

# Interpreter

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## Teaching Visitors about the Consumer Revolution

by Cary Carson

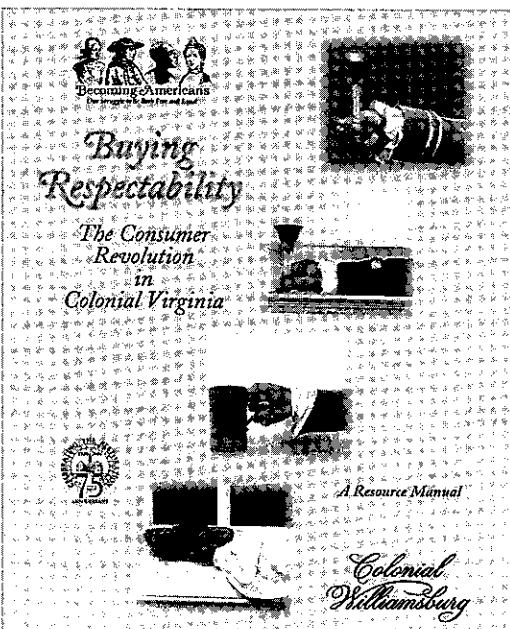
Cary is vice president of the research division. He gave the following slide lecture to interpreters who took story line training in January. A much fuller version can be found (with lots of footnotes and illustrations) in Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1994): 483-697.

Once upon a time, starting in the reign of George III, a string of important inventions in a few industries began a profound alteration of the British economy. Steam engines, flying shuttles, water frames, and power looms, operated by men, women, and children summoned to work by a factory bell, produced prodigious quantities of inexpensive personal and household goods. Machine-made textiles, pottery, ironmongery,

and a multitude of other products were transported over improved roads and along newly built canals to markets in every corner of the realm. There they were snapped up by a rapidly growing population of eager consumers, who waxed healthier, wealthier, and happier than ever before in rising wages, falling death rates, and a diet of roast beef and white bread supplied by model farmers and progressive stockbreeders.

Echoing the modern corporate slogan "Better things for Better Living," the orthodox histories endorse a supply-side explanation for the events that led to industrial and commercial expansion. Consumer demand is presented as a universal given, as immutable as mankind's quest for a dry cave and a square meal. Mechanization, the factory system, faster, cheaper transportation, and new banking and credit facilities were simply those English-made miracles that finally in the eighteenth century drove down the costs and increased the supply of goods and services that everyone had always wanted and that ordinary people could now afford.

Industrial progress, the schoolbooks imply, thrived on freedom and waited on genius. U. S. histories provide the classic example. Because



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Old-World mercantilists had frowned on colonial manufactures, Americans first had to win independence, then steal British industrial secrets, to bring the factory system to these shores. Soon thereafter, the wheels began to turn and the spindles to spin. The rest was textbook history. This orthodox version of early American industrial history is the most supply-driven of them all. Mass production in the United States not only met existing demand. Aggressive merchandisers deliberately created an expanded market of new customers needed to buy the flood of products that soon poured from the factories.

The main lines of the cause-and-effect, supply-and-demand argument stand largely uncontested. The Industrial Revolution awakened an enormous unquenchable appetite for material goods. It sired the race of getters and spenders that we all have become, we Americans nonpareil. The essential truth of supply-side economics stands unchallenged as the incontrovertible central thesis that explains the genesis of our consumer societies in the industrialized nations of the West. . . .

Incontrovertible except for one little problem, one awkward fact. Demand came first.

Already by 1750, the downward and outward spread of luxury had been a preachers' and pamphleteers' favorite target for going on fifty years. Before Arkwright, before Watt, before Hargreaves, Wedgwood, Boulton, and Kay, almost before even Abraham Darby, people up and down the social order had discovered and were indulging the most extraordinary passion to purchase consumer goods in quantities and varieties that were unknown, even unimaginable, to their fathers and grandfathers. It was indeed a revolution, but a consumer revolution in the beginning. The better-known industrial revolution followed in response.

Putting a demand-driven consumer revolution before power-driven industrialization forces historians to ask questions that they've seldom addressed until very recently. It shifts their perspective from the means of production to the consumption of the goods produced. Initially, it requires attention to describing certain basic facts: What goods did people really acquire? How did they use them? How have people's everyday lives been changed by possession of newfangled artifacts and practice in the things they can do? Who has shared in the wealth of material possessions? How evenly or unevenly have they been distributed and how have those differences rearranged the social order? Descriptions of material life eventually send historians in search of explanations: What caused ordinary people at certain times in the past to spend their

sometimes small earnings on expendable goods and services in preference to longer lasting investments? Why is there demand for some things at one time and quite different things at others? Why did the pace of consumption quicken so dramatically in the eighteenth century?

Ultimately, historians who pursue this line of inquiry end up exploring a set of fundamental relationships in modern society. They're social relationships, to be sure, but with this difference: they require the intercession of inanimate objects, namely, the household goods and personal possessions whose ownership and use first became widespread among northern Europeans and North Americans in the eighteenth century.

Artifacts and the activities to which they were instrumental defined group identities and mediated relations between individuals and the social worlds they inhabited. We ourselves take the facilitating role of material things for granted. Competence in understanding and using the "language" of artifacts is learned along with the ability to speak, read, and write, although actually it is a far more general form of literacy than the latter two. Ours has become a very complex material culture. Two hundred years ago it was simpler; three hundred years ago very much simpler almost everywhere the world around. Only small groups of affluent courtiers, churchmen, merchant princes, and other elites had always led well-furnished lives of luxury. The consumer revolution changed all that. It's the term that historians now give to a fundamental transformation when whole nations learned to use a rich and complicated medium of communications to conduct social relations that were no longer adequately served by the parochial repertoires of words, gestures, and folk customs alone. Artifacts expanded the vocabulary of an international language that was learned and understood wherever fashion and gentility spread.

For a time the old handcraft industries supplied the needs of the first new consumers. In the end, they couldn't keep pace. As venture capitalists came to see the tremendous potential for growth in home markets, the search began for new technologies to increase production and new sales strategies to enlarge those markets. Consumer revolution and industrial revolution were mutually necessary and complementary sides to events that the textbooks must put back together again—the right way round—before we can appreciate the full significance of one of the great divides in the chronicle of human experience.

Looking back at the whole history of material life, it exaggerates nothing to say that the mass of humanity were only rudimentary tool users



The Tichbourne Dole (1670)  
by Gillis van Tilborch.

before the eighteenth century. Most men and women were conspicuously not consumers in 1600. If standardized consumer goods eventually became high marks of esteem and essential tools necessary to communicate status and identity, what had people's possessions meant before? To describe a basic alteration in the use of everyday objects as a "revolution" invites a before-and-after comparison. If we take the late Middle Ages as our starting point, there's no danger of jumping into the story halfway through.

Scholarship over the last generation has discarded many sentimental stereotypes about medieval peasants and their descendants under the Tudors and Stuarts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A remarkable painting of the Tichbourne family—household servants on the left, tenants and villagers on the right—was painted in 1670 to record a community ritual and a set of social relationships that had survived three or four hundred years in this Hampshire backwater. For want of a genuine medieval painting, this one serves to remind us that, although rural communities were ordered in a familiar hierarchy of gentlemen, yeomen, husbandmen, and laborers, medievalists now know that they were open to conflicts, outside influences, and a never-ending turnover of inhabitants. Yet, for most villagers, their birthplace was still the center of the universe, however much they orbited around it. Few escaped its gravitational pull altogether. Despite the ever-changing cast of characters, the English village and its neighborhood retained its ancient integrity as a vital community center.

Status, wealth, and power ran together in such face-to-face societies. A man's reputation resided in his neighbors' estimation of his worth. It was measured in the only terms that really mattered—in land, labor, livestock, precious plate, and capital improvements; reputable kin-

folk and creditable neighbors; the offices he held; and the largess he dispensed in the exercise of his authority. All but plate were indivisible from their locality, and gold and silver objects were safest locked away. A farmer's reputation was his letter of credit beyond the village boundaries. That network of acquaintances might extend some miles roundabout, as I said, but seldom farther.

Heavy wooden furniture and coarse earthenware vessels that had little value in themselves nevertheless were used in two distinctive ways, first, as accessories to the display of real wealth and, second, to affirm social precedence. Both are worth considering briefly because they stand in marked contrast to later uses of consumer goods as status symbols in their own right. Affluence took material form in articles of three or four kinds in medieval households: exotic and expensive foodstuffs, jewelry and plate, and textiles made into clothing or used as napery, upholstery, bedclothes, and wall hangings. Furniture and ceramic tableware were important principally as objects needed to store, display, and serve these few articles of real value. The most common pieces of furniture in medieval farmhouses were chests and boxes. The contents usually far exceeded the value of the container.

Other medieval furniture forms functioned principally as display stands for plate or as sideboards for the serving of eating and drinking vessels used at table. Furniture and tableware that became showpieces by the eighteenth century already served as showcases in medieval times.

There was another way they were important. Certain kinds of household equipment asserted and reinforced the user's degree of estate. In particular, seat furniture, bed hangings, standing salts, and various covered table vessels expressed social realities very precisely. Always the controlling factor was precedence rather than rank based on occupation, office holding, or other preferment. The one quality was conditional, the other constant. In other words, a yeoman farmer might sit in an armchair in his own hall and drink from a covered cup at his own table, but he would expect to occupy a stool or bench located below the salt and drink from a tankard in the house of his seigniorial lord. Precedence overruled rank in the use of objects that had ceremonial significance. Not even ownership entitled a person to use his or

her possessions in every situation. Let us note, in anticipation of later events, that the rule of precedence was to be thoroughly swept away, except on state occasions, by the scramblers after luxury in the centuries still to come.

This patchwork quilt of commonplaces that covered the British Isles in the Middle Ages began to come unraveled and the local colors ran together as economic pressures accelerated the movement of people and expanded their cultural horizons in the sixteenth century. The colonization of North America was a spillover from these local and regional movements of people across the British Isles and eventually across large parts of northern Europe as well. The westward transatlantic movement of Europeans and Africans not only forms the foundation of American history, it is the key event in understanding the origins of modern consumer behavior and the development of visual literacy since the Middle Ages.

What is that connection? A world in motion was a world full of strangers. Accidental tourists and neighbors by happenstance spoke unintelligible languages and practiced unfamiliar customs. They were necessarily unacquainted with each other's social standing back home since the traditional and continuing measures of status—property, family, and offices—were inevitably left behind. A pressing need therefore arose to invent a portable and universally acknowledged system of status identification. It required a code of manners, a repertory of performances, a set of conventions, and an assortment of costumes and props that could be recognized by anyone in the know. It was a system of polite behavior borrowed ultimately from courtly protocol, then wedded to an aesthetic developed in Italy and France, and eventually disseminated through Amsterdam and London to the rest of Europe and its far-flung colonies in the second half of the seventeenth century. Contemporaries had a name for this new system of good manners and good taste that qualified them for citizenship in the world at large. They called it "politeness" or "gentility."

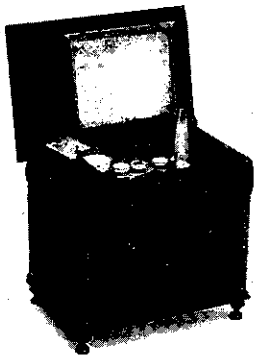
For the most part, domestic artifacts were the medium of exchange in this genteel language of social communications. Their use was learned at home and practiced abroad in activities that never before had been part of ordinary household routines. Tea ceremonies, formal dinners, social calls, promenades, evening entertainments, assemblies, balls, and musicales required a multitude of specialized equipment not to be found in the chests and cupboards of an older way of life.

These consumer ancestors of ours have lately received the kind of attention that earlier generations of historians paid to Puritans, patriots, and pioneers and, more recently, to slaves, women, and children. Scholars offer many reasons to explain why material things became such essential mediators in everyday social life only three centuries ago. They advance arguments for the growth of population, the domination of London, the spread of commerce, easy access to cheap money, the development of home markets, the dense layering of social classes, and many more. These were indeed preconditions to the rise of a consumer culture. But they beg the question, why was wealth converted into durable goods? The answer, I suggest, is because the old forms of visible wealth weren't transportable or recognizable in distant counties, cities, and overseas colonies to which vast numbers of people began traveling on business and pleasure and moving permanently to start new lives.

Inescapably, the search for an explanation for consumer behavior comes down to understanding how a whole host of new inventions equipped their owners and users to meet social needs and solve communications problems that arose when people struck out for parts unknown. To explain what I mean, consider two groups of furnishings that made their first appearance in seventeenth-century American houses, specifically in the parlors that were the innermost sanctum of a yeoman's or merchant's physical world and his principal entertaining room. Look first at several new-fangled pieces of furniture devoted to the fine art of self-presentation. It is also useful to pay attention to accessories to the dinner table, where genteel sociability was put to the test in groups. These pieces of furniture and tableware have been taken so much for granted by those who could afford them since the eighteenth century that a house without them mocks the very meaning of the word "furnished." That wasn't always so.

Among the earliest inventions worthy of note were things that assisted people's dressing activities and toilet preparations. That is hardly surprising considering that the human body, when it came to clothing, had long been treated like a medieval cupboard, a bare frame to be draped and adorned before it reflected the glory of him or her to whom the face belonged. Ever since the seventeenth century, faces have borne endless looking at and looking after. New furniture forms included chamber tables and dressing boxes, both accessories to the serious work of self-beautification.

Dressing boxes were divided into tiny



*Dressing box, 1694, by Thomas Dennis [?].*

compartments for cosmetics, powders, and unguents needed to improve on nature. Sometimes they were fitted with a mirror under the lid to assist the user in performing

the kind of close-up facial renovations that old-fashioned country people had little time or use for. The earliest owners of dressing boxes were often sea captains, mariners, and merchants—men more frequently than women. They were the very men whose affairs were advanced not so much by a familiar honest face as a fashionable pretty one. Such boxes first appear in American probate inventories in the 1670s.

A companion piece to the dressing table and another commonplace piece of parlor furniture with an unusual social history in this period was the chest of drawers. It was destined to become the principal storage container for clothing and other textiles in fashionable Anglo-American households in the second half of the seventeenth century. The earliest chests of drawers were especially popular among wealthy middle-class town dwellers who valued compactness and yet desired the convenience of drawer storage for the thinner, lighter, seasonable clothing they were putting on and off more frequently. Drawer furniture appeared almost simultaneously in London and Boston in the late 1630s and early '40s. By 1760, drawer storage had become the norm almost without exception among middling householders of English descent even in the countryside.

Before the turn of the eighteenth century, fine ladies and gentlemen came to regard a chest of drawers as an important component in a set of dressing furniture that included the table, box, and occasionally even stands on which they placed pots and basins for convenience or candles to shed light full face on their toilet preparations.

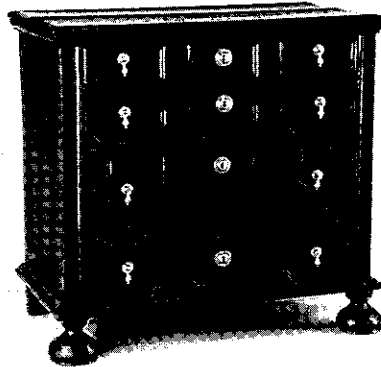
Sometimes looking glasses came en suite too. Upright, rectangular looking glasses joined the

kit of dressing chamber paraphernalia as English mirror glass manufacturers found ways just before 1700 to elongate a squarish face glass into a three-quarter-length living portrait of face and figure fashionably united. Never before in human history had people seen themselves “from top to toe,” as one delighted Englishwoman described the first experience of seeing her reflection at full length.

Silvered reflections and painted “effigies” were the quintessential expression of the personal identity that men and women concocted with the things they kept in drawers and dressing boxes to create the artificial self-images that they then saw mirrored back at them from looking glasses in the parlor chamber and from oil canvases on the parlor wall. Painted portraits were yet another new addition to the furnishings of prosperous American homes in the second half of the seventeenth century. As such they appropriated and domesticated a category of artifacts that earlier ages had reserved for church and state officials and others of great estate. For the living, portraits advertised an individual's place in society. Men often held gloves, canes, books, documents, and other recognizable badges of office. Gentlewomen posed with fans, Bibles, and bouquets of flowers. After death, portraits honored the memory of the sitter and celebrated the family's genealogy no less than funerary monuments immortalized its reputation in the churchyard. Better than churchyards, paintings were portable.

There is something new and different to be observed in these pieces of dressing furniture, articles of clothing, cosmetics, and artificial likeness. First, they were all equipment necessary to achieve a calculated effect. The results—fresh smelling clothes, a pretty face, a fashionable figure—were unattainable without the gear. Its use required learned skills and careful practice. Of course, that much may be said about tools of any kind. The difference worth noting is the sheer number of new tools invented or popularized in the second half of the seventeenth century to perform basic everyday chores. Washing, dressing, and making oneself presentable all reached new heights of elaboration and refinement by 1700.

Second, it should not be overlooked that the act of using the new equipment, the prepara-



*Chest of drawers.*



"Tight Lacing/Fashion before Ease." Colonial Williamsburg Collections.

tions themselves, assumed an importance it had never had before in bourgeois circles. The rich ornament and fine workmanship lavished on lowly toilet kits and storage boxes are one indication. So are the many popular depictions of ladies and gentlemen ensconced in their dressing chambers and busy at their toilet seen in prints, performed in comedies, and depicted in the light literature of the period.

Such scenes illustrate one final observation. The equipment needed for dressing and grooming was increasingly regarded as a suite of furnishings to be encountered in a specific place within the house. It joined a growing list of domestic goods that genteel householders everywhere regarded as pieces belonging to sets that users could expect to find in public rooms reserved for the activities in which they assisted. It was another step in the process of converting the many folkways that had governed people's private ablutions and informal dressing habits into a standardized system of polite public behavior. Where fashion could coerce gentlemen and ladies at their washstands, there was no telling how it would refurbish the rooms of their houses where they displayed all their resplendence to neighbors and strangers.

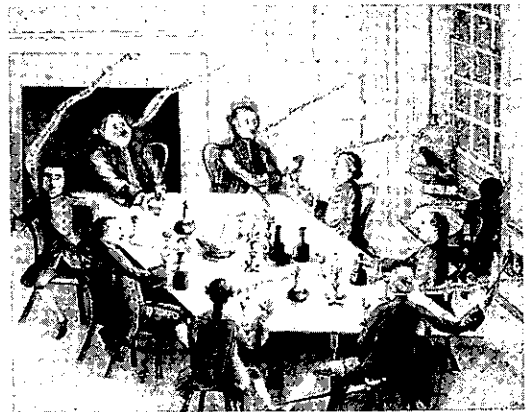
These numerous self-centered artifacts, however prosaic and traditional their uses, are important to understanding my argument about geographical mobility and the spread of con-

sumer culture. All contributed to overhauling and standardizing people's personal appearances. No longer was it enough to be expensively dressed. To cut a respectable figure abroad, or to command respect at home from those traveling abroad, it was increasingly necessary to dress according to an acknowledged formula.

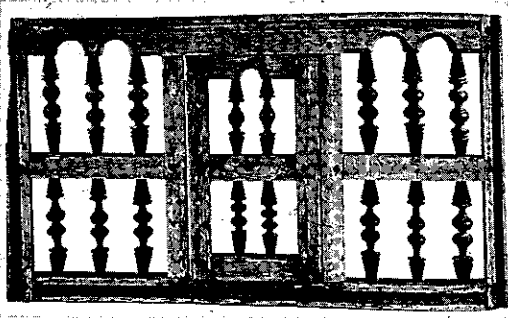
Gentility put on a uniform; it wore a stock expression; it prescribed universal good manners. Drawers and dressing boxes contained the essential costumes and make-up. Mirrors imaged rehearsals. Prints popularized role models, and portraits immortalized successful performers. Bedchambers became actors' and actresses' dressing rooms, and parlors and public spaces the stages on which they appeared.

All these preparations culminated in formal performances that began now to reshape fundamentally the daily routines of quite ordinary people. Burghers and a few country gentlemen were usually first, but others followed soon enough. These were social events by definition, occasions when men and women consorted together in activities that, whatever their outward purposes, served deep down to reaffirm and regulate the social order. Frequently these formalities were observed on occasions that brought together people from outside the immediate family. Often they included complete strangers, as seen in this drawing of a drinking party given by Peter Manigault of Charleston.

Displays of hospitality traditionally involved the sharing of food and drink. It's therefore not surprising that the earliest genteel performances took place at table and radically altered the design of furniture and utensils used at mealtimes. Things used to seat, serve, feed, and entertain a householder's family and guests numbered among the earliest mass-produced consumer goods that can be called genuine inventions.



Peter Manigault and His Friends, 1768, by George Roupell. Courtesy, Winterthur Museum.



*Fragment of glass and galley pot case, circa 1683–1720.*

The glass case, for example, was an object utterly unknown to earlier generations. The form has recently been identified as a small case piece used to store drinking glasses, galley pots, and other refined table garnitures. Such cases held the sturdy, inexpensive, lead crystal drinking glasses perfected by English glassmakers after 1675 and widely marketed in the colonies by the 1690s. Their design, not just their affordability, responded to changing tastes in table manners. Not only were they intentionally one-handed vessels, they were designed to be elegantly held by pinching either the stem or the foot between the thumb and forefingers. That left the other hand completely free to engage in the practiced gestures that accompanied genteel conversations, which were the real substance of the dinner table performance.

Fashionable dining arbitrated even the shape of the table. Always they had been four-sided before. Always four corners had marked the metes and bounds between the head, the foot, and the two sides in between. Each was a distinct social territory. Protocol placed the most important male diner present at the head or top of the table. His dependents took their places to the right and left in descending order of precedence according to gender, estate, age, and servility. Wives appear to have sat next to their husbands at the head of the table, or alternatively, opposite at the foot.

The advent of fashionable dining changed everything, not least of all the shape of four-sided tables. They became round or oval. Tables without corners made a closed circle of men and women whose shared commitment to the arts of civility outweighed any real differences in their rank. Master and mistress were replaced by host and hostess, and so thorough was the revolution in manners that husbands and wives actually traded places. The meat-carving and soup-ladling duties were reassigned to the hostess. The host, now seated at the foot, was re-

sponsible for the guests' exchange of pleasantries. That too was said to happen more easily at round tables. "It is the custom here in England," wrote a knowledgeable housekeeper in 1758, "to eat off square or long Tables; the French in general on round or oval," thus giving them (she said) "vastly the advantage in the disposing and placing [of] their Entertainment." Companions seated in a circle enjoyed greater informality, what the housekeeper called "this French fashion of perfect ease."

The mealtime performance required matching dining chairs whether the table was oval or not. These too made their first appearance in American parlors in the second half of the seventeenth century. Socially differentiated seating furniture had been one way that precedence-minded diners had signified their place around old-fashioned tables. Where chairs had been scarce, usually they had been reserved for the householder himself, sometimes his wife, and occasional honored guests. Social inferiors had often sat on stools, forms, benches, and makeshift chests and boxes, or might even have stood.

This ancient seating plan was subverted by the invention of the upholstered back-stool about 1615. Three features recommended their use in polite society. Their sometimes lower height, armless sides, and open back were a convenience especially to women who wore fashionable farthingale skirts. Indeed the French term for them translated as "farthingale chair." Second, they usually came en suite, often in sets of six or a dozen. The third feature, their coordinated upholstery, reinforced this impression of sameness, and, not coincidentally, conferred on the whole assembled company the superior status long attached to rich textiles.

Even before the popularity of turkey work and leather chairs had peaked, artisans in London developed a line of high-backed cane chairs that were mass produced in such astonishing numbers and enjoyed such tremendous success in the marketplace that they revolutionized the furniture industry and made genteel dining affordable to large numbers of middling consumers on both sides of the Atlantic. It hardly mattered that cane chairs lacked coordinated upholstery, which sitters always covered up anyway. Sets of high-backed chairs had something better. Their identical carved crest rails towered above the tallest users in unobscured affirmation of every diner's equal right to occupy one piece in the set. Crested chair frames communicated other messages as well. They clearly resembled the tops of picture frames and looking glasses. Thus high-backed chairs enframed a

person's fashionable face and figure in the same image that he or she had composed it earlier at the dressing table and could further study its idealized form in the prints and portraits that lined the parlor walls. Thus, the correspondence was complete from model to rehearsal to performance. *En suite* meant more than chairs by the dozen. More fundamentally, it was a state of mind made manifest in a pervasive and unified aesthetic and a corresponding system of artificial good manners.

Good manners and fashionable accoutrements validated their possessors' claims to gentility. Gentility itself worked like paper money. It was presumed to stand for tangible social assets that unfamiliar bearers kept stashed away at home. A knowledge of etiquette and practice in the things that fashionable artifacts could do were the portable parts of this new communications system. Men and women of fashion could leave their own possessions at home and expect that others just like them would be placed at their disposal wherever they traveled in polite society.

Fashionable living therefore required standardized architectural settings. The stage required props in places where the actors could count on finding them from one performance to another. The seventeenth-century parlor activities that I have described one piece at a time were enlarged upon and elaborated in the course of the eighteenth century until they ruled over a fashionable gentleman's entire house as completely as they ruled his whole life.

The history of western art can scarcely produce another earlier example of ideas that spread so rapidly and widely from court to countryside to colonies. Domestic architectural spaces planned, decorated, and furnished *en suite* refashioned drawing rooms and parlors around the world little more than a century after their invention. The scale was much reduced, the splendor diminished, the lines simplified, and the materials cheapened. Yet one idea endured. That was the notion that virtually anyone could hold court in his or her own house by carefully observing prescribed conventions and correctly using a few pieces of standardized equipment. The goods could be purchased at popular prices and the manners learned from plays, prints, dancing masters, and penny publications.

The great movement of European peoples that achieved a momentum in the eighteenth century that still rolls forward into our own times was the definitive force that shaped modern consumer culture eventually for everyone whether migrant

or not. The travelers themselves were the first to put aside older parochial customs. They most urgently needed to acquire the manners and trappings that would smooth their reception in far away places. They led the way, but their wake washed back on the shores they left behind and passed by. The influence of their example worked inexorably to rub off local prejudices even among the firmly settled. Thus vicariously homebodies too gradually acquired some measure of cosmopolitan consumer culture.

So here at last is an answer to the question, "Why demand?", arrived at by careful study of archaeologists' artifacts and curators' objects of the decorative arts. Historians understand it, of course, as a historical problem. The issue as they see it, draws its intellectual vitality (as good scholarship in history should) from something that concerns a larger body of thoughtful citizens.

Events in our national life in the 1990s have reopened the debate about the celebrated American standard of living and our persistent belief in a beneficent materialism. For some time now, poor people in this country have been getting poorer, absolutely poorer in terms of real disposable per capita income. There have been other periods when the value of wages declined, but this one coincides with an unparalleled glut in new consumer goods and services available to those higher up the economic ladder whose buying power has remained more or less constant. The growing disparity between rich and poor, or more accurately and significantly between rich and middle, puts at risk a basic element in the American dream, the promise of almost universal access to a shared material culture, which for so long helped unite a nation of immigrants into a democracy of fellow consumers. Compared to the rest of a world deeply divided between haves and have-nots, Americans are fortunate to have always been a nation of haves and not-yets.

That could change. The possibility gives timeliness and even urgency to the work that you do in the Historic Area. The scholarship that I have summarized in this lecture gives us a perspective from which to second guess what consequences might follow were the welfare of hardworking men and women to reach such low levels that they and their children lost all hope of eventually participating in the consumer culture that has served as one of the great equalizing influences in American life. Think about it. Then, help visitors to Colonial Williamsburg to think about it so that (as we are fond of saying) the future may learn from the past.



## Was There an American Common Man? The Case in Colonial Virginia

by Kevin P. Kelly

Kevin is a historian in the Department of Historical Research. This article is from a lecture he presented in 1992 at a Colonial Williamsburg conference on "The Common People and Their Material World: Free Men and Women in the Chesapeake, 1700–1830."

Was there an American—or even a Virginia—common man? The answer is obvious—yes! But nothing is ever that simple. As I have pondered such a seemingly straightforward question, the fact that the answer seemed so obvious troubled me. I am not sure I have completely resolved the problem that puzzled me, but I think I have pinpointed its source.

Eighteenth-century contemporaries certainly seemed to believe that there were people living in colonial Virginia—and England for that matter—who could be considered common. Drawing upon those eighteenth-century observations and from the work of historians, it is possible to give shape to what I will call the traditional view of the common folk of eighteenth-century Virginia. First, everyone agreed on what the common man was not; he was not a gentleman.

It will be useful to review what characterized a gentleman in the eighteenth century because it sharply reveals what was thought to set the better sort apart from the rest of society, and it will remind us that these traits were presumably possessed only by an extremely small minority of Virginia's population.

A gentleman was expected to be educated, not just beyond basic literacy but to receive a "liberal" education grounded in Greek and Latin classics. And the knowledge gained was to be used in both private and public conversations. From tutors to classes at the College of William and Mary to studies in England, the sons of the Virginia gentry were exposed to the best in eighteenth-century formal schooling.

A gentleman was of good family background. Certainly one's immediate forefathers should be of a gentle status. Ideally, one was born into the elite. No wonder family Bibles, noting births, deaths, and even full genealogies, were regularly kept and updated by Virginia's best families.

A gentleman was to be wealthy enough to bear the cost of living the genteel life without



visible strain. One can almost sense the pathos running through the advertisements William Byrd III placed announcing the lotteries he was forced to hold to pay off his debts. Indebtedness not only threatened financial independence, it mocked a planter's claim to be a member of the gentry. In Byrd's case, suicide may have been preferable.

A gentleman was expected to command. It was both his right and his duty. This expectation motivated Robert Munford's Squire Worthy in the play *The Candidates* to stand again for election when it seemed likely that the wrong men might win.

But most important, a gentleman was to be free from the necessity to work, especially if that work involved physical or manual labor. In theory, this freedom was the keystone of the gentle life. John Randolph, testifying in support of his nephew John Randolph Grymes's loyalist claim, implied as much when he wrote "that at the Commencement of the Revolution, he . . . lived Affluently as a private gentleman without following any Trade or Profession."<sup>1</sup> The ideal, however, was rarely ever fully realized by even the wealthiest of Virginia's planters. A quick reading of Councillor Robert Carter's accounts reveals he was an active, hands-on manager of his widespread enterprises, from storing iron bars from his Maryland mine in his kitchen to arranging the reshipment of tons of ship biscuits.

The acceptance of work—if it was not truly drudgery—as not inappropriate for a Virginia gentleman might be called the American "fudge factor," for without it colonial Virginia would have had few true gentlemen. Indeed, as it was, the great planters, the First Families of Virginia, the genteel professionals (physicians, attorneys, and the clergy), and the import/export merchants were a pale reflection of the eighteenth-century English country gentry. Nevertheless, the boundary between the better sort and everyone else in Virginia's eighteenth-century society was understood by those on both sides of the line.

If the gentry clearly stood above the line, not everyone below it, according to the traditional viewpoint, would be labeled the "common folk." As one reads the comments about the "lesser sort," it is clear that those who figure most in these observations were thought active partners in the successful working of a hierarchical social order. They had a role to play, and they did so willingly. Furthermore, they were capable of granting deference to their social betters because they were not completely helpless in the face of the power exercised by the gentry. In this they were thought to share with their betters a claim of "independency." The eighteenth-century Virginia commoner is familiar to us as Thomas Jefferson's yeoman, to which can be added his urban counterpart, the shopkeeper and the artisan. In other words, eighteenth-century observers—and many historians follow their lead—elevated the "middling sort" to the position of "common man."



This middling sort, of course, expected to work by necessity. But, unlike the work of the gentry which diminished them, the work of the middling sort was valuable and rewarding—a positive good—because, as Jefferson implies, it was honest work upon the land that added value to society. They were the part of the population that, as Gregory King noted at the end of the seventeenth century in the case of England, increased rather than decreased the national income.

The middling sort encompassed a broad range of people with essentially similar experiences. In Virginia by the middle of the eighteenth century, they were literate, if not literary. They could reckon accounts, understand the contents of deeds they signed, and many even

owned a small parcel of books. The middling sort were politically active. It was from their ranks that the "foot soldiers" of the political institutions—petit and grand jurors, constables, etc.—were drawn. They held political opinions as well. Although belittled by colonial playwright Robert Munford, their concerns naturally focused on issues close to home, such as the placement of highways, ferries, and courthouses and, as the middling sort do even today, on taxes. Furthermore, by 1770, to the dismay of Munford, the middling sort expected their political leaders to take those concerns seriously. Most of the middling ranks at the very least earned a "decent sufficiency" by their labor. Yet increasing numbers of them were being bitten by the bug of consumerism and their material possessions began to include such genteel items as teaware and specialized furnishings.

But the key feature that linked the middling sort together was their actual (or potential) control of some means of production. In late-eighteenth-century Virginia that meant first land, then labor. Land was widely available in colonial Virginia, so much so that it quickly became a commodity to be bought and sold. Even the most cursory reading of any county's deed books demonstrates that the middling planters were fully engaged in the land market as early as the mid-seventeenth century. Even the rising price of land in the older settled areas of Virginia after 1750 did not close off trading in land. The urban artisan, of course, was not so economically dependent on owning land. Access to tools and the skills to use them might prove good enough to gain entrance into the middle ranks. Yet ownership of a lot and shop ensured one's place there. It was from these property-owning Williamsburg and Yorktown artisans that York County justices of the peace chose individuals to join with rural freeholders in political offices that confirmed their middling status.

As historians have examined the colonial social order, they have singled out for special comment its fluid character and attributed that fact to special, if not unique, American conditions. As a truly hierarchical society—even in Virginia where the gentry gained a solid foothold of respectability—America lacked the upper levels of aristocracy that characterized England. American society, in Gordon Wood's words, was truncated. Furthermore, the barrier between the better and the middle sort was low and not a major obstacle to movement across it. This mobility was helped along because the way to wealth in the profoundly agriculturally based

colonial economy was essentially the same for large, middling, and small planters. As many historians have long noted, it was in colonial America, where so many had access to land, that the underpinnings of privilege, upon which a hierarchical society rested, were severely undermined.<sup>2</sup>

Although I have oversimplified the case, I believe this to be the usual view of the American common man that seems so obvious an answer to the question "Was there an American common man?" Yet this definition seems almost too pat—too smug—to be really convincing. I suspect I knew this to be so because it fails a crucial test. If the question were rephrased to ask, "What was the most common—typical, representative—experience in colonial America, and which colonial Americans experienced it?" then the answer would not be the middling sort, who in colonial Virginia were in the minority. No, I suggest the title of the common folk of colonial America and most certainly of colonial Virginia could just as appropriately be accorded to the men and women who were poor whites and slaves.

Of course the poor were not completely ignored by eighteenth-century commentators who usually heaped more scorn than praise upon them. The poor had none of the socially redeeming features that the elite occasionally acknowledged the middling sort possessed. The poor were thought vulgar and crude, and because they made no positive contribution to civil society, most eighteenth-century commentators simply dismissed them.

Many historians, too, have not taken the poor seriously. There is nothing sinister about this. The poor are extremely hard to track. They existed virtually beyond historical note in the eighteenth century. Yet evidence of their existence does surface now and again. For example, consider the 20 percent single tithable households listed on the James City County sheriff's 1768 tax roles, many of whom were noted as insolvent. Or consider the poor children who were bound out by the York County court because their parents could not adequately care for them. They are often overlooked because it is also probably true that in colonial Virginia the white poor did not comprise a sizable portion of the population. But that, I believe, is because the true extent of poverty in colonial Virginia is hidden behind the veil of race. For, if you add in slaves who were surely not rich, the poor, white and black, especially in the Tidewater counties, do constitute the majority.

If we can discount race and legal status for a moment, it is clear that poor whites and slaves experienced a good deal in common. They were the true manual laborers of the eighteenth century; further, it was labor that was forced. Slaves worked under the threat of punishment, and whites for survival. While in theory the poor white, unlike the slave, controlled his own labor, in fact it gained him little. And to the degree he was forced to seek employment from others, his circumstances differed little from that of the slave.

Both the slave and the poor white were politically powerless and thus always politically and legally at risk. If poor whites ever shared in the franchise—and election polls reveal that they rarely did—it was at the sufferance of the local elite who could equally withdraw the privilege. Slaves were caught in the strange twists of colonial Virginia law. For example, as property, slaves could not own property, yet in an inversion of eighteenth-century understanding of torts, property—slaves—could be punished, even executed, for stealing property.

Slaves and poor whites both lived on the margin. Their housing provided only minimal comfort. These houses were almost always cramped, drafty, and damp. While neither slave nor poor white faced starvation in the eighteenth century, their diets were little more than adequate to maintain a basic level of health and well-being. And despite the presence of exotic items in their possession—second-rate export Chinese porcelain in the case of some slaves, or tea cups and wine glasses in the case of some poor whites—it is hard to imagine this group of Virginians as heavy contributors to the galloping consumerism said to be sweeping across colonial Virginia and America.

It may well be that these poor Virginians did not share the cultural values that informed the behavior of the better and middling sort. Reverend Woodmason's biased and exaggerated description of the poor Carolina backwoodsman hints at the fact that the poor did have a different understanding of morality, sex, marriage, and family than the genteel. African Americans and poorer Anglo-Virginians may have thought they inhabited an environment much more meaning-filled and alive, where dreams and portents still had power to affect human behavior, than the nature envisioned and articulated by the well-to-do student of the Enlightenment.

Finally, we cannot discount race and the legal status of slaves. Although racism may have bolstered the poor white's self-esteem, it undercut the value of manual labor, the one truly

valuable thing he or she possessed. And slavery institutionalized poverty and insured its existence regardless of any economic changes that could or would mitigate conditions.

If I am correct, then the characteristics of Virginia's eighteenth-century common man—poor, marginal, and exploited—differ significantly from those put forth by the traditional view of the colonial common man. And, of course, I am correct! But I was also correct earlier, because both groups did exist in the eighteenth century. The middling sort with their access to land were reshaping the nature of the hierarchical society, while at the same time, the poor were becoming a permanent part of that same new society. This then brings me back to the problem that troubled me at the very start, and that is, why do we ask such a question? Why do we care to categorize some groups of colonial Virginians as the "common folk"? And what kind of answer are we willing to accept when we pose it?

I think we seek categories—because as historians we seek to understand more than just the descriptive characteristics of the middling sort, the poor, and the slaves. We use categories such as the "common man" because we believe it will enhance our analysis of the past and provide us with a more powerfully plotted story about early America. And depending on where we set the template to encompass our chosen "common sort," we will end up with very different stories.

The use of the traditional view that equates the common people with the middling sort fits the prevailing American myth well. This myth is essentially a sociopolitical one that sees the course of American history as the retreat of hierarchy and privilege in the face of advancing equality and democracy. The focus on the colonial middling ranks with their access to property, their desire to share in the good life embodied in the gentry's material goods, and their eager embrace of the goal of earning money, make them the worthy forefathers of middle-class America in the nineteenth century. This continuity between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is also important because it suggests there is something distinctively American about this whole development. Un-

like Europeans, this story goes, Americans, energized by middle-class values, are not limited in their vision of the possible. They are truly a people of plenty, a people of progress.

Needless to say, acceptance of the idea that the commoners of early America were really poor whites and slaves promotes a very different American myth. In the first place, because these common folk were politically disenfranchised, this new myth exposes the limited nature of the political and ideological radicalism that is usually thought to characterize American history. While at first glance this idea that the typical Virginian, both white and black, was impoverished stresses the continuity between the old world and the new, it is also a very American story because it integrates the slaves' experience into the historical mainstream. It demonstrates just how unique to America this racially mixed laboring class was. Further this new myth shifts the focus away from the triumph of the middle class and back onto the emergence of the "working class." By positing that slaves laboring in a commercial agricultural system differ little from wage-earning factory workers, this version of the American story pushes the roots of American labor exploitation back into the eighteenth century. Further it acknowledges the persistence of great social and economic inequalities in American history.

I do not at this time propose to state which of these myths contains a greater measure of truth—although I do have an idea—rather I will let each of you decide. I will, however, conclude with a caution and an invitation. If you set out to answer such a loaded question as "Was there an American common man?" you cannot hope to avoid an ideological answer. Since you cannot escape the fact, embrace it.

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<sup>1</sup> Claim of John Randolph Grymes, 1 November 1783, A.O./13/30, folder G, Public Record Office.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York, 1992); Stuart M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900* (Cambridge, Eng., 1989); and Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1985).



# COOK'S CORNER

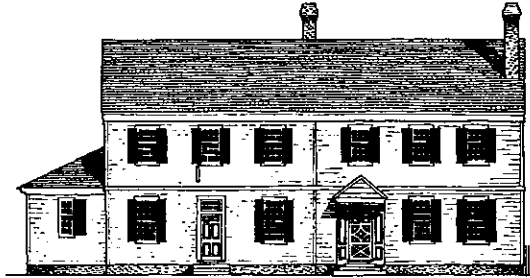
by Laura Arnold

Laura is a member of the Interpreter planning board.

Depicting eighteenth-century households as self-sufficient entities gives a false impression of the lifestyles of all colonists, especially residents in an urban setting like Williamsburg. Kitchen gardens and orchards were not large enough to provide the quantity of fresh fruits and vegetables needed by most families. As a source of meat, livestock required larger pasture areas than the regulated size of lots within a town permitted. The cultivation of wheat, corn, and oats was definitely a plantation enterprise.

Even gentry families like the Randolphs, whose plantations provided them with most of their food, supplemented their needs by shopping, along with their middling-sort neighbors, at stalls on Market Square and at the various merchants along Duke of Gloucester Street. One-stop shopping, the time-saving concept to which shoppers of today are accustomed, was simply not possible. The eighteenth-century housewife patronized stalls set up on Market Square for fresh produce, meats, poultry, dairy products, and seafood. She purchased herbs, spices, and sweetmeats from the apothecary or a local store; bread and rolls at the baker's; flour from the miller; and imported foodstuffs, such as salad oil, wine, sugar, and candied fruits, from those merchants who were also grocers. (The use of the word *foodstuffs* in a merchant's advertisement implied imported goods.)

Shops run by merchants Robert Nicolson, Joseph Scrivener, the Carter brothers, and James Tarpley served the Capitol end of town. An advertisement in the December 12, 1771, edition of the *Virginia Gazette* reveals John Greenhow's store at the foot of Palace Green, to be the eighteenth-century version of a "gourmet market" as well as a general store. Almost buried within the list of hundreds of practical and luxury items available are the imported foodstuffs: "Old Spir-



its, best and common Arrack, *Madeira*, Lisbon, Port, Claret, *Canary*, and *Renish* Wines, mixed Sweetmeats, preserved Ginger, Orange Chips, candied Angelica, Barley Sugar, white and brown Sugar Candy, Anchovies, Olives, Capers, Vinegar, best and common Olive Oil, Groats, Split Peas, Rice, Sago, Salop, all Sorts of Spices, Currants." To avoid being scorned by his patriotic customers, he qualified the listing of "Bohea, Green, Congo and best Hyson Teas" with the phrase "imported before the Association," an indication that the pragmatic Greenhow did not want politics to interfere with his commercial success. (While Greenhow would not have known the nineteenth-century term *boycott*,<sup>1</sup> he clearly understood the principle.) The location of his store made him conveniently accessible to the gentry families who built their homes close to the Governor's Palace, and he obviously stocked the kinds of foodstuffs his wealthy customers desired.

Market Square, a short walk from Greenhow's store, was the site of what today would be called a farmer's market. Here, small farmers who doubled as greengrocers and purveyors of fresh poultry, dairy, and seafood items, set up their stalls six days a week. A 1781 drawing by Georg Daniel Flohr, a German soldier serving in a French regiment during the American Revolution, shows a market hall across the street from the Courthouse of 1770. Archaeological investigations found no evidence that such a structure ex-





isted in that specific location, but that kind of building was customarily used in England to house butchers. George Chaplin, who advertised himself as a “butcher on the main street” and whose name appears in the accounts of Governor Botetourt, is the best known of the six butchers who operated at various times in Williamsburg. Chaplin’s reference to “main street” possibly infers that, since most fresh meat was found in the stalls or market hall at Market Square, his customers knew where to find him. Small farmers who could not afford to advertise depended upon word-of-mouth recommendations and a central location for their success. “Location, location, location” was timely advice then as it is today.

Visitors are often surprised to learn how necessary bakeries were to the residents of Williamsburg. Baking loaves of bread required a large bake oven like the brick ones at the Governor’s Palace and the Powell house. The medieval English practice of constructing a community oven apparently was not copied in colonial Virginia. A bake oven was a kitchen convenience included on few residential properties, and most households used a Dutch oven to bake small rolls and biscuits. Bread production was left to the bakers in town. Unlike today, bread and rolls did not have to be hot or fresh in order to be enjoyed. Mainly, they served as a “sponge” that individual diners used to sop up sauces and gravies. Cooks used bread as thickeners in soups, stews, and custard puddings, toasted it for fritters and garnishes, and grated it for breadcrumbs. The grades of flour a baker used determined the quality of the penny loaf purchased. Mrs. Randolph probably chose bread made with the best white flour as opposed to the heavier loaf made from whole-wheat flour favored by those of lower status. Confectioners supplied rich cakes and confections made with sugar, candied fruits, and nuts, which were expensive ingredients saved for the preparation of special treats.

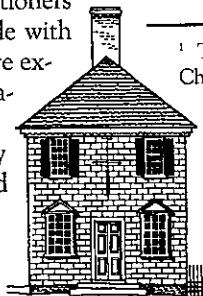
While it is true that an apothecary mainly sold medical supplies and provided

medical assistance, advertisements for the Paster and Galt apothecary list wares including confections and other imported foodstuffs. Confections referred not only to sugared fruits, nuts, and other sweetmeats, but also to a medicinal syrup made with sugar or honey. Many of the herbs and spices stocked by an apothecary were as useful in cooking as they were for treating illnesses. Stopping at the apothecary gave the eighteenth-century housewife the opportunity to learn about the latest home remedies, which frequently were based on soothing broths and herb teas. Rosewater, the oils of lavender and rosemary, carmine powder for rouge, and fine castile soap were also stocked by the apothecary. Perhaps this shop was the last stop for the housewife on a strict budget. With pennies to spare, did she splurge on lavender oil to scent the pure lard she used for hand cream, or instead buy sweetmeats as a treat for her family? These are questions for which there are no answers.

If the colonial housewife could come back today and participate in the wonders of one-stop shopping, would she be happy? Or would she prefer the personal interaction she enjoyed while filling her market basket as she made her way down Duke of Gloucester Street? Shopping was a time-consuming ritual that took her into the larger world around her. She might very well conclude that standing in line at a checkout counter is neither a convenience nor an improvement.



For a visual “recipe” of eighteenth-century foodways check out *Eat, Drink & Be Merry: The British at Table, 1600–2000* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd., 2000) at the Rockefeller Library. This book, edited by Ivan Day, uses paintings and photographs to depict British table settings from 1600 to 2000. It is the catalog of exhibitions at York, London, and Norwich that matched tableware and period food with appropriate paintings and photographs. The result is a picture of dining as social history, an important aspect of the Buying Respectability story line.



<sup>1</sup> This late-nineteenth-century term immortalizes Charles C. Boycott, a retired British army captain who served as estate agent in County Mayo, Ireland. In 1880, his refusal to reduce rents earned him the attention of Irish Land League agitators, who sought to ostracize him economically and socially.

## Religion and the Market in Early America

by Mark Valeri

*Mark, a professor at Union Theological Seminary, presented this paper in April 2000 for religion month as part of Colonial Williamsburg's Visiting Scholar Lecture Series. Focusing on New England, he explores the connections between the consumer revolution and religion.*

The history of the relation between religion and the economy in early America encompasses a remarkable change. Leading Protestants in England and the early settlements of North America described a market economy as the bane of the Old World and the nemesis of a godly order in the New. Colonial economies nonetheless became integrated into a transatlantic system of commerce during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. From 1630 through the 1710s, most religious leaders had a pronounced habit of lamenting this development. They excoriated market behaviors, from the most specific (such as demanding high wages during a labor shortage or borrowing money to speculate in land) to the most general (such as seeking profits for the sake of upward mobility). Yet by the end of the eighteenth century, the heirs to these earlier critics had ceased to issue such customary declamations. Many of them embraced a free-market system.

Most historians of religion and the economy have examined this transformation in terms of Max Weber's discussion of the so-called Protestant ethic. Focusing on Puritan New England, they have seen in Puritanism an original impulse toward modern economic rationality. Puritans, according to this line of reasoning, revered the individual who glorified God by achieving economic success. Once the New England colonists overcame the rude economic conditions of the first few decades, they willingly embraced a market economy. The late-eighteenth-century enthusiasm for commerce was, from this perspective, the evolutionary and inevitable outgrowth of Puritanism.<sup>1</sup>

I wish to suggest a different line of interpretation. We cannot understand the relationship between religion and the American economy rightly if we fail to appreciate the immense dis-

tance between the moral imaginations of seventeenth-century Puritans and late-colonial Americans. We might even think in terms of a shift in discursive worlds. My argument is that, in New England, this shift occurred from the 1720s through the 1750s. Leading religious thinkers adopted theological and moral methods associated with the Enlightenment that realigned their ethics from a resistance to the market to a recommendation for it. The outcome was striking. It produced an alliance between Calvinists and rationalists, who determined together during the 1770s that Americans ought to take up arms against Great Britain for the sake of a free economic order.

To understand this development, we should think again about Puritanism and the meaning of a "market culture." The term may stand for the nexus of economic behaviors, social theories, and ethical ideas that legitimated new modes of exchange in which goods, services, and credit were priced according to their supply and demand. Rather than defined by customary rules, canon law, or civil legislation, such prices fluctuated according to regional and international, as well as local, demand. A widespread use of paper money or other promissory notes (stocks, annuities, bills of credit) and an increasing reliance on credit integrated mercantile activities into a transatlantic network. Credit, too, changed, from a simple accounting of debts between individuals to a commodity to be brokered or sold for profit. Disputes over credit or unpaid debts were increasingly adjudicated in civil courts, according to new concepts of contract and legal right.<sup>2</sup>

There were several sanctions for profit-seeking individualism in the market, ranging from ideas about national productivity to contemporary ethical theories that defined self-interest as the inevitable and, therefore, potentially virtuous well-spring of all human activity.

Proponents of a free economy held that the exchange of goods and services could be construed as one expression of a universal and ordered system—regulated by natural laws (supply and demand) that were omnipresent but were invisible to, or at least distant from, the common shopkeeper or day laborer. Yet these laws were reasonable in that they produced prosperity and harmony. They linked individuals to an international network of sociability, transforming the market into a moral law.

*The history of the relation between religion and the economy in early America encompasses a remarkable change.*

More generally, one of the intellectual platforms for this market culture—whether or not one took a market position on specific policies such as currency supply, price regulation, or poor relief—was the philosophical assumption that universal, rational laws ordered human affairs and bound individuals into an invisible social system. Stephen Toulmin has characterized this agenda in terms of the modern search for a cosmopolis: a civil society (*polis*) that duplicated the universal natural order (*cosmos*). The philosophical method that underpinned the market approached ethics as an analytical science. It described universal truths that, if followed, would lead to corporate peace and prosperity. Given various formulations by writers as diverse as Grotius, Hobbes, Locke, and Leibniz, this style of social analysis, in Toulmin's phrase, "decontextualized" human reason from historical particularities in search of a rational, universal, and natural law of society.<sup>3</sup>

The intellectual premises of Puritan moral thinking were incongruent with this full-fledged culture of the market. Anglo-American Calvinists attempted to contextualize moral thought in local communities and their disciplinary institutions. John Cotton, a Puritan divine trained at Cambridge and the minister-teacher of Boston's First Church from 1633 to 1652, spent much of his career dealing with this issue. He took up the agenda set by an earlier generation of English Puritans such as William Perkins. Perkins, like other Puritans, criticized the English episcopal system as incapable of dealing with the day-to-day temptations of lay people. He envisioned local disciplinary bodies on the model of Geneva's Consistory. Elders and ministers in the church were to examine individuals and counsel them or admonish them to follow specific rules that touched on all aspects of social behavior, ranging from sex to choosing one's vocation, entertaining friends to treating servants. He insisted that those who practiced market-driven activities such as usury, hoarding goods, or raising prices beyond customary limits be excommunicated.<sup>4</sup>

Perkins modeled a version of Puritanism that had little in common with the Enlightenment idea that moral analysis began with the induction of universal principles from an observation of human nature. In Toulmin's terms, this method marked Puritanism as pre-modern. Pu-

ritan moralists rarely aspired to the universal laws of the Enlightenment. Oriented toward the solution of pragmatic dilemmas, they premised their positions on local needs and problems. Religious texts, customary values, and particular social conditions were the data of moral decision-making. Perkins made a direct application of the Bible to moral dilemmas in the context of particular social bodies: the family, the church, and the commonwealth. Nothing better typified this way of reasoning than the cases-of-conscience method, which consisted of a series of practical quandaries and their resolution according to biblical principles and contemporary social implications. Perkins addressed it to new modes of commerce. How much wealth should one seek? What clothing fashions were acceptable? How should one

give alms? His answers were thoroughly alien to the standards of the market. One should not seek an income beyond what is necessary for a healthy life, should dress modestly and avoid especially French and Italian styles, and should give alms without reservation to all needy people. Perkins derived conclusions that pushed his readers to consider the meaning of the Bible for the circumstances of the local community.<sup>5</sup>

Cotton followed closely in this regard. Writing about a Christian's vocation, for example, Cotton began by locating economic decisions within quite immediate social networks. Guided by the ordinances of "the word of God," individuals should seek "the counsel of friends, and encouragement of neighbours" to determine which trade or vocation would be "ayming at the publique good," that is, the practical needs of "this or that Church, or Commonwealth." Cotton advised merchants to consult frequently with their Christian friends and business partners to determine the effects of their loan practices or prices on their debtors or customers.<sup>6</sup>

Leaders in the Boston church initially attempted to turn this method into a system of corporate discipline. According to Puritan theory, the ideal church disciplined individuals by bringing their social behaviors before the local congregation, which applied sanctions in line with biblical texts. Cotton claimed that this disciplinary procedure was, indeed, the whole rationale for the Great Migration. Ministers and lay elders in Boston's First Church gathered in council to examine and excommunicate mem-

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bers who presumed to set prices or wages by the impersonal law of supply and demand instead of by the organic needs of the community.<sup>7</sup>

From 1630 to 1654, the church passed some forty sentences of excommunication, eight of them dealing with economic vices. The church censured Boston merchant Robert Keayne for making too great a profit from selling his wares. Keayne protested the facts of the accusation, but neither he nor his accusers doubted the church's prerogative to intervene in such matters. Ann Hibbon was admonished explicitly for acting as an autonomous economic agent. She insisted that some local carpenters had done shoddy work on her house, despite the fact that a church council had determined that the work was acceptable. She demanded compensation. Church elders demanded her submission to the guidance of the community and excommunicated her when she refused.<sup>8</sup>

The story of Boston merchant John Hull tells us much about the restraints that Puritanism placed on pious businessmen. Born in England in 1624, Hull immigrated to Massachusetts Bay with his parents in 1635. He became a prominent public official—master of the mint, treasurer for the colony, captain of the local artillery company, deputy to the General Court, assistant to the governor—and one of the founders of Boston's Old South Church. Hull invested profits from his silversmith shop in overseas trade. He eventually purchased six ships and developed a substantial mercantile business. He marketed American furs in England and imported tobacco from Virginia and sugar from the West Indies. He bought manufactured goods from London and sold them to shopkeepers in Boston. He bought fish from New England waters, transported them to Spain, and imported wine and iron in return. Hull, also, sold textiles to New Yorkers and shipped their whale oil to England.<sup>9</sup>

Hull's biography represents the early growth of New England's economy. Puritans did not shy away from making profits from the production and exchange of goods. Puritan colonies were, after all, funded by Puritan and Anglican financiers in London who sought at least some return on their investments and established policies to that end. Subsistence farming and local trading

initially characterized Massachusetts's economy. To the dismay of the colony's backers and settlers, it underwent a severe depression in 1640 and 1641, caused chiefly by a drop in the number of new immigrants and the resulting scarcity of workers and consumers for local products. During the late 1640s and early 1650s, however, immigration rose again, and the economy recovered. New England farmers began to produce wool, hay, livestock, and cider for profit in colonial markets throughout British North America and the West Indies. Merchants such as Hull also began to work more actively to procure furs and timber for trade. Fishing ventures also began to produce profits. The governments of Massachusetts and Connecticut supported nascent manufacturing efforts, such as stone quarries, ironworks, mines, and shipbuilding.

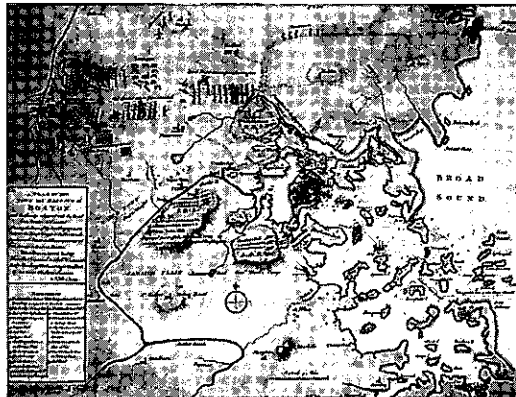
By the time of Hull's death in 1683, signs of relative prosperity had appeared, along with the rudiments of a modern economic system. Farmers and merchants learned to anticipate the relation

between excess production and market needs throughout New England, the Caribbean, and even England. Regional trading also grew, as small amounts of consumer goods were sold by shopkeepers not only in Boston but also in inland towns. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Boston bore only a distant like-

ness to the commercial worlds of London or Edinburgh, to be sure, but its economy was, nonetheless, a far cry from the rudimentary conditions of the first two decades.

When Samuel Willard, a minister at the Old South Church, delivered Hull's funeral sermon, he analyzed the moral fortunes of New England in the midst of its newfound prosperity. Willard did not gainsay material wealth. He followed convention in eulogizing Hull as a merchant who had grown rich and remained godly. Hull gave his money to the church, served the government, and cared for the poor.

Willard's funeral oration is striking, however, in its recommendation for the anachronistic (and to no small extent, impractical) way that Hull had conducted business. Hull, indeed, was a paragon of virtue precisely because he eschewed the hallmarks of modern economic rationality: the incessant drive to make profits, the prudent investment of profits in business,



the use of law courts to sue delinquent debtors, and a secularized view of business. Hull fretted constantly about making too much money, often refused lucrative business ventures, saw the supernatural hand of Providence working to frustrate his commercial deals, and never took his delinquent debtors to court. As a result, he never accumulated the massive amounts of capital characteristic of the great trading dynasties of later, non-Puritan families such as the houses of Hancock or Hutchinson. Hull gave Willard the opportunity to voice a deep reservation about the entrepreneur driven by the law of profit-seeking in the market.<sup>10</sup>

Still operating in the discursive world of Perkins and Cotton through the first decades of the eighteenth century, many ministers issued complaints against Yankees who increasingly rejected the values that Hull had so admirably upheld. Increase Mather spoke for many in 1676, when he declaimed against the seemingly endless array of merchants who charged whatever price they could, speculated in land, bargained with the Indians, and profited from new mechanisms of credit.<sup>11</sup> Mather and other Puritans, such as Samuel Willard and John Danforth, retained the moral method common to an earlier generation of Puritanism—contextual and historically minded—and taught at Harvard through the 1720s.

Cotton Mather attempted to remind New England of the ethical perspective of its founders time and again. His *Lex mercatoria* of 1705 was a long reiteration of economic cases of conscience in the Puritan mode, including the usual warning against playing the market to get the best price. He made two original contributions. First, he updated the list of vices brought on by the market since the days of John Hull. Some New Englanders, for instance, had taken unjust advantage of the depreciation of the Massachusetts currency. They borrowed money at a low interest rate, delayed repayment, and thereby defrauded their creditors.

Second, Mather argued that proper moral reasoning contradicted an ethic based on the laws of nature. A merchant who operated according to a "State of Nature," Mather claimed, "thinks, he may in the General Scramble" of the market, "seize as much as he can for himself, tho' it should be never so much to the Damage and

Ruine, of other men." God formed New England, in contrast, as a community with peculiar moral obligations. It existed under a covenant that other people did not recognize. Guided by biblical law, the saints should forgo market mechanisms and take the needs of their immediate neighbors into account. They should refuse to profit by their neighbor's loss. Mather recalled New Englanders to a rule-based, organic ethics. It was integral to Christianity itself, and the denial of such violated the baptismal vows that united Christians into a social body. "If you don't like my Rules," he concluded, "let me have them again; but then, Resolve to fill the world with as much Rapine and Ruine as ever you can; Resolve to be worse than Pagans."<sup>12</sup>

One of the last Puritan utterances in the old method was Solomon Stoddard's *Cases of Conscience* in 1722. Like Mather, Stoddard updated the specific issues under consideration, bringing in the current "oppression of the Country" by market-driven behaviors. Merchants from larger towns or cities sold their "Commodities" for "more than is meet," making egregious profits especially off of people in "Country towns" such as Stoddard's Northampton. Debtors continued to make a profit to the harm of the creditors, often spending their loans on newly available consumer goods. Depreciation of the currency seduced people to raise their prices or demand more wages. The mobility offered by the market also tempted people to settle at a great distance from an established church, displacing them from the ministry of the local community. Stoddard reiterated the specific commands of scripture against such behaviors.<sup>13</sup>

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Puritan moral thinking, that is, could not accommodate a market ethic. But during the 1710s and 1720s, many New Englanders began to adopt a discourse that had the potential to provide a religious sanction for the new economy. Indications of this change were often subtle. Ministers abandoned the jeremiad. Divines stopped writing antimarket cases of conscience, or any cases of conscience for that matter. As taught at Harvard and Yale, academic ethics began to reflect rational systems of moral philosophy written in Britain. Many preachers began to discuss foundational moral principles that were much more congruent with the market than were the dictates of the old Puritan ethics.

One of the more significant figures in this turn was Jonathan Edwards, a grandson of Solomon Stoddard. Edwards was known as a defender of old fashioned Puritan theology, rekeyed into an emotion-based revivalism. And yet, Edwards imbibed enough of the New Science and rational moral philosophy to think also in an abstract and analytical mode. He, like the Enlightened moderns of whom Toulmin writes, anticipated a universal ethical system that correlated natural law and divine revelation, transcended any one organic community, provided a means of communication between individuals in distant relations, and resulted in a cosmopolitan society. He thought that moral decisions might be grounded on abstract reasoning on natural law, as long as such reasoning did not contradict orthodox doctrine. Edwards, in sum, experimented with a fashion of moral philosophy that other thinkers would use to sanction a free market.

He employed this new method in part in his ethical treatises such as *The Nature of True Virtue*. He also contemplated a systematic demonstration of how a rational moral philosophy could sustain Calvinism. "A Rational Account" was a project that he mentioned but never completed, in which he proposed "to shew how all arts and sciences, the more they are perfected, the more they issue in divinity, and coincide with it."<sup>14</sup> Edwards was specifically attracted to the rational ethics, if not the theology, of idealists such as Nicholas Malbranche and Samuel Clarke and moral sense theorists such as the third earl of Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson. From them, as Norman Fiering has put it, Edwards learned a method to fuse divine grace and natural principles in the conviction that "the rational laws of nature," which demonstrate the virtues of integration, order, and harmony, "must be accepted for what they are, the laws of God" for human society.<sup>15</sup>

Admittedly, Edwards's specific economic recommendations were few and far between, but they did reveal something of the effect of his turn to Enlightenment moral assumptions. Traditional Puritan teaching rejected the whole notion of exchange according to laws of the market. Edwards insisted instead on the pursuit of virtue within the market. He sought to subject economic rules to this fundamental law: God designed economic exchange between free individuals to benefit all of society. "Buying and selling is one exercise in society," as he put it.<sup>16</sup>

The potential for sociability according to rational economic laws certainly intrigued Edwards. On the rare occasions that he commented

on the future of economic exchange, he foresaw that the spread of "knowledge and trade" would go hand-in-hand with "prosperity" and social union on a universal scale, as temporal affairs moved toward "one orderly, regular, beautiful society."<sup>17</sup> He culled the latest financial news from Boston newspapers and the *Scotch Magazine*, looking for signs of the progress of the market. He noted that the mercantilist taxation policies of the French monarchy signaled economic and social disaster. Conversely, news that the Pope had begun to encourage manufactures, abolish many Holy Days, and reform regressive economic laws in the Papal States took Edwards aback. He could not fathom a reconciliation between false doctrine and commercial success.<sup>18</sup>

In line with Enlightenment rules for social analysis, and in divergence from Puritan moral teaching, Edwards held that public moral laws could be derived from an observation of those acts that effected social union. Indeed, his one observable test for genuine religious experience was the amount of social solidarity produced by that experience. Eighteenth-century moralists who followed similar discursive conventions often found them compatible with the dictates of a market economy. Proponents of a liberal economic order saw the principles of the market not as ethical innovations but as descriptions of natural and moral laws. In this intellectual milieu it was possible for merchants and ministers to conceive of individuals who followed rational modes of economic exchange, i.e., the profit motive, and yet who were united into an international and benevolent community. It was just this line of reasoning, according to Joyce Appleby, that convinced English theorists of the benefits of free-market exchange on a worldwide scale.<sup>19</sup>

I have focused here on Jonathan Edwards, in part because he exercised so much influence on other Calvinists who took his moral innovations more explicitly into the economic realm. Take, for example, the efforts of Thomas Prince, a pastor in Boston's Old South Church who was instrumental in printing Edwards's treatises. In 1743, Prince began to produce a new serial publication, *The Christian History*. He designed it as a medium for knowledge about spiritual revivals. During the same year, another periodical appeared simultaneously in Boston, Philadelphia, New Haven, and possibly New York, *The American Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, a vehicle for the Enlightenment and economic progress initiated by Benjamin Franklin.<sup>20</sup>

Although *The Christian History* and *The American Magazine* were intellectual competi-

tors, they adopted the same layout, used the same editorial strategies, and produced parallel tables of contents. Just as *The American Magazine* gave notice about current events in faraway places such as China and St. Petersburg, Prince brought his readers news from New York, New Jersey, Georgia, England, and Scotland. *The American Magazine* included testimonials to literati such as Alexander Pope; Prince offered short biographies of New Light preachers. *The American Magazine* provided extracts from religious and moral essays on happiness or religious superstition; *The Christian History* excerpted sermons and treatises on the New Birth. *The American Magazine* printed letters with personal advice on marriage or business; letters in *The Christian History* recounted the moral virtues of local revivals. Finally, while Franklin reprinted historical writings by political commentators, Prince reprinted the historical reflections of Puritan divines.<sup>21</sup>

The format and content of these magazines can be traced, moreover, to a common model: English publications such as *The Gentleman's Magazine*. Printed in London beginning in 1731 and widely imported into America, *The Gentleman's Magazine* perfectly mapped out the visual apparatus for a serial that promoted Enlightenment morals, progressive politics, and a market economy. Beneath the title from 1732 onward was an illustration of one of the great gates to inner London and its markets. A table of contents lay below the illustrations. It included essays on scientific discoveries and voyages to distant lands, extracts from moral writings (the editors favored selections from Shaftesbury, Pope, Tindal, Woolston, and Swift), historical excerpts, and weekly notices of bankruptcies, values of the most popular stocks, and prices of staple goods such as wheat and copper.<sup>22</sup>

News from distant lands, excerpts from scientific and moral essays of rationalist writers, letters about political or social affairs, and the promotion of success in a commercial order brought *The American Magazine* and *The Gentleman's Magazine* within the sphere of the emergent print culture of the eighteenth century. As David Hall has contended, the growth of such publications helped to form a transatlantic network of sociability. The exchange of Enlightenment ideals and fashionable commodities united producers and consumers. Boston and Philadelphia were too far from the London exchange to warrant weekly updates in stock prices, but *The American Magazine* still announced its commercial orientation. In place of *The Gentleman's Magazine's* picture of St. John's Gate, *The American Magazine* presented



a prospect of Boston Harbor: wharves, docks, and ships, all situated in the New World by the images of an Indian, tobacco, and American flora. Intended as an item for popular consumption, *The American Magazine* fit well within the cultural matrix of the market.<sup>23</sup>

We can locate Prince's *Christian History*, just as we can Edwards's thoughts on commerce, in the same discursive milieu. Focused as it was on the preached word that stimulated revivals, *The Christian History* omitted the visual imagery of market gates, ships, and wharves. Yet the appeal to popular consumption in the use of extracts, the rapid and serial publication of news and ideas, the promotion of an international network of knowledge and experience, and the conviction that the present moment revealed new sources of truth marked Prince's New Light magazine as much as it did *The Gentleman's Magazine* or *The American Magazine*.<sup>24</sup>

As if to make explicit this implicit connection between religion, printing, and a market culture, Prince previously had produced a manual for American merchants. It provided what his *Christian History* lacked: lists of currency values and their relation to standard measures of goods, tables of simple and compound interest rates, meeting times for civil courts in all the colonies (the sites of negotiation between merchants and their debtors or creditors), dates and locations for trading fairs, descriptions of intercolonial and local roads, and even a gazetteer of streets in Boston, lest out-of-town merchants lose their way. Furnished with Prince's *Vade Mecum* in one pocket and the latest installment of *The Christian History* in another, the evangelical merchant belonged to a vast network of religious and commercial connections.<sup>25</sup>

Prince, like Edwards, did not advocate rationalist religion; but he, also like Edwards, did accept the same conventions as his more overtly enlightened interlocutors. They equally grounded their arguments on knowledge gained through experience—what may be thought of as an appeal to nature rather than to tradition

or history. No less than *The American Magazine*, *The Christian History* attempted to certify itself as intelligible and appealing to the common person, as a way for individuals to be united into a far-flung community, and as the source of a new and sociable moral conscience. Prince, that is, began to make explicit what Edwards left only implicit: a reconciliation between Calvinism and the market.

Over the course of the 1750s and 1760s Edwards's closest adherents revealed the full implication of these innovations. They erased any trace of ambivalence remaining from their Puritan heritage. They exulted in the possibilities of an economic system bounded only by natural moral laws. The eventual successor to Edwards at the College of New Jersey, John Witherspoon, exemplifies this completion of Calvinism's transformation into an ally of the market. Witherspoon began his lectures on moral philosophy in 1768 with the argument that Cotton Mather and the old Puritans were dead wrong in their moral method. Witherspoon wanted to "meet" Enlightened unbelievers "upon their own ground, and to show them from reason itself, the fallacy of their principles." Witherspoon's intent was to write an apologetic theology that drew upon the method and premises of rationalists to defend Calvinism. He relied on Hutcheson, Pufendorf, and other philosophers who grounded their systems on the virtues of human nature and the correspondence between social and natural law.<sup>26</sup>

Indebted to an alliance between a rational moral discourse and Calvinism, Witherspoon was free from a previous generation's scruples about a free economy. Social exchange and harmony, he contended, were negotiated not by customary rules, specific biblical texts, or local and corporate obligations, but by human contracts that assured the natural rights of individuals. Contracts were voluntary agreements. Witherspoon concluded that it was a natural law that individuals should set the terms of such contracts, whether they concerned loan rates, prices, land values, or even the worth of money, in ways that would most reward their labor and ingenuity, i.e., by a free market.<sup>27</sup>

By the early 1770s, American Protestants, Calvinist and rationalist alike, had so thoroughly

accepted the foundational discourse of the Enlightenment that they took the concept of natural rights as the political and economic corollary to the divine and moral law. The timing of this transformation marked a congruence between Calvinism and other cultural trends: the growth of rational legal procedures in the 1720s, the maturation of colonial politics into a coherent and integrated system of government, the rationalization of accounting procedures, the growth of the popular press, the spread of newspapers, and even the increased number of roads. All of these regularized and expanded New England's networks of communication in unprecedented proportions in the 1720s and 1730s. Together, they allowed Americans the conviction that they participated in a benevolent social order, even as they set prices and sold credit as individuals regulated only by impersonal laws of the market.<sup>28</sup>

The political implications of this transformation were revolutionary. Evangelical Calvinists joined other Americans who legitimated resistance to Great Britain as a defense of their natural rights to free trade.<sup>29</sup> Claims about the laws of nature, natural rights, and British violations of those rights appear repeatedly in Calvinist preaching during the 1770s. The son of Jonathan Edwards serves as a case in point. On February 1, 1775, Jonathan Edwards the Younger, pastor of the White Haven Church in New Haven, urged his parishioners to take up arms against Great Britain.

His reasons were many. He emphasized, however, British violation of the natural rights of Americans. Chief among them was the freedom to engage in commerce without interference. Resistance was a moral duty because "the court of Great Britain" had "laid the most burdensome restrictions on our trade, whereby we are restrained from carrying on free trade," especially with "those foreign parts where we could [trade] to the greatest advantage." In addition to excise taxes, port bills, trade restrictions, monopolies, and unfair navigation courts, Edwards fumed against the "vast train of collectors, comptrollers" and other royal officials who clogged up exchange, received salaries from fees levied on merchants, and thereby artificially raised the prices of goods over their market values.<sup>30</sup>

*By the early 1770s, American Protestants, Calvinist and rationalist alike, had so thoroughly accepted the foundational discourse of the Enlightenment that they took the concept of natural rights as the political and economic corollary to the divine and moral law.*

According to the Edwardseans, then, the War for Independence was morally reasonable in that Britain had violated natural economic laws. Parliament taxed them without their consent. It also had impeded the market in America. Not usually given to creativity, Edwards was so enraged by attacks on American commerce that even he could muster a bit of rhetorical ingenuity. The Navigation Acts, he asserted in another sermon, amounted to nothing less than the tool of "the great whore of Babylon," which "would suffer none either to buy or sell, save that he had the mark, the name of the beast." "We may expect" that such a beast, Edwards concluded, would not stop until it either had "taken absolutely all our property" or had been defeated by an aroused populace.<sup>31</sup>

Such sermons provide evidence enough that in the long term Anglo-American Calvinists became capitalists. There is more than one explanation for this transformation, but transformation it was. There was a world of difference between Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards, Jr., or between John Hull and John Witherspoon. This suggests that we rethink the importance of the Enlightenment for an understanding of the connections between Anglo-American Protestantism and capitalism. In its intellectual history, the eventual alliance between Calvinism and the market was less the outcome of an original social impulse or set of theological ideas than a concession to the philosophical agenda of the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Max Weber himself drew attention to this agenda when he drew on Benjamin Franklin as the most salient illustration of how a Protestant ethos of self-discipline and rationality was integral to capitalism. Franklin, of course, was America's philosophe and a religious rationalist with little sympathy toward Calvinism. Weberians have explained the appropriateness of the illustration in terms of irony. Puritanism, we have been told, had unintended consequences, namely the triumph of a market culture in America. Irony, however, does not always serve well as historical explanation. Puritans, in fact, appeared too deliberate in their self-scrutinies, and too attentive to the meaning of their rhetoric, to admit of such an explanation. Puritanism, to put it simply, yielded not to ironic consequence but to other forms of thought. When Calvinists began to think like rationalists they left Puritanism behind. Whether betrayal or progress, declension or adaptation, this transformation signaled religion's contribution to the market in early America.

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York, N. Y., 1995); Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1994); Mark A. Peterson, *The Price of Redemption: The Spiritual Economy of Puritan New England* (Stanford, Calif., 1997). For earlier statements about the relationship between Puritanism and capitalism, see Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), 19-57; and Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1991).

<sup>2</sup> For the general concept, see Alan MacFarlane, *The Culture of Capitalism* (New York, 1987). For studies of economic behavior, especially in terms of prices in New England, see Winifred Barr Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy: The Transformation of Rural Massachusetts, 1750-1850* (Chicago, 1992). For economic theories of the period, see Joyce Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton, N. J., 1978), and *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (New York, 1990), quotation on p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> See William Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie* (London, 1609), 97-154, 170, and *Works*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1608), I: 63-65, 734.

<sup>5</sup> Perkins, *Works*, I: 728, 750, 753-754, and *The whole treatise of the cases of conscience* (London, 1611), 305-362.

<sup>6</sup> John Cotton, *The Way of Life* (London, 1641), in Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., *The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings*, 2 vols. (New York, 1936) I: 319, 321, 326-327.

<sup>7</sup> John Cotton, *God's Promise to his Plantations* (London, 1630), 12, 19.

<sup>8</sup> First Church, Boston, *Records of the First Church in Boston, 1630-1868*, ed. Richard D. Pierce, *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, vols. 39-41 (Boston, 1961), 39: 31-33, 42-49; see 39: 12-160 for statistics.

<sup>9</sup> See Samuel Eliot Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Boston, 1930; repr., 1964), 135-182.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Willard, *The High Esteem which God hath of the Death of His Saints* (Boston, 1683).

<sup>11</sup> Increase Mather, *An Earnest Exhortation To the Inhabitants of New-England* (Boston, 1676).

<sup>12</sup> Cotton Mather, *Lex mercatoria, or the Just Rules of Commerce Declared* (Boston, 1705), 11, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Solomon Stoddard, *An Earnest Exhortation To the Inhabitants of New-England*, (Boston, 1722), 1-2.

<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Edwards, "Outline of a Rational Account," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 6: *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, ed. Wallace E. Anderson (New Haven, Conn., 1980), 397.

<sup>15</sup> See Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1981), on p. 97.

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Edwards, sermon on Ezekiel 22:12, 1746/47, Beinecke Library. "Tis one of those Improvements of Human society that are much for the Benefit of mankind when duly and properly managed," he added about commerce. By "traditional Puritan teaching," I refer especially to the jeremiads of the 1660s through 1680s, which were decidedly anticommercial.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Edwards, "An Humble Attempt" (Boston, 1747), in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 5: *Apocalyptic Writings*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New Haven, Conn., 1977), 338-339; and *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 9: *A History of the Work of Redemption*, ed. John F. Wilson (New

Haven, Conn., 1989), 483–484.

<sup>18</sup> Edwards, "Apocalyptic Notebook," in *Works*, ed. Stein, 255–274, esp. 255–256, 272, 275.

<sup>19</sup> Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton, N. J., 1978). For Edwards's tests of true religion, see his *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746), published as *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2 (New Haven, Conn., 1959), esp. pp. 383–461.

<sup>20</sup> *The Christian History* was published in Boston. The first intercolonial American imprint, *The American Magazine* was published in Boston, Newport, New Haven, New York, and Philadelphia.

<sup>21</sup> *The Christian History*, no. 53, March 3, 1743/4, title page; *The American Magazine*, November 1744, title page.

<sup>22</sup> E.g., *The Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1743, title page.

<sup>23</sup> See David D. Hall, "The Atlantic Economy in the Eighteenth Century" and "Learned Culture in the Eighteenth Century," in Hugh Amory and David D. Hall, eds., *A History of the Book in America*, Vol. 1: *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World* (New York, 2000): 152–162, 411–433. Scott Black contends that the form of Addison and Steel's serial publications should be read in such a way. ("Social and Literary Form in the *Spectator*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33 (1999): 21–42). As Black puts it, "Rather than the Puritan form of the diary, organized by the relations of a person to God, the *Spectator* explained itself as an essay," which "articulated the terms of civil, urban, and secular public." This "form of literary representation" expressed the essential tenets of "modernity" (*Ibid.*, 29).

<sup>24</sup> For a recent study of the meaning of print culture for the revivals, with attention to Prince, see Frank Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton, N. J., 1999).

<sup>25</sup> [Thomas Prince], *The Vade Mecum for America* (Boston, 1731).

<sup>26</sup> John Witherspoon, *An Annotated Edition of Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, ed. Jack Scott (Newark, Del., 1982), 64. See Mark A. Noll, "The Irony of the Enlightenment for Presbyterians in the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 5 (1985): 150–175.

<sup>27</sup> Witherspoon, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, 126–137.

<sup>28</sup> Bruce H. Mann, *Neighbors and Strangers: Law and Community in Early Connecticut* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1987). For commerce and communication, see Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675–1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community* (New York, 1986).

<sup>29</sup> Previous studies of religion and the American Revolution have paid little attention to the economic implications of Calvinist support for Independence. See J.C.D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660–1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (New York, 1994). Margaret Ellen Newell surveys much of the relevant literature on the economic aspects of the Revolution, in *From Dependency to Independence: Economic Revolution in Colonial New England* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1998), 237–316. For material here and below on the New Divinity, see Mark Valeri, "The New Divinity and the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly* 46 (1989): 741–769, and Valeri, *Law and Providence in Joseph Bellamy's New England: The Origins of the New Divinity in Revolutionary New England* (New York, 1994).

<sup>30</sup> Edwards, sermon on Ecclesiastes 4:1, February 1, 1775, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., papers, Hartford Seminary Library, manuscript #166.2735.75777.

<sup>31</sup> Edwards, sermon on Ecclesiastes 7:14, August 31, 1774, Jonathan Edwards papers 166.2735.75758.



## The Bothy's Mould

by Terry Yemm

Terry, a gardener for nearly thirty years, is a historical interpreter in the Department of Historic Sites. Inspired by Laura Arnold's "Cook's Corner," he will share with you in this new column the best dirt (or mould) from the gardener's hut (bothy). The Interpreter staff thanks Terry for his willingness to author this feature.

*I have lately got into the vein of gardening, and have made a handsome garden to my house; and desire you will lay out five pounds for me in handsome striped hollies and yew trees.\**

Thus John Custis records the beginning of his Williamsburg garden in a 1717 letter to his London agent, Micajah Perry. One of the wealthiest Virginians in the first half of the eighteenth century, Custis continued to pursue his interest in horticulture nearly until his death in 1749. Like many affluent British men, he created an image of himself for his community while he created his garden. As he cultivated his landscape, Custis developed a network of friendships with gentlemen having similar interests. His network spanned the colonies, the oceans, and the decades.

Custis's principal contact in that network was London merchant Peter Collinson. The transatlantic correspondence between Custis and Collinson began in 1734 and continued until 1746. Earl Gregg Swem, former librarian for the College of William and Mary, compiled their surviving exchanges about gardening in his book *Brothers of the Spade*. The similarities and differences between the plants sought by these two British gentlemen on opposite sides of the Atlantic reveal some of the elements contained in fashionable gardens of the eighteenth century.

One of those differences was John Custis's love of variegated plant materials. On numerous occasions throughout the correspondence, he would ask for "striped" or "gilded" plants. These terms describe cultivars of plants having green leaves marked with areas of white or yellow. What is most significant about these re-

peated requests is that Custis knew these kinds of plants were no longer fashionable in England. He revealed this in a 1736 letter saying, "One striped box has some life in it; I should have bin glad of it; being a great admirer of all the tribe striped gilded and variegated plants; and especially trees; I am told those things are out of fashion; but I do not mind that I allways make my fancy my fashion."

Peter Collinson followed a different fashion for the plants in his garden. He most often asked Custis for samples of native Virginia plants, which he added to his collection that was gathered from all over the world. Some of this diversity was revealed in Collinson's description of damage resulting from an unusually harsh winter in the first months of 1741. He wrote, "I perceive that after the Cold had made sad Havock In our Gardens It took a Tripp over & Visitted you but Its Effects in your southern Latitude is very surpriseng. I Lost a great Number of Rare plants your Americans stood it out better than Asians or Africans—but yett my Inclination does not flagg, neither do I vex, I Endeavour to remedy & procure More."



Although Custis apparently grew some Virginia plants in his garden, many seem to have been cultivated for their interest to collectors in Britain. In his first letter to Collinson in 1734, Custis wrote, "I am very proud it is in my power to gratify any curious gentleman in this way." He, willingly, shared his only samples of an unusual dogwood with Collinson to no effect. In 1738, Custis wrote, "as for the peach colored Dogwood Mr. Catesby mentions; I had two in my garden but they never bloomed; I sent them to you by Capt Cant with some other trees; but

it was his hard fate and ours to have the ship overset the voyage; and so lost all."

Collinson encouraged Custis to attempt rare plants from other parts of the world, prompted sometimes by motives other than generosity. He frequently used Custis—and other gardeners—to propagate plants that would not come to fruition in his English garden. In 1737, Collinson wrote, "If you have any Correspondents in Philadelphia there is Two of my Friends viz Doctor Witt att German Town and John Bartram on Skullkill both places near Philadelphia, these Friends of mine have gott from France the Double Flowering China or India pink. If you send to Either of them in my Name I doubt not but they'l readily send you some seed. It is an Elegant Flower but Rarely Ripens seed with us." Collinson also asked Custis to experiment with samples of vegetables, nuts, fruits, and field crops.

The results of all these trials are dutifully and dourly reported back to England by the Virginian. In 1738 he wrote to Collinson, "Friend did not arrive here till Aprill and was some time in the country before he could send up my garden cargo; which turnd out very poorly; the Chilly and hautboy strawberries rotten as dung; would not have you give yourself any more trouble to send more; for it is but a folly." Collinson's enthusiasm for variety and experimentation never seemed to be matched by Custis. Perhaps that was a result of chronic illness that troubled Custis beginning in 1740. Possibly it was the result of marital discord that prompted his gravestone inscription to read "aged 71 years, and yet lived but seven years, which

was the space of time he kept a bachelor's house on the Eastern Shore of Virginia." In any case, John Custis felt his gardening efforts demonstrated his superior position in Virginia society. He left a clear visual symbol of this belief in his portrait painted at age forty-five, which shows him holding a book titled *On the tulip*.

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\*The first quotation used in this article is taken from a typescript copy of the John Custis Letter Book, 1717-41, in the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Research Library. The remaining quotes are taken from *Brothers of the Spade*.



## Questions and Answers

*Why is consumerism a relevant topic to interpret at Colonial Williamsburg?*

For twenty-first-century Americans, it is difficult to comprehend that there was ever a time when consumer goods were not available. Status symbols from the mall seem a natural part of life nowadays. It was not always so.

In the eighteenth century, with rising amounts of disposable income, quite ordinary people in England and the American colonies began demanding goods and services well beyond the dreams of preceding generations. Standards of living improved for the middling sort. In many cases, tradesmen and farmers developed *styles* of living; that is, their surroundings were more than warm places out of the weather with food in sufficient quantities to sustain life. They decorated their homes with new and fashionable items. They had more plentiful and more stylish clothing. Adults and children both engaged in leisure activities and intellectual pursuits unimaginable to previous generations.

Production rates rose to keep up with demand. Inventions and new labor arrangements helped increase the flow of goods. New products and new trends spurred on the producers of many kinds of goods, from ceramics and textiles to innovative books, musical instruments, cooking equipment, and other brand-new specialized objects. The consumer revolution in colonial America was indeed something new under the sun.

Those Americans who could buy the appropriate status symbols and who had learned to conduct themselves in a genteel manner automatically moved up the social scale. Unlike England where a set of hereditary titles and centuries of local traditions and family reputations shaped daily lives, North America was populated by a society of people on the move, immigrants who carried their social rank on their backs, in their portmanteaux, and in their manners. If a colonist looked and convincingly behaved like gentry, he or she was admitted as a full member of that social circle. (Lou Powers)



*Was the participation of slaves in the consumer revolution limited merely to their roles as consumers?*

African Americans both free and enslaved supported the consumer revolution in a variety of ways. As artisans they participated in the

production of many of the consumer goods desired by the gentry and middling white Virginians. They supported the consumer revolution through trade as direct participants by selling items at market, by selling excess foodstuffs and cottage-craft items like baskets or carvings to their masters or neighbors, by bartering, and by transporting goods along roads and waterways.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, African Americans' involvement in the consumer market was limited by restrictions on their mobility and on their ability to participate in trade, as well as by the lack of familiarity with trade or interest in it among newly arrived Africans. As Virginia moved toward a more creole or native-born population, the interests and opportunities to participate increased. Greater mobility, the easing of legal restrictions on trade, increased familiarity with the system, and more family formation contributed to this involvement.

Archaeology at slave quarter sites reveals a variety of consumer goods ranging from basic ceramics to Chinese-export porcelain. Discoveries include monies and other valuables, along with tools, shells, animal bones, buttons, and the like. These finds indicate the sorts of things African Americans may have possessed, but they do not tell us how these items were used. Attitudes about consumer goods may have differed between European ideals and African ideals. Therefore historians may need to shift their focus from studying why and how people acquired status items to considering more closely how such goods were displayed and used in various cultural contexts. In an article titled "The Recent Archaeology of Enslaved African Americans," Ywone Edwards-Ingram explains:

*Slave cultural practices prioritized multiple uses and meanings of objects, structures, and landscapes. Slaves used objects and the landscape in ways that were not readily recognizable by European Americans. Some of their activities were acts of "separatism" to keep slave lifeways culturally distinct. Slaves conferred different meanings to everyday objects of ceramics, shells, clay tobacco pipes, and beads.*

Martha Katz-Hyman's article "In the Middle of This Poverty Some Cups and a Teapot" makes the following points:

*It is one of the anomalies of eighteenth-century Tidewater Virginia slavery that even though slaves were regarded as*

property and bought and sold like livestock, they were also active participants in the region's market economy. The pages of . . . account books also record payments made directly to slaves for goods and services and record credit purchases slaves made for themselves. It is impossible to know the details of cash sales to slaves, because the records of such sales were usually not associated with the name of a particular individual, but those slaves who ran credit accounts—and there were more than a handful—purchased a variety of items.

Advertisements for runaways offer insight into clothing and the pursuit of fashion. Many advertisements indicate that enslaved individuals managed to acquire a range of clothing, headgear, and more colorful and fashionable items than the standard issue. Store purchases indicate that slaves were buying items to enhance their personal appearance, such as ribbons, combs, mirrors, hats, jewelry, thread, and better-quality textiles.

In interpreting the participation of African Americans in the consumer revolution, we must keep in mind that slaves and free blacks were not able to acquire "respectability" or "respectableness" simply by possessing and using consumer goods in the same ways that European Americans could. Respectableness for African Americans might have come in the form of respect for their skill (as in the case of skilled free blacks Matthew Ashby or John Rawlinson), their knowledge (as with the medical knowledge of Landon Carter's Nassau), or their age or religious acumen (like Old Paris, an elder at Carter's Grove, or Gowan Pamphlet, founder of the first Black Baptist Church in Virginia).

Were slaves and free blacks both participants in and limited beneficiaries of the consumer revolution? The answer is YES. Did their participation bring about the same ability to "buy respectability" as their white counterparts? That answer is NO. (Rose McAphee)

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**What type of money was being used by Virginians?**

During the colonial period Virginians generally used two types of money: **real money** (*specie*) and **paper money** (*treasury notes*). *Specie* is any type of coined metallic money. The most common types in Virginia were Spanish silver *reales* (the most prevalent being

the Spanish milled dollar, also known as a *peso* or piece of eight), Spanish gold *pistoles*, Portuguese gold *moeadas* (*moidors*), and Portuguese gold *dobras* (Joes and Half-Joes). There were also a few English sterling coins circulating in Virginia.

The values of these coins were based on the weight of gold or silver in the coin, not its face value. To determine the value of these coins, Virginians consulted the yearly *Virginia Almanac*, which printed a chart indicating the values of gold and silver in Virginia.

As a British colony, Virginia used English denominations for money. These monetary values were as follows:

- 4 Farthings = 1 penny (abbreviated as "d," from *denarius*, an ancient Roman coin)
- 12 Pence = 1 shilling (abbreviated as "s")
- 5 Shillings = 1 crown
- 20 Shillings = 1 pound (abbreviated as "£")
- 21 Shillings = 1 guinea

In 1755, Virginia became the last colony to print treasury notes. Between 1755 and 1773, the colonial government issued treasury notes sixteen times.

Many of the foreign coins circulated during and after the Revolution. In 1776, the Continental Congress passed a resolution establishing the value of all gold and silver coins in circulation in relation to a Spanish milled dollar. This value was expressed by a decimal notation in dollars and parts of a dollar. The *Journal of the Congress* for September 1776 includes a chart listing all of the coins in circulation, their weights, and their values in dollars. (John Caramia)

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**Was there a tobacco warehouse in the town of Williamsburg?**

No tobacco warehouse was located within the town itself. However, there were tobacco warehouses nearby at the ports of College Landing and Capitol Landing.

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**Did women wear lipstick in the eighteenth century?**

Eighteenth-century English cookbooks include recipes for lip balms made of various fats such as lard, spermaceti, and butter, but no dyes. Carmine or ground plaster of Paris mixed with red lead and other coloring agents is said to have been used by some fashionable London ladies.



*What did colonials use to brush their teeth?*

The toothbrush has changed very little since its invention by the Chinese in the fifteenth century. Stores and shops in eighteenth-century Williamsburg sold both toothbrushes and dentifrice powders. Sassafras twigs may have been used occasionally.



*Did men and women button their clothes on opposite sides during the colonial period?*

During the eighteenth century, most women's clothes were not fastened with buttons. Some clothes were laced, some pinned together, and some wrapped and held with an apron. Some garments, such as riding habits, were exceptions. Print and painting sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries show that men nearly always buttoned their garments with left lapping over right, as they do today. The men's costumes in the Colonial Williamsburg collections button this way. Buttoned women's garments, on the other hand, do not seem to have been standardized during the period. Print sources from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries show garments buttoning in either direction.



*How did people wash and clean their clothes in the eighteenth century?*

Many methods were used to clean clothing, depending on the fiber and construction involved. Washable fabrics, such as linens, were washed in tubs with soap and hot water. Occa-

sionally, other substances were added or used alone as special cleaning powders or when soap was not available; these included lye water and putrid urine. Silks and wools were either spot cleaned with fullers' earth or other dry solvents like bran, or they were sent to professionals (when available) like the wool fullers or silk dyers who were trained in scouring, cleaning, and dyeing textiles.



*When did forks appear commonly on tables in colonial Virginia?*

In general, it is correct to say that some of the wealthiest Virginians had forks very early in the eighteenth century and that by the 1750s even quite modest households had them. Historians Lois Carr and Lorena Walsh compared inventories from rural and urban York County for various consumer goods, including forks. No York County inventory from the seventeenth century mentions forks. By 1732 in urban York County, more than half of the estates worth more than £95 included forks. Later in the century, forks became more common in rural and urban areas at all wealth levels.



*Compiled by Bob Doares, instructor in staff development. Special thanks to Lou Powers, historian in the research department, Rose McAphee, instructor in staff development, and John Caramia, program planner, for their help with some of these questions.*

## BRUTON HEIGHTS UPDATE: *New at the Rock*



### Becoming Americans Story Lines: New Titles in the Rockefeller Library

#### Taking Possession

Shannon, Timothy J. *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754*. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press; Cooperstown, N. Y.: New York State Historical Association, 2000. [E 195.S53 2000]

The author challenges the common interpretation that the Albany Congress provided the origins of American independence through its plan for colonial union. Instead, he sees the Congress's most significant legacy as the centralization of Indian trade and diplomacy under British management. Shannon also re-

futes the thesis that the Iroquois introduced colonial statesmen to principles of democracy that later were incorporated into the U. S. Constitution.

Nester, William R. "*Haughty Conquerors: Amherst and the Great Indian Uprising of 1763*". Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2000. [E 83.76.N47 2000]

Pontiac's War was one of the most successful in Native American history. With disdain for the arrogance and inconsistency of British policy, the author analyzes the causes and effects of the conflict. It was both the source of the expression "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" and the last major frontier uprising before Dunmore's War in 1774.

Chepesiuk, Ron. *The Scotch-Irish: From the North of Ireland to the Making of America*. Jeffer-

### Books for Children on Historic Trades and Decorative Arts

#### Janice McCoy Memorial Collection, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Breck, Joseph<br><i>The Young Florist, or, Conversations on the Culture of Flowers, and on Natural History</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Kalman, Bobbie<br><i>Colonial Crafts</i>                                                                              |
| Cobb, Mary<br><i>A Sampler View of Colonial Life</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Mayor, Susan, and Diane Fowle<br><i>Samplers [The Treasury of Decorative Arts]</i>                                    |
| Colby, C. B.<br><i>Early American Crafts, Tools, Shops, and Products</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Pleasant Company<br><i>Felicity's Craft Book: A Look at Crafts from the Past with Projects You Can Make Today</i>     |
| Fisher, Leonard Everett<br><i>The Architects</i><br><i>The Cabinetmakers</i><br><i>The Glassmakers</i><br><i>The Hatters</i><br><i>The Homemakers</i><br><i>The Limmers</i><br><i>The Papermakers</i><br><i>The Printers</i><br><i>The Shoemakers</i><br><i>The Silversmiths</i><br><i>The Tanners</i><br><i>The Weavers</i><br><i>The Wigmakers</i> | Sloane, Eric<br><i>Diary of an Early American Boy, Noah Blake, 1804</i>                                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Tunis, Edwin<br><i>Colonial Craftsmen and the Beginnings of American Industry</i>                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Wilbur, C. Keith<br><i>Home Building and Woodworking in Colonial America</i>                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Wilmore, Kathy<br><i>A Day in the Life of a Colonial Blacksmith</i><br><i>A Day in the Life of a Colonial Printer</i> |

son, N. C.: McFarland & Company, 2000. [E 184.S4 C47 2000]

The author intends his book for the general reader interested in the major influences on the Scots-Irish people. Though he carries the story through to the formation of the new American nation, the focus is on the seventeenth-century migration to Ireland, the life of the Scots-Irish in Ireland, and the reasons for migrating to America.

### Buying Respectability

Arditi, Jorge. *A Genealogy of Manners: Transformations of Social Relations in France and England from the Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. [BJ 1883.A73 1998]

By utilizing courtesy manuals and etiquette books, the author shows how, in turn, ecclesiastical authorities, monarchies, and aristocracies developed their own systems of propriety, or manners, and used them to move toward positions of dominance. While the focus here is on France and England, the theories are relevant to the evolving social structure in eighteenth-century America.

Wrightson, Keith. *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000. [HC 254.4.W74 2000]

This survey of the economic history of Britain ranges from the household economies of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. The author enriches his exposition by emphasizing social and cultural contexts and shows how shifting attitudes and values among the social ranks affected the development of a market society.

### Choosing Revolution

Holton, Woody. *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia*. Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1999. [E 210.H695 1999]

The author argues that Virginia's leaders decided to participate in a revolution not because of elevated ideas of liberty and equality but in order to counter grassroots challenges that threatened social privileges. Indians, slaves, and small landholders were pressing their grievances and seeing some signs of hope in British policy, such as enforcement of frontier boundaries and threats to free the slaves. Holton concludes, however, that the leaders deserve some credit; despite being confused and frightened, they managed a successful campaign for independence.

Jennings, Francis. *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. [E 210.J43 2000]

"An effort to tell the Revolution for adults," this revisionist history is broader in scope than Holton's. Jennings also attempts to look at the subject from the viewpoints of all levels of society. He concludes that the founding fathers were politicians looking out for their own interests. They did not favor a democratic republic over an empire but wanted to run the empire themselves.

Shenstone, Susan Burgess. *So Obstinate Loyal: James Moody, 1744-1809*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000. [E 278.M8 S545 2000]

This is the story of a New Jersey farmer who chose loyalty over revolution. His actions behind American lines were noteworthy enough to gain Washington's attention as "that villain Moody." After retreating to England to write *Narratives of His Exertions and Sufferings . . .*, Moody made a new life for himself in Nova Scotia as shipbuilder, Anglican layman, military officer, and legislator.

### Freeing Religion

Westerkamp, Marilyn J. *Women and Religion in Early America, 1600-1850: The Puritan and Evangelical Traditions*. New York: Routledge, 1999. [BR 520.W474 1999]

This is a synthesis of scholarship in the emerging field that studies the relationship between gender and religion in early America. Westerkamp looks at the Puritan and evangelical traditions, which presented women with the paradox of an animating and empowering Spirit available to all believers, in the context of patriarchal suppression. There are few references to Virginia, but the discussion is relevant to the evangelical communities that emerged here in the eighteenth century.

Andrews, Dee E. *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 2000. [BX 8236.A53 2000]

Andrews provides a detailed account of the rise of Methodism in the Revolutionary period. It was an inclusive movement, but not really democratic. Its proselytizing and revivalism furnished powerful alternatives to the deistic, aristocratic republicanism of the founding fathers.

Compiled by Del Moore, reference librarian, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library

## New Items in Special Collections at the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library

Henry Baker, *The Microscope Made Easy* . . . (London: R. Dodsley, 1743).

This work, containing fourteen plates and an index, explains the usage of microscopes and includes accounts of surprising discoveries.

Glenn Brown, *The Octagon: Dr. William Thornton, Architect* (Washington, D. C.: American Institute of Architects, 1917?).

From architectural historian Thomas Waterman's library, this folio volume includes a historical sketch of the Tayloe home in the capital, together with a biographical sketch of its architect. There are thirty plates of measured architectural drawings including plans, elevations, and details.

*Contract of Agreement, for Building an Exchange in the City of Edinburgh* . . . (Edinburgh: Hamilton, Balfour, and Neill, 1754).

This construction agreement, between the magistrates, town council of Edinburgh, and the tradesmen hired to carry out the work, outlines the individual responsibilities of contractors, masons, roofers, plumbers, glaziers, carpenters,

and plasterers. It also gives cost estimates for all aspects of the enterprise.

Thomas Deloney, *The Delightful, Princely, and Entertaining History of the Gentle-craft* (London: Henry Woodgate & Samuel Brooks, 1758).

Penned by a popular, late sixteenth-century balladeer, this prose narrative employs legendary material together with deftly observed scenes of Elizabethan London life to describe the shoemaking craft.

Philippe-Julien Mancini, *Le Parfait Cocher* . . . (Paris: F. G. Merigot, 1744).

A comprehensive manual concerning carriages, this volume—in French—also covers all aspects of choosing, training, using, shoeing, and caring for carriage horses.

Abraham Swan, *Designs in Carpentry* (London, 1759).

This architectural pattern book includes fifty-five plates illustrating design and construction methods for domes, trussed roofs, flooring, beams, angle brackets, and cornices. It also shows a series of small chinoiserie bridges suitable for estates.

Compiled by George Yetter, associate curator for the architectural drawings and research collection.

### In Memory of John Hemphill

*Donations in memory of John M. Hemphill II, historian and former Colonial Williamsburg employee, have made possible the purchase of a rare letter recently added to Special Collections at the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library. On April 29, 1770, Philadelphia physician Cadwalader Evans wrote to Samuel Wharton, a merchant and land speculator then in England. The letter reported on smallpox inoculation, American manufacturing, and politics in pre-Revolutionary Pennsylvania.*



## EDITOR'S NOTES . . .



### New Member

The *Interpreter* planning board welcomes Pete Wrike, historical interpreter in Group Interpretation. We appreciate his willingness to serve as part of our staff.

### Coming Attraction

The summer issue of the *Interpreter* will be a salute to Colonial Williamsburg's 75th anniversary.

*The Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter* is a quarterly publication of the Division of Historic Area Presentations.

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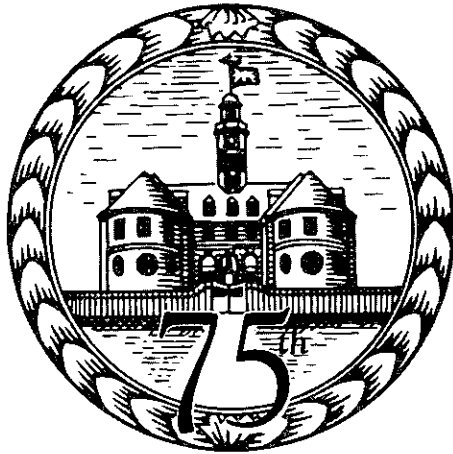
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