard with a steady stream of freshmen. His *Accidence*, which was circulated in new editions and reprints until 1828, was a successful attempt to modify and explicate the excruciating *Lily's Grammar* which had been in use since the sixteenth century. Part of the same benign attitude led him to a policy of teaching without resort, very often, to the rod, although the stroking of his long white beard was a signal quickly picked up by all his students to stand clear. His students in their seventh year with him studied Cicero's *Orationes*, Justin, Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, and Persius, made Latin dialogues, or turned a Psalm into Latin verse, and also read Homer, Isocrates, Hesiod, and the New Testament. They no doubt received advanced placement when they entered Harvard, for the college's first year courses were not substantially different. Cotton Mather's funeral encomium of Cheever was a pastiche of classical allusions and sentiments in a fitting farewell tribute to the master who had introduced hundreds of the colonies' leading citizens to the classics.
John Witherspoon was born in 1723 in Scotland and by the age of four was reading the Bible. He entered the University of Edinburgh at thirteen and graduated in 1739 at the age of sixteen with a Master of Arts degree. In the midst of some religious disputes, the trustees of the College of New Jersey offered him the presidency of the college that made it the worthy rival of older institutions. He brought with him a large library of books and left orders for more to follow him. In addition, he purchased the Hottenhouse orbery and installed it in Nassau Hall. This machine represented the Solar System on one side with little brass and ivory balls moving in elliptical orbits around a gilded brass sun, on another Jupiter and its moons were represented, and on the third side was the Earth's moon. He did not change the curriculum, but he did institute a new method of teaching. Previously, teachers devoted all their class time to questioning students on their assigned readings. Witherspoon introduced the lecture system and after all his students came into possession of the notes for his lectures, he devoted his class time to the students' questions and giving explanations and illustrations. His explanations were very clear and lucid, for his students said they could remember them for years afterwards. His lectures covered topics in moral philosophy, history, English composition, divinity, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. His favorite method in Latin was to speak an English
sentence which his students had to translate extemporaneously into Latin. In his career at the bastion of Scotch-Irish education in America, Witherspoon was responsible for the preparation of James Madison, the President of the United States; a Vice-President; ten cabinet members; six members of the Continental Congress; twenty-one U.S. Senators; thirty-nine Representatives; twelve state governors; three Supreme Court Justices; and six members of the Constitutional Convention. Truly he can be called the Maker of Statesmen. His devotion to all learning was well known, but his students reflected the Scotch-Irish passion for the classics especially well. It was at his country seat, named Tusculum after Cicero's villa, that Witherspoon died in 1794.⁵

The man whom Witherspoon edged in consideration for the presidency of New Jersey was Francis Alison, whom the Old Side Presbyterians were promoting for the position. He was born in Donegal, Ireland, in 1705 and received a decree from Edinburgh before emigrating to the colonies. He served first as a private tutor and later opened an academy in 1742. Alison was hired to teach Latin, Greek, logic, and ethics at the Academy of Philadelphia when the first rector died in 1751. He worked with William Small to create the College of Philadelphia and when the charter was granted in 1755 he became the vice-provost and "professor of the higher classics, logic, metaphysics, and geography." his
reputation was sufficient that the trustees allowed him to teach "any of the other arts and sciences that he may judge himself qualified to teach ...." He was a superb teacher, although subject to a mercurial anger, who made his classes interesting and stimulating. Ezra Stiles judged him in 1779 "the greatest classical scholar in America, especially in Greek. Not great in mathematics and philosophy and astronomy--but in ethics, history, and general reading." He was well honored in his lifetime. Besides being considered for the position at The College of New Jersey, he was awarded honorary degrees by Yale, New Jersey, and the University of Glasgow.

The number of amateur ancient historians and classicists among the eighteenth-century Americans was legion. The two that are most always cited by modern historians in any survey of the culture of early America are John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. These are the two sages to whom a quick bow is directed as intellectual historians race on to more important fields. Of late, their lifelong scholarship has been dismissed because of their difficulty with Plato and Jefferson's failure to cut the pages on some of the classics books in his library. Somehow these situations are supposed to make them incompetent or superficial in their pursuit of classical knowledge. They cannot nullify, however, the significance of the correspondence between the two men in their old age as a proof of their ability and
interest in the classics. The Federalist Adams and the republican Jefferson were reconciled through the good offices of Benjamin Rush in 1811, and they kept up a witty and erudite exchange of letters for as long as they both lived. In these epistles from 1811 to 1826 they discussed a whole spectrum of issues, often combining in the best eighteenth century manner, a review of the events of their momentous lives with a classical perspective. They loved to consider the problem posed by Tacitus in his *Annals* IV: 33: "A mixed government, composed of three simple forms, is a thing rather to be wished than expected." Adams still tended toward aristocracy and depended on checks and balances as the prime protection against mob anarchy. Jefferson trusted the people to rule themselves wisely and feared a too powerful Senate. In the end they settled on the wisdom of Aristotle's *Politeia*. They denounced the damage due to the science of government since the days of Aristotle and Cicero by "ecclesiastical and imperial despotism." They censured all tyrants and demagogues like Cleon, the Gracchi, Sulla, and Caesar. They felt the fatal flaw in the Roman constitution and the Roman character was the unbridgeable gap between the very rich and the very poor. They echoed the opinion of most Americans who knew ancient history when they compared the Articles of Confederation to the Greek Leagues. "If the thirteen states were put into a league like the Achaean or Aetolian, each an
independent entity, the result would be chaos." Both were
definitely in favor of a classical education. Adams said,
"Classics in spight [sic] of our friend Bush, I must think
indispensable." Jefferson agreed: "I would not exchange
this attainment for anything which I could then have
acquired and have since acquired." Contemporary events
often reminded them of some classical instance and they
specifically mentioned Sallust and Seneca on civic harmony
and Fliny the Elder on pirates upon appropriate occasions.
They knew obscure authors like Silius Italicus and Manilius
and regretted the loss of the Sibylline Books, portions of
Livy and Tacitus, and especially Cicero's De Republica,
which was extant at that time only in fragments. They were
realists also who, while they admired the humanity and
morality of Cicero, Brutus, and Seneca, they wondered what
a Cicero or Cato could do in a broken-down republic where
the will of the people was lacking. Jefferson asked another
prophetic question on the issue of slavery when he wondered
about the nation he had helped create, "Are we to see
Athenian and Lacedaemonian confederacies? Have another
Peloponnesian War? Or merely a servile war?"

The two elder statesmen often discussed the form and
content of various authors. Jefferson admitted that he was
confused by the forest of opinions and events that occurred
in his lifetime and copies out for Adams in Greek the passage
in Theocritus (Idylls, 17.9) where the woodcutter on Mount
Ida stands bewildered by the forest and cannot decide which tree to cut first. Adams responded that he also was like the woodcutter. "Lord, Lord what can I do with so much Greek . . . . Some years ago I felt a kind of affection for one of the flames of my youth, and again, paid my addresses to Isocrates and Dionysius Halicarnassensis. I collected all my Lexicons and Grammars and sat down to the latter's volume *Peri Syntheseos Onomaton." But the work did not go well and Adams lamented that the Greek slipped from him so easily. They had a lengthy discussion of the Hymn of the Stoic Cleanthes and discussed the definition of the *aristoi*, or the best men. Adams quoted the Greek poet Theognis and supplied a Latin translation of the passage where he says nobility exists not just among men but also in the breeding of horses, sheep, and asses. He cites Xenophon to support his theory of the "well-born," but notes that often they are not the wise and the just but the rich and the beautiful. In response, Jefferson checked Theognis again and countered with the poet's observation that "good men never harmed a city," for there is a natural aristocracy based on virtue and talent. Adam's "Senectutal Loquacity" and Jefferson's "Senile Garrulity" in the classics ran on for many years and establishes that the two men were always at home with the ancients. One odd consideration about them and several other writers familiar with the classics should be pointed out. They did not use the classics very much in
their political pamphlet-writing in the years before the Revolution. In the sample of pamphlets used in this study there were some by Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, and several others known to be familiar with classics and who used them in other of their writings. Surprisingly little classical material can be gleaned from their polemical pamphlets. Perhaps the explanation is that when these pamphlets were written they were being addressed to the public at large and not so much to the intellectual elite as has been previously thought. A classical education was associated with the upper class, and these writers may not have wanted to alienate a large number of their readers with seemingly snobbish classical references. As the Revolution progressed, however, and Americans set out to establish their own outlook, they turned more and more as a people to the ancient world for inspiration and example. The Federalist Papers are addressed to the American people, and are replete with references to the ancient past and classical political theory. Perhaps times had changed and there was no danger of anyone taking the use of the classics amiss, although in the earlier period there is no shortage of pamphlets with a good deal of classical material.

While the majority of Americans in the eighteenth century had no trouble accepting the importance of the classics without question, a minority sought to dislodge them from the curriculum of the colonial college. In the
seventeenth century, men of education and culture, brought up in the classical tradition of English schools and universities, felt that Latin and Greek authors were essential if they were to live a cultivated life in the colonies. Even the Puritans, who were suspicious of creeping panism wherever they looked, were reconciled to a study of the classics and a library without them was hardly worthy of the name. In the eighteenth century the pressures of conquering the wilderness and building a civilization caused some individuals to wonder if an education in the utilitarian arts might be more profitable for most young men than the disciplines suitable for a minister. The earliest instance of dissatisfaction was at the town meeting in Boston in 1711 when a group of dissident parents expressed the feeling that, "very many hundreds of boys in this town, who by their parents were never designed for a more liberal education, have spent two, three, and four years or more of their early days at the Latin School, which hath proved of very little or no benefit to their after accomplishment." Perhaps some of the disillusionments appeared because old Cheever and his methods had been removed from the school three years earlier. Nothing came of this movement or later abortive efforts until the late eighteenth century. The increase in knowledge during that century and the spread of it through the printed page as well as the increased interest and respect for things
"scientific" united to produce a utilitarian movement in education throughout the Western world. The idea of progress and the growing spirit of egalitarianism in America made the demands for reform grow there all the more quickly.

In the American Weekly Mercury of Philadelphia, an anonymous writer attacked the methods of teaching and the content of the classical curriculum in 1735. He maintained that people going into trades did not need Latin, but English, and in any case, soon forgot all the Latin they knew while they did not know their English grammar well at all. As early as 1749, that frequently quoted critic of the classical curriculum, Benjamin Franklin, was demanding in his Proposals relating to the Education of the Youth in Pennsylvania that none but those who ardently desired it be forced to take languages but that all be allowed to study English, arithmetic, and other utilitarian subjects. The charter of the Academy of Philadelphia had established in 1749 an English school as well as a Latin school, but by 1789 it was virtually defunct from a lack of interest. In wonderment and irritation, he offered some "Observations" about the "unaccountable prejudice" of people who persisted in learning Latin and Greek even though "for the purpose of acquiring knowledge [it] is become absolutely unnecessary."9 Franklin considered the classics as pure ornaments, and that is why he used them in his writings, which perhaps explains
why he asked that he be painted in a toga in a portrait he commissioned. Another harsh critic of the classics was John Trumbull, who painted many famous people, ancient and contemporary, some of those in ancient dress. He denounced the college curriculum in a poem "The Progress of Bulness" but he himself, before his public career began, had read Suetonius, Nepos, Virgil, Cicero, Horace, Juvenal, the Greek Testament, the Iliad, and Rollin's Arts and Sciences of the Ancient Nations.  

The great friend of the classics, Jefferson, proposed in 1779 that Latin and Greek be discontinued at William and Mary. However, the reason he made this astounding suggestion was that he felt they should have been taught well enough in the grammar schools and he wanted the teachers' salaries freed so that oriental languages, Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, and Icelandic could be taught instead. He failed in this purpose but he did get the first professorship of modern languages in America established.

In the 1780's and 1790's the attack against the classics picked up momentum as more voices were raised against them. One of the most strident belonged to Benjamin Rush, who up until 1789 had been a supporter of the classics. In attack after attack, in articles, letters, and speeches Rush attributed everything that ailed education to the teaching of the classics, from causing students to quit school to fomenting militarism and monarchy among them. The classics
served absolutely no useful purpose whatsoever and were a positive hindrance to learning anything worthwhile. He probably wanted to restrict the study of the classics to the work of specialists in the arcane and free everyone else to pursue more rewarding tasks. An ambivalent note is sounded in much of his ranting against the classics because he often used classical material himself in his denunciation of them. Perhaps like many of the other opponents of the classics, "he hated them but he used them" just the same because he had been educated in them. Having read the classics and become attuned to their elemental language and concerns, he and others could not help thinking in classical terms and concepts. Much of Rush's attack on the classics is undercut by his advice to his son Richard in 1792 to continue with his studies in Latin. Adams and Rush had a long quarrel about the worth of the classics and Adams demanded that Rush take back some of the intemperate things he had said about them, but Rush died without backing down an inch. Public interest in his and others' attacks sputtered out around 1800, although he kept them up long after. The classics weathered this storm well and stayed entrenched in the curriculum of the colleges until much later. The only accomplishment was to add new courses in the sciences, modern languages, and English. The attack against the classics failed because too many people still felt there was value in them for all. In fact there is evidence that the
period after the revolution was even more pro-classical than the years before.

An anonymous letter in the South Carolina Gazette of December 21, 1769, made the case well for a continued liberal arts curriculum in college and mentioned all the standard reasons for sustaining the classics as part of it. The writer is not a hide-bound traditionalist, though, who would allow nothing else in the schools, but is a man with a humanistic outlook. After observing that the young mind needs some guide "to ripen in into reason and reflection; to point out the way to knowledge," he declares "to be able to read the English language with ease and accuracy, is certainly pre-requisite to every other study." He has no quarrel with this modern view, but for some extremists who wish to generalize their bad experiences for all, he makes a caution.

It is imagined by some, who have reaped little benefit from three or four years attendance at a grammar-school, that this method of teaching English, will answer all the purposes intended by the study of the dead languages; but this opinion is ill-founded . . . . it would fall short of the purposes of a liberal education. It would require a singular strength of genius to write even correctly in the English language, unless a foundation in the Greek and Latin languages had been previously laid: The arts and sciences, by these means, are laid open to us; the most ingenious of all ages become our companions and acquaintances, whom we may upon all occasions consult.

This was the standard plea of the pro-classicists. English could not be properly learned unless a solid founda-
tion were first laid in a knowledge of Latin and Greek. Style and grace in expression was best learned from the great classical authors while modern authors were only interesting or recreational. The letter writer goes beyond stylistic considerations for mere "knowledge of words would be very insignificant." It was also in the classics "where the taste for writing and living may be . . . formed; the judgement rectified; the first principles of honour and equity instilled; the love of virtue, and abhorrence of vice, excited in the mind." The classics were a lessonbook with many chapters, valuable on all occasions and in all occupations to both young and old. Not only accuracy and beauty of form could be learned from their study, but virtue and knowledge.

The study of rhetoric and composition ought by no means to be neglected . . . it will teach them to range their thoughts, arguments, and proofs, in proper order . . . . By this means, they will not only be able to read the works of the best authors, with taste and propriety, but be taught to observe the elegance, justness, force, and delicacy, of the turns and expressions; and still more, the truth and solidity of the thoughts . . . . But to speak or write well, however necessary it may be, is not the only object of instruction: It will be of very little consequence to have the understanding improved if the heart be totally neglected.

Because an individual is destined to play a part in society, he should be trained to play well or "like a bad performer in a concert of music, I will destroy the harmony . . . ." Philosophy disciplines the young man to his role as a social being and he should have recourse to
the great thinkers in order "to tune his mind to virtue and morality; to moderate his passions, and to subject all his actions to the test of reason." Likewise he should study the principles of law and government where he would learn "to whom obedience is due, for what it is paid, and in what degrees it may be justly required." His education should not leave out the utilitarian arts for he should know some geometry, algebra, and other mathematics. These studies "invigorate the mind, free it from prejudice, credulity, and superstition; and accustom it to attention and to close and demonstrative reasoning." Such a course of study in the liberal arts, based on the classics and indeed very similar to the medieval curriculum, would produce paragons of civic and moral virtue. They would be prepared in a practical way for the trials of life. This was utilitarianism in its finest sense for these students, "their knowledge . . . so particular, and their morals so secured, . . . will be proof against the arts of the deceitful; the snares of the disingenuous; and the temptations of the wicked." The Carolinian, as he signed himself, covered all the best reasons for the continuation of the classics in the schools. His catholic approach to learning, accepting most of the new elements into the curriculum without unseating the old, was apparently shared by the majority of Americans. Almost all the schools in America by 1800 had weathered the storm over the proper
subjects for study and had incorporated into their
curriculum judicious ingredients of tradition, utilitar-
ianism, nationalism, and democratic idealism.

A transition took place not only in education and in
politics at the end of the colonial period, but in other
cultural areas as well. Ideas become very important in a
period of crisis and cause events to happen. These
occurrences in turn endorse and develop the ideas so that
in a process of syncopated feedback, they nurture each
other and produce new social and cultural structures. The
Americans after the Revolution were mentally cast adrift
and had to find new psychic roots and cultural origins.
For many, a continued dependence on Great Britain for
intellectual modes was abhorrent because they were a new,
pure, democratic republican people who could no longer
look back to the fashions of an old, corrupt, despotism
of Europe for stimulation and emulation. When Americans
were confronted with the fact that English history had not
only produced themselves as representatives of the true,
the right, and the just, but had also produced the depraved
perverters of the fine British constitution, they were
forced to rely on other sources of more intellectual and
ideological purity. From 1763 onwards, they had found
congenial companions in the classics to whom they could
turn for moral ethics and civic principles in equal shares.
They gradually came to look upon the ancient republicans
as their true ancestors in sentiment. At the same time Americans were renewing their comfortable acquaintance with the friends and teachers of their schooldays, events in Europe served to reinforce their interest in all things ancient. As early as the fifteenth century, the enthusiasm of the humanists of the Renaissance had resulted in some excavations being carried out in various parts of Europe. The very word, "renaissance" refers not just to a rebirth of learning but to a rebirth of classical humanism. In the eighteenth century these first random attempts based on aesthetic and philosophical motives were replaced by more systematic efforts with the goal of discovering rational, positive information about ancient history. In mid-century the two Roman towns which Vesuvius had buried alive were discovered and archaeology took its first tottering steps as a method and a science. Herculaneum and Pompeii were the most important sites of excavation in the eighteenth century. Around 1750 an Englishman made drawings of the ruins of the Roman colony at Palmyra in Syria and a few years later another expedition explored and recorded the ruins of the palace of Diocletian on the Dalmatian coast at Spoleto. All of these discoveries and excavations resulted in the publication of books which provided accurate, detailed information and plates on the architecture of Rome. Students could recapture with exact precision the monumental grandeur of Roman architecture and recapture it they did
with a flurry of buildings in the classical style throughout Europe that still stand today. Architects were not the only artists affected by the new fashion, for painters and sculptors were also seized with an ardor for the ancients. They produced many works inspired by and modeled upon what they thought were classical images. Roman civilization was eulogized but had been known in Europe for a long time. How, shortly after 1750, Hellas became the subject for scholarly admiration. The Comte de Caylus published his _Recueil d'antiquités_ which was one of the most comprehensive works of the period. Although he dealt with Egyptian as well as classical material, he was chiefly significant for his excitement about what he called the noble simplicity of the Greek style. In 1753, the Abbe Laugier published _Essai sur l'architecture_ in which he boldly affirmed that "architecture has only middling obligations to the Romans, and . . . owes all that is precious and solid to the Greeks alone." In 1751, two Englishmen, Stuart and Hevett, had studied the buildings on the Acropolis in Athens and in 1762 they published the monumental _Antiquities of Athens_. The German, J.J. Winckelmann, put all the sporadic enthusiasms for Greek culture together in his _Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums_ (1764) where he attempted to define the principles of Greek art and to trace its history for the first time. Hellas was no longer just the home of philosophers and philosopher-historians, but it was the birth-
place of a unique, ineffable civilization with a total culture. 14

Interest in the classical styles came more slowly to America, but when it arrived it found fertile ground in a land where the people were consciously searching for new beginnings in old origins. There was little building in America for almost a decade after the Revolution, perhaps because of the economic stagnation under the Articles of Confederation. The classical revival, or Neoclassicism, was already well under way in Europe when Americans began building and expressed itself mostly in a Roman style, because the Federalist party established and developed the early style of American government, the American manifestation of this Roman style is called the Federal period. It outlasted the political Federal period, stretching from about 1785 to 1820. A second period from 1820 to the Civil War is considered the Greek Revival because the Roman fever had been replaced by that time in architectural fashion by a Greek fervor. The Federal style appealed to the rich mercantile aristocracy that made up the Federalist party. They had been among the leaders of the Revolution but they still had cultural as well as economic ties with Great Britain. They did not wish to depart radically from British prototypes and so the Federal style tended to be conservative in character. The architects of New England are typified by the Boston classicist Charles Bulfinch and
the Salem woodcarver Samuel McIntire. Thomas Jefferson's style of architecture does not fall into this category of Anglified Romanism. He despised Great Britain and the denizens of the dark cities on America's coast. In seeking a new, clean mode of architecture suitable for the republic as he envisioned it, Jefferson went directly to Roman models. In 1785 at the request of the governor of Virginia, he drew up plans for a state capitol based on the ruins of a Roman temple he examined on a visit to Nimes in France. The facade of his building is a portico with free-standing Ionic columns (American workmen were unequal to constructing Corinthian columns which he would have preferred) surmounted by a blank pediment. The capitol at Richmond, complete in 1789, was the first public building in America to be patterned after a Roman temple. Jefferson also used Roman models for his home, Monticello, but there he tempered strict classicism with his own imagination and creativity. At the University of Virginia, he constructed a small scale replica of the Roman Pantheon for the college library. Jefferson's influence in American cultural affairs was not limited to his own building projects in the classical style, for he sponsored several architects who shared his views. Robert Mills, William Strickland, and especially Benjamin Latrobe, received encouragement and commissions from Jefferson to further the development of the ancient style. The spirit of classicism was also evident in other artistic media; for
instance, Samuel McIntire and Samuel Badlam made furniture in a classical mode and the silver work of Paul Revere and Robert Humphreys had classical inspiration. The expatriot American painter, Benjamin West, pioneered in portraying vast figure pieces based on classical or Biblical themes which appealed to the English middle class and particularly his patron, George III. For his 
*Agrippina and Her Children Landing at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* he carefully studied Roman reliefs from the period of Augustus and anticipated the Romantic Classicism of the French by almost twenty years.\(^{16}\)

This explosion of fascination with ancient men and their creations occurred after the Revolution and was under way in Europe before the Americans manifested it. However, the groundwork had already been laid in the Revolutionary period and only needed the touch of a match to set it off.

Americans emerged from the war with a new ideology and a new government. Classical precedents had an ever-increasing importance as they wrestled with the theoretical and practical difficulties of establishing a nation of people from thirteen separate colonies and developing a stable, effective government in place of the old colonial system. The classics had helped to develop the ideology of the Revolution, especially in regard to Natural Law and the treatment of colonies which were two of the most basic concerns before the shooting actually started. In the pamphlets these
concerns, along with the danger of standing armies and the perfidy of the British government, were some of the major topics of discussion. When the Americans wanted to form a new government because the Articles were inefficient, they turned to the ancient histories to discover and dispute the various forms of government available to them. During the Constitutional Convention, after enduring it as long as an aged anti-classicist could, Franklin rose and complained that the whole effort was in danger of becoming a classicist's debate. The Federalist Papers, written to convince a skeptical population that a stronger government was a better government, are heavily larded with classical references explaining the relative merits of republicanism and federalism and the debilitating weaknesses of unfettered democracy and loose confederation. In Western literature in general, the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, 1765-1825, is usually referred to as the romantic period. "Romantic" principles are often contrasted with "classical" principles of the early eighteenth century as though the romantic writers were anti-classical. Actually, the classics in literature of this period were not neglected but reinterpreted. Since the men of the eighteenth century saw themselves in the classics, they tended to interpret them in ways that suited them best, but this does not mean that in literature the classics were ignored or deprecated.

"It is impossible to believe that the movement which
produced Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, Keats' *Ode on a
Grecian Urn*, Goethe's *Roman Elegies*, Chateaubriand's *The
Martyrs*, and the tragedies of Alfieri were anti-classical.

For the Americans, this period in art and culture was ideal
for they could dip into the well of European civilization
and emerge with forms, styles, and ideas uniquely their own,
without having to make grateful obeisance to contemporary
elements they found distasteful. They could break away from
Europe and condemn its excesses and tyrannies but still
participate in the cultural fashion of the day without
becoming contaminated. In leaping back to classical
precedents and ideals over the degenerate, despotic civil-
ization then in Europe, they were spurning their cultural
cake but greedily eating it too.

As the new United States became truly independent, in
mind as well as in fact, the Americans looked less to
England for their cultural cues and more to what Europe had
in common. Many Americans, not just the New England
Federalists and merchants, were in the curious, ambivalent
position of having risked life, liberty, and property to
fight free of Great Britain and, having attained indepen-
dence, being reluctant to break the old cultural patterns.
In the colonial period, the Americans had turned unquestion-
ingly to Great Britain and devoted themselves to the ideals
of English values, forms, and institutions. It was their
belief and insistence on the idealized versions that helped
bring on the Revolution. They developed these models because, "Conditions of life in new and relatively inchoate and unstable societies at the extreme peripheries of English civilization inevitably created deep social and psychological insecurities, a major crisis of identity, that could be resolved, if at all, only through a constant reference back to the one certain measure of achievement: the standards of the cultural center." Robbed of their sense of identity by the matricidal Revolution, the Americans repaired their insecurity with an appeal back to the common spring of European ideals. Nowhere is this more striking than in the Americans' adoration of Addison's Cato, a play about the self-righteous anachronism who hastened the fall of the Republic by his stiff-necked morality and blind ignorance of the practical situation of Rome under Caesar. Cato was loved by the Americans from its first appearance in 1712 but was overwhelmingly popular in the 1760's and 1770's. Addison showed Cato with a god-like disdain for the corruption and venality around him and a martyr's devotion to republican principle. Franklin, Patrick Henry, and many others used lines from the play often. Washington was especially enamoured of the work and in the dark days of his own republic, perhaps likening his situation to Cato's flight to Africa, he ordered its performance at Valley Forge on May 11, 1778. Another republican martyr, Nathan Hale, probably uttered his famous last words in conscious para-
phrase of those Addison placed in the mouth of the Roman
at the point of his suicide. Americans could use English
cultural elements as long as they were clean and pure,
free from the recent degeneration. They could agree
heartily with the European fashion for the classics and
could even accept without demur a British lord's advice
on education to his son because most of them shared the same
sentiment.

Let Greek, without fail, share some part of
every day: I do not mean the Greek poets, the
catches of Anacreon, or the tender complaints of
Theocritus, or even the porterlike language of
Homer's heroes; of whom all smatterers in Greek
know a little, quote often, and talk of always;
but I mean Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, and
Thucydides, whom none but adepts know. It is
Greek that must distinguish you in the learned
world, Latin alone will not. American education, even after changes had been made
in the curriculum and in spite of the vociferous demands
of the anti-classicists, was still primarily classical.
The daily life of all Americans was touched at least a little
by the classics. Even the anti-classicists like Thomas
Paine and Benjamin Rush used the classics they had learned,
often to condemn the teaching of classics. Benjamin
Franklin, who is most often cited as the opponent of the
classics, would use them on occasion. During the Revolution
he wrote a satirical letter upon the hiring of the Hessian
troops to fight in America. It was a document designed as
propaganda and meant to be understood by the public at
large. In the letter, he mentions the heroic stand of the Spartan 300 at Thermopylae.

... a battle gained without costing the conqueror any blood is an inglorious success, while the conquered cover themselves with glory by perishing with their arms in their hands. Do you remember that of the 300 Lacedaemonians who defended the defile of Thermopylae, not one returned? How happy should I be could I say the same of my brave Hessians!

It is true that their king, Leonidas, perished with them; but things have changed, and it is no longer the custom for princes of the empire to go to fight in America for a cause with which they have no concern.

The common people were exposed to a filtered classicism even if they had never attended a secondary school. They constantly heard the names given to the possessions of rich, educated men. The rich christened their plantations, their slaves, and their horses with classical names. John Randolph listed his horses: "Gracchus was got by Vionna, his dam by Chanticleer, grandam by Old Celer, great-grandson by Mark Anthony, and Vixen by Regulus." Some of Henry Laurens' slaves were Tully, Valerius, Claudius, Lavinia, and Helissa. Witherspoon's home was Tusculum and Jefferson's Monticello. Preachers often spiced their sermons and discourses with a few Latin lines and store owners displayed gaudy signs with Latin mottoes. Every revolutionary leader, and it seems almost every letter writer of the period, either assumed or was given a Latin or Greek nom de guerre. Colonial newspapers abounded with Latin quotations and many articles were prefaced with an explanatory citation from the
ancients. When he took over the editorship of the Courant, Franklin was not stating a new editorial policy when he promised, "Gentle readers, we design never to let a paper pass without a Latin motto, which carries a charm in it to the Vulgar, and the Learned admire the pleasure of construing." The most common literature in the colonies was the almanacs which were circulated among all levels of colonial society for the wealth of information they carried. "Along with astronomical calculations, the horoscope, Zodiac signs, comets, and weather and crop conditions," the almanacs were jammed full of Latin quotations and mottoes. Sometimes the editors translated passages from the classics for the delectation of their readers and sometimes they quoted directly from such authors as Ovid, Cato, Virgil, Cicero, Seneca, and Manilius. 22

Another indication of the favor the ancient world found in the new republic was the tremendous number of towns given classical names after the Revolution. Once again the ideology of the Revolution conditioned the people who were concerned with founding towns on the frontier to turn to classical authors for appropriate and impressive names for their new settlements. The pervasive cultural groundcover of the classics in the late colonial period erupted in spontaneous, verdant flowering in the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary era. The coming Revolution brought the classics into focus for Americans and they immediately
adopted and adapted them for their own uses. In the whole colonial period, from the earliest founding to the late 1760's, there are only two surviving classical names: Philadelphia and Annapolis. As soon as settlements were again started after the Revolution, however, especially in the 1780's and 1790's, the Americans' idea that they were marking the boundaries of a new Rome or Athens is evident. Vanderheyden's Ferry in New York was renamed Troy in 1789. In 1790 settlements near Cayuga Lake, New York, were named after Plutarch's heroes. Some names bestowed were Aurelius, Camillus, Cato, Cicero, Cincinnatus, Fabius, Hannibal, Hector, Lysander, Manlius, Marcellus, Romulus, Scipio, Sempronius, Solon; and Ulysses. They added Homer, Ovid, and Vergil as well as Dryden, the translator of Plutarch, Locke, and Milton. The officers of the Revolutionary army formed a mutual aid society after the war to help each other and to keep alive the experience and ideals for which they had served. They called their organization after the Roman farmer Cincinnatus, who had left his plow to lead the armies of Rome and save the republic and then had returned to his fields. The Ohio city, Cincinnati, was named in honor of the hero and the retired officers, although not all Americans looked so favorably on this seemingly aristocratic association of military leaders. In 1800 the people of a small Ohio town planned to build a college and they deemed it meet to call their town Athens. The Georgia town received
its name the following year. Other nations admired the ancients in those days, but no people identified with them so personally and fervently as the Americans. The Revolutionary experience had imprinted a deep appreciation of classical principles and ideals on them. This impression was so profound that "the frequent, deliberate adoption of classical names for places in an area lacking a direct historical link with the world of Mediterranean antiquity is an idiosyncracy peculiar to citizens of the United States and almost certainly derives from a central trait of the national character." 24

The classics, then, were definitely important to the Revolutionary generation. Their education was primarily classical. They had to know grammar and syntax before they went to college. Once in college they studied the philosophical and moral content of the ancient authors. The ideology of the Revolution was derived directly and indirectly from the classics. The Americans were familiar with the most important classical authors from a variety of sources and those European contemporary writers who most interested them also drew on the classics for an important part of their intellectual content. There were few professional philologists in the colonies in the nineteenth century sense, but there were many intelligent, competent teachers of the classics in schools and colleges. Any
educated man who expected to be considered so knew at least Latin, if not Greek, and tried to stay familiar with the classics, if only in translation. There were many dedicated amateur historians and philologists in America the like of Adams and Jefferson, who pursued a lively, voluntary interest in the Greek and Roman sources. The explosion of interest in the classics in the new United States can be attributed to European Romanticism, the discovery and publication of Roman and Greek ruins, and especially and most importantly, to the feeling of the American people that they had picked up the banner of a free people living in a democratic republic dropped a millennium and three-quarters past by the Greek and Roman commonwealths. The constitutional debates, the Constitution itself, The Federalist Papers attest to the self-conscious emulation of the best advice the ancient world had to offer in the construction of a government. The Federal period and even the later Greek Revival testify to the hold the classical period had over whole cultural outlook of the Americans of the Revolutionary period. The same people who read and sympathized with the polemical pamphlets of the 1760's were those who engaged in the classical frenzy of the 1780's and 1790's. Interest peaked in those years but it was growing and spreading twenty years earlier when the pamphlet authors found that their loftiest appeals and demands could be made with the ancients as their firm allies.
Notes for Chapter IV

1Colbourne, pp. 200-232. He lists the most abundant
titles found in these selected libraries. See also
Morison, p. 133, for libraries of the seventeenth century
in New England.

2John Edwin Sandys, A History of Classical Scholarship,
451.

3Cremin, pp. 508-09.

4Morison, pp. 102-07.

5Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, "John Witherspoon," in
Willard Throp, ed., The Lives of Eighteen from Princeton

6Cremin, pp. 515-16.

7Gummere, Colonial Mind, pp. 192-96.

8Wright, p. 132.

9Reinhold, Opponents, pp. 222-25.

10Gummere, Colonial Mind, p. 16.

11Reinhold, Opponents, pp. 229-34.

12See Gummere, Colonial Mind, on "A Classical Doctor's
Dilemma."

13South Carolina Gazette, Dec. 21, 1769, Charleston,
South Carolina.


"... American culture shares with others a good many Neoclassical elements—for example, architectural styles, city planning, personal names, scholarly vocabulary, military terminology, ceremonial language (as in official mottoes, inscriptions on public buildings, and academic diplomas), the iconography of currency and seals... naval vessels and rocket missile systems and spacecraft... . . ."

24. Ibid., p. 466.
Chapter V. The Hopkins-Howard Series

If the classics were important to the formulation of the ideology of the revolutionaries, they must be found in the polemical literature of the period between 1763 and 1776. In the pamphlets the colonials argued all their most important cases and presented the constitutional and moral evidence for their position. The pamphlets were one of the most common means for communicating ideas and rallying support before the Revolution. The ideology of the Revolution is contained almost completely in the pamphlets, and its development can be traced in them from 1763 to 1776. This random sample of pamphlets has established that in fact the classics were important to the revolutionaries but, of course, they were more important to some than to others. Some pamphlet writers relied heavily on the classics as a source of inspiration and as a defense for other ideas. Others ignored them completely, although the majority made some effort to add at least a touch of the classics with the title page quotation or aphorism from the ancients. Most of the pamphlets (13) which employed a large amount of classical material were those involved in a series exchange, which implies that the more important pamphlets tended to contain classical material. Unfortunately, the most famous pamphlet of the period, Common Sense, was penned by a confirmed anti-classicist, but
he was a special case and will be dealt with later. Interestingly enough, the two responses of the Tories to him did contain a lot of classical material. The longest series in this group of significant pamphlets is the so-called Hopkins-Howard exchanges, which also involved James Otis. It consisted of seven pamphlets and letters, all from 1765 except Otis' famous work from a year earlier. The second group is less homogenous but contains three small series. The first is the Leigh-Laurens exchange of 1769, which tended to be a public display of some soiled family linen, although the quarrel was ostensibly over political matters. The second is Drayton's "Freeman of South Carolina" letter and the anonymous Tory response to it. The final pair is the strange interchange between Samuel Mather and Timothy Prout over Mather's assertion that "America must have been known to the Ancients." The next group of "classical" pamphlets is four Whig works from the hands of Richard Bland, John Dickinson, and Josiah Quincy. The fourth is a letter from the Boston merchants to the Earl of Hillsborough. The final group contains the radical Whig, Thomas Paine, and his two Tory respondents, Charles Inglis and James Chalmers. These thirteen pamphlets (actually twenty counting letters and newspaper articles) out of the eighty-two selected for this study demonstrate the vitality and the significance of the classics for the Americans. Not only how often they used the classics points this out, but how well they did so. The arguments they made based on the
classics spoke directly to the most momentous problems facing them.

Stephen Hopkins spent his early life as a farmer but educated himself in a knowledge of surveying and law. In 1732, at the age of 25, he became town clerk of Scituate near Providence. He was elected to the General Assembly often and became a justice of the court of common pleas and eventually chief justice of the colony. In 1755 he was first elected governor but was beaten in 1757 by Samuel Ward. These two men continued their yearly struggle for the post until 1768, although Hopkins had the better of it, losing only three times. Hopkins was enthusiastic for colonial union and attended union congresses three times, including that at Albany where he met and became friends with Benjamin Franklin. He was active in pre-revolutionary agitation and helped pass various circular letters. As chief justice he refused the governor's order to arrest those who burned the English ship Gaspee, some of whom were his own kinsmen. Hopkins attended both Continental Congresses, helped prepare the Articles of Confederation, and signed the Declaration of Independence. He combined his political interests with a passionate love of reading in any field, but he especially had literary and scientific interests. He founded the Providence Gazette to offset the royalist Newport Mercury and wrote several works on the history of Rhode Island. He was also the first chancellor of Rhode Island college (Brown) and a member of the Newport
Philosophical Society. His wide reading, his political beliefs, and his love of debate are all evident in his letters and pamphlets. 1

The life of Martin Howard, Jr., is obscure up to the point when he became involved in Rhode Island politics. He studied law with an important lawyer in Newport and by the 1740's was prominent himself as a legal representative for the shipowners and merchants of Newport. In 1754 he was chosen to go with Hopkins to the Albany Congress but remained out of politics except for one unsuccessful bid for the office of attorney general on the Ward ticket. Inclined toward Loyalism by parentage, marriage, his Anglican religion, and, to judge from the tone of his pamphlets, by temperament as well, Howard emerged into the political arena in 1763 as a champion of the British Empire. His royalist views made him extremely unpopular in Rhode Island, and on August 27, 1765, his effigy, identified with a placard bearing the words of James Otis, "that fawning, insidious, infamous parricide, Martinus Scriblerus," was dragged through the streets of Newport, hanged, and burned. Howard abandoned his property in America, boarded a British man-of-war and fled to England. His loyalty was rewarded with the office of chief justice of North Carolina, where he quickly became just as unpopular as he had been in Rhode Island. He personally ordered the death sentence for twelve leaders of the Regulators for treason and when the Revolution broke out he again had to abandon his property and flee to
England. Penniless in 1777, he was given a small pension by the British government until he died in 1781.²

Less needs to be said of the life of James Otis, since he is the most famous of the three authors. By hard study, Otis early in his life became a master of common, civil, and admiralty law. He was a devoted student of the classics and in 1760 wrote *The Rudiments of Latin Prosody*. He also wrote a similar work on Greek prosody but it was destroyed in an accidental fire. Otis was an avid reader of classical English literature and devoured anything, ancient or modern, on political theory. His father was disappointed in an appointment to a legal office by Governor Hutchinson, and Loyalists always maintained afterward that Otis' revolutionary zeal was a result of frustrated ambition. Otis was involved in many court battles against the crown in tax cases and other matters. He was a fiery, passionate speaker and brought those qualities to his writings. Even his friends considered him rash and intemperate and sometimes doubted his sanity. In 1769 he was clubbed on the head in a tavern brawl with a customs officer and subsequently there was no doubt about his insanity. For the rest of his life he had only brief lucid moments, but he still retained wit, charm, and erudition.³

Opposition to England's new colonial policy began early in Rhode Island with a merchants' meeting in October of 1763 to protest the Sugar Act and to discuss the publication of Stephen Hopkins', *An Essay on the Trade of the*
Northern Colonies. Because of factionalism, protest against the Stamp Act came more slowly, and when it did it was the statement of only one group in the colony. The factions were divided along economic and geographic lines, with Stephen Hopkins of Providence as the representative of the new economic forces in the colony, and Samuel Ward of Newport and Kingstown as the representative of the well-entrenched mercantile leadership of Newport. The political battle was between the mercantile faction of the Establishment defending secure sources of supply and routes of trade and the newcomers from the interior of the colony who threatened to wrench the economic and social fabric out of its familiar frame. The battle was characterized from 1757 by the annual struggle for the governorship between Ward and Hopkins, which degenerated into a personal feud between the two men for over a decade. Each side battled for votes with every trick known to eighteenth century politics: bribery, polemics, flattery, slander, and sometimes even the truth.

This unseemly state of local politics disturbed those inhabitants of Rhode Island who believed in dignity and decorum in public affairs. A group of these men in Newport, the local center of Anglican and governmental officials, decided that the charter of the colony was at fault in granting too much democracy and allowing factious politics to flourish. In the spring and summer of 1764, members of
the group published attacks in the *Newport Mercury* on the charter for its excess of democracy in allowing political chaos. They suggested the immunities of the colony be eliminated and a royal governor and assembly be appointed. They also indicated approval of the recent reform of the English colonial system, including the Sugar Act, and condemned the pamphlets and petitions circulating in the colonies against it. At this point, when there was widespread fear created by the new impositions and outraged anger at the attempts of royalists of the Establishment to revoke the colony's charter, Stephen Hopkins published his pamphlet, *The Rights of the Colonies Examined.*

Since Hopkins had attacked both the principles and the character of the Newport group, its leader Martin Howard, Jr., felt constrained to reply to his charges. A *Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax to his Friend in Rhode Island* of February, 1765, is a point-by-point reply to Hopkins, written in an acerbic, condescending tone. Howard pointed out inconsistencies in his arguments, disputed his legal citations, refuted his historical examples, and mocked his poetic decorations. Hopkins replied with a long essay entitled, "A Vindication of a Late Pamphlet entitled, *The Rights of Colonies Examined* in three installments in the *Providence Gazette* of February 23, March 2, and March 9, 1765. Another anonymous writer in the February 23 issue entered the fray on behalf of Hopkins and even anticipated
some of his replies in the later issues. To round out the crowded February 23 issue, a letter purportedly from a Newport merchant combined a defence of Hopkins with a plea for his re-election in the coming year.

Next, James Otis, the Boston patriot, joined the debate in March both to defend his friend Hopkins and himself, since Howard had obliquely attacked him in the Halifax letter. A Vindication of the British Colonies was a more stinging rebuttal than Hopkins was capable of, but in writing it Otis made concessions on the power of Parliament to tax the colonies that seemed to lose the debate for his side. Howard replied in April to both Hopkins and Otis with A Defense of the Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax and claimed that Otis had completely surrendered his position and betrayed his friend. Before replying to Howard's Defense, Hopkins turned to his friend Otis in a letter to the Providence Gazette of April 8, 1765, and gently but firmly corrected him for a misunderstanding of his (Hopkins') position. Hopkins replied to Howard with A Letter to the Author of the Halifax Letter, but by this time the debate was circling around clarifications and more and more personal abuse. The latter element reached its nadir with the publication in May of the last pamphlet in the series, James Otis' Brief Remarks on the Defence of the Halifax Libel on the British-American Colonies. It was a wild mixture of Latin quotations, legal and constitutional arguments, sarcasm, vicious innuendo, and outright personal
abuse. The final pamphlet in this group, although it was not part of this series and had been published the year previously, is Otis' The Rights of the British Colonies. It is an important document because it stated the colonial position strongly and is usually accepted as one of the most significant contributions Otis made to the colonial cause. It is important for this study because it explains why Otis jumped unbidden into the fray between Hopkins and Howard and because it is so well known to American historians. The way Otis uses the classics in it is one reason why the historians play down the importance of the classics in the pamphlets.

In his first pamphlet, The Rights of the Colonies Examined (1765), Hopkins quotes (p. 6) three famous passages from Thucydides (I: 34, 27, 25) that were widely employed throughout the debate concerning the treatment of the American colonies. Otis had alluded to Thucydides in his earlier pamphlet (1764) but Hopkins made the comparison explicit between the Anglo-American colonies and the Greek.

I: 34 "they were not sent out to be slaves, but to be equals of those who remain behind."

I: 27 "The Corinthians gave notice that a new colony was going to Epidamnus, into which all that would enter, should have equal and like privileges with those who stayed at home."

I: 25 "the Corinthians complained that the Corcyreans from whom, though a colony of their own, they had received some contemptuous treatment . . . ."
Hopkins correctly states that the Greek colonies were usually free, owing only respect and some religious observances to the mother city. The Roman colonies, on the other hand, were free but not separate (p. 7). They enjoyed Roman citizenship rights and thus all cities were part of the Roman Empire and all citizens, no matter where they lived, were Roman citizens. This was true in the late Empire but it is a gross oversimplification of the complex nature of Roman citizenship rights as they developed during the Republic and the Empire. For Hopkins' purposes, however, simple comparison was enough. He compared the American colonies to the Greek and maintained that both were removed from the mother country and equal in liberty and the enjoyment of separate constitutions. Most Americans liked to think that their colonies were like the Greek, established by heroes and having only sentimental ties to the mother country. The Roman treatment of their colonies was generally considered harsh, but some saw in the Roman policy a better system. Hopkins' citation of the Greek colonial policy is significant because as early as 1765 he was stating that the Anglo-American colonies should be separate but equal to the mother country. Whether or not he meant it to be so, the passages he quoted from Thucydides were ominous because the discussion of which they were a part was a prelude to a colonial war between Corinth and Corcyra that eventually contributed to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.
Hopkins also made two minor points with other classical passages. He refers (p. 15) to a story in Tacitus about how miserable the Romans were when Tiberius let loose and encouraged the informers of his era. Hopkins was alluding to the British use of informers to help catch colonial smugglers. The comparison between Tiberius, the half-mad emperor, and George III was an odious one and not missed by the Loyalists. Hopkins also narrates a long, not very clear story of how Constantine duped the agents of Diocletian into believing he had a full treasury by getting his subjects, who loved and trusted him, to lend him their money while the agents were investigating. He meant this history to demonstrate that the safest repository of national wealth is in the hands of its citizens, but the narrative is too abstruse to make the moral clear.

Martin Howard was so upset by Hopkins' charges and allegations that he felt a reply was necessary to defend the British cause. One of the first points (p. 3) he makes in his Letter...Halifax is a quotation from a Roman poet meant to refer to Hopkins.

Est genus hominum, qui esse primos se omnium volunt,
Neo sunt.

(There is a kind of man, who wishes to be first in all things,
But isn't.)

Howard is referring to the novi homines of the colonies, who, like Hopkins, were frustrated in their ambitions and were writing this sort of pamphlet in retaliation. Howard makes
it clear that this sort of situation was a real one in the colonies and that both sides were aware of it. Howard also made several stinging remarks based on classical allusions, such as mentioning (p. 5), as an insult to Hopkins, that Narcissus was turned into a daffodil for his pride and maintaining (p. 18) that "the government is justifiable in making laws against it smuggling, even if like those of Draco, which were written in blood." He makes (p. 4) a sneering reference to the "head of the tribunitian veto" meaning a demagogue. This was an allusion to James Otis and his pamphlet of 1764, and it brought Otis into this debate. The most important point in regard to the classics that he makes is to deny their authority in the issue between Great Britain and America. As he says, "Great Britain may one day be what Athens and Rome are today; but may Heaven long protract that hour." He went to great pains to refute Hopkins' comparison of America to Greek and Roman colonies.

The examples cited by His honor with regard to ancient colonies may show his reading and erudition, but are of no authority in the present question. . . . it is plain His Honor's argument is not strengthened by the example of the Grecian colonies; for what likeness is there between independent colonies, as those must be which "took such forms of government as themselves chose," and colonies like ours, which are in a manner feudatory, and holden of a superior? (p. 14).

He continued that not only were the American colonies never like the Greek, but even the Roman colonies did not have such a beneficial position as Hopkins inferred.
the Roman colonial did not enjoy all the rights of Roman citizens; on the contrary, they only used the Roman laws and religion and served in the legions, but had not the right of suffrage or of bearing honors (p. 15).

Having established that ancient history had no bearing on the present situation, he went on to show that there were situations in the ancient world in which colonies were badly treated. His discussion of this topic, in spite of his aversion to the classics in this case, indicates that he had a fair knowledge of them.

If the practice of the ancients was of any authority in this case, I could name examples to justify the enslaving of colonies. The Carthaginians were free people, yet they, to render the Sardinians and Corsicans more dependent, forbade their planting, sowing or doing anything of the like kind under pain of death, so that they supplied them with necessaries from Africa: this was indeed very hard (p. 15).

Hopkins' response to Howard appeared in the Providence Gazette in several issues, February through April. First, he rejects Howard's statement about the Carthaginian treatment of Corsica and Sardinia because they were not colonies, but conquered provinces. He says he cited Greece and Rome originally only to show that freedom begets freedom. Next he had to turn to his ally, Otis, whose attack on Howard had been published earlier. Otis had said that the colonies had a "natural relation" with Great Britain in a mother and daughter sense, which implied that Great Britain had some kind of maternal control over the colonies. Hopkins denies this "natural relation" and repeats that the colonies owe
only "political allegiance" to the mother country. Otis had intruded in the debate and had practically given Howard the victory by his admission that a wise mother could control a rebellious and truculent daughter by stricter regulations and punishments. Hopkins then continues his debate with Howard and cites two new references to ancient history to bolster his opinion of how the colonies should be treated. He mentions Sir Edward Coke's example of how Saul of Tarsus had been born a Jew in Syria but was still a Roman citizen. So should Englishmen born in the American colonies have all the rights of full citizens of the British Empire. He backs up this significant point with the full quotation of the speech of Claudius (Tacitus Annals XI) to the Senate on admitting Gauls to Roman citizenship and membership in the Senate. The importance of these remarks cannot be overemphasized for here Hopkins, the colonial "notable," is making a plea for admission to full participation in the rights and privileges of British citizenship. He was aware, and anyone who read his pamphlet was aware, that the American Englishmen were second-class citizens, contributing to the wealth and power of the Empire but not participating fully in them. At this point, in 1765, Hopkins, and perhaps other colonial aristocrats like him, were poised, waiting to see whether or not they would be received into full communion with the imperial nobility. The speech of Claudius shows that Hopkins, at least, was
conscious of the importance of admitting the colonial notables to full citizenship and that he sensed that "the vitality of empire" depended upon it.

James Otis entered the scene with his *Vindication of the British Colonies* but it did not contribute much to the debate. He makes the remark about the "natural relation" between Great Britain and America and afterwards Howard crowed that Otis had lost the case for his side with it. He also placed on the title page four long quotations in Latin from Virgil's *Aeneid* (III: 639-40, 672-74, 445-46, 449-53) which mention a lot of weapon making and admonish "the miserable ones" to "cut the cable and flee." Perhaps he was issuing an oblique call to arms and rebellion, but it is all very obscure. He addressed himself to the issue of the Greek and Roman colonies, but he seems more interested in insulting Howard than in making a point about the status of colonies.

... 'Tis well known the Grecians were kind, humane, just, and generous towards theirs. 'Tis as notorious that the Romans were severe, cruel, brutal, and barbarous towards theirs... Great Britain... might be justly compared to Greece in its care and protection of its colonies... the French and Spaniards followed the Roman example. But our Letter Writer tells a different story. He compliments the nation and comforts the colonies by declaring that these "exactly resemble those of Rome..." (p. 22).

He contradicts Hopkins about the Roman colonies and completely misses the valid insights to the situation that Hopkins had. All in all, this pamphlet is not a very
edifying performance for someone who was supposed to be brilliant and effective as a polemicist.

The last two efforts in this series are relatively minor because Howard and Otis, who had appropriated the quarrel for himself, were chiefly interested in abusing one another by this time. In A Defense... Halifax Howard angrily denounces a poem from Phaedrus that appeared in another pamphlet outside this series. It concerns (p. 7) an old man and his ass who are in a meadow when the enemy approach. The old man tries to get the ass to flee but the ass demurs because his burden will not change no matter who owns him. This seemed a traitorous sentiment to Howard because it appeared that the Americans were saying that in the next colonial war (the French and Indian War ended in 1763) they would be indifferent as to who won it for they would carry the same burdens whoever owned them. This is a good example of the didactic use of the ancient sources to which the Americans often put them. The poem must have carried some weight because Howard was upset enough by it to counter the American radical interpretation at some length in his pamphlet. The rest of the pamphlet is given to insults; for instance, he gets around to being outraged at Hopkins for his comparison of good King George to Tiberius (p. 11) and he fumes that, after reading the filth Otis writes, drinking from the foulness of the River Styx will be an Elysian experience for him (p. 24). Otis had the
last words of the debate in his Brief Remarks... which must have been written on the verge of an apoplectic fit. He uses a flood of classical quotations and allusions mostly to add color and sting to his insults. He recalls (p. 11) the prudence of Nestor and the legislative skill of Solon and Lycurgus and discusses mad Orestes, whom, he says, disemboweled his mother, stabbed his sister, killed his children, and finally plucked out his eyes. Otis may have been thinking of his opponent as a likely candidate for these disasters, but the Greek Orestes was guilty of only the matricide. The other activities are credited to Medea and Oedipus. He heaps scorn and abuse on Howard throughout the pamphlet, but his most interesting way of insulting him is in the deliberately free translation of two passages from Cicero's De Oratione. He obviously meant his translations to be both humorous and offensive.

Ita det tibi jurisconsultus ipse per se nihil, nisi leguleis quidam cautos et acutos, praeco actionum, cantor formularum, auceps fabularum.

And so to you, lawyers are nothing to themselves unless pettyfogging along, sort of safe and sly, heralds of plays, singers of contracts, tellers of tales (Hunt).

And so my Lord Editor, you think a learned lawyer is in himself nothing unless to compleat and give the last polish to his education, he is properly taught to become all things to all men and women too. He must, according to you, be a fine gentleman, a sly, artful petty-fogger, fraught with a good stock of low cunning and brass, a master of grimace, a spouter of plays, a bawler of forms, with a voice fit for a common crier of a court, adeptus vere, at repeating mass mattins, and other musty formularies: To crown all, he
should be a delicate chanter of Lillibullero, and other songs ancient and modern (Otis).

* * * * * *

Quicquid est vocis ac linguae omne in istum turpissimum calumniæ quæstum contulisti! Tu lucem adspicere audes? Tu hos intueri? Tu in foro, tu in urbe, tu in civium esse conspectu?

Whatever there is in you of voice and language, you use it all for most foul profit and calumny! Do you dare to look upon the light? You in the forum, in the city, to be seen in the community? (Hunt)

You are a lawyer and counsellor at law too, and a candidate for one of the provinces? There is nothing more of eloquence in you, than there is music in the lumbering of a lumber cart. What little skill you have in the management of your voice, hath been employed in singing, as your pen hath been in scandalizing your country. Dare you behold the light? Dare you face the forum, the city and the assembly of your injured fellow countrymen? (Otis)

Otis does not show his argumentative power or his command of the classics to advantage in the later pamphlets. However, in The Rights of the British Colonies (1764), he demonstrated why he was feared as a disputant in and out of court. He makes many points based on classical precedent in this pamphlet and it clearly supports the claim that the classics were important in the revolutionary ideology. It is this pamphlet, however, that opens the colonials to the charge that their classical knowledge was superficial and derivative because he uses Latin quotations, mottoes, and bon mots throughout this work (and the others) as window-dressing and because he quotes liberally from Grotius and Pufendorf on the rights of Greek and Roman colonies. This famous
pamphlet, well known to American historians, is used to question the classical content of all the pamphlets. A closer reading of what Otis actually did and said about The Rights of the British Colonies restores him to a place of respect as a colonial leader and thinker and justifies the fear and respect which both Whigs and Tories felt towards him. He was a dangerous enemy and a strong ally, but in the latter capacity his intemperance and excitability sometimes turned him into a two-edged sword. His prolific use of classical metaphors and allusions can be explained two ways: he was a classicist and a lawyer. Most of the material he worked with as a classicist was in Latin and most of English common law and the commentaries upon it were also in Latin. It was thus natural for him to sprinkle his speeches and writings, and probably his conversation also, with Latin aphorisms. If his abundant decorations strike the modern ear as artificial, they would not have bothered a fellow-classicist and lawyer of the eighteenth century. The charge that he garnered his classical allusions from other writers is more serious, but it can be dismissed by reading what he actually said. He quotes very long passages (pp. 25-27) from Grotius and Pufendorf, but it is to reject these authors as authorities that he does so.

Those who expect to find any thing very satisfactory on this subject in particular /The rights of colonies/, or with regard to the Law of nature in general, in the writings of such
authors as Grotius and Pufendorf, will find themselves much mistaken. It is their constant practice to establish the matter of right on the matter of fact.

He goes on to say that he has drawn on a very few writers for his "sentiments," mostly Locke for, of all he had seen on the subject, "there are not ten worth reading." He quotes Grotius twice. Once (De jure belli, I: 3, 21) concerning confederates with unequal treaties who had certain rights, he cited Grotius' reference to Thucydides who explained that daughter colonies owed "reverence" and "certain expressions of honor, so long as the colony was well treated." Second, Grotius told how Greeks found new and independent states which were "not content to be slaves, but to enjoy equal privileges and freedom" and how Tullius in Dionysius of Halicarnassus says, "We look upon it to be neither truth nor justice, that mother cities ought ... to rule over their colonies" (II: 9, 10).

Pufendorf says roughly the same when he states (VIII: 11, 6) that colonies are settled either by remaining part of the mother country, being united to it by unequal confederacy, or by establishing a separate state. The Romans founded colonies that remained under the jurisdiction of Rome but the Greeks founded separate colonies, "which were obliged only to pay a kind of deference and dutiful submission to the mother commonwealth" (VII: 12, 5). The question is, did Otis derive his position on the treatment of the colonies from reading other authors like Locke,
Grotius, and Pufendorf, but the answer is difficult. The familiarity with both the ancient and more modern sources was so widespread in the colonies, and especially in Otis the classicist and lawyer, that it is almost impossible to separate them. This difficulty recurs several times in the pamphlets. For instance in Alexander Hamilton's pamphlet *The Farmer Refuted* (1775), the author quotes from Blackstone's *Commentaries*, citing without acknowledgement Cicero's famous definition of natural law. Was Hamilton familiar with both, or with only one? It is difficult to know. Otis in this case was searching for the natural rights of colonies and in fact that was the title of this chapter in his pamphlet. He often applied natural law to the problems of the colonies and he used all the authorities he knew to back up his assertions. Here he expressly rejects Grotius and Pufendorf, so it is difficult to say that he was relying on their citation of Greek and Roman precedents.

From which passages 'tis manifest that these two great men only state facts, and the opinions of others, without giving their own upon the subject: And all that can be collected from those facts and opinions, is, that Greece was more generous, and a better mother to her colonies than Rome. The conduct of Rome toward her colonies and the corruptions and oppressions tolerated in her provincial officers of all denominations, was one great cause of the downfall of that proud republic (p. 27).

His other uses of classical materials in this pamphlet are less lengthy and less ambiguous. He presents (p. 10) an interesting theory about the origin of the delification
of kings and heroes. Since it was contrary to reason that supreme power should be in the hands of one man and the greatest "idolatroy, begotten by flattery, on the body of pride" that one mortal should be worthy of such power, some trick must have been used to establish kings and tyrants.

It was from the trick of gulling the vulgar into a belief that their tyrants were omniscient; and that it was therefore right, that they should be considered as omnipotent. Hence the "Dii majorum et minorum genium": the great, the monarchical, the little, Provincial and semidemigods, ancient and modern. Thus deities of all kinds were multiplied and increased in abundance; for every devil incarnate, who could enslave a people, acquired a title to divinity; and thus the "rabble of the skies" was made up of locusts and catterpillars \(\text{sic}\); lions, tygers and harpies; and other devourers translated from plaguing the earth!

This is an amusing theory, but it is not very substantial as a political principle. It is rather an oblique insult to kings in general and George III in particular.

A discussion of more substance (p. 13) concerns the various forms of government—democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy—and the various abuses that turn them into anarchy, oligarchy, and despotism. He says the grand political problem of all ages has been the search for the best balance between the legislative and executive powers. Those states that were the strongest and most durable separated those powers and placed each in more hands than one (p. 14). The Romans were the most successful but they never found a balance between the Senate and the people and this led to their fall. Great Britain now had the best chance for
"honest wealth and grandeur" since Rome fell. Rome was destroyed by Julius Caesar and Great Britain should learn a lesson from his career (p. 15). Otis says that almost never does a colony forsake or disobey a tender mother; but when the mother rules in such a way that she needs to hire guards for her colonies, she is leaving herself vulnerable to a Caesar.

... armies stationed as guards over provinces, have seized the prey for their general and given him a crown at the expense of his master. Are all ambitious generals dead? Will no more rise up hereafter? The danger of a standing army in remote provinces is much greater to the metropolis, than at home. Home found the truth of this assertion; in her Sylla's, her Pompey's/Sic/ and Caesars; but she found it too late: Eighteen hundred years have roll'd away since her ruin ... (p. 52).

* * * * *

... The experience of past times will show, that an army of 20 or 30,000 veterans, half 3000 miles/ the distance from Great Britain to North America/ from Rome, were very apt to proclaim Caesars. The first of the name, the assassin of his country owed his false glory, to stealing the affections of an army from the commonwealth. I hope these hints will not be taken amis; they seem to occur from the nature of the subject I am upon; ... (p. 64).

Otis' performance in this first pamphlet was both more controlled and more significant than in the later ones. He disagreed with Hopkins about the Roman colonies and confused the argument when he interfered with Hopkins' position, but both agreed that the Greek policy was the preferred one that Britain should follow. Hopkins made a sterling point when he said that the Americans should have all the rights of imperial British citizenship and, in fact,
in this whole series he cuts a better figure than Otis, who appears irascible and confused sometimes. Otis does make a good contribution with his remarks about the dangers of a standing army, but many others had made the same observation. His discussion about constitutions also appears to have been gleaned from Locke or some other similar political writer. Hopkins' observations about the desirability of the Greek precedents of colonial policy and his indication of the tactics concerning Roman citizenship were the most solid contributions in the whole affair. Howard held his own against Otis, trading insult for insult, although Otis did have the last word, but he was unable to answer the problem set by Hopkins. Either the Americans had to be admitted to full partnership in the Empire or something else was going to be done. The British refused to admit them, or were unaware that they wanted to be admitted, and the Revolution was the result. Probably Howard was conscious of what Hopkins really wanted, but his vested interests prevented him from letting novi homines share in the best fruit of the Empire and imperial officials in London paid more attention to people like Howard than to enlightened administrators like Thomas Pownall.
Notes for Chapter V


4 Bailyn, Pamphlets, p. 500.

5 Morgans, Crisis, p. 48.

6 Bailyn, Pamphlets, p. 501.


9 Bailyn, Pamphlets, pp. 503, 546.

10 James Otis, A Vindication of the British Colonies Against the Aspersions of the Halifax Gentleman, In His Letter to a Rhode Island Friend (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1765), 32 pp.


Otis was not the first to apply natural law to the American view of the controversy with Great Britain, but in his famous speech on the writs of assistance in 1761 he established natural law as superior to mere positive law in colonial policy. John Adams later described Otis in the courtroom on that day, "a promptitude of classical allusions, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, and profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance into futurity, a torrent of impetuous eloquence." Guinier, Colonial Mind, p. 100. Apparently Otis wrote the way he spoke and did not change with the years but to grow more extreme.

Thomas Pownall, The Administration of the Colonies (London: J. Wilkie, 1764), 131 pp. This pamphlet went through five editions and several reprints. If Pownall's advice had been followed, history would have been different.
Chapter VI. The Classics in Polemics: Six Pamphlets

In the southern colonies, the antagonism between the interests of the imperial bureaucrats and the native American upper class was also heating up. One issue was the cause of an exchange of pamphlets that demonstrates clearly that the colonial aristocracy was finding that its best interests would be served by attacking British policy rather than by serving it. Henry Laurens, a prosperous Charleston merchant, became involved in a public dispute with the Crown's Attorney General of the colony, Sir Egerton Leigh, who also happened to be his brother-in-law. Before they had finished they had aired in their pamphlets not only the dispute over the seizure and disposition of an American ship by the vice admiralty court under Leigh, but also some highly personal family linen. The tone of this series is actually more important than the content of the pamphlets. In the so-called "a Representation of Facts" series, the merchants of Charleston had opened the dispute with a pamphlet of that title, published in 1767, in which they charged that the crown officials involved in the seizure and condemnation of American ships were dishonest and corrupt. To further prove their case, Laurens published \textit{Extracts from the Proceedings of the Court of Vice-Admiralty}
(1768) in which he questioned the legality of the court proceedings and the propriety and honesty of the judge, Leigh. He responded with *The Man Unmasked* (1769) and showed that Laurens was a religious hypocrite and an ignorant fool. Laurens felt constrained to reply, so he placed an Appendix on the second edition (1769) of his *Extracts* and rebutted as best he could Leigh's counter-charges.

In their pamphlets, Leigh appears as urbane, sophisticated, and educated, while Laurens appears straight-forward, honest, blunt, and defensive about his cultural attainments.

Leigh was involved in several controversies while he was attorney general. A few years after the dispute with Laurens he had another pamphlet exchange with William Henry Drayton over the pamphlet Leigh had published anonymously in London, *Considerations on Certain Political Transactions of the Province of South Carolina* (1774). In his work, Drayton described Leigh as "a man desperate in Fortune, abandoned in Principle, and ruined in reputation" who possessed equally a "weak Head and a wicked Heart." Leigh had worked hard to earn the enmity of the colonials, and his humorous admission that he was a placeman and that he had earned his baronet solely for defending royal prerogative in the colony did nothing to redeem him. His early career in the colony had been successful and he had been considered a prize catch for the provincial girl who married him. His success began to sour in public and private life soon after.
He became the object of scandal in the colony, and indeed throughout the North American colonies, when it became public knowledge that he had seduced his young sister-in-law. Not satisfied with immorality, he is supposed to have put the young girl on a ship bound out of the colony at the term of her pregnancy, not, as he said, to save her the embarrassment of delivering the bastard where she was well known, but in the hope of disposing of both her and her discomforting offspring in a rough sea voyage. There is some question, actually, of just who seduced whom, for the sister-in-law had a reputation of her own before she met Sir Egerton. He was blamed for the unseemly affair, although at first it did not appear to rupture his friendship with his brother-in-law, Henry Laurens. The dispute over the seizure of American ships carrying illegal goods did accomplish a split, and much of the subsequent pamphlets is given over to mourning the betrayal of the other's friendship and heaping insults and recriminations on each other. Leigh's career was remarkable because it summarized for the Americans everything that was wrong with the imperial administration of the colonies. "Clearly, his actions, and, ultimately, his mere presence, helped to disenchant South Carolinians with imperial authorities and their policy... he contributed significantly to the growing American hostility toward the Vice-Admiralty Courts and to the increasing feeling that Great Britain and her servants were corrupt."
Henry Laurens was born into a Charleston merchant family in 1724 and made such a success of business that he was able to retire in 1771 at the age of forty-seven. He was a conservative in politics but was on the side of the Americans against British policy. In 1776, he was a delegate to the Continental Congress and served as its president for over a year in 1777-1778. Later in the war on his way to Holland to negotiate a loan, he was captured and held prisoner until 1781 when he was exchanged for Cornwallis. Perhaps as can be expected from a "practical" businessman, he was dubious about the value of the classics as a requirement of general education. As a cultured man, he himself read widely if not deeply, but he felt "the classics in my poor opinion have often been impediments to the success of young men, in an education of more value and utility in the middle sphere of life." He did allow his children, sons and daughter, to pursue their interests in education, and many of those were classical. His attitude toward the classics is significant, for it left him at a disadvantage in his exchanges with Leigh. Laurens was widely read but he did not have the classical background and facility that Leigh had, so he was left with a few lame alibis when Leigh directed insults with classical barbs at him. The one use of a classical author that he did essay, the widely misused Plato, was swiftly turned back on him by Leigh. The tone of these two pamphlets is important because
they encapsulate the attitude of a writer who can use the classics in debate and one who cannot do so easily. Laurens' obvious defensiveness is an indication that Leigh's easy familiarity with the classics as a source of insults and precedents placed him at a disadvantage that his claims to be merely a humble, plain-spoken businessman did not entirely overcome.

In The Man Unmasked, Leigh was responding to Laurens' first edition of the *Extracts of Proceedings*, and in it he divides his attention equally between defending himself and attacking Laurens. Leigh must have known Cicero well, for he not only quotes his work but even imitates his style and uses his rhetorical devices. Like Cicero, he says (p. 6) he is not going to attack his opponent personally, and then immediately proceeds to do so in detail, all the while protesting he is not going to say anything like that. Later, he describes for several pages (pp. 22-23) Laurens' religious hypocrisy and his denunciatory, periodic sentences are in the style of Cicero's Verrine or Catalinarian Orations. He quotes (p. 15) Cicero on the Roman practice of burning a capital "K" on the head of anyone convicted of calumny, "which brand incapacitated any person from ever acting as a prosecutor in a court of justice." Leigh was amused by Laurens' attempt to play the prosecutor as he had in his pamphlet, and asks Laurens if he has a translation of Ovid so that he might see a "monster like himself" in the
"wild and imaginary metamorphoses" of a merchant into a lawyer (p. 9). The question about a "translation" was deliberate because Leigh knew about Laurens' lack in the area of the classics. He provided two passages (p. 80) in Latin of the law concerning calumny and does not translate them but condescendingly assures his reader of their meaning, if he is "unskilled in the Latin tongue" (p. 81). In regard to Laurens' attacks on his personal life, Leigh assumed the stance of a great man assailed by the mud and envy of a miserable, despised rival. He compared himself, modestly enough, to Socrates who was ridiculed by Aristophanes (The Clouds) and made the object of contempt: "but the truth was, that this Socrates described by the poet, was so disguised by fiction, that it was only the same name given to a different character; he was not the divine moralist and father of antient wisdom" (p. 109). Some of Laurens' accusations must have hit the mark, however, for Leigh describes loftily how under assault, a virtuous man like himself "becomes, like the temples of the Gods, venerable even in his ruin" (p. 122). He accuses Laurens of calumny again and again in the pamphlet but is sure that he will eventually be vindicated for "sooner or later the mast will fall from every man who wears it" (p. 136) . . . "for no man can act agreeably to right reason, who, as Horace expresses it, 'Aestuat et vitae disconvent ordine toto,' fluctuates and disagrees with himself through the whole course of life" (p. 137). For himself he is a
compassionate man and he concludes his pamphlet with twenty-nine lines of Juvenal's Fifteenth Satire on "compassion proper to mankind appears" (p. 138).

Laurens had quoted Plato in his pamphlet and Leigh ridiculed him unmercifully for it. First, he asserts that it was not original anyway but "picked up out of Pufendorff" and secondly that Plato has no bearing on the case. If Laurens wants to use "this heathen moralist" (who will become "the divine moralist" later in Leigh's pamphlet), he must first prove that the vice-admiralty courts are founded on "his policy and principles" and that his laws have been incorporated into common law. Leigh clearly uses the "father of antient wisdom" to serve the purpose at hand, for here he rejects his "many extravagant and wild conceits" (p. 79). He ridicules Laurens for bringing Plato into the issue because of other things that Plato said, that of course, had nothing to do with the point Laurens had quoted. This is another rhetorical device that Leigh had probably learned in his studies of ancient rhetoric. To show how ridiculous is Plato as a source of political practice, he mentions that in the Politics, Plato "in order to banish out of his republic all property ordains a community, not only of goods, but also of wives and children." Leigh admires the virtue and philosophy of Plato in many respects but has to draw the line at some objectionable ideas that Plato had, although Laurens might subscribe to them "for his own particular convenience."
Something Laurens "would relish well enough" perhaps, is the idea "that women should be destined to the same employments as the men." This incredible provision "would divide the cares of life more equally, and afford a larger share of comfort to the male; those who are fond of making their wives drudges, will into Plato's scheme without dispute." Leigh evidently thought it was absurd to consider a woman doing a man's business and it might be noted here that other authors occasionally mentioned a woman in the male's place as the epitome of nonsense and fatuity. In his pamphlet of 1776, Jacob Green was condemning hereditary governments because the people had to accept the heir to power as he was; sometimes an infant, sometimes an idiot, often a fool or a tyrant, and occasionally a woman. He stops to consider the last possibility and decides that it alone is enough to discredit hereditary government.

Should one of our charter governments choose a girl, or an old woman for their governor, and give her the usual salary, would not their money be nobly expended, and their government finely managed! This among other things may serve to show, that hereditary government cannot be founded in reason and equity.

While Laurens' response was strong in other areas and it can be said that he won the debate in general, he did not show well when he tried to counter Leigh's classical insults. He did not even try to argue Leigh's disposal of his citation of Plato. Instead, he was reduced, in the Appendix of the second edition, to the weak defense that he writes
"without labored apologies or refined glossings" (p. 1), thereby admitting that the finished polish of Leigh's essay had been remarked over the rather clumsy amalgamation of legal precedents and court proceedings that Laurens had cobbled together in his first pamphlet. With a note of desperation he says (p. 1) that he "has less cause to regret the want of classic veterans for his allies." He means that for his cause, he cannot quote ancient authors for support but it is so just that he feels the lack less than Leigh would. But the whole style of the Appendix shows that he was trying to match his clear, but plain, style to the sophisticated rhetorical flourishes of Leigh. Laurens may not have even been aware of the subtle oratorical artifices that Leigh had employed in his pamphlet. The first proceedings had been a plodding rendition of facts and testimony, but it had told the truth and Laurens says (p. 2), "Mr. Leigh would decry truth because it is written by a person who does not understand Greek . . . ." He accuses him of trying to "amuse the Vulgar with a few Latin Sentences" (p. 46). Laurens even summons up the courage to try to turn one of Leigh's self-serving classical companions back on him. He says (p. 47) Leigh is "like Cacus, . . . beat out of his strong Hold, and must fall flat down--but oh! how unlike 'the temples of the Gods, venerable even in their Ruins.'" In lengthy rebuttals, he recounts all of Leigh's misdeeds, public and private, and tries to answer Leigh's defense of himself. Laurens concentrates on Leigh's
personal life, his betrayal of their past friendship, his almost incestuous lechery, and other assorted doings, and concludes that "such Acts and Deeds blur the Grace and Blush of Modesty--call Virtue hypocrite, and the very Soul of Sweet Religion make a Rhapsody of Words" (p. 46).^{8}

Laurens was able to fulminate against Leigh because the Englishman was fatally weak in regard to his personal life, but Laurens was clearly weak in his inability to respond to Leigh's refined jibes at his lack of classical learning. Other authors of the pamphlets at once denied the pertinence of the classics to an issue and used them in the same pamphlet for the same or related issue as did Leigh with Plato. Perhaps some of the confusion over the use of the classics in the pamphlets derives from this ambiguous practice.

William Henry Drayton was one of those American aristocrats who came to the rebel cause slowly, but when he decided for separation he became a radical. The produce of rich, landed families in South Carolina, he received his education in Great Britain at Westminster and Oxford and when he entered the Assembly in 1765 was in accord with imperial policies. At the risk of personal unpopularity, he published articles in 1769 which denounced the nonimportation agreements and encouraged individuals to ignore them because they were established by illegal bodies. He visited Great Britain soon after and was welcomed as a
proponent of the king and royal prerogative in South Carolina. He was appointed to sit on the Council when he returned and was made an assistant judge, although he would soon lose the latter position when a replacement arrived from Great Britain. This personal frustration and his unpopularity with fellow Americans turned him from the Loyalist side. He published his "Freeman Letter" (1774) in which he denied that Parliament could legislate for the colonies and suggested instead a federal system with an Assembly which would make laws for all the colonies in tax matters and a few others. Drayton was another clear case of a native American aristocrat, full of ambition and pride, who had tried to ascend the ladder of success in the imperial system and found himself dumped for a placeman from the British Isles. He quickly did an about face in his loyalty to Britain and published sentiments that contradicted those he had printed five years earlier although he did not admit so either in the pamphlet or probably to himself. Since he was a lawyer and a judge, his main interest was the laws that Great Britain passed for the colonies and constituted the major thrust of his pamphlet. When he does use the classics, it is to describe some ancient Roman precedent for good or evil for the laws then being enacted by Parliament. An anonymous Loyalist wrote a response to Drayton's pamphlet and rehearsed the legal precedents for Parliament's actions and warned about the results of faction.
Judge Drayton used his best courtroom rhetoric in the pamphlet to influence the jury of his readers. His style is full of outrage and exclamation points. His client, the wronged colony, is seeking justice under English common law from the illegal and immoral perversions of the English Constitution by the duplicitous Parliament. All the colonies are really involved because while "The highest Despotism is now exercised over Quebeck; remember! it is true to a proverb 'multis minatur, uni qui injuriam facit'" (p. 8). The British Parliament was sending troops to enforce the Intolerable Acts and Drayton knew the danger to the English Constitution that such a standing army in the provinces prevented.

The Roman Legislature vested in Caesar, unconstitutional authority in the Provinces, he was at length enabled, only by the means of this authority, to overthrow even the Roman Liberties and Constitution; and upon their ruins, to establish a Despotism throughout the whole Empire (p. 25).

Judge Drayton was worried about the legality and constitutionality of Parliamentary acts; but he, in the usual manner of the eighteenth century, educated gentleman, was able to demonstrate a contemporary situation through a classical allusion. He does this again when he suggests that the person who conceived the plot to send indicted servants of the Crown to Great Britain or another colony for trial derived it from a policy employed at the time of the first Roman emperors.
Tacitus somewhere says, that when the Legions being encamped, were oppressed by their Centurions, and in a clamorous manner demanded justice of the Generals; to save the accused from the vengeance of the injured, they at once ordered them to Prison, under pretence of future punishment; but in truth only to screen them from popular fury, and to enable them to escape the doom due to their crimes (p. 25).

Drayton's language at the beginning of the above passage took on the stilted style of a literal translation directly from the Latin. It may have been unconscious and he was reproducing how Tacitus always sounded to him in translation or he may have been purposely using Latinisms like "the Legions being encamped" to impress readers with his familiarity with Latin. He uses the classics obliquely sometimes as part of his rhetorical speech to the jury. In recounting how English subjects emigrating from England to America carry with them the inalienable right to enjoy the benefits of common law in any time or place, he concludes with "and such were the Lares our Forefathers religiously embarked with themselves to protect them and their Posterity, in the Wilds of America" (p. 37). It is a general reference to the Roman practice of taking the household gods, the Lares and Penates, with them when they had to change abodes for any reason, and especially a reference to Virgil's Aeneid where pious Aeneas carried his father on his back from burning Troy while the old man cradled the Lares in his arms at the beginning of their journey to Italy and Rome. Perhaps Drayton was aware of the
tradition which said the Trojans founded London or had seen an old map which called London "Troy Nouvant." Like most upper class Americans, he admired the Roman upper class for their aristocratic, Stoic virtues and appealed to Americans to emulate the Romans in time of stress.

While Hannibal thundered at the gates of Rome, such was the fortitude of the Romans, a people destined to be "Populum late regem," that in the Forum was sold and bought even the very ground on which Hannibal was encamped. The Romans opposed him with a vigour, the more formidable, by being temperate. The event was suitable to the conduct. Let us imitate such an example. Let us not give up our rights, because a military government is formed, ... Let us not despair, because armies are, as I may say, encamped upon our rights. Not we will still consider them, our property, as the Romans did their Soil, which Hannibal covered with his Numidians, and which he held planted with his hostile ensigns (p. 46).

South Carolina was divided by an antipathy between the coastal plain and the interior, which resulted in the frontiersmen being against anything the city people favored. The frontiersmen had felt cheated and slighted for years by poor representation, excessive taxation, and a lack of access to the courts. One of Drayton's jobs after he joined the rebel side was to tour the back country to rally the settlers to the dissident cause. He failed in this and although some who came after him extracted oaths of loyalty to the new government at gunpoint, the back settlers stayed loyal to Britain. Their intransigence was one reason the British moved the war to the South in the latter part of the Revolution. The person who responded to Drayton signed
himself "a Back Settler" and he typified the rural hostility to the machinations of the merchants of the coast. Most of his pamphlet attempted to establish that Parliament indeed had the right to make laws for the colonies. Perhaps to offset Drayton's recurrent appeals to Roman legal history he noted early that Rome had fallen as much by "publick Discontents" as by "Debauchery." The way he interpreted Roman history, the Republic had stayed strong as long as the people remained united and strong. They extended their conquests over the known world until the time when "Faction reared its Head." Some scheming individuals felt it was in their interest to embrace extremist views and ambitious men worked to keep the breeches in the body politic open that could be used to their advantage. This was when ancient Roman virtue began to decline.

Publick Offices, which were in the Gift of the People, were generally filled by their designing Leaders; indeed the most flagrant and turbulent Characters were commonly preferred. The guilty Custom drawing into an Establishment, soon rendered the air of Italy too polluted for Freedom or Order to dwell in; they therefore winged their way; By which Flight the Romans lost themselves and the Empire of the World together (p. 36).

The settler was referring to the feared tribunes of the plebs who, like the "venal orators" of Athens, led the Republic down the road to anarchy and ruin. As a conservative he distrusted those who appealed to the discontents of the people. It probably meant they were trying to establish themselves as demagogues who would reduce the government to political bickering and hasten the ruin of the
whole Republic and people. He considered Drayton one of these worms of political order and concluded his pamphlet with a three-line poem in Latin that left no doubt about his opinion of Drayton's principles and writings. He included a translation for those who could not understand the succinct Latin.

Let Flames on thy unlucky Papers prey,  
And Moths thro' written Pages eat their Way;  
Thy Loves, thy Wars, thy Praises be forgot,  
And all become one universal Blot.  
The Rest is empty Praise, an Ivy Crown,  
Or the lean image of a mean Renown\(^{11}\) (p. 36).

One of the most eccentric exchanges of pamphlets during this period occurred between Samuel Mather, a Boston divine and the youngest son of Cotton Mather, and Timothy Prout, a Boston merchant. From their professions, a guess could be made as to their political persuasion, but it would be wrong. Mather, "the last and the least of a great dynasty," was certainly considered part of the Establishment, but he was a Whig, and even a radical Whig, for he disowned his son who sided with the British. Prout was a remarkable specimen: a Boston merchant who felt smuggling was immoral as well as illegal. In response to a request by some unnamed gentleman, Mather, in 1773, undertook to prove in a scholarly manner that America as a separate continent or group of islands was at least known to the ancient nations, if not familiar to them. He discussed passages from classical Greek and Roman authors, the Old Testament, and the New Testament to show that certain wise men knew of voyages to the new world
in ancient times and knew where, approximately, it was located. He added a ten page appendix to his scholarly effort, which denied that Parliament had the right to tax the American colonies. The tone and manner of Mather's pamphlet was too much for Prout to let pass. He wrote a response, the only thing he ever published in his life, with the suggestive title, *Diana's Shrines Turned into Ready Money, by Priestly Magic; Or, Virtue Given Up* . . . (1773). He ridiculed and lampooned almost every one of Mather's citations and theories on the geographic knowledge of the ancient world and rejected his pretensions about the limitation of Parliament's powers. The fiasco connected with his *Attempt to Shew America Known to the Ancients* was fairly typical of Mather's career. He combined all the pomposity of his illustrious forebears with a limited amount of their intellectual ability.

As a young man in college, Samuel caused his famous father some uneasy moments because he turned to idleness before study, although he did engage enthusiastically in projects that interested him. Perhaps due to his father's influence, he received one of the first Thomas Hollis scholarships (1720) when he entered Harvard at the age of thirteen. He also engaged in the debate over small-pox vaccinations, because he himself was vaccinated and survived an epidemic because of it, and wrote a few articles in opposition to Franklin's Hell Fire Club. He preached his
first sermon before he was eighteen to some soldiers on
Castle Island, selected perhaps because they "were used to
hardships and could not well escape." His father wrangled
a Yale degree for his seventeen year old son before he had
received his Harvard degree. By 1731, Mather had earned
his Master's degree from Harvard and had been elected
pastor of his father's and grandfather's church in Boston.
He also earned a reputation for being a staggering bore in
the pulpit and some question about his theological orthodoxy
caused him to abandon the Second Street Church and inaugurate
his own with about one-third of his former congregation
following him in 1741. Although by no means a democrat, he
was a patriot. Perhaps the loss of his son, Thomas, an army
surgeon in Halifax, and his son, Increase, impressed into
the British navy in 1761, helped turn him against Great
Britain. When the Stamp Act was imposed on the colonies,
Mather said it was "a most unadvised Thing to attempt" and
described the British attempt to put down the Stamp Act mobs
as religious and political persecution. His enemies said
Samuel had a lot of learning but little sense. He was vain
and liked to collect degrees from universities at home and
abroad. As a writer and thinker, he was not as influential
as his ancestors and really only became famous after he
began to espouse the patriot cause. His strengths and
weaknesses are demonstrated in his curious pamphlet on
America and the ancients: credulity, erudition, pedantism.
Timothy Prout was not interested in politics and his single foray into public view was his quarrel with Mather. He received an M.A. from Harvard in 1740 and then went to work in the family business. His father had been in the House of Representatives for Boston and had served as a Justice of the Peace for Suffolk, but Timothy refused to serve in the only position he was ever appointed to, constable in Boston, and thus barred himself from further office-holding. Although he was a Boston merchant, Prout believed that smuggling was harmful and dishonest and felt that the best course for all good citizens was a hearty cooperation with Great Britain. When Mather published his pamphlet, Prout was enraged by what he felt was its pompous stupidity. His response to it was circulated among his friends for awhile, and they tried to have it printed in Boston but were prevented by threats from the clergy. The manuscript was sent to New York and printed there. In some circles in Boston, Mather was unpopular and his views on political and economic matters were sometimes vague or even absurd, so copies of Prout's pamphlet were circulated with pleasure. Prout participated in one of the Tea Act meetings in 1773 and then disappears until 1776. When the revolutionary government ordered him to be arrested as a Loyalist, he escaped, however, and probably died in New York in 1782.14

The chief significance of this exchange is that the pamphlets themselves are so odd, the address to contemporary
affairs by a classical scholar, the reversal of the usual positions of the merchant and the minister, and the public interest in a classical pamphlet and the response to it. Mather's pamphlet consists of twenty-five pages of densely packed classical and Biblical quotations and arguments and a ten-page appendix on the unjust oppression of the colonies with a few classical quotations. Prout devoted twenty-three pages to demolishing systematically every one of Mather's statements and ideas, most of which had some classical or biblical connection. Both are interesting for the scholarly type of approach the authors pursued. Mather discussed an unlikely thesis with his usual dozen or so ancient sources to back him up and criticized and discussed each of his sources as he presented them. Prout took a less "scholarly" approach but questioned the worth of all the erudition and reasoning in Mather's pamphlet if they went against common sense. Prout felt the whole idea was ridiculous and Mather's citation of ancient sources could not redeem the fact that the basic idea was ludicrous and unreasonable. He lumped Mather's patriotic appendix with his discussion of ancient geography. It is significant that Mather, a minister and a classicist, would feel that he could annex a discussion of contemporary affairs to a scholarly exercise in ancient history. Here again is the eighteenth century opinion that there is no division of knowledge or interest. Mather felt that people intelligent enough to be interested in his
survey of ancient geographic knowledge would also be
interested in his opinion on colonial policy. Mather's
family was certainly established in the colonies, in fact
the name Mather is almost synonymous with Puritan. However,
like the other Mathers, Samuel's mind was not closed to
new ideas, especially scientific ones, and he was not intolerant of unorthodox theology. This latter attitude resulted
in his being charged with Arminism and resulted in his flight
from his family's traditional church. Prout, on the other
hand, should have been an example of an upwardly mobile
American merchant who felt frustrated by British restrictions.
His father corresponded to the archetype of the colonial
malcontent, for he was a cordwainer who had risen in economic
circles by hard work and had participated in the local
politics of the Boston area and served in the Massachusetts
legislature. His son should have been a patriot, as many
other Boston merchants were, but he was not. Educated at
Harvard, influenced by his father, affected by British
mercantile policy, still Prout was a Tory. The last point
about these two pamphlets is that they were popular in
Boston. People on both sides of the dispute over colonial
policy enjoyed these pamphlets and bought and read them.
Most of the discussion in Mather's pamphlet is on classical
material and less on biblical sources, and Prout responds
mostly to Mather's statements point by point, so most of his
material is also classical. The confrontation between the
merchant and the priest, the Tory and the Whig, must have
titillated a lot of Bostonians, but the debate centered
around the interpretation of classical information and they
apparently were able to follow it, not with difficulty, but
with interest.

There are very many classical allusions and quotations
in Mather's pamphlet but just a few will give the flavor
of the whole. On his title page, he sets the tone by quoting
three passages in Latin from Cicero, Terence, and Claudian.15
He begins his discussion (p. 7) with L. Annaeus Seneca,
the nephew of the famous Seneca, who wrote "In Late Years
Ages shall come, in which Ocean shall loose the Bonds of
Things, and the Mighty Earth shall be laid open, and Thyphus
shall discover new Worlds." About Seneca, he says, however,
"we need not be so unnecessarily credulous" as to accept
that he knew about America. This is just about the last
time he is so cautious. His next story (p. 8) comes from
Pomponius Mela, whom he says wrote about 93 A.D. and concerns
the time when Metellus Celer was proconsul among the Gauls
and the king of the Suevians gave him a gift of some
Indians, "who being snatched away by the Force of Storms
from Indian Shores, at length came out to the Shores of
Germany." He accepts this story as probably true. Prout
had a lot of fun with Mather's credulity here, for he asks
if Indians might not have become a little damp in their
canoes on the passage over and wonders which current could
have carried them to Europe in time to prevent their starvation. Mather continues (p. 9) with the repeated mention in ancient times of two islands called the Atlantides, where the Elysian Fields and the Isles of the Blessed are located. They are mentioned by "Homer, Horace, and other Poets" and Mather thinks they might be Hispaniola and Cuba. He goes on to recount Plato's story, "the Atlantic Island," and mentions that Strabo and Pliny also speak of it. Mather thinks this must be the continent of North America. He discusses (p. 12) briefly Hanno's Periplus, which he says is still in existence although he has never seen it, and maintains that the Carthaginian Hanno might have touched on some part of the Americas on his Periplus, or circumnavigation, of Africa. Aelian, who wrote around "Achian's time" 136 A.D., records a colloquy between King Midas of Phrygia and Silenus wherein Silenus informs the king that Europe, Asia, and Libya (Africa) are islands surrounded by Ocean and that one continent "exists without this World." These citations made Mather thoughtful and he believed that the ancients really did have some idea that there was an additional continent located somewhere in the West. He also believed that some fearless sailors or hapless travelers had sailed or been blown to American shores where they met the inhabitants. He believed that America had been inhabited many years ago and not just recently.

\[\text{America}\] surely it must have been inhabited, not merely above 500 years; but above one, two,
three and even four thousand years ago; And indeed it was probably inhabited not long after the Dispersion of those numerous Families, who were separated in Consequence of the unhappy Affair at Babel (p. 13).

In spite of the "Affair at Babel," his idea is not bad for someone writing before the development of the science of anthropology. His case is weakened when he tries to show in the rest of the pamphlet that America was also known to the wandering Hebrew nomads of the Old Testament (by divine revelation) and to the apostolic authors of the Four Gospels. His appendix contained no new or startling ideas but stated what was the standard colonial position by that time, that Parliament could not tax them. He discusses the importance of a legislature and its power to tax the people and how the people must be represented in that legislature in order for it to have the power to tax them. He says,

Commons have the sole power to tax but the American Commons cannot see how the Commons of Britain has the right to take their money.

Prout's response to each of these citations and all the others was to mock them. They were ridiculous, unlikely, and silly, and Mather was credulous, pompous, and stupid for believing them. His response was "devastating, bad tempered, and unfair" but it was mostly a point by point mockery of each statement that Mather made. His attitude can be summed up with the sarcastic praise he directed toward Mather.

The pamphlet may well be tacked as an appendix to the wondrous Magnalia: Herein is verified that saying, Every generation grows wiser and wiser.
Notes for Chapter VI


8. There is no standard of capitalization in the eighteenth century and hardly one of spelling. In general, it seems that the more capital letters a writer employed, the less educated he was.


11. *Frange, miser, calamos vigilataque praetia dele,*
   *Qui facis in parva sublimia carmina cella,*
   *Ut dignus venias bederis et imagine macra.*


13. Ibid.


15. The only other pamphlet that contained as many different citations of classical authors was William Hicks, *The Nature and Extent of Parliamentary Power Considered* (Philadelphia: William and Thomas Bradford, 1768). It was originally published in the Pennsylvania Journal in six installments so it was not considered part of this study. Hicks cites Demosthenes, Claudian, Seneca, Cicero, Terence, Livy, and Sallust.
Chapter VII: Whig Pamphlets

These four Whig pamphlets are typical of those that contain classical material. They are from three different periods in the controversy with Great Britain, 1766, 1769, and 1774. They rehearse many of the same points, accept or reject the same ancient illustrations, and repeat some of the same important principles. Although they duplicate the classical materials time after time, this repetition is not confined to the classical area. The polemicists borrowed generously from each other in all the sources and a good argument in one pamphlet often showed up slightly altered in a later pamphlet. The classical principles and illustrations that pertained to the American colonial situation were limited, so a certain amount of repetition could not be avoided. When a point from the classics was especially telling, the pamphleteers felt it could bear no end of reiteration, as for instance Thucydides' passage about the treatment of the Greek colonies. The conservative Whigs generally were uncomfortable with the citation of the ancient colonies as precedents for the treatment of the Anglo-American ones and sometimes rejected the argument from ancient sources altogether, as did Richard Bland and a few others. John Dickinson made sparing use of the classics but
what he does cite is often important. Josiah Quincy, Jr., is a mine of classical allusions, illustrations, and principles. His pamphlet contains the most vigorous, varied, and prolific classical citations in the entire sample. Many of his arguments and discussions are not repetitions of other pamphlets but do reflect many of the underlying ideas and emotions that surfaced in other pamphlets and writings. He repeats many of the warnings about the connections among corruption, power, and tyranny that were caroled throughout colonial writing in the period. Many of his illustrations from the past and predictions for the future are similar to the admonitions of the English Whig writers of the early eighteenth century.

Richard Bland was the son of a Virginia planter who was successful in business and influential in the colony's government. Bland was educated at William and Mary and followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather in government. He first entered the House of Burgesses in 1742 at the age of thirty-two and continuously served there until 1775, the year before his death. In 1753 he became the champion of public rights in the issue of the pistole fee demanded by the governor and opposed the clergy in the matter of the "Two Penny" bills, which he defended with two pamphlets, one of which was the famous The Colonel Dismounted (1764). As early as 1764 he helped draw up an
address to the British government that objected to the imposition of taxes on Virginia by anybody other than its own legislature. In 1766 he published An Inquiry into the British Colonies which was the earliest published defense of the colonial position on imperial taxation. Although he strongly defended what he felt were the public's rights in the area of taxation, he hoped to avoid a final break with Great Britain and was conservative in the early phases of the struggle. He was an expert in the early history of the colony and was always in demand on public occasions and for discovering historical precedents. He was elected to both Continental Congresses but served in the Second only a few days, and declined to serve when he was elected a third time.

Several American writers in the Whig camp claimed that the policy of the ancient empires in regard to colonies had no bearing on the American situation. Richard Bland maintains that the English colonies in America were settled in a manner "of which there is not an Instance in all the Colonies of the Ancients." The colonies in North America were founded by Englishmen who were private "adventurers." They established themselves without expense to the Crown or Parliament and so are "plainly distinguishable" from the colonies of the ancient world. The Roman colonies particularly were not similar to the English. The Romans established their Colonies in the midst of vanquished Nations, upon Principles which
best secured their Conquests; the privileges granted to them were not always the same; Policy in the Government of their Colonies and the conquered Nations being always directed by arbitrary Principles to the End they aimed at, the subjecting the whole Earth to their Empire (p. 13).

Ebenezer Devotion in the same year, 1766, made a point similar to Bland's first. He says that many of the settlers of New England came to America because they were driven out of Great Britain and Holland by hard usage. Because they established their colonies without assistance from the mother country, Great Britain could not now claim them as dependents.

Athens and Rome claimed no other colonies but those which they either conquer'd or planted at the publick expense, nor do I remember to have met with any instance wherein colonies have been claim'd upon any other footing (p. 13).

These Americans are claiming in 1766 that Great Britain cannot hold the plantations in North America because they were settled at private expense. Athens and Rome never claimed such colonies and therefore Great Britain should not. Even the best of nations could be guilty of injustice. Americans could not agree whether Rome's colonial policy was benevolent or malign. Some felt Rome was generous with its citizenship rights. Others felt Rome was cruel and vicious in its treatment of the colonies and jealous of the rights of a Roman citizen.

In 1774-1775 Alexander Hamilton and Samuel Seabury had an exchange of opinions that ranged over several topics
including the behavior of Rome towards its colonies. Bland's point in 1766 had been that there was no similarity between the colonies of Rome and those of Great Britain. In 1774 Hamilton drew a parallel between the ancient and the modern nation which showed that a nation could be just at home and tyrannical abroad. A colonial's rights were often different from a citizen's.

Rome was the nurse of freedom. She was celebrated for her justice and lenity; but in what manner did she govern her dependent provinces? They were made the continual scene of rapine and cruelty. From thence let us learn; how little confidence is due to the wisdom and equity of the most exemplary nations.

At the same time Seabury was saying that legislation was not an inherent right of the American colonies and many colonies had subsisted long and well without that right. In the Roman Empire, all laws for the Empire were made at Rome and, he says, neither colonies nor conquered countries had anything to do with legislation. This statement is too sweeping to be completely true, but in general it was a fact that "It was not until the later period of their republic that the privileges of Roman citizens, among which that of voting in the assemblies of the people of Rome was a principal one, were extended to the inhabitants of Italy" (p. 9). Hamilton reacted the next year in another pamphlet to this statement. He says the practice of Rome towards her colonies did not afford "a shadow of an argument" against the citizen's right to civil liberty. He insisted again that Rome's treatment
of its colonies was a lesson and a warning against a like state of dependence on Great Britain. He says Rome treated its colonies badly and that treatment is "one of the greatest blemishes in her history." If this treatment proved anything, it proves that Rome felt it had a right to plunder the colonies at will and as much as possible. He felt there was no lack of Englishmen who felt the same way about America.

This doctrine, I presume, will not be disagreeable [Sic] to some ears. There are many who would rejoice to see America plundered, in a like manner, provided they could be appointed the instruments (p. 22).

Almost all Americans agreed with the Greek policy of colonization and usually cited Thucydides to demonstrate it. Bland is one of the several colonial writers who cites the Athenian historian as a balance to his rejection of the Roman style of colonization. The Romans were too severe and jealous of a citizen's rights and privileges for Bland. The Greeks were generous, fair, and easy-going. He asks what is to be done if the mother country denies the colonies justice and denies and even ignores "humble and dutiful Representa-
tions." He gives the answer to the question that Thucydides placed in the mouths of the Corinthians on the eve of the Peloponnesian War. They said that if "a decent and condes-
cending Behavior is shown on the Part of the Colonies, it would be Base in the Mother State to press too far on such Moderation." As long as a colony acknowledges the preeminence of the metropolis, it would be despicable for the mother
country to try to take advantage of such filial affection and loyalty. When the mother country offends or abuses her colony, however, she loses her right to honor and obedience. This point appealed to Americans on the basis of their familiarity with covenant theology and Locke's theory of government. Bland quotes Thucydides as the historian has the Corcyrans, the colony of Corinth, reply to the same question.

... every Colony, whilst used in a proper Manner, ought to pay Honour and Regard to its Mother State; but when treated with Injury and Violence, is become an Alien. They were not sent out to be slaves, but to be the Equals of those that remain behind (p. 27).

Other Americans made the point from the same passage that colonies owed the mother country only "Honour and Regard" and not taxes and duties. Bland makes the point that when the metropolis presumes on the relationship, she automatically breaks the familial connection, just as a tyrannical king breaks the covenant with his subjects or a sinning people break the covenant with their God.

In 1769 the Boston merchants made up a list of grievances and sent them in A Letter to the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Hillsborough. The fifty-five page letter printed in pamphlet form was chiefly a summary of the history of the charters of the colonies and the wrongs done to them by the British government. In an appendix, the author or authors of the Letter addressed themselves to the pamphlet published in
1765, probably written by Thomas Whately, entitled The Regulations Lately Made... considered (London, 1765). The Americans firmly believed that they had the right to petition the British government for redress of their grievances and when the British ignored their "representations" or refused to accept their petitions, some Americans felt this was further justification for their separatist decision. As a free people they had the right to tell their government what it was they wanted and what they wished to be changed. There was no shame in the government listening to the people's petitions and no arrogance in their soliciting redress. In 1774 an American pamphleteer reminded the British king that no less a powerful and suspicious body of governors than the Roman Senate commonly received petitions from Romans and colonials alike. He tells the story of a particular ambassador who came to the Senate and, when asked by the consul what peace and redress he desired, answered sturdily, "The same they deserve who think themselves worthy of Liberty; and if the terms you give be good, the peace will be observed by us faithfully and perpetually; if bad, it will soon be broken." Some of the senators were offended but most felt this was a worthy statement of "a man and a freeman," for no nation would stay long under adverse conditions unless they were forced to. The Romans concluded that these were the kind of men they respected, so they were all made citizens of Rome and
obtained what they desired, for "they were only fit to be made Romans, who thought nothing valuable but liberty." (p. 7). This author clearly presents the case for redress of wrongs and admission to full citizenship. The more honorable and desirable the people, the more demanding is their petition, because it is just and sincere. The best way to treat such men is to answer their petition, redress the wrongs they complain of, and admit them as worthy partners to the rights and privileges of citizenship. The lesson unfortunately was lost on Great Britain.

Thomas Jefferson sounded the same note when he prefaced his pamphlet of the same year with a passage of Cicero, "On Duties." Jefferson maintained that the executive, or the king, had the obligation to protect the rights of the people, as he was acting as the representative of the whole community.

It is the indispensible duty of the supreme magistrate to consider himself as acting for the whole community, and obliged to support its dignity, and assign to the people, with justice, their various rights, as he would be faithful to the great trust reposed in him.

Jefferson is saying that the "supreme magistrate" is required to redress the wrongs that are presented to him by the
people. He implies that an unjust magistrate betrays the trust placed in him by the people and they must replace him or draw away from him to form a new government. Not all Americans agreed with this revolutionary interpretation of the obligations and responsibilities of kings. Some still agreed with Thomas Hobbes rather than John Locke that a bad king was to be endured rather than overthrown. After the Boston Tea Party, some conservative Americans felt that such resistance to the king was wrong, even immoral. Thomas Bradbury Chandler wrote in a pamphlet of the dire consequences of meddling with divinely ordained order and encouraged prudent men to leave bad enough alone. Under no circumstances could a good Christian Englishman lift a finger in resistance to the government.

The ill consequences of open disrespect to government are so great, that no misconduct of the administration can justify or excuse it. The guilt of it is so aggravated, that Christians are required under the heaviest penalties to avoid it, and to be subject to the higher powers, of whatever character, for conscience's sake (p. 5).

He does not say whether the downtrodden subjects under such a regime should be permitted to beg for relief from oppression, but such a course could easily be interpreted as presumption and arrogance under the circumstances.

In their letter of petition to the Earl of Hillsborough the Boston merchants were concerned with the status of the American colonies. Whately had disturbed them with his statements about the subordinate position of Roman colonies.
The merchants vehemently reject the Roman colonial system as a precedent for the British colonies. The Roman colonies were not "acquired in the same manner, or settled by the same means, and for the same end, as . . . [The] American colonies." The Romans generally obtained their provinces "jure gladii" and governed them in such a way that "every consideration of equity or justice was disregarded when repugnant to the great object of all their operations, the attainment of universal dominion." These words echo Bland's sentiments on the same subject and, indeed, they appear to be the common property of many American pamphleteers. The merchants go on to deny any similarity at all between the colonies of Great Britain and Rome so that it would be "impossible to infer any thing therefrom pertinent to the present subjects." Even those colonies that appear at first glance to be similar to the British colonies are not, and most of the other types of colonies bear no resemblance at all to the American settlements.

The few colonies planted by the Romans, were settled at the instance, and supported at the expense of the commonwealth, and were not considered by the settlers, as assylums [sic] from the oppression of the senate, but as garrisons and cantonments for the preservation or extension of their conquests; but even in these the Romans, who were there [sic] inhabitants, were never denied the freedoms and immunities of citizens of Rome (p. 44).

John Dickinson, the famous "Farmer in Pennsylvania," needs little introduction. He was educated at home by a
tutor who taught all the Dickinson children and continued his training in the law office of John Maland, a leading Philadelphia lawyer. In 1753 he went to London to complete his studies at the Middle Temple. By 1762 he had become an eminent lawyer in Philadelphia and was arguing cases before the colonial supreme court. He was elected to the Assembly of Delaware and became its speaker and later entered the Pennsylvania legislature. He and Franklin were on opposing sides on several questions. In 1764 he adopted the position that bad as the proprietary system was in Pennsylvania, a royal government would be worse. For this unpopular viewpoint he lost his seat in the legislature and was not returned until 1770. Dickinson was conservative in his approach to the disputes with Parliament and his attitude is reflected in the pamphlet he published in 1765, The Late Regulations Respecting the British Colonies... considered. He hoped to take the pacific course of enlisting British merchants in the drive to repeal the Sugar and Stamp Acts by showing how they would hurt trade in the British Isles. His knowledge of the issue resulted in his appointment to the Pennsylvania delegation to the Stamp Act Congress of 1765. In 1768 he wrote his famous letters to the Pennsylvania Chronicle; but even as late as 1774, he still hoped to avoid a final break with Great Britain. He placed trust in repeated petitions and remonstrances to the king. At a conference in July of 1774 held to appoint delegates to a Continental Congress, Dickinson drew up three papers which
were unanimously adopted by the Assembly. One of these was the treatise on the constitutional power of Great Britain to tax the colonies. *An Essay on the Constitutional Power of Great Britain* (1774) was a strong, although conservative, statement but it was a printer's nightmare. Dickinson anticipated the worst excesses of German scholarship of the next century in his extravagant use of footnotes, qualifications, asides, and illustrations. Sometimes only one line of text appears across the page while the rest of the space is taken up by footnotes and footnotes to footnotes that go on for pages in ever decreasing type until they are often only a blur.

Dickinson uses the footnotes to give illustrations of the points he is making in the text of the Essay. He objects to the presence of a standing army in the American provinces but he warns Great Britain that such an army is not a good idea from the imperial standpoint either. He quotes Tacitus who says that the Roman emperors forbade any man of distinction from setting foot in Egypt. They did this because Egypt was a personal possession of the emperors but also because it was immensely rich in gold, men, and grain. A rebellion could easily be raised and financed along the Gift of the Nile. Great Britain foolishly trusts an army in provinces further away from it than Rome was from Egypt under the command of a general whose ambitions and those of the people "may engage them to unite in establishing an inde-
pendent empire." He warns that Great Britain ought not to forget, "that Rome was ruined by keeping standing armies in her provinces" (p. 52). This warning about the danger to the British Empire inherent in the maintenance of garrisons in the provinces was made often by Americans trying to show that such a policy was not only abhorrent to the Anglo-Americans but also potentially destructive to the Empire itself. Another image that many writers liked to evoke was that of one fallen power ruefully contemplating the other. They warn that, if Great Britain persists in its short-sighted policies, it will one day sit mournfully contemplating the mutual ruin of itself and Rome, just as Marius gloomily meditated at the ruins of fallen Carthage. This was a popular image in painting as well as literature. The Boston merchants' letter made the comparison of Americans' contemplation of their fall to slavery to the "wretched consolation which Carthage and Marius mutually afforded each other in their fall" (p. 47). Dickinson mentions the Parliament of the period of the English Civil War which "sat amidst the ruins that surrounded it, fiercer than Marius among those of Carthage" (p. 108). These illustrations are a minor use of the classics by an American pamphleteer but they give an indication of the mental accoutrements with which they ordinarily worked. Dickinson was upset about the imposition of taxes and regulations on the colonies and one of the ways he expressed
his distaste was to show the folly of similar policies in the past. He recalls the policy of the Carthaginians toward the Sardinians whom they forbade "to raise corn, in order to keep them in due subjection." Thus it is not "the suggestion of fancy" that Great Britain forbids the American colonies certain rights to keep them in subjection. Great Britain was similar to the Carthaginians, "those masters in the sublime politics of commerce," for it employed the same strategies. Indeed, says Dickinson, "There are few men on this continent would be as much surprized at the measure [corn law], as at some late measures" (p. 68). From Herodotus, Dickinson cites the folly of a foolish king, a weak man, who scourged the waves that offended him. Xerxes, the Persian King of Kings, had the Hellespont scourged because a storm arose and destroyed the bridge of ships he had built to transport his army on its way to conquer Greece. How much more foolish was the English king who passed such laws.

To excite commotions, and then to scourge for being excited, is an addition to the wildness of a Xerxes, reserved more particularly to distinguish the present age, already sufficiently illustrious by the injuries offered to the rights of human nature.

One of the most important ideas the Americans derived from the classics was the theory of natural law. The Greek and Roman philosophers had derived the idea that there was a natural, right way of living in accord with the unwritten laws of the universe. When a man lived according to these
laws, moderately, avoiding extremes, doing his duty, he could expect a pleasant, rewarding life. When he offended these immutable laws of Nature and human society, he was often punished in ways subtle and cruel, or disastrous and final. The French philosophes and the other thinkers of the Enlightenment revived the idea of natural law and added their own interpretations of it to what the ancients had said. Dickinson speaks of it but he hides an ancient statement of its power and pervasiveness in a footnote. Sophocles, the Athenian playwright, dealt with the conflict between human or positive law and the Law of Nature. In his tragedy, Antigone, the heroine is doomed by her insistence on following the natural law even though it conflicts with the edict of an earthly lord. Dickinson quotes those lines of Antigone which summarize her dilemma.

I could never think
A mortal's law of power or strength sufficient
To abrogate the unwritten law divine,
Immutable, eternal, not like these
Of yesterday, but made e'er time began.
Sophocles Antigone, Frank trans. (p. 107).

Another place in the classics where natural law is clearly described is in a fragment of Cicero's De re publica (III: 33) which was preserved for the eighteenth century in the Divine Institutes (VI: 8.6-9) of Lactantius.

True Law is Right Reason in agreement with Nature; it is of universal value, unchanging and everlasting. It is a sin to alter this law . . . . We cannot be freed of its obligations by senate or people, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder. There will not be different
laws at Rome and at Athens; but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times. God is the author of this law. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature.

Josiah Quincy was born in Boston in 1744 and died only thirty-one years later, a week after the battle of Lexington. As a youth he was always frail and sensitive but attended Braintree under Joseph March and received a bachelor's degree from Harvard in 1763 and a master's three years later. He went to work in the law office of Oxenbridge Thacher and, when he died two years afterwards, Quincy took charge of the office while continuing his studies. Quincy had an active part in the politics of Boston and wrote several essays and newspaper articles which strongly took the Patriot side. Nevertheless, when the British soldiers accused of the "Boston Massacre" were placed on trial, it was Quincy and John Adams who defended them. Quincy did so at some personal cost, for his brother as solicitor-general of the colony prosecuted the case and his father expressed horror at his younger son's action. He continued to write and agitate for the colonial cause while practicing law but began to develop symptoms of tuberculosis. In 1774 he wrote his chief political work Observations on the Act of Parliament . . . Armies, which presented the case against the Boston Port Bill. This pamphlet was so effective, he received an anonymous letter threatening his life if he did
not stop writing. As one of the leaders of the colonial cause and because of his gift for oratory, he was selected to go to the mother country in 1774 to present the case of the colonies in the best possible light. While in London he spoke to Lord North and other British leaders but his protestations were in vain, for there was no change in policy. He was anxious to communicate what he had learned to the Americans, so he started home in spite of his physician's warnings against the rigors of a sea voyage. He grew progressively worse on the journey home and died at sea a few hours from Gloucester harbor on March 16, 1775. Quincy became a radical by fits and starts and did not completely reach that status until 1774. He sometimes disagreed with other Boston radicals in tactics and in private hoped for more moderation in their activities. His distrust of the mob, his reluctance to accept bloodshed as the price of liberty, his distrust of Thomas Hutchinson, and finally his sometimes erratic and excitable personality account for some of his political vacillation.

Quincy's essay is a repository of classical metaphors, stories, illustrations, and examples. Of all the authors of these pamphlets, he is the most prolific with his classical material and he seems to be most intimate with the ancient world. As others casually used contemporary colonial history or modern British history to prove their claims, Quincy easily cited the situations and precedents of ancient history.
to prove this. He cites Plutarch, Lucan, Cicero, Tacitus, Caesar, and Sallust and refers to Gordon on Sallust and Tacitus, Macaulay's History, and Montagu's Rise and Fall. He repeats some of the points made by other writers, especially on standing armies and the danger of a military despot, but many of his observations are found only in his pamphlets. Some of these he gleaned from other writers, such as Gordon, Mrs. Macaulay, and Montagu, but he adapted the remarks of these English writers to fit the situation in the American colonies. His rhetorical style reflects the success he had in public oratory, for his phrases are well-rounded, memorable, and lend themselves to repetition and quotation. Plutarch shows, he says, in his lives of Caesar, Lepidus, and Anthony "that no beast is more savage than man, when possessed of power equal to his passion" (p. 7). These sententiae of the Greek moralist and historian writing on the political and military struggles of Rome appealed to Quincy and he sought to emulate them. He laments that the experience of all ages shows that mankind is inattentive to the calamities of others, careless of admonition, and slow to repel attacks on its liberties. Even when so renowned a speaker and statesman as Cicero sounded the alarm, the citizens of Rome were too slow to act. Cicero warned, "I perceive an inclination for tyranny in all Caesar projects and executes" but too late, the citizens learned "that no beginnings, however small, are to be
neglected." Quincy observed the truth of the statement with his own aphorism, "For that Caesar, who at first attacked the common-wealth with mines very soon opened his batteries" (p. 31).

He was most anxious himself to warn Americans and Englishmen alike of the dangers of such tyrants and the opportunities a standing army in the provinces offered them. He asks his readers to answer for themselves a few questions about the armies of modern princes. What loyalties and sentiments does a military body have? Who composes an army? Of what character are they? Is there anyone in the modern armies, which out such a splendid figure, who would not have been driven from the Roman army for want of property when that body was the true defender of liberty and the constitution? (p. 33). The landless soldiers are the creatures of their general and are dependent on him. "Booty and blind submission is the science of the camp." When generals incite them to lust, rapacity, or resentment, whole battalions are guilty of atrocities. He quotes Tiberius Gracchus who said, "Private soldiers fight and die to advance the wealth and luxury of the great." Quincy can observe no differences in the British army, for "Soldiers, like men, are much the same in every age and country" (p. 34). All empires degrade and debase the human species and the dominion of Great Britain is a mighty empire.

Her laws waste our substance, her placemen corrupt our morals, and her armies are to break our spirits.
The armies are to do even more than cow the colonials and
Quincy cites "a noble speech recorded by Tacitus . . . of
an old Briton to his followers, exciting them to free
their country . . . from the yoke of bondage." These words
of Tacitus will probably always be true, then as now, in
all times and all places where some men seek to dominate
others.

To spoil, to slaughter, and to commit every
kind of violence; and then to call the manoeuvre
sic by a lying name--Government; and when they
have spread a general devastation, call it Peace
(pp. 37-38).

More to be feared than an invasion and conquest by foreigners
is the establishment of a standing army under the banner of
municipal authority. "Thus Roman armies were more terrible
to the Roman colonies than an enemy's army" (p. 63). In
these circumstances the abuse of rights and liberties and the
loss of freedom are exercised in the name of law and order.
There is no recourse for the injured, because then these very
wrongs are the law of the land and those perpetrating them
are the rulers of the land.

The army is intimately connected with the rise of a
tyrant and the loss of freedom. The army of Great Britain,
says Quincy, is now "larger than that with which Alexander
subdued the East or Caesar conquered Gaul." He recalls the
fear of a member of Parliament thirty years past who
wondered then if the army of Great Britain became as attached
to the Crown as Caesar's army was to him, "where could we
find a force superior to that army?" Quincy echoes the
ancient historian when he says "The supreme power is ever possessed by those who have arms in their hands and are disciplined to use of them." He notes the case of the "Archives sic" who disputed with Lysander, the Lacedaemonian about a good title to land boundaries. The Spartan hefted his sword and taunted them, "He that is master of this can best plead about boundaries." In another time the "Marmotines" of Messina refused to appear at the tribunal of Pompey to acknowledge his jurisdiction and cited in excuse some ancient privileges granted to them by Rome. "Will you never have done," groaned the exasperated general, "with citing laws and privileges sic to men who wear swords." Quincy asks what boundaries will they set to their passions who have no limit to their power. History shows what happens to men when they ride at the head of an invincible army.

Unlimited oppression and wantoness are the never-failing attendants of unbounded authority. Such power a veteran army always acquire, and being able to riot in mischief with impunity, they always do it with licentiousness (pp. 51-52).

Julius Caesar was the great example of an ambitious man who became a tyrant through the manipulation of the popular will and the seduction of the Roman army away from the state. Quincy deprecates the fact that the people usually have sufficient warnings against such tyrants from "the wise and liberal-minded of all nations," but such cautions do no good because, "no Precept or example can
make the bulk of mankind wise for themselves." Although
the Romans were cautioned against the projects of Caesar,
"the smiles of his benignity" disarmed them until the
growth of his power made opposition impossible. The Romans
could not believe that a native son, a "smiling Caesar,"
would "filch away their liberties" (p. 45).

Celebrated for his generosity and magnificence,
his complacency and compassion, the complaisant
courtier made his way into the hearts of his
countrymen . . . . But the ambitious Caesar
aiming at authority, and Caesar armed and intoxi-
cated with power, appear in very different
characters. He who appeared with the mildness
of a fine gentleman, in his primateval state, in
an advanced station conducted with the sternness
of a tyrant (p. 46).

Surely this analysis of the transformation of a politician
through the influence of power on his character is a truth
that will remain accurate as long as there are men in
government. Here Quincy taps one of the important observ-
ations of the classical historians and applies it to his
own time. Since it is one of the most profound insights
to human character, it is true and will be probably for all
times and all places. What is to be done when a people
find they have handed over their government to a tyrant,
a man who rides roughshod over their liberties? Caesar
answers, "If you are not pleased with what I am about, you
have nothing to do but withdraw. Indeed war will not bear
much liberty of speech."

Quincy probably felt that it was ironic that he had to
turn to Caesar himself in his *Gallic Wars* to find a descrip-
tion of the original, pure constitution of the Britons. Caesar described how the Britons organized their resistance to him when he invaded the island. Quincy felt that the original constitution had been subverted by contemporary monarchs. In the days of the Druids, "The militia of England was raised officered and conducted by common consent. It's militia was the ornament of the realm in peace and for ages continued the only and sure defence in war." When the Romans invaded Britain "Cassibelau" was the war leader, but he was elected by the Common Council. "Summa belli communi concilio, Cassibelano traditur." He was an elected leader, for it was customary among the leaders of the Britons, "ne loqui de republica, nisi per concilium," not even to speak upon a matter of state unless in council. So accustomed were these men to liberty, that they told Caesar they did not understand the meaning of tribute or slavery. When Caesar tried to impress them with his power and family, they returned a message to him that they had as good blood as he, and from the same fountain. Caesar liked to report on the bravery and strength of his enemies, so that his later victory over them would be magnified. But Quincy suggested, "Surely a message that was received by a Roman, may be sent to a British Caesar." Of the Gauls, whom Caesar also fought and defeated, he reports that they boasted they could call on the resources of a great Common Council, "as all the world cannot resist." Tacitus relates
of the Saxons, "Reges ex nobilitate, Duces ex virtute in
eidem conciliiis eliguntur." Kings were elected from the
nobility, and leaders for virtue in the same council. This
council, or parliament as Quincy is careful to call it,
had not only "the appointment of the principes militiae,
but the conduct of all military forces, from the first
erection of the standard to it's sic lodgment in the
Citidel sic." Tacitus also records that this was a
citizen army, for no man was entrusted with arms before,
"Civitas suffecturum probavent," and Quincy considers such
a provision a protection "from the calamities of a standing
army" (p. 42). The ancestral constitution then, the way
Quincy read Caesar and Tacitus, called for elective leader-
ship, the control of the army by the "Common Council," and
an army composed only of citizen soldiers. Obviously, Great
Great Britain no longer adhered to such a constitution and
Quincy felt that this was due to the subversion of the
original constitution by the kingly party. Gaining personal
control of the army and transferring its loyalty from the
state to an individual are the first steps in the establish-
ment of a tyranny in both classical and modern times.

A man seeking to establish himself as a tyrant—that is,
an unelected ruler with absolute power—must proceed care-
fully in the first stages of his project. If too many
citizens suspect his purpose, he will be undone. "Artful
dissemblings and plausible pretences are always adopted in
order to introduce regular troops." Quincy cites the
example of "Dyonysius . . . the tyrant of Syracuse, the most opulent of all the Grecian cities," who "by feigning a solicitude for the safety and security of the people and a fear of his own person . . . humbly prayed only a guard for his protection." He convinced the people that the reason he feared for his own person was because he was so active in promoting their interests that the enemies of the people were planning to dispose of him. They granted him his bodyguard and he promptly used it to establish himself as solo ruler. Agathocles, a successor of the Dionysian family, continued the tyranny, "and butchered the enslaved people by centuries" (p. 43). Not all tyrants were cruel and homicidal, but their successors often found that in order to maintain their position, it was necessary to enforce a reign of terror on the people. Sometimes it was hard for the people to know certainly that their liberty had been removed.

The formalities of a free and the ends of a despotic state have often subsisted together. Thus deceived was the Republick of Rome:--Officers and Magistrates retained their old names.--the forms of the antient government being kept up, the fundamental laws of the Common-wealth were violated with impunity, and its once free constitution utterly annihilated.

Quincy believed that Augustus Caesar was given the advice to continue the "name, pomp and ornaments" of the officers of the state "with all the appearance of authority, without the power," but the wily Octavian had probably derived that lesson from the career and death of his uncle. Quincy says
he soon became "Senate, magistracy and laws" and asks his famous question, "Is not Britain to America, what Caesar was to Rome?" (p. 5). Not all tyrannies are exercised by the man in power but by those acting in his name, sometimes without his knowledge. A nation has nothing to fear perhaps, "From this rare character—a wise and good monarch," but it is still a dangerous practice "to cloath sic him with authority, and invest him with powers incompatible with all political and social security." While the individual himself might not abuse his great authority, those under him may. Quincy mentions the emperor Galba who himself had "the greatest integrity of heart" but in his court existed all the corruption and extortion of Nero's reign. Quincy boldly tells the reader here to consult Plutarch's life of Galba and Gordon's Discourse on Tacitus and pointedly remarks that "A Monarch justly dignified with the appellation—'of the wisest and best of kings'—will surely receive some advantage by attentively contemplating an instance so replete with instruction" (p. 63). The pertinency and accuracy of both the ancients' observations and Quincy's remarks continue undiminished even down to this present time. Quincy clearly uses the classics as a lesson for his own time. He warns that "the progress of thraldom is secret and its effects incredibly rapid, and dreadful," and quotes "that sagacious politician Tacitus" who acutely observed, "The loss of liberty is ever accompanied with the loss of spirit and
magnanimity" (p. 70).

Quincy concludes his pamphlet with a peroration in the manner of a Philippic. He exhorts Americans to remember that "submission to the yoke of bondage is the worst that can befall a people after the most fierce and unsuccessful resistance." What can the misfortune of vanquishment take away, which despotism and rapine would spare? He quotes Solon to the Athenians, "It had been easy to repress the advances of tyranny, and prevent it's establishment, but now it is established and grown to some height, it would be more glorious to demolish it." But nothing glorious is accomplished, nothing great is attained, nothing valuable is secured without magnanimity and devotion of heart to the service. His words, though his own, sound as though they were those of a Demosthenes or a Cicero. He implores Americans, "Brutus-like" to dedicate themselves to the service of their country and to live, in the words of Brutus himself, "a life of liberty and glory." The "high-spirited Cassius," inspired with public virtue and fired by the wrongs to his country, replied to his heroic friend, ". . . let us march against the enemy; for tho' we should not conquer, we have nothing to fear" (p. 81). Quincy believed that the cycle of history held a western course. "From Chaldea and Egypt to Greece and Rome, . . . Italy, and thence to the western provinces of Europe." Chaldea and Egypt had their wise men, law givers, and heroes when Greece and Rome swarmed
with barbarians. Greece and Rome had their Golden Ages when Europe was sunk still in rude ignorance. Neither wise politicians nor mighty potentates have been able to stop the gradual progression of power westward as "the flying ball of empire:--superior to human powers, like blazing stars, they hold their destined course, and play their corruscations as they run their race" (p. 15). Power and empire would inevitably pass westward to America and great men would arise to see that this happened. The time of transition was, perhaps, at hand.

Spirits and genii, like these [Brutus and Cassius7, rose in Rome--and have since adorned Britain; such also will one day make glorious this more Western world. America hath in store her Brutis and Cassii--her Hampdens and Sydneys--Patriots and Heroes, who will form a band of brothers: men who will have memories and feelings --courage and swords:--courage, that shall inflame bosums, till their hands cleave to their swords--and their swords to their Enemies [5107 hearts (p. 82).
Notes: Chapter VII


11 DAB, V, pp. 299-300.
12 See painting.
13 DAB, XV, pp. 307-08.
Chapter VIII

Thomas Paine is the most famous pamphleteer of the American Revolution. His most important works are Common Sense (1776) and Crisis, a series of pamphlets which appeared from 1776 to 1783. Paine's writing style appealed to the people and Sam Adams said of Common Sense that it "popularized the principles of the Declaration." He had little schooling, for his Quaker father withdrew him from school at the age of thirteen to work with him as an apprentice stay-maker, but he was able to develop a clear, articulate, argumentative style that made his writings the most widely read of the Revolution. Although he did not have much formal education and did not learn Latin even when he was in school, he had an acute, perceptive mind and voracious reading habits. It is sometimes said of Paine that he was an enemy of the classics but it is more accurate to say that he was an enemy of the classical languages. He studied the works of the ancients, but in translation. He was one of the progressive men of the eighteenth century who felt that learning Latin and Greek in order to read the classics was a waste of valuable time and energy. He did know the contents of the great classical authors and scattered allusions and paraphrases of them throughout most of
his works. Paine never bothered to learn any "foreign" language, for although he spent ten years in France trying to get that country's revolution onto what he thought was the right track, he never learned to speak French and even his speeches to the National Assembly had to be delivered through a translator. He made himself very unpopular in every country he settled (America, England, and France) by his stubborn insistence on always saying what was on his mind and never compromising. He was often an embarrassment to his allies in the manner of James Otis because his actions were sometimes as intemperate and contradictory as his rhetoric. This was later in his career when he had worn out his welcome in all three countries. When Common Sense appeared on January 10, 1776, he was the darling of the Patriots. Unlike most of his works, it contained no reference to ancient history or the classics.

Here was a popular appeal aimed to enlighten soldiers round the campfires and civilians at their tasks of agriculture or industry. It was a well-timed explosion and its contents offered little that was novel to those who read Otis, Dickinson, Vulany, and Jefferson's Summary View. Its feature was the vivid way in which the grievances were stated.2

Perhaps the reason he did not use the classics in this great pamphlet was because, like other authors who knew the classics yet did not use them in their popular works, he feared that references to subjects which only those with a secondary or college education might be familiar with, would put off those less educated. But more numerous were the
readers composing the audience whom he hoped to convince and to whom he directed the pamphlet. Paine however did know the classics, and in later works, like Crisis, he employed them fairly often, or at least often enough to demonstrate that he was an enemy of Greek and Latin and not of the content and ideas of the ancient authors.

Charles Inglis was an Anglican churchman, and, like most of them, he was an ardent supporter of the Crown. When Paine's Common Sense appeared and enjoyed so much obvious success, Inglis felt obliged to write a response to it. He was an associate of Thomas Bradbury Chandler, who also religiously obeyed the Crown, and together they "labored earnestly for the establishment of the Episcopate in America." It was because of this labor that many dissenting Protestants in the colonies were fearful of the designs of Parliament. This feeling of incipient papism contributed to the spirit of resistance within the New England states. Inglis was a devout and sincere man who hoped to convert many to Anglicanism and even worked for a time among the Indians. Temperamentally, he was "a quiet student and scholar who loved to spend his scanty leisure in literary and intellectual pursuits." He was certainly no democrat or egalitarian, for he once deplored the suggestion that church pews be held in common because then "men, perhaps of the worst character, might come and sit themselves down by the side of the most religious and respectable characters in the
parish." Inglis stayed in America, supporting the Loyalist cause until the war was finally and completely lost. Then he sailed for Great Britain, penniless, but leaving behind him no one against whom he bore "the smallest degree of resentment or ill-will." In 1787 he became the bishop of Nova Scotia, the first Anglican bishop in America, and served in that post until he died in 1816.3

Although Paine had scrupulously avoided any mention of ancient history in his pamphlet, Inglis attempted to refute many of his arguments through the classics. In The True Interests of America Impartially Stated (1776)4 Inglis discussed a wide range of topics from ancient history. He mentions the Peloponnesian War, the imperial administration of Rome, and the downfall of the Hellenistic states of Greece and Asia Minor. His most extensive discussion concerns Paine's statements about the inherent evil of a monarchy compared to the essential goodness of a republic. Inglis first outlines Aristotle's analysis (p. 17) of the various forms of government—monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy—and their respective abuses—tyranny, oligarchy, and anarchy. He then attacks, in turn, each one of Paine's statements about the undesirability of monarchy and tries to turn the attack back on republicanism. Paine said that states which do not have kings are exempt from war, but Inglis maintains this assertion is groundless. Republics, he says, have been involved in just as many wars as monarchies.
The several republics of Greece enlisted under the banners of Sparta, on one side, or those of Athens on the other—both republics waged a most bloody war for thirty years together. And what is very remarkable, they were plunged into this war by Pericles, a popular Athenian, and celebrated speaker; who being impeached for embezzling the public money and applying it to his own private use, took this terrible method to divert an inquiry. The war ended in the destruction of Athens (p. 23).

Athens can certainly be considered a democracy even under the influence of her first citizen, Pericles, but it is pushing the description of the Spartan constitution to describe it as a democracy or even as a republic. The eighteenth century considered Sparta a republic, however, and even Thucydides reported as a possible fact the canard about Pericles' instigation of the ruinous Peloponnesian War to distract attention from his domestic troubles. Inglis indicts Rome as another representative of the republican form of government, which by itself, "made greater havoc of the human species, shed more blood, diffused more wretchedness and misery through the earth, and was guilty of more cruelty, oppression and tyranny, then perhaps any three monarchies that can be mentioned in the whole compass of ancient history." Inglis probably knew this was an exaggeration but the imperial excess of Rome was one of the favorite whipping boys of the eighteenth century. Writers of all political shades could find in the fairly well documented history of the Late Republic and the Empire some abuse or excess to condemn. Next Inglis assails Paine for denouncing monarchy
because it was founded by "Heathens." "So," says Inglis, "was Greek and Latin smoking tobacco; and yet I can dip into Homer and Virgil, or enjoy my pipe with great composure of conscience" (p. 23). He goes on to say how bleeding for sickness and administering "clysters" are of Egyptian origin, yet "mankind use them without scruple" (p. 24). Democracy is also of heathenish origin, as well as monarchy. The worst statement of Paine's, however, according to Inglis, was to the effect that monarchy must have been the invention of the devil, for the promotion of idolatry, because heathens paid divine honors to their deceased kings. The devil must have soon enlisted the aid of all the pagan republics because, storms Inglis, "It is a most notorious, undeniable fact, that the ancient republics—Home, Carthage, Athens, etc. were as infamous for every species of the grossest and most abominable idolatry, as any monarchies whatever." He suggests the Floralia of Home and the human sacrifices at Carthage as sufficient instances to prove this assertion. Inglis maintains that the lot of them might have been fools but they also deified heroes, benefactors in general, both male and female. If the argument of pagan origin has any strength against monarchy, it also has force against improvements in agriculture, cleaning stables, and killing snakes, because the ancient pagans "paid divine honours to deceased persons for all these exploits" (p. 24).

Having disposed of Paine's attacks on monarchy, Inglis assails Paine's favorite form of government—the republic.
A republic is unsuitable to the "genius of the people" and besides, such a form of government was inadequate for the great extent of America. It could do well enough in a single city or a small territory, "but would be utterly improper for such a continent as this." America is too large and unwieldy for the "feeble, dilatory administration of democracy." He recalls that Rome did well while confined to a small area, but it was only a few years after conquering Greece and entering Asia to the battle of Pharsalia, "where Julius Caesar put an end to the liberties of his country." It was Caesar who defeated the Gauls and invaded Britain. If it had not been for the rivalry between Marius and Sulla, Rome would have succumbed to a tyrant even sooner (p. 53). Inglis also warns the Americans against calling in foreigners with the example of how Rome used such pretexts to extend its conquests. He says there is scarcely an instance where foreigners were called in to assist in domestic quarrels that was not ruinous to the party that sought their aid.

The Etolians and other Greek states called in the Romans to assist them against Philip of Macedon, one of Alexander's Successors. Philip was reduced; and the Roman yoke was imposed on the Grecian states. Sensible to their error, when it was too late, and anxious for deliverance from the Romans, the Etolians applied for Aid to Antiochus, who then possessed the remains of Alexander's Asiatic Dominions. The Romans now employed Philip to subdue Antiochus and the Etolians, ... The Roman yoke was more confirmed and made heavier (p. 66).

In case his readers did not see the point, Inglis concludes that, if the Americans were so foolhardy as to call in the
French to help them in their struggle against Great Britain, and if they succeeded in their united front, then he was certain that "something similar to this would probably follow."

The career of James Chalmers (1727-1806) is relatively obscure except for the facts that he was a Tory, wrote a pamphlet in response to Paine, and raised a force of Loyalists to fight during the Revolution. He entitled his pamphlet *Plain Truth, Addressed to the Inhabitents of America* (1776) and signed himself, "Candidus." He was, indeed, blunt with his advice and he cannot be placed squarely in the Loyalist camp for he appeared to doubt and disapprove of some of the imperial policies of Great Britain. He felt that antiquity "affords . . . no eclatismnet respecting the future government of America," but he does note that Rome, though situated in a "sterile corner of Italy," long retained the world in chains. Rome would have maintained its dominion longer, "had not the cross, removing the empire to Byzantium, weakened the eagles, and in turn, justly been destroyed by the Barbarians." He saw similar destructive forces at work on the Empire of Great Britain,

I see no reason to doubt, that Great Britain, may not long retain us in constitutional obedience. Time, the destroyer of human affairs may indeed, end her political life by a gentle decay. Like Rome, she may be constrained to defend herself from the Huns, and the Alaricks of the North (p. 31).
Chalmers echoed Inglis' attack on Paine's statement about the peaceful republics. He maintains that Paine never mentions the republics of Greece and Rome because they were "ever . . . in a state of war domestic or foreign." The American demagogues, to seduce the people into their criminal designs, constantly hold up democracy to them, although they must be conscious that it never worked nor ever will in practice. Paine does not talk about the ancient republics because to do so would demonstrate that they were impractical, anarchic, and warlike. He quotes from the career of Alexander the Great.

When Alexander ordered all the exiles, to be restored throughout all the cities, it was found that the whole amounted to twenty thousand, the remains probably of still greater slaughters and massacres. What an astonishing number in so narrow a country as ancient Greece? and what domestic confusion, jealousy, partiality, revenge, heart-burning must tear those cities, where factions were wrought up to such a degree of fury and despair (p. 8).

He adds that Appian's history of the civil wars of Rome also contains "the most frightful picture of massacres, proscriptions, and forfeitures." The republics, in Chalmers' view, were continuously in the grip of stasis or civil war, and bellum or foreign war. Jealousy and envy in the domestic arena and greed and avarice in foreign affairs assured that the tumultuous republics would always be at war.

Chalmers would not allow Paine even the slightest suggestion that the republican form of government was conducive to peace. Paine had said that commerce diffused
a knowledge of all nations so that nations found out about each other. "Peace is the natural effect of trade," he said. Chalmers again returns to ancient history, which Paine had avoided, to disprove this point. "The Athenian people, perhaps the most respectable of antiquity," did not long engage in commerce, according to Chalmers, but were almost continually involved in military operations. To maintain this status of defence, the common people did things that in Chalmers' eyes were horrendous. They oppressed the rich. He cites Lysias the orator "and others" who say that when the Athenians were in need of public revenues they adopted the custom of putting to death one of their rich citizens, "as well as strangers, for the sake of the forfeiture" (p. 46). Chalmers grows incoherent in this passage as the vision he has presented himself flabbergasts him, but he evidently expects the newly independent Americans of Paine's ilk to proscribe the rich merchants and landowners of North America. Paine had said that the bravest deeds of a nation were accomplished in its "non-age" but Chalmers insists that the "Greeks in their early state were pirates, and the Romans robbers." He anticipates no more from the Americans in their early stages. Great Britain, on the other hand, was in its maturity.

...the English are the lords and factors of the universe and ... Britain joins to the commerce of Tyre, Carthage and Venice, the discipline of Greece, and the fire of old Rome (p. 47).

Inglis and Chalmers were part of the last attempt by the
American Loyalists to win the hearts of the colonials for George III and Great Britain. By the time they published their pamphlets in 1776, they were speaking to deaf ears. Those Americans who were indifferent either stayed so or joined the Rebel cause, those who had decided on independence were committed to that course, and those who remained loyal to the Crown and Parliament knew they would have to fight for that Loyalty. It is interesting that Inglis and Chalmers adopt the same attitude toward the Greek republics and amphictyonies as the Americans did in 1789 in Philadelphia. Perhaps some of the conservativeness of the American Revolution can be traced in the similarities of the positions of the Tories on government before the Revolution and the statements of the upper class Rebels as they moved to formulate a new constitution.
Notes: Chapter VIII


2 Gummere, *Wise Men*, pp. 82-84.

3 *DAB*, IX, p. 476.

4 Ibid.


6 By coincidence Gibbon's *Fall of the Roman Empire*, with its similar thesis, was published the same year, 1776.
Chapter IX. Conclusion

These selections from certain pamphlets printed from 1763 to 1776 should give an indication that the ancient classics were a primary source of the principles of the ideology of the American revolution, as well as allusions, illustrations, and decorations. The major problem with demonstrating the importance of the classics in the revolutionary ideology is that they were so pervasive, so often taken for granted, so readily available from numerous sources, that they tend to be overlooked. The authors made a great show of brandishing the new learning and theories of the Enlightenment but tended to assume, as naturally as they assumed that a gentleman could understand plain Latin, that everyone had some background in the classics. Even the "vulgar," the common people, were expected to know the outlines of the most famous stories and legends from ancient history. Higher education, from the secondary level onwards, was in the eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century, primarily classical in content. Even the form of the curriculum and the language in which it was taught were often classical. Some science was added to the curriculum in the late eighteenth century, but neither science nor its tool, mathematics, could dislodge the classics as the major
subject of higher education. Some critics tried to abolish
the study of the classics and the classical languages, but
they met with only limited success. They had to be satis-
fied with the addition of more utilitarian courses of study
to the traditional curriculum rather than a wholesale
refurbishment of it. The Americans in general and the
usually well-educated authors of the pamphlets read many
authors who themselves dipped into the classics for their
sources and inspirations. Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and
Voltaire all acknowledged their debt to the ancients. The
eighteenth century "commonwealthmen" of Great Britain who
have been studied as the great transmitters of radical Whig
theory to the embattled American colonials were often the
authors of studies on the political science and history of
the ancient Greek and Roman republics. The Americans knew
all these sources, and of course, knew the classics them-
selves, at least from their study of them in school. When
dispute with Great Britain arose, the Americans knew instinc-
tively that they were right, legally and morally. For their
legal history, they often turned to the history of England
and the rules of common law. For their moral theory, they
fell back on the writers of the Enlightenment and the ulti-
mate source of almost all western abstract thought, the
writers of Greece and Rome.

From an analysis of their revolutionary ideology, their
educational background, and their cultural milieu, it is
clear that the Americans of the late eighteenth century had
a thorough familiarity with the ancient classics in a selected number of pamphlets; it appears that the classics were a significant source of ideas and models for grappling with their relationship with Great Britain. The major ideas and models that occurred to the Americans from their study of ancient history were several. The most important was probably the precedent for the treatment of colonies found in Greek and Roman history, and especially the principle of extending equal rights and citizenship to colonials. These points, particularly the latter, were repeated often by the American polemicists and hotly debated by them. They also scoured ancient history to demonstrate the dangers to a republic that the maintenance of a standing army presented. The tyrants of Greece and Rome, most notably Julius Caesar, provided ample ammunition for this charge. Many Americans, even in these early years, were already engaged in a debate about which was the better form of government—democracy, republic, aristocracy, or monarchy. Oftentimes, authors appealed to natural law. Many spoke of it in terms of the Enlightenment, but the most enlightened knew that the Greeks and Romans had evolved it millennia before. Not to be scorned is the colonial use of the classics as a source for insults, slogans, allusions, decorations, and illustrations. Their use in this manner does not preclude a more substantive use in another place. When a people are steeped in the classics as were the eighteenth century Americans, it was natural for them to use the classics in a common, daily,
familiar manner. They were at home and at ease with the classics. It did not take a learned professor from a college to make a comment about contemporary events in a classical vein. Everyone could appreciate a comparison when one was made or draw a lesson when one was offered from ancient history. Some of the more educated pamphlet authors apparently thought that they had best not mention too many classical subjects to avoid insulting their "ignorant" readers, but they soon corrected their misapprehension. Indeed, it seems that the most popular pamphlets often contained some material that was clearly classical. The Americans of the Revolutionary generation were humanists, and, as humanists, they were as imprecise and catholic as all devotees of mankind are. They knew what was right for the human soul and mind and gleaned the pages of history for the idealists, philosophers, and historians who spoke to them of human dignity, rights, and beauty. It is no wonder that many of them, like Adams and Jefferson, began and ended their harvest among the sages of ancient Greece and Rome.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

The section of primary sources is a briefly annotated bibliography of the pamphlets used in this study. The long titles have been abbreviated and the publishers omitted. The author, when known, is listed first, then the title, the place of publication, date, and the length of the work. Added to this information is the number under which the pamphlet is listed in Evans and Adams, i.e., E14639, A205 is John Adams, Thoughts on Government Applicable to the Present State. The last notation (much, some, little, none) refers to the amount of classical material found in the pamphlet.

Primary Sources:


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Considerations upon the Rights of the Colonists to the Privileges of British Subjects. New York, 1766. 27 pp. A25, E10273. None.


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The Triumph of the Whigs; or, T'Other Congress Convened.


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Wilson, James. Considerations on the Nature and Extent of
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