TESTING THE ELITE: YALE COLLEGE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA, 1740-1815

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TESTING THE ELITE: YALE COLLEGE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA, 1740-1815

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

of

ST. JOHN’S COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

at

ST. JOHN’S UNIVERSITY

New York

by

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Date Submitted ____________ Date Approved__________

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ABSTRACT

TESTING THE ELITE: YALE COLLEGE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA, 1740-1815

David A. Wilock

It is the goal of this dissertation to investigate the institution of Yale College and those who called it home during the Revolutionary Period in America. In so doing, it is hoped that this study will inform a much larger debate about the very nature of the American Revolution itself. The role of various rectors and presidents will be considered, as well as those who worked for the institution and those who studied there. It will be demonstrated that while at various times the aforementioned groups helped propel the school to make changes, in the end, all constituencies tended towards a conservative course so as not to jeopardize the future of the institution or their individual prospects.
DEDICATION

For my family, whose support throughout these past nine years made this dissertation possible.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would never have been completed without the support of numerous people. To begin with, I am indebted to the Sterling Library, Yale University, Library Manuscripts and Archives Division. The professionalism and courtesy of their staff made my time spent there a true pleasure. I am also extraordinarily grateful for the assistance of Charlotte Rowell of the Seymour Public Library who was willing to go above and beyond to acquire book upon book via interlibrary loan, for years, even in the midst of a pandemic.

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Lastly I would like to thank my family. Their willingness to support my work, in particular my frequent sojourns eighty miles south to New York City has not gone unnoticed. My parents’ generous offer to watch my children while I was attending classes relieved a tremendous amount of pressure. I will never be able to adequately express my appreciation to my wife, Beth, for her patience and love during the past nine years, thank you. To my sons, Sean and Ryan: I hope that this project serves as an example that you can accomplish anything you set your mind to. I can’t wait to see what the future holds for you both.
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INTRODUCTION

On Monday morning, July 5, 1779, at 11 AM, residents and Yale College students alike were roused by the thunder of alarm guns being fired as British troops approached New Haven.¹ General Henry Clinton had ordered General William Tryon and his three thousand soldiers to attack the town.² With the redcoats advancing from Long Island Sound, President Ezra Stiles dismissed the college then departed himself. Some students set off for home upon dismissal while around seventy or so more stayed to fight under the leadership of senior George Wells.³ Meanwhile, other Yale College students and town volunteers tried to retard the advance of British troops by destroying a bridge that led from West Haven into New Haven.⁴ In the end, however, American resistance was insufficient to prevent the temporary British occupation of the town.

While these events were certainly dramatic, they were not fundamentally transformative for Yale College or for many of the young men who studied there. Indeed, life for Yale students had been changing for decades prior to the American Revolution. It is the intention of this dissertation to investigate the institution of Yale College and those who called it home from roughly the end of the French and

⁴ Kelley, Yale: A History, 94.
Indian War through the first decade and a half of the nineteenth century. In so doing, it is hoped that this study will serve to further inform a much larger debate about the very nature of the American Revolution itself.

The American Revolution seems like well-trodden territory for historians. Indeed it seems like each new week sees the publication of a new biography of a Founding Father— to say nothing of more popular representations such as the musical *Hamilton*. Still, there are facets of the period that are less well-treated; one of those aspects is the role of the college. On the eve of the Revolution, there were nine institutions of higher education in the American colonies educating a modest number of students. While the number seems insignificant, many college graduates went on to become important figures both at the national and state levels during and after the war. While it is hard to deny that the college experience had some influence on those who became prominent fixtures in the new nation, the degree to which they played a role is harder to determine.

This dissertation takes as its primary subject Yale College during the second half of the eighteenth century in order to answer the following questions: To what extent did the Revolutionary period (1763-1815) impact Yale’s faculty, students, and institutional life? And does the Yale experience help to shed light on the debate regarding the nature of the American Revolution as a conservative or radical event? The answer to the former suggests that it does. Other than a shift towards producing more politicians and public servants rather than ministers, throughout the eighteenth century, Yale continued a tradition of producing individuals who

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5 For the purpose of this dissertation, the Revolutionary period lasts from the end of the French and Indian War in 1763 to the end of the War of 1812 in 1815.
would perpetuate the economic and social status quo, both under the British and later in the newborn United States. At the same time, the institution as a whole underwent an evolution that was reflective of the broader changes in America that would continue into the era of the early republic. In the end, it was a two-way process: Yale influenced its students - many of whom rose to prominence - while those same students set Yale on a course toward what it would become in the nineteenth century.

The history of colleges amid the Revolutionary Era has been researched before but in different ways than this dissertation approaches the subject. One way that has been attempted are full-length investigations of individual schools from the colonial period to the present. The problem with this method is that the scholars who write these texts focus on the educational and institutional history, without sufficient regard for the Revolutionary context. Other academics have dealt more directly with the period by producing works that focus solely on the colonial and Revolutionary era colleges in general rather than exclusively focusing on any particular school.6

By the 1960s, prominent colonial historian Bernard Bailyn noted that colleges of the period had been “badly neglected” by the academy.7 Since then however, there has been an uptick in publications on the subject. Bailyn himself helped to inaugurate this period with his work American Higher Education: A

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6 The most comprehensive work on higher education during the colonial and Revolutionary period is Hoeveler’s Creating the American Mind: Intellect and Politics in the Colonial Colleges (2002) Cremin’s American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783. (1970) is an older, but still useful volume.
Documentary History, published in 1961. Edward McClellan recognized Bailyn as a turning point in the historiography of the field, as he was one of the first historians to point out that prior contributions to the history of education in America viewed the subject in a largely triumphant light which seemed to depict the evolution of American education as foreordained and intertwined with the development of democracy. This period witnessed a flurry of activity such as Fredrick Rudolph’s The American College and University: A History (1962) and David Robson’s Educating Republicans: The College in the Era of the American Revolution, 1750-1800 (1985) among others. By the twenty-first century, new scholars of the subject like John Thelin employed a methodology that revolved around “the social, political, and economic factors that have shaped the structure and life of higher-education institutions.” It is within this framework that some of the more recent histories on the topic of colonial colleges have been written. The work of David Hoeveler is typical.

This is not to say that there have not been any recent treatments by scholars at the individual college level. In 2005, Conrad Wright of the Massachusetts Historical Society wrote Revolutionary Generation: Harvard Men and the Consequences of Independence. This work detailed the entire lives of those men who graduated from Harvard between 1771 and 1774, and, as a result, only one chapter out of nine was dedicated to the college years. Wright followed up this

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work in 2015 with his edited volume *Pedagogues and Protesters: The Harvard College Student Diary of Stephen Peabody, 1767-68*, which provided a microhistorical look at one student’s experience at Harvard over the course of a few months. The well-written introduction and detailed notes adding needed context for the reader.

When it comes to the topic of Yale College in particular, there are fewer options available. Conrad Wright has gone so far as to argue that “the published work on Yale’s early history is a bit thin.”11 Outside of the odd journal article, the most recent book-length treatment of the subject was *Yale: A History* (1974) written by former Yale archivist Brooks Mather Kelley. As the title suggests, the work does not focus on the Revolution alone but on all of Yale’s history from its founding to the twentieth century. To find a work that focuses on the Revolutionary period in more detail, one would need to turn to Franklin Bowditch Dexter’s multi-volume *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History Volume III* (1903), and *Volume IV* (1907). The most recent work on Yale during the Revolution was Louis Tucker’s slim volume: *Connecticut’s Seminary of Sedition: Yale College*, which was published in 1979 meaning that the most recent work on the college during this period is over forty years old. As such it seems that there is a gap that needs to be filled by more recent scholarship: that gap being a monograph-length treatment of Yale College during the Revolutionary Era. With luck, this project, will begin to fill the gap and is the

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11 Wright, Conrad – email correspondence with David Wilock
major reason why Yale College during the Revolutionary era was selected as a topic.

This dissertation, while admittedly small in scope, aspires to find itself engaged in a larger historical debate that has engaged scholars for years: the debate over the very nature of the Revolutionary Era itself. According to Michael McGiffert, the debate is about how the Revolution should be viewed: Does it represent a radical change or something else? Although histories of the period date to the eighteenth century, by the twentieth century the discussion included Progressive historians such as Charles Beard who attributed the Revolution to the economic motivations of those men who would go on to craft the Constitution. This thesis, while compelling, was ultimately overturned by scholars such as Robert E. Brown yet is still part of the larger discussion about the temperament of the Revolution.

More celebratory interpretations of the event can be found on the shelves of most Revolutionary historians worth their salt. In his epic tome, The Glorious Cause, Robert Middlekauff argued that “...when the Americans proclaimed their independence it stunned many....Well it should have...the Revolution released – or inspired – an enormous display of creative imagination.” This view is in accord with those of Gordon Wood as articulated in his book The Radicalism of the

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American Revolution, in which he contends that “the Revolution was the most radical and most far-reaching event in American history.”\textsuperscript{16} Jonathan Israel also seems to be in this camp as he argues that it was ideas of the Radical Enlightenment, ideas of egalitarianism and representative government in particular, which really helped to inspire the American Revolution.\textsuperscript{17} He goes so far as to argue that the ideas of the Radical Enlightenment were not put into practice or accepted until the American Revolution.

Yet not all academics share the sentiments of Middlekauff and Wood. Historians such as Barbara Clark Smith have criticized Wood’s thesis, considering his description of the war as “an elusive and unsatisfying characterization.”\textsuperscript{18} She recognizes that the English revolutionaries in the seventeenth century executed their own king, and French Revolutionaries in the eighteenth century abolished slavery, casting both as more radical than the American experience. In considering slavery in the new United States, Nathan Huggins has suggested that “American historians...have conspired with the Founding Fathers to create a national history, teleologically bound to the Founders' ideals rather than their reality. They have chosen to see American history from even before the Revolution as an inexorable development of free institutions and the expansion of political liberty to the broadest possible public.”\textsuperscript{19} Along those lines, others have rightly pointed out the

fact that the Revolution did not emancipate women or allow the poor to substantially increase their political voice; those changes would have to wait. In his popular version of this historical approach, *A People’s History of the United States*, Howard Zinn characterized the Founders as men “who did not want a balance [of contenting powers in society], except one that kept things as they were....They certainly did not want an equal balance between slaves and masters, propertyless and property holders, Indian and white.”

Michael Zuckerman would seem to concur with Zinn as he argues that it is exactly these kinds of men who are the focus of Wood’s work. For Zuckerman these were men who clearly saw themselves as superior to black Americans and American women.

Other scholars, such as Joyce Appleby have considered the generation that was born during the Revolution. In her interpretation, these individuals – born in a new nation – were not saddled with the memory of living in an America under British dominion that their parents had. This generation only knew the Revolution through what they were taught and had no understanding of the hardships that the war had wrought. She went on to suggest that members of this group “became agents of change in an era of change.” She also contended that this generation pushed the nation to “move from the end of traditional society - ‘the world we have lost’ – to the social framework that we are still living within.”

Finally, she argued that information which had heretofore been controlled by the elite was, beginning

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in the 1790s, now controlled by critics of the elite. While it is certainly true that those born during the Revolution helped to move the country forward this interpretation discounts the role of those who did the fighting during the war and those who made the decision to break away from the British Empire. Furthermore, as this study will show, both the students and faculty at Yale College worked against this trend and were loath to promote societal change. It seems clear that there is a wide spectrum of interpretations about the nature of the Revolutionary Era. It is within this milieu that this project aspires to position itself, in some ways adding credence to the radical vision of the Revolution, and in other ways adhering to a more conservative reading of the period.

In order to prove the first contention about the Yale’s influence on those who attended, this study uses the student experience as a major source of evidence. Such evidence will include both the courses students took and the pedagogy employed by their instructors. Was the education available in New Haven more closely tied to English collegiate traditions rooted in Oxford and Cambridge or was it something else? It would seem that the approach at Yale prior to 1776 was shifting toward one that was embracing Enlightenment ideals, though not fully. This change was due in no small part to the actions of Yale students who petitioned the school to offer new subjects.

Of course there was more to the Yale student experience than just classes; there were other aspects of life in the eighteenth century that will be examined in order to prove the contention concerning the formative character of the college.

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24 Appleby, Inheriting the Revolution, 6.
From literary societies to student militias, there were ways for students to engage in an exchange of ideas outside of the classroom in a manner that may have been more comfortable than through a more traditional in-class format. These student-run groups would be important proving grounds for ideas that would result in changes ranging from new courses offered at Yale to new modes of national government. By interrogating personal sources produced by Yale students of this period it seems clear that there is at least some connection between what students went through at Yale and the attitudes and world-views they developed.

This dissertation will proceed moving from the top of the institutional hierarchy to the bottom. Chapter 1 will consider the role of the rectors and presidents. From Thomas Clap through Timothy Dwight, the office will be shown to be one that could move the institution to embrace new ideas, yet its holders would be willing to push back against notions that went against their vision of what the school should be. Chapter 2 considers the changes to the curriculum that took place during this period. While there were similarities to Yale’s English antecedents, the college was beginning to institute changes in the years leading up to the Revolution. In addition, this chapter will also investigate the roles the limited number of professors and tutors played. All of those responsible for students: professors, tutors, and presidents, played a large role in shaping the outlook of Yale graduates after they left campus. Many of those school employees were graduates themselves; their positions and influence were self-reinforcing. The final chapter will delve into the role of students at Yale and how while they were disposed to rebel at times, in the end, they knew the value of their credential
and were generally unwilling to behave in ways that would put their social and cultural capital in genuine jeopardy.

**The State of Colleges in the Revolutionary Era**

Before proceeding any further, it is worth devoting a few pages to some of the other colleges that existed in British North America in order to fully appreciate the Yale story. Prior to the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, there were nine institutions of higher learning operating throughout the colonies (see appendix 4). With the exception of The College of William and Mary and the College of Philadelphia (later the University of Pennsylvania), all of them were located in either New England, New York or New Jersey. With the exception of the College of Philadelphia, all of the schools, including Yale, were closely associated with various Christian denominations and as a consequence employed members of the clergy in leadership roles both in administration and as Trustees. For instance, the College of Rhode Island’s (the future Brown University) charter made sure that its Presidents, Fellows and Trustees would be Baptists.25 As a consequence of the various religious affiliations held by most schools, all but the College of Philadelphia shared a primary mission, upon their founding: to train the next generation of ministers. The College of Philadelphia, as a nonsectarian entity, was chartered in order to “prove a Nursery of Wisdom and Virtue, and be the

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Means of raising up Men, of Dispositions and Qualifications beneficial to the Public, in the various Occupations of Life, and for other Causes and Considerations...”

Regardless of their affiliation, all of these schools were incredibly small operations when compared to what they have become in the twenty-first century.

Like Yale, other colleges in the colonies had to manage the after-effects of the Seven Years’ War. In an attempt to recoup some of the losses incurred during that conflict, the British Parliament passed a series of acts which upset their colonial subjects. In response to these actions by the crown, seniors at Harvard in 1768 agreed to stop drinking tea and to attend commencement ceremonies in American-made attire. The following year in neighboring Rhode Island, it was President James Manning, along with his students, who attended the school’s first commencement in domestic cloth as a way to illustrate their support for American boycott efforts. On that same day, Manning’s students debated the proposition: “The Americans, in their present Circumstances, cannot, consistent with good Policy, affect to become an independent State,” illustrating that student opinions about the impending crisis ran deeper than the clothes they wore.

Meanwhile, it was in midst of these troubles that further to the south, in New Jersey, John Witherspoon, had just taken up his post as President of the College of New Jersey shortly after immigrating from Scotland. At the first

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28 Hoeveler, Creating the American Mind, 272.
commencement that Witherspoon presided over, students dealt with political subjects leaving few to wonder what topic was preoccupying minds of these young men. Indeed, at the school’s commencement two years later, Witherspoon’s own son went on to argue in favor of “resistance to tyrannical kings” while others supported the notion boycotts as form of patriotism.\(^{30}\)

As the Revolution drew closer, schools increasingly began to feel the effects of what was to come. At Harvard, the school formed a military company named the Marti-Mercurian Band – so named from its motto (\textit{Tam Marti quam Mercurio}). In April of 1771, the Massachusetts House went so far as to request that the governor provide weapons to the school so that the students “may be disposed to acquaint themselves with the Art Military.”\(^{31}\) That same year, records report that this student militia was made up of sixty-one scholars.\(^{32}\) At the same time, the college offered up space in one of its buildings for the House to hold its sessions as the Massachusetts General Court moved from Boston to Cambridge between 1770 and 1773 to avoid the “mobs” present in the city.\(^{33}\) While the Court left Cambridge in 1773, the following year the Harvard Corporation suspended public commencements due to growing disorder, a state of affairs that would remain in place until 1781.\(^{34}\) That decision would seem to have been the right one, as the year after the cessation of public commencements, the school’s buildings were being used in a military capacity, first as a barracks and later as a hospital.\(^{35}\) At the

\(^{31}\) Quoted in Morison, \textit{Three Centuries of Harvard}, 141.
\(^{35}\) Hoeveler, \textit{Creating the American Mind}, 257.
College of Rhode Island, it was the students who requested that the commencement of 1775 not be held in public as a result of “the Distresses of our oppressed Country, which now most unjustly feels the baneful Effects of arbitrary Power.”\textsuperscript{36} The College of Philadelphia’s 1775 commencement was a public one, but it too had a revolutionary flavor as the William More Smith, the son of the school’s president, delivered an oration on the fall of empires.\textsuperscript{37}

When the actual fighting of the Revolution began in April of 1775, almost all of the schools in the soon-to-be United States were impacted in one way or another. At the College of Rhode Island, the state militia took control of the college buildings and students were forced to leave closing the school.\textsuperscript{38} Meanwhile, at the College of Philadelphia, first, the college was closed, then it was occupied by patriot troops in 1775 who were eventually replaced by the British upon their occupation of the city. The school would not reopen until 1779.\textsuperscript{39} Queen’s College in New Brunswick, New Jersey was also shuttered by force when General William Howe and his army marched into the town. As a result, several Queen’s students and one of their tutors, named John Taylor, joined the armed resistance against the British. The school would remain closed until 1779 when Taylor returned to Queen’s, enabling it to welcome students once more.\textsuperscript{40} Later in the war, when the fighting was more pronounced in the south, The College of William and Mary was broken up. Its

\textsuperscript{37} Hoeveler, \textit{Creating the American Mind}, 339.
\textsuperscript{38} Hoeveler, \textit{Creating the American Mind}, 271
\textsuperscript{39} Hoeveler, \textit{Creating the American Mind}, 342.
\textsuperscript{40} Hoeveler, \textit{Creating the American Mind}, 305, 316.
buildings were utilized by British, American and French troops in the months leading up to the Battle of Yorktown.\textsuperscript{41}

One Harvard history recorded that six of its students joined with the minutemen who fought the British at Lexington and Concord.\textsuperscript{42} The following month, the college’s president, Samuel Langdon – a friend of Samuel Adams and John Hancock - delivered a speech in which he publicly criticized the British contending that

...our King as if impelled by some strange fatality, is resolved to reason with us only by the roar of his Cannon, and the pointed arguments of musquets and bayonets. Because we refuse submission to the despotic power of a ministerial Parliament, our own Sovereign, to whom we have been always ready to swear allegiance, - whose authority we never meant to cast off, - who might have continued happy in the cheerful obedience of as faithful subjects as any in his dominions, - has given us up to rage of his Ministers, to be seized at seas by the rapacious commanders of every little sloop of war and piratical cutter, and to be plundered and massacred by land and mercenary troops, who know distinction betwixt an enemy and a brother, between right and wrong; but only, like brutal pursuers, to hunt and seize the prey pointed out by their masters.\textsuperscript{43}

It is highly likely that this sermon, delivered in an environment such as Boston in 1775, would have received a warm reception. That same year, Harvard was forced to relocate and re-establish itself in Concord for a period of eight months. While

\textsuperscript{41} History of the College of William and Mary From Its Foundation, 1660, to 1874. (Richmond: J.W. Randolph & English, 1874), 51.
\textsuperscript{42} Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, 148.
\textsuperscript{43} Samuel Langdon. A Sermon Preached Before the Honorable Congress of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay In New England, Assembled at Watertown, on Wednesday the 31\textsuperscript{st} day of May, 1775. (Printed and Sold by Benjamin Edes, 1775), 10.
some students chose to withdraw from school, others joined the American fight against Great Britain. Even when classes resumed in Cambridge, it was a struggle to maintain pre-war enrollment figures. Even with the depressed number of students supplying those who were on campus was always an issue. At the same time, having the requisite books was problematic, as at one point the president petitioned the state to raid Tory libraries to supplement their own.

The College of Philadelphia, Queen’s College and the College of William and Mary were not the only schools forced to close during the Revolution. In the fall of 1776, College of New Jersey President Witherspoon decided to send his students home in the face of an advancing British force. The decision must have been a difficult one for Witherspoon who only months earlier had been the sole active member of the clergy to sign the Declaration of Independence. When British forces arrived, the troops damaged campus buildings as they moved into student rooms and the school’s Nassau Hall was repurposed as a jail for those who were considered to be rebels.

The story at King’s College in New York City had similarities to its counterparts to the south. In the same month that Langdon gave his stirring sermon, King’s College began to feel more direct impacts of the conflict. Its president, Myles Cooper, had been targeted by patriots who delivered a letter that stated that his loyalism was unacceptable and that he and his compatriots ought to

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46 In addition to serving as the president of the College of New Jersey, Witherspoon continued to represent the state of New Jersey in the Continental Congress and later served in the New Jersey state legislature.
47 Hoeveler, *Creating the American Mind*, 315
“fly for your lives, or anticipate your doom.”48 He did depart the college but only
temporarily. When he arrived back on campus, patriots stormed the school,
carrying tar and feathers, determined to mete out justice. It was in this moment,
that a young Alexander Hamilton, then a student at the college, delayed the crowd
long enough for Cooper to escape his home before eventually making his way to
England.49 In a way, Hamilton’s actions could be characterized as those of a man
who, while harboring rebel sensibilities, were pragmatic enough to protect Cooper,
who potentially held sway over Hamilton’s future prospects. During the war,
Hamilton’s college was utilized as a hospital, first for the Americans and later for
the British. Like other institutions, its commencement in 1776 was cancelled. By
the time the war was over, the impact felt by the college was so extreme that its
survival was anything but a sure thing.50

The impact of the Revolution on Yale and of Yale’s impact on the Revolution
may seem insignificant as an avenue of inquiry at first glance. The school had
neither large numbers of students or faculty, and those who worked and studied in
New Haven were, for the most part, those with the means to attend. Yet Yale’s
story during this period is significant in that it will show the Revolutionary period
through a different lens. Leaders in the Revolutionary era were, by and large,
members of the social and political elite. From Ebenezer Fitch, to Samuel Johnson,
from James Hillhouse to Noah Webster, Yale produced men who would alter the

48 Quoted in Hoeveler, Creating the American Mind, 323.
49 Robert A. McCaughey. Stand, Columbia: A History of Columbia University in the
City of New York, 1754-2004. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 47 and
Hoeveler, Creating the American Mind, 323
50 McCaughey, Stand, Columbia, 47, 49-50.
course of America. To understand where they came from will help illuminate their outlooks and their philosophies. At the same time, the impact of the Revolutionary period on Yale can shine a piercing light on how new ideologies permeated and impacted institutions of higher learning in the late-colonial and early republic periods. Taken as a whole, this work aims to weigh in on the question as to whether or not the Revolution was a radical event, or was it a more conservative phenomenon that left existing systems largely intact? In the end, it was a process which saw the school make some gradual advancements over time, sometimes inspired by the presidents, sometimes by the tutors and sometimes by the students. Yet at the same time, even Yale’s youngest and most politically rambunctious stakeholders recognized and appreciated their opportunities, which were fostered by a collegiate tradition that favored reform over revolution.

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51 Fitch was the first president of Williams College, Johnson was the first president of King’s College which became Columbia, Hillhouse was a senator for Connecticut and Webster is still present today on the dictionary that bears his name.
CHAPTER ONE: THE PRESIDENCY OF YALE COLLEGE: SAILING THROUGH UNCHARTED WATERS

Apostasy in New Haven

The head of Yale, whether under the title of rector or eventually president, would be viewed as one of the most important public figures in Connecticut. This became clear on Saturday, September 12, 1726, when the school held its commencement exercises, an event that saw distinguished visitors arrive in New Haven from around the colony. The ceremony would prove to be the most surprising in the brief twenty-five year history of the college. There was a buzz surrounding this particular event as there had been rumors of Arminianism in the institution.¹ At the conclusion of the festivities, Rector Timothy Cutler closed with the words “and let all the people say amen.”² To a Congregationalist audience, this Anglican phrase must have been an utter shock. Yale was an institution founded to train clergymen in the Congregationalist tradition, and the rector was supposed to be a bulwark against heretical teachings. However, in expressing this Anglican sentiment, Cutler had exposed himself as a minister with distinctly Anglican thoughts.

¹ Arminianism had come to be a term applied to any movement that challenged established Calvinist orthodoxy. They argued that an individual could choose to embrace or reject God’s grace.
Cutler was not alone in his belief. Anglicanism had also found fertile ground in the mind of Yale tutor Daniel Brown. Another apostate was former tutor and current West Haven minister Samuel Johnson, who would eventually go on to become the president of King’s College in New York. Indeed, these thoughts and actions appeared to be part of a concerted effort to spread Anglicanism throughout the colony. Cutler and his like-minded compatriots had decided to embrace the denomination that was anathema to the old order in Connecticut, a position that the Congregational establishment was not about to suffer.  

The day after Commencement, the Yale Corporation asked to meet with Cutler and six of his fellow travelers – including Johnson and five other Connecticut ministers. In preparation for their interrogation, the suspected Anglicans provided a written statement in which they declared:

Reverend Gentlemen, — Having represented to you the difficulties which we labor under, in relation to our continuance out of the visible communion of an Episcopal Church, and a state of seeming opposition thereto, either as private Christians, or as officers, and so being insisted on by some of you (after our repeated declinings of it) that we should sum up our case in writing, we do (though with great reluctance, fearing the consequences of it) submit to and comply with it, and signify to you that some of us doubt the validity, and the rest are more fully persuaded of the invalidity of the Presbyterian ordination, in opposition to the Episcopal;¹

Cutler went on remark that he had had Episcopalian leanings for some time. Indeed, these notions were one of the reasons he decided to give up his position as the minister in Stratford for the rectorship at Yale.²

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¹ Warch, School of the Prophets, 108.
Several weeks later, the Connecticut’s colonial governor, Gurdon Saltonstall, convened a meeting of the concerned parties as a means of repairing the rift and to convince Cutler and his colleagues to embrace Congregationalism. The debate did not go well for the authorities as the accused Anglicans came armed with solid contentions to defend their positions. According to one Yale historian, “The assembled clergy had no arguments to refute these statements and were soon reduced to railing against their opponents. When this happened, Saltonstall quickly ended the conference.”

Thus, the establishment was unable to win over the recalcitrant men.

As a result of the embarrassment caused by the actions of Cutler - and possibly due in part of the decision of two Yale students to withdraw and reenroll at Harvard - the Corporation relieved Cutler of his duties. In addition, they made sure that any future faculty of the college would need to prove “...the Soundness of their Faith in opposition to Armenian & prelatical Corruptions or any other of Dangerous Consequences to the Purity & Peace of our Churches.” In other words, there would be a religious test in order to serve the institution. This was not just a doctrinal difference of opinion but a political consideration as the Congregational church was, in essence, the state church. For the existing power structure in Connecticut to accept a growing Anglicanism would be to acquiesce to “conformity with the mother country, with an Anglican Episcopal establishment,” and that was not something they were willing to accept.

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6 Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 112.
7 Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 110, 113. Quoted in Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 114.
This incident reveals the significance of the position of rector and later president of the college, as well as the importance of the school itself. Cutler and his band might have declared their sentiments to any one of their congregations, yet they chose Yale commencement as the venue and the person of Cutler to present their positions. According to Leonard Tucker, the president of Yale “...stood as the ceremonial head, as the high priest, of Connecticut Congregationalism. He was interpreter of the faith and moral spokesman all in one.”\(^9\) Cutler would not be the last head of school to highlight the importance of the office. Men like Thomas Clap, Ezra Stiles, and Timothy Dwight all played a role in guiding Yale College through changing times. The investigation of such men provides a unique window into the challenges involved in overseeing an institution of higher learning in colonial North America while providing insight into the nature of the Revolution itself. The decisions these men made during America’s transition from a colonial outpost to an independent state helps shine a light on their status as beacons of conservatism. In the following pages it will be shown that both the presidents of the college and the members of the Corporation sought to maintain the school’s position in society and to protect the social order, yet at the same time, they recognized that the school could not stay the same forever and were willing to make incremental changes in order to keep the institution, and themselves as leaders, relevant.\(^{10}\)

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\(^{10}\) The Corporation is made up of fellows and is the equivalent of a Board of Trustees.
The Office of President

Following the Cutler affair in 1726, there was a sense among many in the colony that Yale was on the decline, that it had been corrupted as a consequence of what had transpired. The trustees wanted to put an end to this perception and restore Yale’s reputation. As a consequence, they selected Elisha Williams as the next rector. He seems to have improved the public’s perception of the school somewhat as college enrollment increased during his time in office, yet, in the eyes of many, he was unable to redeem Yale’s standing completely. 11

At its founding in 1701, the Collegiate School, as Yale was then known, had a rector, not a president. While this may seem like a semantic distinction, the role was more limited than it would expand to become later on. In its inaugural year the Corporation of the school detailed that the first rector should “take special care as of the moral behaviour of the students at all times so with industry to instruct and ground them well in theoretical divinity ...[and] shall have power to punish the non-graduated students according to their faults...” 12 The rector did not sit with the Trustees nor did he have “executive force,” he was mainly tasked with teaching “reformed theology.” 13

This state of affairs changed when Yale adopted a new charter in 1745. According to some scholars, this development was due in no small part to the efforts of Thomas Clap (1740-1766), who stepped into the rectorship in 1740. 14

11 Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 134, 171
12 Yale Corporation Minutes, Nov. 11, 1701.
Indeed, one biographer characterized the charter as Clap’s “single greatest achievement.”\textsuperscript{15} In Clap’s view, the old charter “…did not establish the College in so perfect and complete a Form as it was capable of; particularly the Name, Trustees, by which the first Undertakers and Founders of the College and their Successors were usually called, was not so proper and usual a Title for the Governors of a College, in a more mature and perfect State.”\textsuperscript{16} While the rationale for the new charter is somewhat opaque, it is reasonable to assume that Clap was attempting a coup of sorts, an attempt that would succeed. As to why the trustees would abdicate their power, it is possible that they were simply too busy attending to their own congregations outside of the college to attend to matters within it. Although the reasons for their decision are unclear, what is clear is what the new charter did. The document incorporated the Fellows and created the office of president and appointed Thomas Clap to the position. In addition, the new charter provided that

\begin{quote}
ye PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS shall have ye Government Care and Management of ye COLLEGE and all ye Matters and Affairs thereunto belonging, and shall have Power from Time to Time as occasion shall Require to make ordain and Establish all such wholesome & Reasonable Laws Rules & Ordinances Not Repugnant to ye Laws of England nor ye Laws of this Colony as they shall think fit and proper for ye Instruction and Education of ye Students...

THAT ye PRESIDENT OF Sd COLLEGE with ye Consent of ye FELLOWS shall have Power to give and confer all such Honours Degrees or Licenses as are usually given in Colleges or Universities upon such as they shall think worthy thereof.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 73.

\textsuperscript{16} Thomas Clap, \textit{The Annals or Yale College in New-Haven, In the Colony of Connecticut, From The first Founding thereof, in the Year 1700, to the Year 1760}. (New Haven: John Hotchkiss and B. Mecom, 1766), 44.

\textsuperscript{17} Charter of Yale College, May 1745

\url{https://www.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/University-Charter.pdf}
This new office gave the president a substantial voice in determining the direction the college would move and in crafting the rules and regulations that would govern the institution. Although the letter of the law indicated that the Corporation would have major role to play, in practice, it was Clap who ran the college on the day-to-day basis and was responsible for much of the decision making. In addition, the president could now only be removed if a majority of the Fellows found him guilty of “misdemeanors, unfaithfulness, default, or incapacity.”\(^{18}\) With the charter of 1745, the leader of the institution was now unquestionably the president.

Presidents and rectors clearly understood the importance of their position. In recounting his appointment as rector in his history of the College, Thomas Clap remarked that he believed it was his duty as head of the college to work “…by all Ways and Means in his Power, to bring it forward towards a State of Perfection.”\(^{19}\) While it may seem an exercise in self-promotion to write of his role in this way, his actions as president do illustrate his efforts to better the institution. Clap would not be the last chief executive of Yale to share these sentiments. Ezra Stiles’s biographer, Edmund Morgan, notes the degree to which the Yale president enjoyed the trappings of the office: from academic regalia and all the prestige that it entailed.\(^ {20}\) In a letter to the Yale Corporation in October of 1777, Stiles (1778-1795), himself struck a humbler tone declaring his belief that “It is of great Importance that the Head of the College should be acceptable to the Fellows, to the Body of the


\(^{19}\) Thomas Clap. *The Annals or Yale College in New-Haven, In the Colony of Connecticut, From The first Founding thereof, in the Year 1700, to the Year 1760*. New Haven: John Hotchkiss and B. Mecom, 1766, 41.

Chhs. & Pastors, to the General Assembly and the people at large.”\textsuperscript{21} Beyond the pomp and circumstance of the position, Stiles seemed to understand that to select a president that was not supported by the majority of Connecticut could potentially lead to problems for the institution in the loss of financial support from the legislature. Stiles’s successor, Timothy Dwight (1795-1817), upon his selection to the presidency in 1795, wrote to the Corporation remarking that “... to say that few undertakings in human life appear to me to be fraught with more difficulties, than this on which I am now venturing. It is a consolation to reflect, that, when faithfully pursued, there are not many which are more beneficial to mankind.”\textsuperscript{22} Indeed, when Dwight assumed the office, he considered the college to be in a near “ruined” state of affairs.\textsuperscript{23} Dwight seems to have understood that by virtue of his position he would be able to touch more than just the minds of his students. Through preaching and writing, he would have a broader audience; a view that his biographer shared remarking that as president, Dwight was a figure who “carried weight” in what he did.\textsuperscript{24} This opinion was likely shared by all of his predecessors and helps to illustrate that those who were chosen to steer the institution were well aware of the burdens that the role entailed.

\textsuperscript{21} Stiles to the Yale Corporation, October 2, 1777, Quoted in Ezra Stiles, and Franklin Bowditch Dexter, \textit{The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, Vol. II: March 14, 1776-December 31, 1781}, (New York: C. Scribner, 1901), 215.


\textsuperscript{23} Some scholars have considered Dwight’s assessment of Yale College upon his appointment to be exaggerated. According to Kelley, “Local, state, and national good times meant increased enrollments and economic improvements at the college.” For more see: \textit{Yale: A History} by Kelley, p. 117.

\textsuperscript{24} Cunningham, \textit{Timothy Dwight}, 317 341.
Due to the prominence of the position, college presidents would face criticism from both within and outside the school’s walls. Perhaps due to the political and religious context of the time, Dwight had to suffer his fair share of it. Perhaps most strikingly his opponents spoke out against what they saw as Dwight’s agenda to keep the church and state closely linked. Stanley Griswold, a Jeffersonian who had served in the Revolution before attending Yale came out strongly against Dwight’s agenda with his publication *Infidelity Not the Only Enemy of Christianity, or, Hypocrisy and Antichrist Exposed* in 1803.  

In the piece, Griswold declared “The question with many seems to be, not so much what God a man serves, as what party, - not so much what savior he believes in, as what President!...Yea, the purest practice of [Christ’s] religion is nothing, unless backed by certain party-conduct.” He contended that Dwight had lost his way and that when Judgement Day arrived “What then will become of politics? What then will become of party?”

Perhaps more than any other position at the school, the rector, and eventually president, wore many hats. During his rectorship, Elisha Williams was at the mercy of policies dictated by the trustees but it was he, along with the tutors, who were responsible for instructing students. Thomas Clap took on even more responsibilities as the first president of the institution. He was in charge of

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25 Dexter, *Biographical Sketches Vol IV.*, 477-478. Griswold’s piece is seen as a reaction to Dwight’s own *The Triumph of Infidelity.*


28 Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 135.
instructing the senior class; he delivered lectures to the entire school and he led prayers twice a day. All of this might sound expected, but Clap also was responsible for a litany of other duties including the management of college finances, adjudicating student discipline, and attending Harvard commencements. He had to register students, maintain the physical plant, keep the library up to date, and be the public face of the college. This juggling of roles came to define the presidency of Yale and continued throughout the Revolutionary Era.

Relations Between Yale and the State

The association between Yale and the colonial and later state government was a complicated one that the Yale Corporation and the president would need to negotiate carefully if they were to ensure the survival of their institution. In the end, they would pursue a pragmatic approach with respect to this relationship. In October, 1701, the Connecticut General Assembly passed “An Act for Liberty to Erect a Collegiate School” in which the lawmakers responded to a petition by “Learned & Orthodox men,” in order to create a school “wherein Youth may be instructed in the Arts & Sciences who through the blessing of Almighty God may be fitted for Publick employment both in Church and Civil State.” The legislation also granted the school the “...sum of one hundred & twenty pounds in Country Pay...To such Person or Persons only as they shall appoint & empower to Receiv the same to be faithfully disposed of by ye s'd Trustees Partners or Undertakers for

30 Connecticut General Assembly, “Act for Liberty to Erect a Collegiate School, 1701”.
Other than granting permission to create the school and setting aside some money for that purpose, the management of the college was left up to the trustees. In this way, Yale was separated from state government in a way that Harvard was not. According to Warch, this state of affairs “...established closer, though unofficial – ties with the church than with the state...”

Still, the relationship between the General Assembly turned out to be a boon for the school as the money gifted to Yale helped keep the institution afloat financially. The state was still intimately involved with the growth of the school, but that relationship was mediated by the Congregational clergy. Those ministers who sat on the board of trustees and those who simply supported the school were able to squeeze various concessions out of the Assembly. They managed to set themselves up as a corporation; they were able to obtain land grants from the state as well as money payments that amounted to $21,567 between the years 1710 to 1754. In addition, because Connecticut did not need to replace their entire government when the Revolution began since it was not a royal colony, the institution’s standing was never in question throughout the war or afterwards.

None of this is to say that there were never strained relations between the school and the state. The rapport between the state and Yale has been described as “chilled” during the 1740s. In this analysis, school leadership “...knew full well that the college could not survive on private resources. Yet they wished to exclude

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31 Connecticut General Assembly, “Act for Liberty to Erect a Collegiate School, 1701”.
32 Warch, School of the Prophets, 30.
33 Warch, School of the Prophets, 142.
the Assembly from the management of internal affairs. In some respects, Yale’s dilemma paralleled that of Connecticut’s government in its relationship with the Crown.” In 1755, the Assembly actually withheld funds from the school citing the ongoing war with France as a rationale. In an attempt to remedy this situation, Yale’s new president, Thomas Clap, made his arguments for funds to the Assembly directly. Of course, the Assembly could call on Clap as well and in 1763, following a memorial signed by several high-profile clergymen to complain about Clap’s leadership, they did just that. In his testimony, Clap argued that even though the Assembly had granted Yale money, they should not be permitted to conduct an investigation of the school. In the end, he was able to persuade the Assembly not to take any action, although Tucker believes that may have been due to the fact that he still had enough allies in the Assembly to protect him. In any event, for the time being Clap was able to prevent interference from the state.

In 1777, Yale was in an even more dire financial position than during Clap’s presidency, due in large part to the state of the overall economy. Prices were constantly changing and the cost of keeping the school supplied became so overwhelming that the Corporation actually dismissed students, and then turned to the state for financial assistance. The Assembly wanted the Corporation to consider their input, in particular, they wanted Ezra Stiles to be chosen as the school’s next president by a unanimous vote. In a letter addressed to Ezra Stiles, Rev. Dr. James Dana concluded that a committee of the General Assembly “…all

36 Tucker, *Puritan Protagonist*, 204.
37 Tucker, *Puritan Protagonist*, 204.
mentioned you as the most proper person – as a gentleman who would be the most acceptable to all ranks, so far as they had had Opportunity to know the opinion of gentlemen in different parts of the State and strongly recommended you the Corporation.”

Perhaps due to their dire circumstances, and the fact that Stiles was already well-respected, the Corporation agreed to the selection. In taking this action, the Corporation seemed to be stealing a page from the late Thomas Clap who had argued “...as the College, receives it’s Charter and Part of it’s Support, from the Government: it is necessarily, dependent upon them; and under their Direction; and must choose such a Minister as is agreeable to them; or otherwise, they may, withdraw their special Protection, and Support.”

During his inauguration, Stiles was read an Oath of Fidelity wherein the new president had to “...swear by the name of the everliving God that you will be true & faithful to the State of Connecticut, as a free & independent State, and in all Things do your Duty as a good & faithful subject of the said State, in supporting the Rights Liberties & Privileges of the same.”

This oath was in lieu of one to the king. Still, Stiles wanted to prevent the legislature from exercising oversight of the college and in the 1780s worked to increase enrollment and consequently to improve the school’s finances in order to ensure that outcome.

Following the Revolution, the state took an increased interest in supporting Yale in order to keep up with states like New York and Massachusetts who were already supporting their local institutions. In 1784, the newly renamed Columbia

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40 Dr. Dana to Ezra Stiles, Aug, 25, 1777, quoted in Literary Diary Vol. II., 207.
41 Clap, The Religious Constitution of Colleges, 12.
42 Quoted in Stiles, Literary Diary Vol. II, 283
College in New York City adopted a new charter in an attempt to make the institution one that served the entire state. It required state officials to serve on the Board of Regents in addition to dropping the requirement that the president be an Anglican. However, this charter was short-lived. Three years later, a new charter was adopted that ensured the school would remain private and did not permit any state officials to serve in an ex officio capacity. In this way, Columbia was more successful in pushing back against state encroachment than its Connecticut counterpart.

At the same time, Connecticut was experiencing an increase of anticlericalism. As a result of these attitudes some in the state began to wonder if it made sense to allow the one institution of higher learning to be run wholly by theologians. After a committee sent to investigate the school in 1791 reported that the college was in good order, the Assembly decided to offer a large grant of over $30,000 in exchange for seats on the corporation to be held by the governor, lieutenant governor (posts which are still held to this day), and six others. This was a clear attempt by the state to gain more of a say in the operation of Yale and one the school was willing to accept in order to improve its financial situation and to ensure the government would not permit the creation of another college in Connecticut. Dwight later recounted this situation in his *Travels in New England and New-York*:

This measure was on every account desirable; and has in all its consequences been happy. There had been long a jealousy in the minds of many respectable inhabitants concerning the College;

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44 McCaughey *Stand, Columbia*, 52.
arising from the fact that it was wholly in the hands of Clergymen....and this spirit of alienation regularly prevented the success of every attempt to increase [state] funds.\textsuperscript{46}

Although Dwight has often been painted as a reactionary, prior to his presidency, he criticized the homogenous makeup of the Corporation.\textsuperscript{47} Writing under the pseudonym Parnassus, Dwight asked “whether it is fit that a public seminary should be under the direction of one of the learned professions to the exclusion of other learned men.” He also argued that “A better acquaintance with human nature and the world, than the Corporation collectively taken, appear to possess, is required for the government of a University.”\textsuperscript{48} At the same time he claimed “that gentlemen of known literary merit, in office at the College, had become objects of jealousy, and been removed, or compelled to resign.”\textsuperscript{49} While some of Dwight’s criticism was rooted in rational thought, it is also conceivable that revenge played a role as he felt aggrieved at how the Corporation had treated him during his tenure as a tutor.\textsuperscript{50}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{46} Timothy Dwight, \textit{Travels in New England and New York, Vol. I} (New Haven: Timothy Dwight, 1821), 204.
  \item \textsuperscript{47} Fitzmier has made a compelling argument that the individual known as Parnassus writing in \textit{The Connecticut Courant and Weekly Intelligencer} was in fact Dwight. He had specific knowledge of the manner in which the Corporation had treated tutors and professors. He still had connections at the school and his relationship with President Stiles was strained. Beyond that, another writer using the pseudonym Eschines identified Dwight as Parnassus in 1803, while remarking how the now president of Yale had morphed from one who was pushing to change the college to one who stood for the status quo. P. 47-51.
  \item \textsuperscript{48} Quoted in Fitzmier, \textit{New England’s Moral Legislator}, 47.
  \item \textsuperscript{49} Ovid. "PARNASSUS, no. VI: To PARNASSUS." \textit{Connecticut Courant and Weekly Intelligencer (1778-1791)}, Mar 18, 1783.
  \item \textsuperscript{50} Fitzmier, \textit{New England’s Moral Legislator}, 48.
\end{itemize}
It is also worth pointing out that the Assembly was dominated by Congregationalists and this may have played into their decision making.\footnote{Whitehead, \textit{The Separation of College and State}, 41-2.} One could also make an argument that Yale’s relationship with the state was indicative of public support for select private endeavors which was in line with current trends in Federalist political economy. In pieces written by Dwight that appeared in the Federalist newspaper the \textit{New England Palladium} before he became president, he made his case for a state-supported church. Since Yale was, at its core, a religious institution, it should be propped up by the state according to Dwight. Indeed, he was opposed to the disestablishment of the Congregationalist Church in Connecticut.\footnote{Fitzmier, \textit{New England’s Moral Legislator}, 20.} In Dwight’s mind, churches – led by men educated at institutions like Yale – would help maintain the stability of society with more success than state sanctioned violence ever could.\footnote{Fitzmier, \textit{New England’s Moral Legislator}, 63.} In a sermon delivered in 1791, Dwight contended that “The first duty of a ruler, and the first concern of a virtuous ruler, is the support of religion.”\footnote{Timothy Dwight. \textit{Virtuous Rulers a National Blessing: A Sermon, Preached at the General Election, May 12th, 1791.} (Hartford: Printed by Hudson and Goodwin, 1791), 18.} While some may think that positions like this would cause Dwight to view the establishment clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution with skepticism, it is important to keep in mind that at this time the Bill of Rights had not yet been applied to the states, a process known as incorporation. Whatever the reason for the improved relations, they seem to have continued during the Dwight’s presidency because in 1795 he was able to convince the Assembly to donate £900 for the library to purchase additional books.\footnote{Cunningham, \textit{Timothy Dwight}, 248-9.}
success with the Assembly continued, and by 1805, the school was able to build three new buildings, add on to the library, build a new residence for the president and fund Professorships of Law, Chemistry, and Languages and Ecclesiastical History.\textsuperscript{56}

However, the arrangement between Yale and the state of Connecticut was not viewed in such a positive light by Dwight’s opponents. Yet this criticism had a target that was bigger than just the school; it was rooted in politics and Jeffersonian notions of maintaining a separation between church and state. Yale was still very much a religious institution which was supported financially by a state that still possessed its own established church. One such critic was John Cosens Ogden, a 1770 College of New Jersey graduate, who went on to become an Episcopalian priest.\textsuperscript{57} In a 1798 commentary, he argued that “The constitution of these States, secures universal protection in religion; but peace and happiness will never flourish in either church or state, as long as our colleges are under the control of the Calvinistic party.”\textsuperscript{58} He continued by suggesting “That the Legislature has, and constantly does, violate the constitution by taking money out of the public treasury for party [church] purposes....That the College is the property of the State, that the clergy have no claims in law, equity, honor, prudence, or policy to control it but the reverse.”\textsuperscript{59} Similar sentiments to Ogden were issued four years later by Stanley Griswold. Griswold, a Revolutionary War veteran and member of the Yale

\textsuperscript{56} Dwight, \textit{Travels}, 205.
\textsuperscript{59} John Cosens Ogden. \textit{An Appeal to the Candid}, 18-19.
class of 1786, chose New Haven as the place to deliver his remarks and the day before the Yale Commencement as the time. This was surely done by design in order to send a message to Dwight. In his message Griswold decried “the propensity to make use of human laws in support of few religious establishments, evidently possessed by some and boldly advocated by a few.” This view was anathema to Dwight who viewed the survival of his college and his Church as intertwined with that of the state and illustrates the arguments that Dwight was forced to contend with during his presidency.

Throughout Yale's early history, both the Corporation and the presidents of the school needed to negotiate the relationship between it and the state carefully. Although there were certainly ups and downs along the way, in the end they were able to extract what they needed from the government in order to ensure the institution’s survival into the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Managing the Staff

All chief executives are ultimately responsible for hiring, developing, and managing their staff and the presidents of Yale prove the rule. Although the Corporation officially approved new hires from professors to tutors, they typically deferred to the desires of the president. President Clap recognized that he would need to have an outstanding staff in order to improve the reputation of the college. He wanted to make sure that those he hired as tutors had strong backgrounds in

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60 Dexter, *Biographical Sketches, Vol. IV*, 477. Griswold was a preacher in New Milford, CT before being removed for arguing in favor of the doctrine of universal salvation.

61 Griswold. *Infidelity*, 17.
natural philosophy and mathematics. As president, he was in an ideal position to select them as they were typically drawn from the slate of recent graduates, all of whom Clap would have instructed during their senior year. Some scholars have gone so far as to argue that by employing this method, Clap had instituted a sort of teacher education program in order to make sure that his tutors were as prepared as possible.\textsuperscript{62} While it is sensible to assume that he wanted individuals with a strong grounding in the content they would be instructing, it is also reasonable to conclude that he wanted to select those who would be willing to implement his vision for the college and not upset the system as it existed. Clap did not only want tutors to share his vision, he expected the same from professors. As such, in 1754 he added “...a provision that all officers and members of the Corporation must subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith.”\textsuperscript{63} This policy was not simply a dead letter, as in 1765 Clap was made aware that two of his tutors had joined a religious sect known as the Sandemanians; this was a state of affairs that Clap would not suffer and he had them removed from their positions.\textsuperscript{64} This care for hiring the “right” people continued under Ezra Stiles. During his presidency, Stiles accorded then-tutor Timothy Dwight so much authority that he was considered by some scholars to be the equivalent as a modern dean.\textsuperscript{65}

When he became president himself, Dwight made sure to hire people who were philosophically aligned with his way of thinking. Perhaps the best evidence

\textsuperscript{62} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 91.
\textsuperscript{63} Whitehead, \textit{The Separation of College and State}, 37.
\textsuperscript{64} The Sandemanians believed in a theology that took a different view of salvation from that of Calvinism. Gabriel, \textit{Religion and Learning at Yale}, 30.
\textsuperscript{65} Cunningham, \textit{Timothy Dwight}, 35.
of this could be seen with Dwight’s firing of professor Josiah Meigs. Meigs, who had been appointed by Ezra Stiles, was a professor of mathematics and natural history and was subject to annual renewal of his contract due to the school’s financial constraints. This state of affairs may have made it easier for Dwight to remove Meigs. Although some scholars have asserted that Dwight did not use “his Yale presidency to push a political agenda,” his actions here seem to call that analysis into question. He made the decision not for pedagogical but for political reasons. Meigs was a supporter of Thomas Jefferson and his Democratic Republican party as well as the French Revolution, representing all sentiments that Dwight could not abide. He wanted a staff whose views accorded with his own, so that Yale’s students would be receiving an education that reflected Dwight’s worldview as much as possible. So Meigs was pushed out and would go on to lead the newly established University of Georgia in a region of the young nation more in line with his political leanings. When one considers all of these behaviors on the whole, it seems clear that Yale presidents were not interested in upsetting the status quo at an institution they did so much to shape.

In addition to hiring, the president was also responsible for creating new positions. Perhaps most notable, in the sense that it strayed from the original religious mission of the school, was the desire to create a professor of law which first manifested under Ezra Stiles. Finally, in 1801, during the tenure of Timothy

Dwight, the Corporation agreed to add a professor of law to the faculty.\(^6\) The Corporation determined that

...it shall be the Duty of the Professor for the time being to read Lectures in the Chapel for the benefit of all the Graduate and Undergraduate students belonging to the College on the leading principles of the Law of Nations, on the general principles of Civil Government, particularly of Republican representative government, on the constitution of the United States and of this State, on the Municipal Law of the United States and of this State, and also on the various obligations and duties resulting from social relations especially those relations which arise from our own National and State Governments – so methodized as to present the subject in a connected view and so condensed as will in the best manner serve to form good men and good citizens, the said Lectures to be read monthly or oftener, so as to conclude the course of Lectures in the Term of four years.\(^6\)

None of this is to say the institution or leadership of Yale did not have any interest in law prior to this, yet this codification of the position speaks to the desire of both Dwight and the Corporation to change with the times lest Yale be left behind.

In the years following the Revolution, young men with the desire to become lawyers did so by either studying themselves or under the tutelage of an experienced attorney. It was in this milieu that Tapping Reeve entered the fray. A graduate of the College of New Jersey, Reeve established a school in Litchfield, Connecticut, boasting Aaron Burr and Stephen Row Bradley as its first students. What made his school different was that it was solely devoted to the training of prospective attorneys.\(^7\) In maintaining the school, Reeve, and his partner, Yale graduate James Gould were able to provide an alternative for students who did not

\(^6\)Cunningham, *Timothy Dwight*, 197.
\(^6\)Yale Corporation Minutes, September 10, 1801.
want to subject themselves to the haphazard nature of the tutelage system. The Litchfield Law approach was “systemic and standardized.”71 Dwight spoke approvingly of the Litchfield approach as he noted in his *Travels in New England*.

The Law School...would not, it is believed, do discredit to any country. Law is here taught as a science, and not merely nor principally as a mechanical business; not as a collection of loose, independent fragments, but as a regular, well-compacted system. At the same time the students are taught the practice by being actually employed in it. A court is constituted; actions are brought and conducted through a regular process; questions are raised; and the students become advocates in form.72

With this view in mind, one can see how Dwight was able to able to start Yale down a path that would see it open its own law school in 1824, thus ensuring that the institution kept pace with the times in order to maintain its relevance.

In addition to the law, both Dwight and the Corporation recognized the rising significance of other fields like chemistry and determined the school ought to offer them. In pursuance of this goal, in 1802 Dwight tapped Benjamin Silliman – who had served as a Yale tutor between 1799 and 1802 – as Yale’s first professor of chemistry and natural history. This appointment came despite the fact that Silliman had no experience whatsoever in the subject; it has been suggested that Dwight made the appointment because he did not want to hire someone who was not from the United States. Since he was unlikely to find an American with the necessary qualifications he decided to turn to a young man he knew and trusted.73

In order to get up to speed, Silliman, supported by Dwight and the college

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financially, spent the better part of the first two years of his professorship in Philadelphia learning about his new field.\textsuperscript{74} By 1811, Dwight recorded that “The Professor of Chemistry delivers 120 lectures in that science, every year, to the two elder classes; so that each class hears a complete course of chemical lectures twice. These are delivered in the Laboratory; a room peculiarly convenient for this purpose. Here they have the advantage of seeing every experiment, both preparatory and illustrative, commenced and completed.”\textsuperscript{75} Ultimately, the decision by Yale leadership to add professors of law and chemistry illustrate the desire maintain the relevance of both the institution and themselves.

\textit{Managing the Library}

In addition to having a major voice in the curriculum, Yale Presidents were also ultimately responsible for the library. Their management of this aspect of the school highlights the ways in which presidents could both advance the school or try to maintain the status quo. During the early years of Yale, the library contained the works of authors that were at the forefront of contemporary scholarship including Boyle, Newton, and Locke. According to Warch, the Yale collection was “rich and varied” but “also a dangerous one.” Warch contends that the library was critical for those who participated in the crisis of 1722 to hone their arguments and that throughout the rectorship of Elisha Williams, there were fears of Anglican and

\textsuperscript{74} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 135. Today there is a residential college at Yale that bears Silliman’s name.

\textsuperscript{75} Dwight, Timothy, \textit{A Statistical Account of the City of New Haven}. (New Haven?: Reprint from New Haven City Yearbook (1811), 1874), 40.
Arminian texts in the collection.\textsuperscript{76} Perhaps because of this development, by 1740 new library laws were created by the trustees wherein students wishing to borrow books would have to leave a deposit.\textsuperscript{77}

Thomas Clap played a major role in upgrading the library during his tenure; initially by reorganizing the collection and creating several lists to help find particular works, one by title or author and one by where the books were physically shelved. He had a third list organized by subject in the order that Clap wanted students to progress through them.\textsuperscript{78} Prior to this system, there was typically one list at the end of each individual shelf listing the supposed contents. In addition to reorganizing the library, Clap also helped to improve the collection by adding approximately fourteen hundred books over the course of twenty-three years.\textsuperscript{79} While Clap did make strides in increasing the size of the collection, at the same time, he was the ultimate judge on what would be permitted in the library. In particular he took pains to ensure that texts which challenged his religious worldview would not be permitted.\textsuperscript{80} So while Clap was willing to improve the library in ways that would, in his mind, improve Yale, he was unwilling to accept any works that would upset the existing order.

By the time Dwight assumed the presidency, the library had not progressed much since Clap’s time in office. The collection only contained around twenty-seven hundred works (see appendix 3). Dwight considered the library “almost

\textsuperscript{76} Warch, \textit{School of the Prophets}, 240.
\textsuperscript{77} Warch, \textit{School of the Prophets}, 241.
\textsuperscript{79} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 71.
\textsuperscript{80} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 71.
totally destitute of modern authors” and inadequate to fulfill the educational mission of the institution.\textsuperscript{81} To remedy the situation, Dwight wrote to the Assembly pointing out that Harvard had a library of over 13,000 books and that the Massachusetts Legislature helped to pay to replace the library building that had burnt down. In the end, this tactic seemed to work as the Assembly donated funds to enable Yale to purchase more books and help the school keep pace with other institutions of higher learning.\textsuperscript{82}

\textit{Buildings and Equipment}

One of the more mundane issues that the president was responsible for was the care of the physical plant. By the time of Clap's presidency, the school was still using facilities constructed in the 1710s. Due to the paucity of school housing, some students were living in private homes which made it difficult for school authorities to monitor them and make sure they were living according to the college laws. To remedy this state of affairs, Clap helped to design the building that would become known as Connecticut Hall — a structure which still stands today - in order to recognize the contributions made by the state and provide more student rooms.\textsuperscript{83}

In addition to enhancing the buildings of Yale College, Clap also sought to bring the institution's scientific equipment up to date. In attempting to further the school’s position, he wrote to the Royal Society in London both in 1743 and in 1744

\textsuperscript{81} Quoted in Cunningham, \textit{Timothy Dwight}, 248.
\textsuperscript{82} Cunningham, \textit{Timothy Dwight}, 248-9.
\textsuperscript{83} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 74-5.
asking for instruments. One important piece that Clap was able to add was an orrery which he created himself. According to Tucker, this device allowed students “to witness, with a sweep of the eye, the complex movements of the earth and planets and offered a visual explanation for such natural phenomena as eclipses and the reappearance of comets.”\textsuperscript{84} This advancement allowed instruction to vary from an assigned reading or even a lecture. By utilizing a visual medium, this device most likely would enable students who would otherwise struggle an alternative means of accessing the material.

During the tenure of Ezra Stiles, the desire for up-to-date equipment and facilities was still present. Some of the college’s hardware had been damaged during the British raid on New Haven and needed to be replaced. By 1789, Yale had obtained an air pump, an astronomical clock, globes, and a device which enabled students to observe centrifugal forces in addition to a reflecting telescope.\textsuperscript{85} By the end of his presidency, Stiles was also able to secure funds from the General Assembly that provided for more student housing although this did little to improve the condition of the physical plant.\textsuperscript{86}

When the Connecticut government investigated Yale’s state of affairs in 1795 - the year Dwight assumed the presidency - the situation was not good. The president’s house was decrepit, as was the Professor of Divinity’s house. The chapel leaked, and Connecticut Hall was in danger of being lost for lack of repairs. Dwight appealed to the state for money suggesting that due to the fact that Yale

\textsuperscript{84} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 90-1.
\textsuperscript{85} Morgan, \textit{Gentle Puritan}, 380-1.
\textsuperscript{86} Cunningham, \textit{Timothy Dwight}, 178.
alumni played an important role in the Revolution the school was owed the funds and his pleas were answered. By 1797, Connecticut Hall had been repaired and a fourth story had been added. By 1803, he managed to add another dormitory as well as Berkeley Hall to help manage the increasing student population.87

In addition to the physical plant, Dwight reached out to solicit the community at large to support the school. In a letter to the editor published in the Connecticut Courant in September of 1797, Dwight noted that “The Museum of this College...consists, at present, of about 800 articles, most of which are worthy of attention....This is a very small collection...and it is wished to enlarge it, with a view to the promotion of the interests of science in general.” He asked “fellow citizens and patrons” to “turn their attention to the subject and preserve and transition to the College such articles as may fall in their way.”88 To help achieve his objective, Dwight included a description of some of the items the college held and invited members of the community to visit the collection. Whether or not any donations were made to Yale as a result of this appeal is unknown, but to be sure during Dwight’s stewardship, Yale was prepared to enter the nineteenth-century on stronger footing.

On Religion

One cannot discuss Yale in the eighteenth century without recognizing the extraordinary influence religion, particularly Congregational Christianity, played

87 Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 184-5.
88 Dwight, Timothy. "Letter to the Editor 1 -- no Title." Connecticut Courant (1791-1837), Sep 04, 1797.
in its operations. Whereas Harvard had become somewhat more secular as it gradually reduced its focus on the study of religion, Yale seemed to hold course.\textsuperscript{89} The fact that its faculty and president had to take oaths declaring their faith had much to do with the institution’s trajectory during this period.\textsuperscript{90} Of course Yale was not alone in its devotion to faith; the College of William and Mary was also chiefly focused on religion and the production of clergy, only their graduates were Anglicans. Likewise, the College of Rhode Island was founded to advance the Baptist denomination.\textsuperscript{91} With competing denominations each trying to establish their own institutions, Yale recognized the need for maintaining a keen focus on religious instruction.

The apostasy crisis of the 1720s illustrated the lengths Yale was willing to go in order to maintain its orthodoxy. During the Great Awakening, then-Rector Thomas Clap, had invited revivalism and itinerant “New Light” preachers to Yale which led to increasing problems on campus.\textsuperscript{92} He likely viewed their presence as

\textsuperscript{89} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 78.
\textsuperscript{90} Whitehead, \textit{The Separation of College and State}, 45.
\textsuperscript{91} George Marsden, \textit{The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 54.
\textsuperscript{92} “New Lights” were those who supported the Great Awakening and its focus on revivalism whereas Old Light opposed it. New Lights contended that some ministers had not had true conversion experiences and as a result, their congregation’s salvation was at stake. Old Lights saw this criticism as a threat to the established order. According to Fitzmier, for ministers like Jonathan Edwards, the divisions in Congregationalism had been around for some time. Questions that contributed to the rise of this debate included: “How badly had sin debilitated and individual human being? Was the effect total, leaving the moral agent entirely helpless? Or did sinners have access to some remnant of genuine virtue by which they could leverage themselves into salvation? If the Holy Spirit had somehow to renovate a sinner in order to enable true goodness, how did this occur?...How could an individual or a church differentiate between genuine piety and mere feeling parading itself as true religion?” Beyond that, Dwight has been categorized as an Edwardsen – who disagreed with the Halfway Covenant and “steered a middle course between the limited atonement of traditional Calvinism [only the Elect could be saved] and the unlimited, boundless scope of the atonement held by the Universalists.” p. 106-7, 115.
a means to help inspire increased interest in religion. According to George Marsden, this 1741 decision led “the awakened students” to call out “…many of the clergy and declared Yale and its faculty spiritually dead.”

The Yale alum and minister James Davenport went so far as make defamatory statements of New Haven First Church Reverend Joseph Noyes and encouraged Yale students, who were required to attend the school’s church, to seek spiritual guidance at other churches. Since Clap could not control what Davenport and others said, he decided to issue orders preventing students from attending itinerant services, eventually expelling two students for attending New Light services while on vacation.

Although he had banned itinerant preachers from campus, students still traveled to see them and as a result, became more willing to question their superiors at the college. These decisions seems to confirm the characterization of Yale College as a sectarian institution. For Clap, the New Light movement with its focus on emotionalism would jeopardize religious learning and Yale College itself.

It is interesting to note that in the following decade Clap would reverse his position on the New Lights and find himself aligned with them. Reasons for this reversal abound. One possibility is that New Lights, were, “in the long run, less prone to tolerance than some of the moderate Old Lights.” In addition, New Lights were becoming a more powerful force in Connecticut politics, a force that Clap would rather work with than against. Still, another rationale for Clap’s

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95 Hoeveler, *Creating the American Mind*, 69.
96 Hoeveler, *Creating the American Mind*, 68.
97 Marsden, *The Soul of the American University*, 55.
decision was the founding of a new college in Princeton, New Jersey; a college that embraced the Great Awakening and could potentially syphon off students who might otherwise attend Yale.98 While it can be rightly argued that Clap’s change of stance was a power-grab, it came at a cost; ultimately, he was never able to fully gain the complete support of either group.

Not only did Clap have to wrestle with divisions between New Lights and Old Lights, but he also had to reckon with the Anglican population. Yale had Anglican members amongst its student body, and if Clap treated them with excessive harshness or attempted to bar admission to others, it could result in interference from the crown if the aggrieved parties appealed. As a result, Clap allowed Anglicans to travel to West Haven to worship as long as doing so did not interfere with their academic responsibilities at Yale.99 By 1753 Clap was no longer willing to accept this situation and decreed that Anglican students must worship and receive their religious instruction on campus by Congregationalist ministers.100 News of this state of affairs reached New York City where future King’s College president and past Yale graduate, the Anglican Samuel Johnson, criticized Clap’s decision.101 In the opinion of his biographer, Johnson’s position

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98 Hoeveler, Creating the American Mind, 72.
100 Tucker, Puritan Protagonist, 173.
101 King’s College was itself born out of controversy. There was a great debate over whether or not it should an Anglican institution or Presbyterian. In the end, members of the Dutch Reformed Church were able to secure a professor to represent their interests, the presidency was not to be exclusively open to Anglicans and the institution would admit students without regard to religion. For more see Hoeveler Creating the American Mind, p. 131-137.
was a clear illustration of the rise of liberalism in North American education.\textsuperscript{102} Johnson went so far as to argue that the incorporation of the school was itself illegal since that was a prerogative of the crown. He suggested that if Anglicans complained, then the school’s charter might be revoked.\textsuperscript{103} As a consequence of this blowback, Clap rescinded the discriminatory policy.\textsuperscript{104}

Clap had a desire to exercise total control over the college, and one way that desire manifested itself was through the creation of a College Church. For Clap, it was crucial for the College to have its own church since the institution was a religious one distinct from the broader community. In order for this to take place, the school would need to separate itself from the First Church in New Haven and hire a Professor of Divinity, which Clap was able to achieve in June of 1757.\textsuperscript{105} According to one scholar, with the creation of this church “the New Lights gained an influential man [in Thomas Clap]...and a new congregation comprised of some of the finest young minds in New England.” It was this church that Dwight would join during his time as a tutor in 1774.\textsuperscript{106} Clap was able to bring this church into being by bypassing the religious authority responsible for churches in the New Haven region by utilizing the College Charter.\textsuperscript{107} While he was able to successfully establish the new church, it should be noted that only eight students out of the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[107] Gabriel, \textit{Religion and Learning at Yale}, 77
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approximately one hundred in attendance at that time signed the petition which permitted Clap to take action.\textsuperscript{108}

Stiles also had a strong commitment to the Congregationalist faith although in comparison to Clap he was somewhat more moderate. He required that all students attend chapel each Sunday even in the face of criticism from Anglican parents, yet he permitted students to attend other churches once a term. In addition, Stiles seemed to sense the drift away from religion. Indeed, during the 1780s and 1790s, parts of the nation were beginning to embrace deism.\textsuperscript{109} In a letter to a French army chaplain, Stiles acknowledged that he “had acquired much knowledge from the great and learned men of all sects of Christians, nay, from Deists, from Mohametans, and even from the disciples of the Bonzes and Brahams; that time has, or ought to have arrived, when religious disputes should be contemned, so far as, wither by inimical or inquisitorial influences, they prevent a philosophical urbanity, and a most ample progress of the Sciences.”\textsuperscript{110} At the same time, Stiles worked to mend the divisions present in Connecticut Congregationalism.\textsuperscript{111} As a minister himself, Stiles’s desire to promote Christianity may help to explain why he decided to offer instruction in ecclesiastical history in an attempt to counter the growing infidel movement.\textsuperscript{112} It follows that this why some do not consider Yale to be a hotbed of deism during this period; even in

\textsuperscript{110} Quoted in Gabriel, \textit{Religion and Learning at Yale}, 47.
\textsuperscript{111} Hoeveler, \textit{Creating the American Mind}, 266.
\textsuperscript{112} Morgan, \textit{Gentle Puritan}, 374, 377.
Stiles’s day, those who would speak against Yale pointed to the fact that it was led by members of the church.113

Religious convictions held by the Corporation colored the selection of Stiles’s successor, Timothy Dwight. They had some worries about Dwight’s adherence to his spiritual and biological grandfather Johnathan Edwards. In particular, they were concerned about his rejection of the Halfway Covenant which permitted baptized parents to have their own children baptized in the Congregationalist church even if they themselves had not undergone a conversion experience and become full members of the church. The Corporation’s concern was not without merit. Upon his appointment to lead the church in Greenfield, Connecticut, Dwight implemented his policy much to the chagrin of many of the worshipers there. In spite of this, those who would choose Yale’s next president were swayed by Dwight’s reputation as a teacher and his relative fame.114

By the time Dwight assumed the presidency, he found that many students had lost the devotion and belief in revelation that was supposed to characterize Yale students.115 It seemed that a more radical version of the Enlightenment had taken hold at Yale. Matthew R. Dutton, a tutor under Dwight, bolstered this view when he remarked that “The College, when [Dwight] came to its presidency, was

115 Fitzmier describes the spectrum of Congregationalism. The left included those ministers who were tending towards Unitarianism and denied the trinity. The center who were also known as Old Calvinists who “professed the doctrine of the Trinity...operated on the ecclesiology outlined in the Halfway Covenant of the seventeenth century, and adhered in large measure to the traditions of piety set forth by their Puritan forebears.” The right – of which Dwight was a member – followed the theology of Jonathan Edwards and for the most part “rejected the ecclesiology of the Halfway Covenant.” P. 67.
in a dreadful state of disorder, impiety and wickedness. Infidelity was so common, and so generally thought to be an indication of genius and spirit, that an aspiring, ambitious youth hardly dared avow his belief in the Christian religion....Doctor Dwight, with his constitution ardour and intrepidity threw himself into the gap, and stayed the progress of this overflowing scourge...”\textsuperscript{116} Dutton’s use of the word “infidelity” was not coincidental, Dwight had made his position against infidelity clear in 1788 when he published his work \textit{The Triumph of Infidelity}. The piece, a satire in verse, tells a story wherein Satan comes to America to support his cause of infidelity. In the poem, Dwight accosts Catholics, Universalists, Voltaire, Hume and deists while remarking approvingly of early Christians and the Protestant Reformation.\textsuperscript{117} While it is reasonable to call into question Dutton’s recollection as it detailed events that that took place years before he arrived in New Haven, other accounts by students on campus for Dwight’s ascension seem to back up Dutton’s claim and suggest that Dwight’s efforts were at least initially successful.\textsuperscript{118} Timothy Bishop (class of 1796) observed that under Dwight “affairs have taken a quite different situation from what they were under Dr. Stiles, the government of the college at present possessing more energy and claiming greater respect...”\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{118} Dutton (Yale class of 1808) attended Andover Theological seminary before returning to Yale as a tutor in 1810-1811. Dutton would most likely have been aligned with Dwight’s ideology as he would have been handpicked for the position. Dwight even delivered the sermon at the Stratford Congregational Church to celebrate Dutton’s installation as pastor. For more see Dexter’s \textit{Biographical Sketches Vol. VI}.
This is not to say that Dwight’s theological position did not go unchallenged. In 1791, New Haven attorney and Yale graduate Abraham Bishop, wrote his own poem in response to Dwight called *The Triumph of Truth: History and Visions of Clio*. In it, Bishop stood up for the theology of the Reverend Charles Chauncy who espoused the doctrine of universal salvation.\(^{120}\) It is reasonable to surmise that if these ideas made it into print and were delivered so close to campus the very day before commencement that Dwight would have been aware of them and taken steps to mitigate their impact. John Ogden also leveled an attack on Dwight calling out the policy that prevented students from attending other congregations that they or their families may have preferred. In Ogden’s mind, Dwight took this approach in order to “spread Edwardean tenets, of which his grandfather and Calvin were teachers, that his family pride may be indulged, and his desire to appear a champion, and leader in divinity and politics may be gratified.”\(^{121}\) Ogden was upset that those of Dwight’s theological persuasion were utilizing education so “that they may control the government, through the instrumentality of their pupils, who may obtain public place in any kind and of every degree.”\(^{122}\) While it may seem that Ogden was painting an overly dark picture, from his point of view, it must have seemed like a reasonable prediction. Whatever the rationale, Dwight certainly demonstrated he was willing to take the steps he deemed necessary to maintain control over the theology his students encountered.


\(^{121}\) Ogden, *An Appeal to the Candid*, 4.

\(^{122}\) Ogden, *An Appeal to the Candid*, 15.
One Dwight biographer has suggested, that it was not only just exposure to Enlightenment texts but also exposure to the French during the Revolution that caused students to turn away from religion. In Cunningham’s interpretation, the French, “…in coming to our aid...had brought the philosophy of men in rebellion against the teachings of the church.”\textsuperscript{123} Dwight’s own writings bear this out. In a 1798 sermon, given within the context of the Quasi-War with France, Dwight railed against the French philosophes referring to Voltaire and Diderot as both “men of talents” and “atheists” whose \textit{Encyclopédie} portrayed Christianity as both “absurd and ridiculous.”\textsuperscript{124} While Dwight could not wholly prevent these new ideas from reaching his students, he could, and did register his disapproval of them.

This decline of religion was a nationwide phenomenon and was one of the main problems that Dwight witnessed during his presidency. He was terrified of what he perceived to be shift in a country and college influenced in part by the French Revolution. This perceived decline in morality and a tendency towards skepticism was noted years later by Lyman Beecher in his autobiography. According to Beecher, the students who were his senior “were infidels and called each other Voltaire, Rousseau, D’Alembert, etc.”\textsuperscript{125} Further evidence of these changing modes of thought can been seen in a disputation created by the senior class entitled “Are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament the word of

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\item[\textsuperscript{123}] Cunningham, \textit{Timothy Dwight}, 294.
\item[\textsuperscript{124}] Dwight, Timothy, \textit{The Duty of Americans, at the Present Crisis: Illustrated in a Discourse, Preached on the Fourth of July, 1798.} (New Haven: Printed by Thomas and Samuel Green, 1798), 10.
\item[\textsuperscript{125}] Beecher, Lyman. \textit{Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc. of Lyman Beecher Vol. I.} (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1866), 43. Morgan has been critical of historians who have taken Beecher’s account at face value. He notes that Beecher told his story fifty years after the fact. See Morgan “Ezra Stiles and Timothy Dwight,” 105.
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Rather than suppress this kind of heresy from the outset as Clap might have, Dwight tackled it head on. He debated the students and preached about the subject for six months. Even at the end of his tenure, he engaged with questions such as “Can the Immorality of the Soul be Proved from the Light of Nature?”

It is conceivable that in addition to a true commitment to his denomination, Dwight was also concerned about guarding against new positions of influence that could emerge in light of new ideas. If people turned away from religion, they may not respect his position as president as much as had been the case in the past. In any event, he seems to have been successful in his efforts, at least initially. Evidence of his success in helping students see the light can be seen in college church membership, which at times was measured at over fifty percent. Furthermore, most Yale students were no longer willing to publicly criticize the divine origins of the gospel. Many of them were swept up in a revival of religion led by Dwight and others like him that pushed against deism and other secular notions. Still, although the number of “converted” Yale students in 1801-02 did see an increase, it was not a state of affairs that would last. It has been suggested that Dwight went so far as to sponsor a revival at Yale as a way to use “evangelical Christianity (as) a means by which Federalists might better control the social

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126 Quoted in Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 300.
127 Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 301.
128 Theodore Dwight. President Dwight’s Decisions of Questions Discussed by The Senior Class in Yale College In 1813 and 1814 From Stenographic Notes (New York: Johnathan Leavitt, 1833).
129 Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 304.
131 Kelley, Yale: A History, 123. It has been pointed out that the increase in membership at the College Church took place after revivals began at other Connecticut churches, thus Yale was more influenced from the outside than the other way around in this instance. See Morgan “Ezra Stiles and Timothy Dwight” for more details.
disorder resulting from the Revolution."\textsuperscript{132} While he supported the revival of 1802, he did so in an effort to try to maintain control of the situation and prevent the over-exuberance of the First Great Awakening.\textsuperscript{133} In spite of Dwight’s efforts to reinvigorate piety on campus, the disputation records from November, 1813 to April, 1814 indicate that by this period secular thinking was becoming more prevalent. Out of the forty-one disputation records that were recorded, only two appear to have dealt with theology explicitly while an additional two examined the relationship between the state and religion. The vast majority of disputation records could be categorized as being political or philosophical in nature.\textsuperscript{134} Perhaps even more telling, from its founding in 1701 to 1815, Yale saw a steady decline in the percentage of graduates who entered the ministry. Between the years 1805 and 1815, not even eighteen percent of Yale men embarked on a ministerial way of life.\textsuperscript{135} In the end, even the power of the presidency was insufficient to stem the rising tide of secularism amongst Yale students.

\textit{The President in the Larger Intellectual Community}

In addition to managing the way Yale was perceived by the public, Yale presidents were also part of the larger intellectual community, and their engagement both furthered the advancement of knowledge and the development of higher education in North America. President Clap, besides being interested in

\textsuperscript{132} Wood, \textit{Empire of Liberty}, 602.
\textsuperscript{133} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 123.
\textsuperscript{134} Dwight, \textit{President Dwight’s Decisions of Questions}.
\textsuperscript{135} Between the years 1701 and 1744 fifty percent of Yale graduates entered the ministry. Between 1745 and 1778 that number dropped to thirty-three percent, between 1778 and 1792 the number declined to twenty-five percent. See Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, p. 123.
theological matters, was a student of the Enlightenment and had a particular interest in astronomy. In 1744 he corresponded with President John Winthrop of Harvard about a comet he had seen. Winthrop had already noted the comet and was debating whether or not to publish anything on the matter but was complimentary about Clap’s findings.136 His interest in astronomy was noted again in 1758 when he found himself caught up in the excitement of the expected reappearance of Halley’s Comet.137 Indeed, Clap seems to have fully embraced the theories of Newton as he proclaimed in his, An Essay on the Nature and Foundation of Moral Virtue and Obligation “Thus there are many important Truths in natural Philosophy and Mathematics, which, when they come to be fairly proposed, were never doubted of; such as the general Laws of Attraction, the Weight of the Atmosphere, Rules of Fluxions, &c. and yet it is probable that these Things never came into the Mind of any Mortal, till they were suggested by the great Genius of Sir Isaac Newton.”138 Clap even went so far as to engage in dialogue concerning scientific matters with Quaker Peter Collinson and the deist Benjamin Franklin, illustrating the point that intellectual discovery would not be a purely Congregationalist endeavor.139

Ezra Stiles also reached out to others to engage in the wider world. During his presidency, he also contacted John Winthrop; this time the subject centered on

136 Winthrop to Clap, April 23, 1744, Thomas Clap, President of Yale College, Records (RU 130). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.
137 Tucker, Puritan Proponent, 96.
the creation of an American philosophical society.\textsuperscript{140} The desire reflected the Enlightenment belief in the establishment of institutions where new ideas could be presented and debated relatively free from religious constraints. According to one scholar, through his correspondence with Francis Alison, the Scottish educated minister from Philadelphia, Stiles was also exposed to the ideals of Scottish Enlightenment by learning about their universities.\textsuperscript{141} In his diary, Stiles even went so far as copy down excerpts from the travel diary of a traveler named Henry Marchant who, along with Benjamin Franklin, visited the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow and penned glowing reviews of the experience.\textsuperscript{142} Stiles also introduced \textit{Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres} by University of Edinburgh professor Hugh Blair in the 1780s showing that his curiosity about the ideas of Scotland was not merely a personal concern.\textsuperscript{143} This evidence of Stiles’s interest in the Scottish method of higher education highlights his openness to change and his recognition that Yale was not an institution that existed purely in a vacuum. In this way, he could be compared to College of New Jersey president John Witherspoon, who, being from Scotland himself, was a pioneer in utilizing Scottish Enlightenment ideas “...to reconcile republicanism and Christianity.”\textsuperscript{144} The notions of the Scottish Enlightenment as applied to education focused on determining what the crucial virtues and vices of a commercial society were to

\textsuperscript{140} Morgan, \textit{Gentle Puritan}, 159.
\textsuperscript{141} Douglas Sloan, \textit{The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal} (Teachers College, Columbia University: Teachers College Press, 1971), 86.
\textsuperscript{142} Sloan, \textit{The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal}, 87.
articulate education’s role in fostering the former while inhibiting the latter.\textsuperscript{145} Current scholarship has concluded that those engaged in the Scottish Enlightenment were focused on spreading the word of its ideas and hoped to compartmentalize learning into discreet disciplines even more than was the case theretofore.\textsuperscript{146} Witherspoon, in following these inclinations, worked to modernize the curriculum, he incorporated new thinking, new scientific equipment, and improved the library collection.\textsuperscript{147} While Yale presidents like Stiles made similar improvements, the focus on good teaching did not manifest to a large degree.

Some scholars have considered Stiles to be one of the \textit{philosophes} who have become synonymous with the Age of Enlightenment. Edmund Morgan has suggested that he was “...a somewhat hesitant \textit{philosophe} to be sure, still clinging to the forms of Christianity, but with his heart dedicated to truth in a way that the \textit{philosophes} understood.”\textsuperscript{148} In other words, although he was not a deist, he was willing to accept the role of logic and rational thought, at least to a degree, as crucial to the construction of knowledge. In so doing, Stiles’s stance helps highlight the fact that he, and the institution he led, were not simply cloistered domains for the privileged but places where leadership truly thought about ideas.

The role of the president of the college acting as an ambassador of the school in the broader intellectual milieu continued during Timothy Dwight’s tenure. Biographer Charles Cunningham noted that people would look to the president of

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Robinson, “The Scottish Enlightenment and the American Founding,” 182.}
\footnote{Morgan, \textit{Gentle Puritan}, 77.}
\end{footnotes}
the college as a font of wisdom. In Dwight’s case he was a powerful voice in recommending ministers for local congregations, but perhaps of even greater importance, brand new colleges and seminaries asked for his advice on who should serve in the roles of president and faculty. In so doing, Dwight was continuing a practice of engagement with those beyond the walls of Yale College. This practice helped to both advance knowledge more broadly and the development of higher education in particular.

**Slavery**

Yale College and its leadership during the second half of the eighteenth century had a complicated relationship with slavery. During this period, New England was intertwined in the slave trade and, at its height in the years leading up to the Revolution, Connecticut was home to approximately 6,500 enslaved persons. Thomas Clap himself was an enslaver although he and his wife eventually freed his slaves.

Far more is known about Ezra Stiles’s involvement with the institution. In 1756, long before he took over the reins of Yale, Stiles took possession of a ten year-old boy whom he named Newport. In spite of his status as a slave owner, in August of 1773, Stiles convinced Yale graduate Samuel Hopkins to sign on to a plan to send two blacks to Africa on an evangelizing mission. The plan depended

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on “...those who are convinced of the iniquity of the slave trade and are sensible of the great inhumanity and cruelty of enslaving...and are ready to bear testimony against it in all proper ways, and do their utmost to put a stop to it....by cheerfully contributing according to their ability.”¹⁵³ Perhaps due to the work of Hopkins, in March of 1775, Stiles baptized Newport “into full Communion with the Church.”¹⁵⁴ In spite of this gesture, Stiles did not emancipate Newport until the very week he became president of the College in 1778. It is unclear why Stiles reached this decision; perhaps he viewed it as unseemly for a Yale President to be an enslaver. What is certain however, is that four years later, Newport, who had been living in Rhode Island returned to Connecticut and was employed by Stiles at $20 per year. In addition, Newport’s two-year old son was “bound” to Stiles until he reached twenty-four years of age, to serve with Stiles’s Native American indentured servant named Aaron.¹⁵⁵

In addition to his personal connection to the institution of slavery, as president of the college, Stiles made sure that his students engaged with the topic. In a diary entry from December, 1779 he indicated that he had students debate the question of “Whether Enslaving Negroes be right?” The fact that he immediately followed up the question with the term “Negative” may indicate that the student who took that position prevailed or that he considered that the proper answer to the question.¹⁵⁶ The question came up again in February of 1788 as

¹⁵⁴ Stiles, Literary Diary Vol. I. 525.
well, and although these are the only mentions of the institution in his diary that does not necessarily mean that students were not asked to wrestle with the topic at other times.¹⁵⁷

By 1790, six years after Connecticut passed a statute providing for a slow process of emancipation in the state, Stiles had shifted his opinion more towards the side of abolition. In that year a Society for the Abolition of Slavery was formed, and Stiles signed its foundational document as a sign of support.¹⁵⁸ Two years later, he described the efforts of British abolitionist William Wilberforce in bringing legislation before Parliament as “wonderful,” and commented that this could lead to “an increasing Conviction of the Injustice of the Slave Trade, & a Wish for grad. Abolition of Slavery” in the United States.¹⁵⁹

Timothy Dwight was also an enslaver but did not share his predecessor’s increasingly reformist, though still compromised views. Dwight purchased an enslaved women by the name of Naomi in 1788, four years after the gradual emancipation law was passed. Eventually, she was able to earn her freedom in 1795, the year Dwight became the president of the College.¹⁶⁰ During his tenure, he was involved in the education of prominent pro-slavery figures such as Samuel Morse and John C. Calhoun. Dwight did not actively promote slavery, but he apologized for the system that maintained it. In one of his published works towards the end of his life, Dwight decried slavery as “misery, interminable but by death,” yet, at the same time, he noted that the “Southern Planter, who

¹⁵⁷ Stiles, *Literary Diary Vol. III*, 305
¹⁶⁰ Dugdale, 12
receives slaves from his parent by inheritance certainly deserves no censure for
holding them. He has no agency in procuring them: and the law does not permit
him to set them free.” He also went on to argue that the treatment of enslaved
persons in British colonies was worse than that of the American South.  

While Yale was established in a Yankee state, its presidents were very
much enmeshed in the milieu of the day. While some steps were taken to engage
in dialogue surrounding the institution of slavery and men like Stiles seemed to
turn around on the subject by joining an abolition society, his successor was not
quite as liberal minded.

**Discipline**

One of the more challenging matters that the rectors and presidents of Yale
had to deal with was an issue that faces almost every school leader: enforcing rules.
According to Craig Smith, “The codes of conduct were largely enforced based on
principles of honor, mainly through oath taking and public shaming.” If any
individual Yale president stands out as a harsh disciplinarian wedded to the idea
of preserving order, it would be Thomas Clap. When he took over the reins of the
school he went about creating a new set of laws. Whereas earlier Yale laws
referenced those of Harvard, these new rules were much more comprehensive. The
regulations dealt with the admissions process, detailed what a student’s religious

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161 Dwight, Timothy, 1752-1817, and Jedidiah Morse. *Remarks On the Review of
Inchiquin's Letters: Published In the Quarterly Review ; Addressed to the Right
Honourable George Canning, Esquire,* (Boston: Published by Samuel T. Armstrong,
1815), 81-84.

162 Craig Bruce Smith. *American Honor: The Creation of the Nation’s Ideals during the
Revolutionary Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 54.
life should look like (which held a prominent place in the written laws right after the section about admission and prior to academics), “penal laws,” room regulations, the particulars of commencement, and library policies.\textsuperscript{163} Clap’s approach to discipline seemed to be grounded in instilling fear in the students. In the eyes of his biographer, “Clap was certain that admonition, reprimands, and fines were proper penalties for minor infractions, but chronic offenders should be removed from the college community, for these students exerted a ‘pernicious’ influence on the entire student body.”\textsuperscript{164} This is not to say that all students would acquiesce to the pressure Clap brought to bear. When they did disobey, Clap was inclined to respond harshly with punishments ranging from fines to the denial of degrees, all dependent upon the infraction in question with more serious incidents warranting more extreme consequences.\textsuperscript{165} Still, Clap’s determination to make examples of those he considered to be recalcitrant did not deter students who were unhappy with his leadership, which, when combined with his failing health, would eventually lead to his resignation. In some ways, his approach was not unlike that of the British towards her colonies in the lead-up to the Revolutionary War and the results were similar: a change of administration.

During the tenure of Ezra Stiles, the enforcement of discipline loosened to a degree. While Stiles wore a wig and gown on campus in order to demonstrate his authority, he also was willing to accord students some autonomy. He accepted the

\textsuperscript{165} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 243.
presence of student clubs at Yale but did not go so far as to allow them to put on any types of plays for fear of the controversy they could create. Rather than expel students, Stiles tried to coerce them into leaving on their own accord. Even when expulsions did take place, Stiles was willing to readmit recalcitrant students as long as they would confess their crimes to the entire college body and, in doing so, illustrate their regret. By 1794, he did away with the tradition of requiring freshman to stand up when tutors came into the chapel; he also only required those same freshman to go without their hats in the college yard for one quarter rather than two. In so doing, Stiles recognized the broader changes of egalitarianism that were present in the new United States and began to apply them at Yale.

By the time Dwight assumed the presidency, he was ready to reform the disciplinary system of Yale. During his tenure the school moved away from both fining students and from requiring them to publically confess their transgressions while still reserving the right to expel, rusticate or suspend offenders. Dwight seemed to accord in part with President Witherspoon of the College of New Jersey, who instructed his staff to “govern always, but beware of governing too much. Convince your pupils...that you would rather gratify than thwart them; that you wish to see them happy, and desire to impose no restraints but such as their real advantage and the order of the college render indispensable. Put a wide difference between youthful follies and foibles, and those acts which manifest a malignant

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167 Rustication referred to students who would be sent to the country to study with a minister. If the minister certified that the guilty party had accorded themselves well they had the potential to return to school. Kelley, *Yale: A History*, 121-2 and Gabriel, *Religion and Learning at Yale*, 62.
spirit, and an intentional insubordination.”

It is possible that Dwight may have viewed the draconian approaches employed at Yale as a remnant of a bygone era and may have been more in line with Witherspoon’s approach. America had won the Revolution and was embarking on the great project of nation-building. Perhaps Dwight was willing to turn away from what he considered to be antiquated methods towards the use of persuasion as a means of influencing student behavior.

For one thing, Dwight, along with a committee tasked with reforming college laws, recommended abolishing the fagging system which allowed upperclassmen to, in essence, reduce freshman to their servants. This decision was not well received by the faculty who believed such discipline was necessary in order to mold wild boys into men. Dwight was forced to modify his proposal and while sophomores were now prevented from abusing freshman, juniors and seniors still could. The fagging system would not be completely abolished until the early nineteenth century, nearly ten years after Harvard did away with the practice.

According to Cunningham, Dwight “…treated the students as gentlemen, demanding no other marks of respect than those which gentlemen naturally render one another. He democratically abolished distinctions between the classes, no longer recognizing any superiority of one over another. Notably, he freed the freshman from their servility.”

Rather than focusing on public humiliation, Dwight preferred to try to persuade students in public, sometimes

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169 Kelley, Yale: A History, 119. The committee to revise the college laws started its work in 1793 under president Ezra Stiles but would not complete the process until Dwight’s tenure.
170 Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 258.
recruiting their parents to assist in his efforts. It is perhaps due to these methods that Yale students tended towards more moral behavior under Dwight’s administration. Student Timothy Bishop, who studied at Yale under the presidencies of both Stiles and Dwight, noted that “It is surprising to see what a difference there is in the behavior of the students since last year; at present there is no card playing, at least very little of it, no nightly revellings, breaking tutors windows, breaking glass bottles, etc., but all is order and quietness, more so I believe than was ever known for any length of time in this college.” The fact that Dwight’s approach differed from his predecessors does not mean that he tolerated academic incompetence; however, if students were not making adequate progress the president was willing to convince them that another pursuit might be more appropriate.

During the Revolutionary Era, Yale, like all educational institutions, had to deal with the fact that they were managing young men who could at times be boisterous or even outright insubordinate. The methods employed to keep students in check ranged from extreme harshness to a more tender style. In the end, the style of Clap seems to have been recognized as ultimately a destructive force for the college and was cast aside for a more temperate approach for a new century.

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172 Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 258-9.
Navigating the Revolution

The most earth-shaking event to occur during this era was of course the American Revolution. When fighting broke out at Lexington and Concord in 1775, Yale was being led by Naphtali Daggett, who held the position of president pro tempore. In that year, Daggett and the Corporation made the decision to suspend commencement ceremonies conferring diplomas in private instead. While this was clear evidence of the Revolution impacting the school for all to see – the ceremony was an event drawing eminent men from Connecticut and beyond – yet the other issue Daggett had to contend with was the decision of the General Assembly to cut funding to the school.\textsuperscript{173} By 1776, students were so dissatisfied with Daggett’s leadership and teaching – he was considered quite boring - they petitioned the Corporation asking for his ouster.\textsuperscript{174} Like Clap before him, the Corporation rejected the request, but this did not bode well for the acting president. In December of the same year, Daggett and the Corporation decided that because “of the difficulty of subsisting the students for want of regular commons...” that they should be sent home.\textsuperscript{175} The following year, Daggett, along with a committee of two others were tasked with securing the school’s important papers and asked “...to remove the whole or part of the Library and all the appurtenances of College to such places as they shall think convenient and safe.”\textsuperscript{176} The Corporation also appealed to the town of New Haven asking the civil authority

\textsuperscript{173} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 85.
\textsuperscript{174} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 85, 89.
\textsuperscript{175} Yale Corporation Minutes, December 10, 1776.
\textsuperscript{176} Yale Corporation Minutes, April 1, 1777.
to help protect the school’s buildings by not quartering troops in them.\textsuperscript{177} In their appeal to the state, Daggett and the Fellows suggested that if American forces who opposed the British occupied the buildings it might make them targets. If those buildings were damaged then the school would not be able to fulfill its mission to prepare young men for Connecticut.\textsuperscript{178} This turned out to be the last act Daggett would make as president; he tendered his resignation at the same time leading Ezra Stiles to guide the college through the rest of the Revolution and into the Federal Era.

Supplying the school was an ongoing struggle. In December of 1778, Stiles, like his predecessor, was forced to send students home early due to a paucity of supplies. Unlike Daggett, however, Stiles, reached out to the parents of his students suggesting that the boys needed to be at Yale rather than at home to receive the best education and that he needed their support to supply the school. His appeal seemed to have the desired effect as the school was soon reopened.\textsuperscript{179}

In July of 1779, the British invaded New Haven bringing the conflict closer to Yale than at any previous point. Stiles acted quickly, dismissing students, ordering his own children away and securing important college documents before sending them to safety under the care of his youngest son.\textsuperscript{180} When Stiles returned to survey the school the following day, he was pleased to see it was virtually free from damage, possibly due to the actions of loyalists who were also supporters of

\textsuperscript{177} Yale Corporation Minutes, April 1, 1777.  
\textsuperscript{178} Yale Corporation Minutes, April 1, 1777.  
\textsuperscript{179} Morgan, \textit{Gentle Puritan}, 331.  
Yale.\textsuperscript{181} Thus ended the invasion of New Haven, to be sure the most dramatic event to take place at Yale during the Revolution. Although supplying the college would continue to be an issue, the institution was able to survive the conflict intact and would continue to expand in the years that followed.

By the year 1800, democratic ideals were ascendant. It has been suggested that “the presidential election of Thomas Jefferson led to the uncoupling of social and political power, drowning in a democratic tidal wave the colonial belief that authority should be exercised through the uncontested leadership of a recognized cadre of families.”\textsuperscript{182} Yet at Yale, by and large, this seems to not to be the case. Indeed, during the era from the 1740s through the early nineteenth-century, the presidents of Yale College played an important role in maintaining the status quo. Yet at the same time, they also had a hand in slowly guiding Yale forward in terms of its growth both physically and intellectually. Although the times when these men presided over the school were turbulent they were able to chart a course for the institution that ensured its survival and growth in the years to come.

\textsuperscript{181} Morgan, \textit{Gentle Puritan}, 334.
\textsuperscript{182} Appleby, \textit{Inheriting the Revolution}, 6.
CHAPTER TWO: THE BACKBONE OF YALE: STAFF, FACULTY, AND IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

_Daggett’s Day_

During the British invasion of New Haven in July of 1779, some members of the Yale community took action in order to defend their colony. Perhaps the most remarkable story of that day was of the aged professor and former president _pro tempore_, Naphtali Daggett. Unlike President Ezra Stiles, who avoided the military conflict, Daggett grabbed a musket and went to meet the enemy. While his compatriots retreated from the advancing forces, Daggett remained to fight, firing on the advancing redcoats before eventually surrendering.¹ Daggett later recalled his ordeal in a sworn statement:

...they called me a damned old Rebel and swore they would kill me instantly. They demanded, “What did I fire on us for?” I replied, “Because it is the exercise of war.”....One of them gave me four gashes on my head with the edge of his bayonet, to the skull bone, which caused a painful effusion of blood...They then bade me march towards the main body...where some officers soon inquired of me who I was. I gave them my name, station, and Character, and begged their protection, that I might not be any more abused or hurt by the soldiers. They promised me their protection, but I was robbed of my shoes and was committed to one of the most unfeeling savages that ever breathed. They then drove me with the main body, a hasty march of five miles or more...²

² Daggett, quoted in Rae, 415-416.
While Daggett escaped his predicament with his life long enough to state his account, he would never be the same, dying the following year, almost certainly of the wounds he sustained.³

While the events above sound like something out of a war novel, the reality for those who worked at Yale College during the Revolutionary era was usually far more mundane. But that mundane existence served a purpose. The professors and tutors employed in New Haven had a unique role to instruct students in an ever-evolving curriculum in order to produce graduates who would be ready to lead the field in divinity, law, government and business. They and the curriculum they implemented and instructional methods they employed had a role to play in accomplishing this mission. While there were moments when these men helped to push the institution forward, more often than not they served as middlemen of sorts – acting as an instrument of the institution designed to maintain its standing in society at large.

**Professors and Tutors**

When one thinks of colleges and universities the image of sage professors with decades of experience comes to mind, yet Yale College during the eighteenth century employed virtually none. The fact that Yale did not boast an impressive teaching faculty put it at odds with the more established universities on the other side of the Atlantic. Both Scottish and English universities boasted high quality, established chairs that were held by “first-rate thinkers.”⁴ The European model

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³ Morgan, *Gentle Puritan*, 333.
⁴ Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 246.
saw tutors, who were recently graduated themselves, work side by side with established professors, learning from them while teaching at the same time. These intellectuals also worked to produce new knowledge. Yale, on the other hand, was content to rely on tutors as its primary teaching faculty and employ knowledge constructed by others.

One reason why Yale asked so much of its tutors in terms of teaching was because there was a paucity of professors. In fact, Yale did not even have any professors during its first fifty-five years of existence, despite an evident will to hire. In 1746, Yale graduate, Philip Livingston, donated twenty-eight pounds sterling to the college, much of it earned through his involvement in slave trading.\(^5\)

In determining how it might best utilize these funds, the Yale Corporation was “of the opinion that it would most for the benefit and advantage of this College to have a Professor of Divinity, and that if the beginning of a fund for his maintenance was once laid it is probable that such generous donations might be made in addition thereunto as that the interest thereof might in some years afford a competent maintenance for such a professor.”\(^6\) It was determined that this position should be called the Livingstonian Professor of Divinity, but the donation alone was not enough to engage anyone suitable. While funding was insufficient for the time being, the Corporation did not lose interest in filling the position.

By 1752, the college decided to reach out to the Reverend Solomon Williams of Lebanon, CT to inquire as to his interest in filling the role of Professor of

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\(^6\) Yale Corporation Minutes, March 8, 1746.
Divinity. In addition to his religious functions in Lebanon, Williams also ran a grammar school in the town and was responsible for sending several students on to Yale. President Thomas Clap recognized that Williams was of the New Light persuasion but acceptably moderate; he felt that he could use the appointment to appeal to the General Assembly, which contained a growing number of New Lights. The Corporation agreed that, because they did not have the necessary funds to engage Williams, they should appeal to the colonial government for aid.

The following year, the General Assembly delivered. Its act declared that

...the students of the said College should have the best instructions in divinity, and the best patterns of preaching set before them....settling a learned, pious and orthodox Professor of Divinity in the said College would greatly tend to promote that good end and design....This Assembly being desirous to promote and encourage such a good design, do hereby grant, allow of, and order a general contribution to be made in all the religious societies in this Colony...and order that the money raised thereby be remitted to the President of said College to be improved by the Corporation towards the support of such a Professor.

In conjunction with the money contributed by the state, the college decided to lease property it held in Litchfield Country as well as sell a property in Cheshire in order to raise funds so they might hire a professor. By 1756, Yale finally had enough money, yet Williams indicated that he would not be able to accept the position, citing his old age and poor health. Consequently, the Corporation reached out to

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7 Yale Corporation Minutes, December 13, 1752.
9 Morgan, Gentle Puritan, 105.
10 Yale Corporation Minutes, December 13, 1752.
11 Yale Corporation Minutes, November 21, 1753.
12 Yale Corporation Minutes, November 21, 1753.
Naphtali Daggett. Daggett, who had been preaching in the College Hall since November 1755, was examined by the Corporation in order to ensure that the crisis brought upon by Rector Cutler in the 1720s would not be repeated.\footnote{Yale Corporation Minutes, March 3, 1756.} Upon meeting with the approval of the Corporation, Daggett made a confession of his faith during his installation, promising to “...always take all proper and reasonable measures such as Christian prudence may direct in my place and station to continue and propagate the doctrines contained in those summaries of religion in this College and transmit them to all future successions and generations; and I will use the like measure to prevent the contrary doctrines from prevailing in this School.”\footnote{Yale Corporation Minutes, March 3, 1756.} With this, Daggett became the first professor of divinity in Yale history at a salary of £60.\footnote{Yale Corporation Minutes, September 8, 1756.}

After Daggett, died in 1780, Samuel Wales assumed his post as professor of divinity in 1782 and held the position until 1793. In 1795, Timothy Dwight took on the responsibilities of the professorship in conjunction with his role as president of the college.

As the years passed, Yale established additional professorships. In 1778, Ezra Stiles was appointed professor of ecclesiastical history in addition to his role as president. Nehemiah Strong was the first professor of mathematics and natural philosophy to be hired by Yale in 1770. Appointed to his position due to president Clap’s inability to instruct these subjects, he would hold the position until 1781.\footnote{Kelley. \textit{Yale: A History}, 78.}

The role would remain unfilled until 1794 when Josiah Meigs would assume the
post. It was not until 1801 that Yale added a professor of law in the person of Elizur Goodrich. It is interesting to note that, in more than one case, Yale waited years to refill vacancies. This was most likely due to a combination of a lack of funds and an absence of qualified applicants to fill the positions. Whatever the reason, Yale students did not receive the same level of exposure to established thinkers as their British counterparts.

Like professors, tutors came and went, but they were arguably a steadier and more influential presence. The role of the tutor at a colonial college, in general and Yale in particular was at once a multifaceted and temporary position. Future president of the college, Timothy Dwight was an outlier serving for a period of six years. Tutors were expected to be responsible for those students under their charge while also being answerable to the president and Corporation. At times, they were forced to fill roles that were typically reserved for high-ranking college officials. Following the aftermath of the apostasy crisis of 1722 and the resignation of Rector Cutler, the daily affairs of the college were left largely in the hands of tutors – young men barely older than those they were tasked with supervising and instructing. Indeed, the college trustees “deputized [tutors] to enact all punishments save expulsion, which required the assent of at least two trustees.”

This state of affairs may have been what caused future College of New Jersey president Jonathan Edwards to remark upon his arrival in New Haven in June of 1724 as a Yale tutor, “This has been a remarkable week with me, with respect to

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19 Warch, School of the Prophets, 126.
despondencies, fears, perplexities...I have now abundant reason to be convinced of the troublesomeness and perpetual vexation of the world.”

At the same time, these positions were not permanent; tutors typically served for only a few years before moving on to bigger and better things.

To be a tutor or a professor was to be both a teacher and an example. Tutors and professors were expected to be of good moral character in order to earn and hold an appointment. Tutors were almost always selected from the pool of recent graduates. Indeed, it has been suggested that President Clap selected likely candidates even before they graduated so that he could prepare them for the post. His successor, Napthali Daggett, did not enjoy the same deference from the Corporation, which took over the responsibility of selecting tutors from the highest performing scholars. By the time of Stiles’s presidency, tutors were no longer a uniform set of future ministers, they were a mix of men intending on religious and secular careers.

Unlike the rare professor or president who were tasked with lecturing to students, as of 1745, tutors at Yale were responsible for the supervision of an entire class of students rather than any one academic discipline. This is not to say that tutors did not teach. Tutors instructed students on the texts they were expected to learn. In the eyes of some scholars, the job of the tutor “…was merely to see that

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21 Warch, *School of the Prophets,* 245.
23 Morgan, *Gentle Puritan,* 383.
the students learned what was in the books.” 25 As their responsibilities included an entire class, tutors taught all of the subjects and followed their students until they became seniors when the president took a more hands-on role in their education. 26 In addition, their engagement with students sometimes extended beyond the classroom as evidenced by Simeon Baldwin who helped to organize and direct a singing school for the sophomore class. 27

Working as a tutor at Yale came with certain benefits: seniority was one of them. Throughout Yale’s history during this period, the school remained one based in hierarchy, and tutors stood above all of the students who were enrolled in the institution. Even within the corps of tutors, there was a pecking order with those being appointed earliest at the top of the pyramid. 28 During Simeon Baldwin’s time in the position, he noted that the senior tutor made five pounds more than he did and had additional responsibilities that would later be “given to the dean of a Faculty.” 29 In addition to an elevated social standing within the college, Yale tutors also enjoyed a more practical benefit: a salary. Still, while their £70 (in 1778) did not equal as much as their Harvard counterparts, holding the position did provide a substantial amount of prestige. Although students certainly put some tutors through torturous ordeals like those detailed in chapter three, they also occasionally showed their respect. In March of 1784, Baldwin’s students

presented him with a coat. In commenting to his students on the gift they had bestowed upon him Baldwin remarked:

What more pleasing situation can a man have than to see himself surrounded by a circle of lively youth – whose whole attention is engrossed in the improvements of the mind....And All must be sensible that the pleasure of an instructor is very much by the Confidence & Affection of his pupils...
You [my students] will therefore please to receive my Assurances of affection & esteem - & that I shall ever take a pleasure in seeing your progress - & think myself bound by the strongest ties to promote – you’ll also receive my sincere thanks, both for the honor done me in the Compliment, & for so valuable & elegant a present.30

While it is possible that Baldwin made this statement in an attempt to stave off any future troubles with his pupils, it is more likely that in this case there was a sense of comradeship that must have developed between them. If more evidence is needed, it came in July when the same group presented their tutor with a satin vest and Florentine breeches as well as silk stockings.31 Like all teacher-student relationships, some were rosy and some were rocky. Yet no matter the relationship, the charge was the same: shape the boys of Yale into America’s future leaders.

Typical days for tutors were filled with prayer and instruction. Tutors, who were constantly responsible to look after students, listened to their charges deliver recitations for much of the day. Students were essentially required to memorize the textbook being studied while the tutor determined the degree to which the student succeeded.32 In addition to leading classes, a tutor’s day also included

30 Baldwin, Life and Letters, 196-7.
31 Baldwin, Life and Letters, 197.
32 Kelley, Yale: A History, 81.
prayers directly after wakeup and right before supper.\textsuperscript{33} This daily routine was the norm six days a week. It was a difficult schedule that in many ways was more challenging than that of a student. Yet tutors must have seen the trials of the position as worth it due to the fact that it could be an important stepping stone towards a brighter future, whether it be in academics, the ministry, or government. As a consequence, it is certainly no coincidence that some of Yale’s most esteemed graduates of the period were, at one point, tutors.

\textit{The Butler & Steward}

Tutors and professors made sure that instruction took place but without support staff the collegiate life would not have been possible. One of the most important of these positions was that of the butler. Like tutors, the butlers were almost exclusively alumni of the college. In this incestuous way, the school was able to keep outside influence at a minimum and thus have greater control over what took place on campus. The first individual to hold the post was Jonathan Edwards.\textsuperscript{34} According to the college laws, the butler was tasked with serving the President. Beyond that he was responsible for ringing the bell to summon students to the chapel, to announce “breakfast, dinner and supper, and for studying time, at half an hour after breakfast, an hour and a half after dinner, and at nine o’clock at night.”\textsuperscript{35} He was also tasked with maintaining and lighting all of the candles in the


\textsuperscript{34} Warch, \textit{School of the Prophets}, 135

\textsuperscript{35} The \textit{Laws of Yale College in New Haven, Connecticut: Enacted by the President and Fellows, the Sixth Day of October, A.D. 1795}. New Haven: Printed by Thomas Green and Son, 1800, 31-32.
college chapel although due to the “privileges he enjoy[ed],” he was responsible for purchasing the candles themselves “at his own expense.” An additional limitation imposed on the butler was that he was only allowed to sell 20 barrels of strong beer every year. Students trying to circumvent the butler and acquire strong beer in town on their own could be fined by the college. While this position was clearly a great deal of work, when Ezra Stiles filled the role, he was still able to find time to read. In the end, like the tutors, the men who filled this role understood its temporary nature and within two years most had moved on to bigger and better things.

Another non-teaching position at Yale that was arguably more important than the butler was the steward. According to the college laws, the steward was charged with providing “…victuals, after the manner of living in common families, for all the Professors, and Tutors, Graduates and Undergraduates, who reside in the College; and shall at all times cause the Tables to be decently spread and attended, at such a price, as shall be fixed by the Corporation.” To add challenge to the position, the school provided a meager budget to operate the commons. As a consequence of the poor food that resulted from these inadequate funds, students

36 Yale Corporation Minutes, July, 1759
37 The Laws of Yale College, 32.
38 Yale Corporation Minutes, September, 1749.
39 Marsden, 59.
40 The Laws of Yale College, 34.
sometimes responded by rioting, sometimes going so far as to break windows and dishes and harassing the tutors who were charged with maintaining order in the Commons at mealtime.\textsuperscript{41}

Perhaps one of the most dramatic moments occurred in 1764 when several students were taken ill after eating in the commons. A letter recounting the event recalled that “82 of the Students were seized with Violent Vomitings, great Thirst, Weakness in the Extremities and some with Spasms, and other Symptoms of Poison....The Physicians conjecture it to be Arsenic, mixed with the Cake, on which they all Breakfasted. The French People are very generally suspected.”\textsuperscript{42} Those “French People” referenced were most likely Acadians living in New Haven who had been forced to relocate following their forced expulsion from Canada. Although the true cause was never discovered, this incident surely added to the sometimes strained relationship between the steward and the student body. Still, in an attempt to stave off a potential source of conflict with the college community, President Clap declared that Yale would not permit French kitchen staff and only authorized personnel would be permitted in the food preparation areas.\textsuperscript{43}

Poor food was not the only thing that strained relations between the Steward and the students: the position was also tasked with collecting payments. While it was understood that the credential that Yale supplied could be crucial to future success, it was surely not a highlight of the quarter when the Steward came

\textsuperscript{41} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 236.
\textsuperscript{42} J. Hubbard, quoted in \textit{Extracts From the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., 1755-1794 With a Selection From His Correspondence.} Dexter, Franklin Bowditch ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), 508
\textsuperscript{43} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 238.
calling. Another cause of conflict may have been the fact that although some stewards were alumni, they stayed in their positions far longer than tutors or butlers resulting in an age gap that could result in misunderstandings.\textsuperscript{44} Still, the Steward looked after students by sweeping their rooms and even making their beds, a situation today’s undergraduates would envy.\textsuperscript{45}

\textit{The Curriculum}

At the heart of any educational institution lies the curriculum, the means by which schools attempt to fulfill their missions. For Yale, that mission involved training orthodox graduates who would hopefully go on to become leaders in the colony.\textsuperscript{46} The responsibility for determining how this would be achieved changed over time. During Yale’s first years, the curriculum was directed by the trustees; what would be taught and how it would be taught was subject to their discretion.\textsuperscript{47} When Clap ascended from rector to president, it was his office that now held the real decision-making power in this area. In order to accomplish the institution’s goal of producing leaders, the school based its curriculum on a European model, especially in the college’s formative decades. In a note to students in the introduction of his 1743 library catalogue Clap wrote that:

\begin{quote}
The Introduction to Philosophy will give you a General Idea or Scheme of all the Arts and Sciences and the several things which are to be known and learnt... And in the First Year to Study principally the Tongues, Arithmetic and Algebra; the Second Logic, Rhetoric and Geometry; the Third,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{44} For more on stewards who were Yale graduates see Dexter \textit{Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History}.
\textsuperscript{45} Warch, \textit{School of the Prophets}, 154.
\textsuperscript{46} Warch, \textit{School of the Prophets}, 38.
\textsuperscript{47} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 64.
Like most other colonial institutions of higher learning, Yale students engaged with the same topics and works that their European counterparts did. This is not to say that Yale’s course of study was the equal of a continental education. In describing the experience of Noah Webster, his biographer remarked that “completing the requirements for his Yale degree would signify not that he was a learned man, but that he had acquired the necessary tools to become one.” This interpretation has been challenged somewhat by other historians who argue that “European standards of learning were the accepted standards, and colonial Yale followed them with willingness, if not complete understanding.” While it makes sense that the nascent institutions of higher education in the American colonies would base their curriculum on a European model, that program of studies would not remain fixed. Indeed, over the decades the curriculum would evolve with the times embracing many ideas of the Enlightenment. Still, while progress was being made in the curriculum, even during Yale’s early years, these advances were built on a traditional foundation. That base consisted of many of the subjects of the

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49 Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 187.
51 Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 157.
trivium and quadrivium of old including subjects such as rhetoric, grammar, and logic as well as theology and ethics.\textsuperscript{52}

\textit{Divinity}

No matter who was directing the curriculum during the college’s first decades, the role of religion in the program of studies was first and foremost. This characterization of its prominence is clearly evidenced by glancing at the library catalogue from 1743 wherein nineteen pages were filled with works of divinity compared to the two and a half pages dedicated to mathematics.\textsuperscript{53} From its inception, Yale wanted its students to be instructed in a form of theology that was “set down at the Westminster Assembly and as interpreted chiefly by the theological treatises of William Ames and Johann Wollebius.”\textsuperscript{54} President Clap’s philosophy was that education should have “moral ends” and that it should “instill in youth a Christian morality,” everything else was a secondary consideration.\textsuperscript{55} Due to his privileging the study of divinity, Clap has been seen by some scholars as an echo of an educational approach from the Middle Ages: one that saw “theology as the queen of the arts and sciences and attempted to subordinate learning to the purposes of religion.”\textsuperscript{56} Indeed, he traced his reasoning back to the 813 Council of Cabilone when he argued that “The original End, and Design of Colleges was to

\textsuperscript{52} Warch, \textit{School of the Prophets}, 195.
\textsuperscript{53} Clap, \textit{Library Catalogue}.
\textsuperscript{54} Warch, \textit{School of the Prophets}, 36.
\textsuperscript{55} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 79.
\textsuperscript{56} Gabriel, \textit{Religion and Learning at Yale}, viii.
Instruct, Educate, and Train up Persons for the Work of the Ministry.” In his opinion, Yale had continued this tradition writing that “Religion...both as to Doctrine, and Discipline, was the main Design, of the Founders, of this College; (agreeable, to the mind, of the Body, of the People;) and, this Design, their Successors, are bound in Duty, to pursue. And indeed, Religion, is a matter, of so great Consequence, and importance; that, the Knowledge, of the Arts, and Science, however excellent soever, in themselves, are comparatively, worth but little, without it.” Clap recognized that the arts and sciences had worth, yet he believed that they could not trump the importance of religion. This can be seen in his 1757 decision to add a category focusing on “the science which contemplates God and his perfections” to the commencement sheets. As all of Yale’s early leaders were clergymen, it would follow that they would proceed in a similar vein to Clap.

Religion was ubiquitous in the Yale curriculum. During the Revolutionary Era freshman encountered religion as they studied Greek by translating editions of the New Testament in that language. Sophomores, juniors and seniors were required to recite a divinity textbook every Saturday – a reduction from the Saturday and Friday afternoon that had been stipulated by the 1726 college laws. Outside of formal classes, students had to attend prayers and Bible readings twice daily and were required to attend lectures on ecclesiastical history. Sundays were almost entirely devoted to religion with students attending prayers and sermons.

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58 Clap, Religious Constitutions, 13.
59 Tucker, Puritan Protagonist, 158.
60 Kelley, Yale: A History, 80.
61 Morgan, Gentle Puritan, 391-2.
Devotion to the faith continued under president Ezra Stiles who certainly wanted to produce graduates who were godly as evidenced by the fact that students were still required to attend prayers and go to the chapel twice each day along with an additional six hours on Sunday and a lecture in ecclesiastical history once a week. Yet, during his tenure, Stiles reduced what divinity students were required to engage with in their formal program of studies. While the motives for this decision are not entirely clear, Stiles must have recognized, that in order to remain relevant as an institution, the school needed to produce more than just ministers. It is reasonable to conclude that the decision to engage in these new subjects was to prepare them to enter a world in which they would be called upon to be leaders among men. Timothy Dwight, like those who preceded him, saw Yale’s mission as distinctly religious. To him, theology was the primary field of study students should engage in. It was through religious instruction that Yale graduates would build the moral framework they would need to be upstanding citizens in the new republic.

The study of Greek had been closely entwined with the study of religion since the college’s inception in 1701. While one may assume that a curriculum for a dead language would be static that was not exactly the case. By Dwight’s time as president, new visions of how to structure the Greek curriculum began to develop. Yet the impetus for change came not from Dwight but from his professor of Greek, Hebrew, Latin and ecclesiastical history, James Luce Kingsley. In addition to reading the New Testament, Kingsley recommended that students also read

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Homer. Dwight’s reception to this proposal was not a warm one. In his mind, by reading Homer, students might be induced into reading pagan works on Sundays. Still, Kingsley, who was steadfast in his support of the idea, continued to press his addition to the curriculum. Eventually, Dwight permitted Homer to be added as an optional text. Over time, that option became a requirement and Kingsley was able to add other Greek authors to the curriculum.⁶⁴

Although there had always been a focus on Greek and Latin at Yale – as there was at every other college – one area where Yale lagged behind some of its competition was in modern languages. By 1784 Columbia College had appointed faculty to instruct in French and German.⁶⁵ Yale, on the other hand was slower to modernize this aspect of its offerings. It was not until 1831, during the tenure of Dwight’s successor Jeremiah Day that Yale was willing to appoint instructors in the languages that Columbia had offered for almost fifty years.⁶⁶

**Enlightenment Thinking**

*Mathematics*

It would be misguided to assume that Yale College was merely a seminary as other subjects such as math were also mandatory in order to earn a degree. In spite of this, students were not even required to be fluent in arithmetic to gain acceptance to the college until 1745.⁶⁷ The first individual to seriously advance the math curriculum at the college was tutor, and future King’s College President,

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⁶⁷ Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 218.
Samuel Johnson who in the 1710s, introduced both algebra and trigonometry which, according to his biographer, was “a substantial contribution to colonial education.”

During Elisha Williams’s tenure as rector, Yale boys had only been instructed in mathematics as seniors. When Thomas Clap assumed the rectorship and eventually the presidency, the mathematics curriculum at Yale was expanded. Mathematics coursework began during the freshman year with a different focus each following year. During Clap’s tenure, the library catalogue details at least thirty-four books on mathematics covering subjects such as arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry and included both Descartes’s *Geometria* and Newton’s *Principia*. During the presidency of Ezra Stiles students were introduced to a new arithmetic book. The text he introduced, *New and Complete System of Arithmetic*, was authored by an American named Thomas Pike. This decision illustrates the willingness of Yale to move away from slavish adherence to European texts alone and a desire to make domestically produced works available to its students. By the time Dwight became president of the college, he continued to push the math curriculum forward by requiring students to come face-to-face with Newton’s mathematical ideas.

*New Thinking and Natural Philosophy*

As a new age of Enlightenment began in Europe, the ideas associated with it began to be absorbed by Yale. During Jonathan Edwards’s time as a tutor (1724-
26), he helped to introduce the ideas of English philosopher John Locke; this according to historians who saw a fair number of “Lockean theses [appear] after his tenure.” During Thomas Clap’s time in office, in spite of his stated duty to fulfill the religious mission of the school, he still managed to present secular materials to his students. He accomplished this by delivering lectures to the student body on topics ranging from anatomy to English law. According to his biographer, these lectures illustrated how Clap “…expanded the curriculum and brought its subject matter more closely in touch with the needs of contemporary life.” The attention to Natural Philosophy could also be seen in the books contained in the library covering such subjects as astronomy, botany, zoology, anatomy and physick. Later, under the leadership of Ezra Stiles, Locke’s An Essay Concerning Human Understanding was employed as an important text for students. The president’s familiarity with other Locke works, like the Second Treatise on Government probably had a role in his decision to offer political philosophy as a new subject for seniors, which he made room for by reducing discussion time on older texts and adding Montesquieu’s Spirit of Laws.

The study of natural philosophy grew and improved as the years passed, although the pace was slow. Prior to the rectorship of Timothy Cutler, tutors Daniel Brown and Samuel Johnson worked to expose students to the Copernicus’s heliocentric model of the universe. Still, in spite of their enthusiasm for keeping

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73 Warch, School of the Prophets, 207.  
74 Tucker, Puritan Protagonist, 80.  
76 Morgan, Gentle Puritan, 388-90.  
77 Warch, School of the Prophets, 210.
their classes at the cutting edge, Johnson’s ability to actually teach the ideas of Newton were hampered by his lack of sufficient background in mathematics.\textsuperscript{78} During his time in office, Cutler added Pierre Gassendi’s \textit{Institutio Astronomica} into the natural philosophy course. While the reasons for this decision cannot be precisely known, it is conceivable that he wanted to bring Yale more in line with English institutions that had been using the text since the seventeenth century as a way to interrogate the theories of Copernicus and Kepler. Indeed, one scholar has noted that, upon the retirement of rector Elisha Williams, “Copernicus was enthroned at the college and undergraduates were familiar with Newton.”\textsuperscript{79} This focus on astronomy and physics continued and was expanded under Clap’s tenure as he hired knowledgeable tutors, added contemporary works of science, and purchased scientific equipment.\textsuperscript{80} For some historians, this was significant because those students who attended Yale would leave with usable knowledge in navigation, surveying and other applied sciences.\textsuperscript{81}

It was a short leap from the desire to incorporate natural philosophy into the curriculum to an increased focus on medicine. Yale had always produced a fair number of graduates who went on become physicians, but the institution sought to increase this number. Indeed, president Ezra Stiles worked to move Yale beyond what Clap had been able to accomplish in this field. He wanted to develop a system that would lead more Yale graduates to pursue careers in medicine. Although his

\textsuperscript{78} Warch, \textit{School of the Prophets}, 213.
\textsuperscript{79} Warch, \textit{School of the Prophets}, 210, 218.
\textsuperscript{80} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 93.
\textsuperscript{81} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 93.
plans for a professor of physic did not materialize until after his death, the seeds he planted would eventually bear fruit under his successor Timothy Dwight.\footnote{Morgan, \textit{Gentle Puritan}, 322.}

Although, to be sure, Dwight was a deeply devout individual, his willingness to embrace at least some aspects of rationalism at Yale is evident. While not strictly curricular in nature, in one appeal to the larger community regarding the College’s museum, he mentioned that its collection could assist in “the promotion of the essential interests of our country, while, at the same time, it will furnish a rational entertainment of the citizens at large.”\footnote{Dwight, \textit{Connecticut Courant}, September 7, 1797.} In a move with more curricular impact, President Dwight eventually convinced the Corporation of the need for a Professor of Chemistry and Natural History.\footnote{Yale Corporation Minutes, September 8, 1802. See chapter 1 “Managing the Staff”}

It has been argued that Dwight was crucial in laying the foundation for Yale’s subsequent position in the field of science, not because he understood the field but because “his organizational and inspirational qualities were such that while most other colleges in America stood still or went backwards during this period,” his institution was moving forward.\footnote{Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 137.} Perhaps his most important achievement relating to the curriculum was the creation of a medical school, the unfulfilled dream of Ezra Stiles. Dwight was well aware that Columbia, Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania had institutions of their own, and he wanted to catch up. By 1805, a committee had been formed “to enquire into the expediency of establishing a Medical Professorship...”\footnote{Yale Corporation Minutes, September 12, 1805.} It took a great deal of persistence on
the part of Dwight and the Corporation to overcome the objections of members of the state Medical Society, but finally in September of 1811, the Corporation authorized “the Medical Institution of Yale College.” In writing of the soon-to-be school, Dwight commented that it would “consist of three Professorships, beside that of Chemistry; one, of the Materia Medica; one, of Anatomy and Surgery; and one of the Theory and Practice of Physic.” While hardly a trailblazer in comparison with her sister schools, Yale’s curricular development during this period illustrates a desire to rank in the top tier of America’s increasing number of institutions of higher education.

The Humanities
The humanities remained at the core of Yale’s mission as evidenced by the library’s collections. An analysis of Clap’s record of the library categorizes Yale’s books into subjects such as History (sub-divided into histories of Europe, England, Scotland and Ireland, Asia, America, Ecclesiastical, and Jewish), Antiquities, and “Geography Voyages and Travels.” During Timothy Dwight’s time as a tutor, he, along with his colleagues, Abraham Baldwin, Joseph Buckminster, and John Lewis, attempted to push the curriculum forward by introducing additional English literature and grammar. This move was not viewed as having a salutary effect by the Corporation who would eventually reverse the decision and push the tutors out of their positions.

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87 Cunningham, *Timothy Dwight*, 193, Yale Corporation Minutes, September 10, 1811.
89 Clap, *Library Catalogue*.
Tangible changes that took place during Stiles’s presidency included the introduction of English grammar as a subject of recitation. Stiles also brought Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of Laws* into the curriculum. It is noteworthy that many of the works he introduced were authored by Americans. One of the books he brought to Yale was *Plain and Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* by Yale graduate Noah Webster. On the subject of the western hemisphere, students were required to read the 1789 publication *The American geography, or, A view of the Present Situation of the United States of America* by Yale Graduate Jedidiah Morse. In this text, they were confronted by an author who decried earlier works still in circulation authored by Europeans. Students were exposed to Morse’s notion that “…since the United State (sic) have become an independent nation, and have risen into Empire, it would be reproachful for them to suffer this ignorance to continue...[the book] is calculated early to impress the minds of American Youth with an idea of the superior importance of their own country, as well as to attach them to its interests...” It is clear that by reading works such as this and the new arithmetic book he introduced, Stiles was helping to move Yale away from the reliance of solely European texts in an effort to help develop a uniquely American identity.

While American writers saw increased exposure at Yale during this time, European authors also maintained an important position within the curriculum.

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91 Gabriel, *Religion and Learning at Yale*, 47.
93 Jedidiah Morse *The American geography, or, A view of the Present Situation of the United States of America* (Elizabeth Town: Printed by Shepard Kollock, for the author, 1789), v, vii.
During Dwight’s presidency, he had helped move Yale ever closer towards embracing *belles-lettres* by exposing students to reading authors such as Milton and Pope.\(^94\) Not only was John Locke’s *Second Treatise on Government* an important text, but his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, was required reading for the senior class which forced students to come to terms with the nature of humanity.\(^95\) If, after being exposed to the ideas of Locke, Yale students and faculty were convinced that humans were not born innately good or bad but were instead shaped by their environment it would almost certainly have affirmed the importance of Yale and their place in it. Students were blank slates that could be shaped and molded into what the institution wanted them to be – the future leaders of Connecticut and the nation.

**Instruction**

A significant difference between Yale and European institutions like Cambridge or Oxford was the manner in which information was conveyed. In British schools, students working towards their bachelor’s degree, would be expected to read authors like Newton and Locke on their own. At Yale, tutors were generally responsible for conveying this information.\(^96\) While all students learn differently, there is a commonly held belief that students retain more information


\(^{95}\) Kendall, *The Forgotten Founding Father*, 27. Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* had been in use since the tenure of Thomas Clap. See Kelley, *Yale: A History*, p. 80.

\(^{96}\) Warch, *School of the Prophets*, 245.
that they read than information they hear; and therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the British model was more effective.97 In spite of this state of affairs, Yale did what it could to instruct students in what they considered to be the most effective way possible.

The role of tutors in bringing about change to the curriculum should not be understated. In 1767, some of Yale’s tutors made a decision to begin to teach both English oratory and grammar on top of the already requisite study of Latin. Four years later, tutors John Trumbull and Timothy Dwight encouraged students to dabble in belles-lettres as evidenced by plays produced by student societies, much to the chagrin of more established voices within the college.98 The fact that Dwight, Trumbull, and Joseph Howe were able to win over so many Yale students to the side of rhetoric and poetry is a testament to their skills of persuasion and charisma as many in the institution at that time considered the subject too feminine to take seriously.99 Additionally, instruction and study of the spoken language would serve Yale graduates in a way that Latin alone never could. British America, New England in particular, was a highly literate society for the time and the more effectively Yale men could convey their ideas, the more influential they would become.100

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97 The idea of a “learning pyramid” with lecture as the least effective means of instruction and teaching others as the most effective method has been disputed recently. See Kåre Letrud, and Sigbjørn Hernes. "Excavating the Origins of the Learning Pyramid Myths." *Cogent Education* 5, no. 1 (2018): 17.
Outside of lectures and recitations, disputation was one of the most popular instructional methods employed at Yale during the eighteenth century as it was in institutions of higher education elsewhere. Twice every week during a student’s junior and senior year, disputations took place. The tutor most likely chose the issue to be argued and the students who would participate.\footnote{Morgan, Gentle Puritan, 79.} There were two types of disputations in use at Yale during this time: syllogistic and forensic.

The syllogistic disputation was conducted in Latin and was a carryover from European schools. According to some scholars, one of the most influential works on the subject that detailed the rules for this kind of debate was \textit{The Improvement of the Mind} by English logician and minister Isaac Watts.\footnote{David Potter. \textit{Debating in the Colonial Chartered Colleges: An Historical Survey} (New York: Teachers College, 1944), 14.} The fact that the book appeared in the Yale College library seems to bolster the claim that those responsible for instruction at Yale were convinced of the work’s merits.\footnote{Clap, \textit{Library Catalogue}, 5.}

According to Watts a syllogistic dispute was conducted in the following manner:

> The Tutor appoints a Question in some of the Sciences or arts to be debated amongst his Students: One of them undertakes to affirm or deny the Question, and to defend his Assertion or Negation, and to answer all Objections against it; he is called the Respondent: and the rest of the students in the same Class, or who pursue the same Science are the Opponents, who are appointed to dispute or raise Objections against the proposition thus affirmed or deny’d. Each of the Students successively in their Turn becomes the Respondent of the Defender of that Proposition, while the rest oppose it also successively in their Turns. ‘Tis the Business of the Respondent to write a Thesis in Latin, or short Discourse on the Question propos’d; and he either affirms or denies the Question according to the Opinion of the Tutor, which is supposed to be the Truth, and he reads it at the Beginning of the Dispute.\footnote{Isaac Watts. \textit{The Improvement of the Mind: Or, A Supplement to the Art of Logick: Containing a Variety of Remarks and Rules for the Attainment and Communication of}
In addition to selecting the topics of dispute the tutors acted as moderators, “to see the Rules of Disputation and Decency be observ’d on both Sides; and to admonish each Disputant of any Irregularity in their Conduct.”

Watts also implored instructors not to argue about “mere Trifles, Things that are utterly useless to be known under a vain Pretence of sharpening the wit: For the same Advantage may be derived from solid and useful Subjects.” These instructions would seem to imply that as much as possible educators must ask their students to debate subjects that were practical, for the goal was to produce individuals who could both obtain and communicate knowledge. Still, most likely due to the fact that the disputes were conducted in Latin, they began to fall out of favor at Yale and elsewhere during the latter part of the eighteenth century. King’s College eliminated them in 1771, The College of New Jersey in 1775 and the College of Philadelphia also eliminated them in the following year; Yale would not abandon the practice until 1789.

In his diary entry for July 21, 1789, president Stiles noted that “The Seniors have had but one syllogistic Dispute this year, & phps. half a doz. last year. There was one only last Commencement — none this. Thus farwell Syllogistic Dispute” in Yal. Coll. much to my Mortification.”

This is noteworthy as it illustrates the inability of the president maintain an instructional method he found worthwhile. One expert on the field of collegiate debate noted that the role of students in protesting this technique was key, as was the dismay


Watts, The Improvement of the Mind, 179.

Watts, The Improvement of the Mind, 187.

Potter, Debating in the Colonial Chartered Colleges, 28.

of the audiences at commencements, who could not understand the disputes.¹⁰⁹ Beyond that, it has been argued that both the Revolutionary War and the Enlightenment more generally can claim credit for the demise of this type of debate as “...a wider conception of liberal education was promulgated in American higher education...”; an idea that colleges should not just benefit the few, but the many.¹¹⁰ Still, Yale had been able to keep this manner of dispute in use longer than her sister schools, suggesting either that Yale’s leadership was relatively stronger, their resistance to change was more impressive, or some combination of the two.

The other form of dispute employed at Yale was forensic. By 1747, records from a student notebook indicate that Yale was beginning to introduce this alternative form of debate.¹¹¹ According to Watts, this form of dispute was “practis’d not only in the Courts of Judicature, where a single Person sets to judge of the Truth of Goodness of any Cause, and to determine according to the Weight of Reasons on either Side; but ‘tis us’d also in political Senates or Parliaments, in Ecclesiastical Synods, and Assemblies of various kinds.”¹¹² Unlike its syllogistic counterpart, this type of dispute was conducted in English, which may have added to its gradual replacement of the syllogistic method. There would again need to be a moderator, at Yale this would be a tutor, a professor, or the President.¹¹³ One student would present his case and then be followed by others.

¹⁰⁹ Syllogistic disputes were, until 1788 an important part of Yale Commencement exercises in addition to being used in the classroom.
¹¹⁰ Potter, Debating in the Colonial Chartered Colleges, 31.
¹¹¹ Potter, Debating in the Colonial Chartered Colleges, 26.
¹¹² Watts. The Improvement of the Mind, 173
¹¹³ Potter, Debating in the Colonial Chartered Colleges, 42.
in support. Following these speeches, the other side would have its chance to 
state its case and rebut the arguments laid out by the opposition. Watts 
explained that the “Controversy is decided either by a single Judge or the 
Suffrage of the Assembly,” yet at Yale there is no indication that Yale forensic 
disputes were decided by the latter method, perhaps because to give students 
such a voice would be to lessen the authority of the faculty. 114

By 1766, this type of dispute had become so prominent that they began to 
feature at commencement ceremonies.115 In his Annals of Yale College, Clap 
explained that the two upper classes would debate in this form every Tuesday. In 
his estimation, both syllogistic and forensic approaches provided students with “a 
greater Scope to their Genius” and were “adapted to the common Use and 
Practice of Mankind, in the Conduct of publick Affairs. In these Disputes we 
often hear a Summary of the best Arguments which can be produced out of any 
Author, on both Sides of a disputed question.”116 It is no wonder that so many 
Yale graduates became attorneys, judges and lawmakers with the experience of 
analyzing the nuances of complicated issues and arguing positions that they 
might not have personally believed in, students developed the skills necessary for 
success in those roles.

Under the leadership of President Stiles, students were required to deploy 
what they had learned in their study of philosophy, history, and political theory in 
order to inquire into contemporary questions.117 Indeed, it has been suggested by

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114 Watts The Improvement of the Mind, 173  
115 Potter, Debating in the Colonial Chartered Colleges, 34.  
116 Clap, The Annals of Yale College, 82.  
117 Morgan, Gentle Puritan, 394.
some that by studying what Stiles assigned it would be possible to wrestle with major issues of consequence. Using the forensic method, students were forced to engage with questions such as “whether agriculture or commerce needs the most encouragement in the United States at present (1780),” “whether female Academies would be beneficial?” “whether a standing army would be dangerous in America (1783),” “Whether Congress ought to have more power and authority (1783),” “whether the insurrection in Massachusetts be justifiable (1787).” In these questions one can see important issues of the day reflected, from the debate on the nature of the United States as articulated by Jefferson and Hamilton to Shays’ Rebellion. Stiles even employed topics that related directly to the college. When students protested Stiles’s decision to make examinations a high stakes performance task he cleverly had them debate the question as to if “residence at college should entitle a students to a degree regardless of his scholarship.”

During the presidency of Timothy Dwight, students still engaged in questions like “Does the Mind always think? (1813), “Is a Lie ever justifiable?” (1813), “Is a Savage State preferable to a Civilized?” (1813), “Can the Immortality of the Soul be proved from the Light of Nature? (1814).” At the same time there was an increasing focus on subjects central to the American ethos. Students debated questions like “Ought Capital Punishment ever to be inflicted?” (1813),

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118 Morgan, *Gentle Puritan*, 395
120 Morgan, *Gentle Puritan*, 398.
“Ought the Liberty of the Press be restricted?” (1813), “Ought Religious tests to be required of Civil Officers?” (1813), “Ought Representatives to be bound by the will of their Constituents?” (1814), “Is a Party Spirit beneficial?” (1814), “Is Resistance to Government ever justifiable?” (1814).”¹²² Even today, skilled teachers engage their students to connect topics to their own lives and milieu. Although how students responded to these questions is unknown, one could surmise that they would have appreciated being able to apply what they were learning in a more authentic way rather than simply reciting what they had read in an assigned text.

**Increasing Expectations**

During his presidency, Ezra Stiles increased the rigor students faced by revamping the nature of exams. By 1785, he was applying grades for what seems to have been the first time in Yale’s existence.¹²³ His diary from that year indicates that he examined the seniors on the 5th of April, attended the junior exams on the 6th, the sophomores on the 7th and the freshman on the 8th. According to Stiles’s account, there were fifty who attended one exam. Twenty were judged “Optimi, 16 ²d Opt., 12 Inferiores (Boni), 10 Pejores.” He continued by explaining how the exams took place: “All examined in Lat. And Greek. Then a Recess of half an hour. Then Gr. Then Dinner. Then Tutor Chansexam’d in Eng. And Lat Frammar and Rhet....Recess ½ h. Mr. Tutor Perkins in Logic. Mr. Russel in Math and Nat. Phil.”¹²⁴ These exams now held so much weight that in July, four students were

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unable to earn their degrees; furthermore, Stiles decreed that these high standards would apply to all classes and that if students performed poorly, they would be placed in a lower class.\textsuperscript{125} Not only does this illustrate an advancement in accountability and standards, it is reflective of the burgeoning American ethos of earned rather than inherited rewards.

\textit{Conclusion}

After having delved into a more in-depth analysis of individual subjects, an overview of where the curriculum stood at the end of the Revolutionary period is necessary. After analyzing the Laws of Yale College published in 1800 one can see how more and more was expected of students academically as they advanced through the institution. Freshmen were expected to study Greek and Latin, as well as arithmetic. Sophomores were required to study geography, plane geometry, and history in addition to languages. As juniors, students encountered even more subjects in addition to language such as English grammar, surveying, navigation, astronomy, natural philosophy and “other branches of mathematics.” By the time students returned to campus as seniors, they studied ethics, logic, rhetoric, metaphysics and the history of civil society.\textsuperscript{126}

Curriculum and instruction surely changed throughout Yale’s first century. It was a gradual change, however, with much of the shifts taking place as the result of outside forces and an unstated belief among college leadership that to fail to evolve was to be left behind and to risk irrelevance. As a consequence of this

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{The Laws of Yale College}, 16-17.
outlook, Yale was willing to embrace ideas of the Enlightenment and the realities of life in the young American nation in order to maintain its position and that of its graduates.
In 1762, President Thomas Clap instituted a new system at Yale whereby he and his tutors would have the authority to evaluate any member of the senior class at any time rather than during the annual July examination, which had been the norm. In response to this change in policy, students indicated that they would only accept random examination if it was with the approval of the Yale Corporation. Clap was not one to shirk from a challenge to his authority, and he attempted to exercise his power over the students by calling them to be examined. When the students refused, he took action against those members of the senior class who wrote the petition by suspending some and admonishing others. Upon the public announcement of the punishment in the college library, a student who had been suspended, named Lyman took the extraordinary step of putting on his hat and walking out of the room followed by about half of the students in attendance. Later in the day, the students returned to and played football on the green – a game that was forbidden during a designated study period. The young men informed the president that they wanted the policy changed and the suspended students reinstated. They then left the college for a week. When the Corporation finally responded, they came out against the students. In the end, two scholars were expelled and the rebels returned with nothing to show for their efforts.  

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Although students had taken a stand when they saw the punishment inflicted on their classmates, in the end they were cowed into submission. This result might suggest that many Yale students during this period were simply interested in earning a credential to advance themselves and that those young men who engaged in school-boy antics did so without a purpose. But this does not paint the entire picture. As the eighteenth century wore on, Yale students became increasingly political, willing to become involved in the broader discourse surrounding the American Revolution. At the same time, these students saw themselves as heirs of a system that they hoped to perpetuate in their adult years and, as such, were unwilling to upset the institution to such a degree as to radically transform it. Instead, they helped push along a gradual transformation of the college that was reflective of broader changes occurring in American society.

**Impact of the Revolution**

Politics and college campuses seem to go hand-in-hand today and the two were connected in the eighteenth century as well. Political questions were discussed in class during disputations and declamations but sometimes went beyond speeches. By 1773, students at colleges including Yale, participated in boycotts, protested the Tea Act and burned British officials in effigy.\(^{128}\) Yet at Yale, students were engaged in political issues almost a decade earlier, when in 1764 they decided not to drink any foreign spirits. Roswell Grant of the class of 1765, wrote to his father describing that in response to the duties placed on various imported

liquor and wine “all the Scholars have unanimously agreed not to Drink any foreign spirituous Liquors any more...there was no Compulsion, by all a voluntary Act.”

Actions such as these seem to call into question the contention of Joyce Appleby, who suggests that prior to the Revolution, families exerted tremendous influence over their children, and it was not until after the war was over that “young people looked more to their peers for models of behavior.” Yale students were willing to follow their classmates even prior to the Revolution. Indeed, students at Yale throughout the entire period considered by this dissertation had a tendency to adopt a herd mentality. When the Stamp Act was passed, it impacted students by taxing them at a rate of “two pounds sterling on ‘every skin or piece of vellum or parchment or sheet or piece of paper on which shall be engrossed...any degree taken in any university, academy, college, or seminary of learning...’” This tax most likely spurred Yale student Jonathan Lyman to give a speech speaking out against the Parliament, an action which saw him punished by the college. In 1769, the senior class agreed to attend commencement in domestically manufactured attire; they also made their intentions clear by including a statement about their position regarding their homespun in local papers. This group also

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agreed to have their theses printed on paper made in Connecticut.\textsuperscript{134} By 1774, students had decided to abstain from drinking tea, and the following February they began military drills.\textsuperscript{135}

Students also took action against their own with whom they believed were sympathetic towards the British. When fighting between British and American forces broke out, a committee of students asked Abiathar Camp Jr. to stand before them as he was suspected of loyalist sympathies. Camp did not appear, and as a consequence, his classmates posted signs in public areas declaring him a loyalist and advising people to avoid him.\textsuperscript{136} While politics were embraced, it would seem that only those of a certain opinion were to be tolerated.

While students at Yale College and other institutions of higher learning throughout the colonies had witnessed changes throughout the years following the conclusion of the French and Indian War, once the fighting really began at Lexington and Concord, the college experience began to be altered in an altogether different way. When reports of the battle at Lexington reached Yale there was quite a commotion on campus as a fair number of students headed home upon hearing the news.\textsuperscript{137} Ebenezer Fitch wrote on April 21\textsuperscript{st} that the news “filled the country with alarm and rendered it impossible to pursue our studies to any profit.”\textsuperscript{138} The following Monday, classes were suspended two weeks before vacation was

\textsuperscript{134} Roche, \textit{Colonial Colleges}, 57.
\textsuperscript{135} Dexter, \textit{Biographical Sketches, Vol. III}, 545.
\textsuperscript{136} Roche, \textit{Colonial Colleges}, 90.
\textsuperscript{137} Dexter, \textit{Biographical Sketches, Vol. III}, 545.
supposed to begin. Not all students headed for home however; two Yale scholars set off for Boston to serve in the force that was laying siege to the city.\textsuperscript{139}

Eventually, students returned to Yale in time to watch George Washington and Charles Lee pass through New Haven on their way to assume command in Massachusetts. Freshman Noah Webster commented on the scene noting that a company of college students drilled for the generals who “expressed their surprise and gratification at the precision with which the students performed the customary exercises then in use.”\textsuperscript{140} Seeing the towering new commander of the Continental Army must have been a rousing moment for many of the impressionable young men who lived and studied in an environment which had its own history of resistance to British policy. By July, events were continuing to impact the student experience. In a letter to his mother, Joel Barlow commented that “The students are sensably (sic) affected with the unhappy situation of publick affairs, which is a great hinderance to their studies: and for that reason there has been talk of dismissing College; but whether they will tis uncertain.”\textsuperscript{141} To be sure, this was not a minor issue, it was foremost in the minds of all. Fitch was also concerned with the situation, and while uncertain of the outcome, he hoped that the war would “terminate in the security and firm establishment of civil and religious liberty.”\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{139} Roche, Colonial Colleges, 68.
\textsuperscript{140} Webster, quoted in Anson Phelps Stokes. Memorials of Eminent Yale Men: a Biographical Study of Student Life and University Influences During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, Volume 1, Religion and Letters. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1914), 312.
\textsuperscript{141} Joel Barlow to Mother, 5 July 1775, in [Joel Barlow Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:52505561$1i]
\textsuperscript{142} Fitch, Memoir of Rev. Ebenezer Fitch, 8.
One change on campus that was glaringly obvious was the suspension of commencement ceremonies starting in 1775. The decision was made based on the uncertainty of the evolving conflict, and as a consequence, seniors were to receive their degrees in private. The suspension of the public ceremony would last until 1781, and although some students may have felt cheated out of the opportunity to participate in the event, others may have believed that the interruption was a fair price to pay to achieve loftier goals like independence.\(^{143}\)

Commencement was not the only aspect of college life at Yale that was impacted during the Revolution. The college itself had to cease operations during 1776 on two separate occasions: once because of disease and a second time because of a food shortage in December. The college would reopen in January 1777.\(^{144}\) The school would also break up or extend vacations several times during the war. The fact that Yale temporarily disbanded was difficult for some students to handle as they longed for the comradeship they had come to know in New Haven; some even considered giving up on a higher education altogether.\(^{145}\) Food shortages would once again become an issue in March of 1777, so much so that the decision was made to move the college out of New Haven. To make their position clear, the Corporation issued the following statement in April:

> Whereas the Difficulties of subsisting the Students in this Town are so great, - the Price of Provisions and Board so high, - and the Avocations from Study occasioned by the State of Public Affairs so many, - Difficulties which still increase and render it very inconvenient for the Students to reside here at


Present: and yet considering the great Importance; that they be under the best Advantages of Instruction and Learning, Circumstances will permit: - Voted that in the Opinion of this Board, it is necessary to provide some other convenient Place or Places, where the classes may reside under their respective Tutors; until God in his kind Providence shall open a Door for their Return to this fixed and ancient Seat of Learning...\(^{146}\)

Each class was sent to a different town with seniors directed to Wethersfield, the juniors spending time in Glastonbury while the freshman went to Farmington.\(^{147}\) As a consequence of the college being scattered to different towns, oversight became more lax giving a young Joel Barlow a chance to write new poetry.\(^{148}\) A dearth of provisions also forced the extension of the winter break in 1778-1779 from the normal three weeks to seven.\(^{149}\) Earlier in 1778, the college made the decision that if students were unable to meet with their class, they could study on their own as long as they passed their exams.\(^{150}\) Situations such as this would cause Noah Webster to remark that the education he received as a result of the war was “much inferior to [that] enjoyed before and since the Revolution in the same institution.”\(^{151}\) The lack of supplies that led to this circumstance would persist throughout the hostilities much to the chagrin of President Stiles. Academic resources for students were also somewhat strained during this time. Baldwin


\(^{151}\) Webster, quoted in Joshua Kendall. *The Forgotten Founding Father: Noah Webster’s Obsession and the Creation of an American Culture*. (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2010), 44.
noted one major way his education was impacted by the war: a lack of books, which were evacuated from New Haven before the British invasion.\textsuperscript{152}

All of these events were occurring in a fledgling nation struggling for existence. In these circumstances, all colleges suffered from depressed expectations. Roche notes that academic standards were not what they were before the war due to the stress of the conflict; because of the diminished availability of professors and tutors, among other “distractions, habits of study were undermined and instruction deteriorated.”\textsuperscript{153}

At the same time, colleges were being charged to conform to the new political reality and seemed to be transforming into “patriot schools.”\textsuperscript{154} A statistical analysis of Yale would seem to bear this out. Out of the six hundred and ten Yale graduates who took degrees between 1765 and 1783, one hundred and fifty three saw service of some sort during the Revolution – only six sided with Great Britain.\textsuperscript{155}

It should be pointed out that despite the fact that many students took steps such as engaging in boycotts, forming military companies, and even leaving school to fight, there were others who resisted the call to serve in the military. A letter addressed to Noah Webster from his classmates in 1779 (see appendix 1) complained that they had been drafted into the militia of Connecticut.\textsuperscript{156} The students made the argument that they were protected by the charter of Yale

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item Baldwin, \textit{Life and Letters}, 22
\item Roche, \textit{Colonial Colleges}, 126.
\item Stats compiled from data derived from Dexter’s \textit{Biographical Sketches}.
\end{thebibliography}
College. This is not to say they were unpatriotic, simply that some students wanted to continue their studies rather than fight.\footnote{Ford. \textit{Notes on the Life of Noah Webster}, 27.}

As it became more and more clear that the war would result in an American victory, students could boast of their new nation in a way that might have been unthinkable just a decade earlier. Simeon Baldwin summed up this attitude in his Masters Oration:

...the shackles of our national Dependence prevented our enterprize (sic). They are now happily removed and we placed on the summit of Liberty & Independence; viewing with our extensive Prospect, the political field of commercial Interest, with perfect freedom with, wise restrictions of our own, to reap the golden harvest where it waves with brightest lustre (sic)...No Nation on earth ever set out with such glorious prospects before it, as the union of America...Such is the superior excellence of our happy Country. Such are our alluring prospects for Commerce – such the happy inducements we have to pursue it certainly nation ever had greater inducement to make it part of their political science.\footnote{Baldwin Papers, (RU 55).}

\section*{Study and Instruction}

Throughout the tumults of the Revolution, the stable, though not unchanging, core of college life was the curriculum. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of records about what students studied and why.\footnote{Thelin, \textit{American Higher Education}, 18.} Some might think that attending college would help lead to a position in a “learned profession,” yet at this time, a great deal of learning took place on the job as young men served as
apprentices in the legal or medical fields for instance.\textsuperscript{160} What scholars do agree on is the impact that English universities had on American college curricula. According to some scholars throughout the colonies, institutions of higher learning were able to blend elements of the Renaissance \textit{studia humanitatis}, including the new sciences, as well as the medieval arts. \textsuperscript{161} Students were of course instructed in Greek and Latin with Yale Freshman focusing mainly on the Latin of Cicero and Virgil as well some Greek.\textsuperscript{162} Yet the classical languages were not studied simply for their prose, but they were a vehicle to investigate tomes from ethics and astronomy, to mathematics and metaphysics. According to one biographer, Yale student, and future pioneer of the American dictionary, Noah Webster had seen his patriotism “nourished” by the study of these languages.\textsuperscript{163} Additional subjects included history, natural and moral philosophy, as well as logic, rhetoric, and theology.\textsuperscript{164}

The list of subjects treated at colonial colleges did not develop overnight, as the eighteenth century progressed, so did the curriculum. One example can be seen in the place of mathematics. In the 1720s, Yale only offered mathematics to fourth year students, but by 1745 it joined Greek and Latin as a prerequisite for admission, and 1766, all Yale students were able to receive instruction in the subject.\textsuperscript{165} By 1767, under President Daggett, English joined Greek and Latin for

\begin{footnotes}
\item[160] Thelin, \textit{American Higher Education}, 31.
\item[161] Rudolph, \textit{The American College}, 24-5.
\item[165] Rudolph, \textit{The American College}, 29.
\end{footnotes}
the first time as a language of study for sophomores.\textsuperscript{166} Natural science or natural philosophy was another subject that began to increasingly gain traction throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century. As early as the 1730s, Yale students were exposed to Newton and Copernicus. By 1770, the college had employed a professor of natural philosophy and mathematics.\textsuperscript{167}

The authors students would study also evolved during this time, as more modern authors found their way into the curriculum. It is a certainty that Locke was assigned to students at Yale as Stiles mentions in a July 1778 diary entry although which particular work is unknown.\textsuperscript{168} Some have argued that the inclusion of authors such as Locke and Milton in the curriculum was to expose students to various interpretations of government, philosophy and history.\textsuperscript{169} This approach included a greater focus on English history, and therefore, almost certainly included an investigation of the 1688 Revolution, which surely played a part in shaping the world-views of those who went on to serve in positions of authority both during and after the American Revolution. Some experts in the field have gone so far as to contend that the curriculum, among other aspects of the college milieu, was a way in which Whig influence reached students. As such, it was no coincidence that colleges like Yale became “centers of sedition.”\textsuperscript{170}

The impact of Stiles on the curriculum at Yale is also important to consider. By the end of the eighteenth century, the aging president was trying to keep his

\textsuperscript{167} Rudolph, \textit{Curriculum}, 35.
\textsuperscript{169} Roche, \textit{Colonial Colleges}, 10.
students up to date on the latest developments in fields including languages, mathematics, astronomy, and natural philosophy, among others. He even made sure that there were lectures delivered on the “learned professions.” At the same time, he brought to Yale “new” subjects, such as Hebrew, although by his own admission, when he first instructed on the subject in 1778 only one student could understand him.

Students need to be taught, and at Yale students were taught by both tutors and professors. Up until the 1750s, most Yale students were instructed by a tutor. A tutor was typically a recent graduate who had familiarity with the curriculum, most would only hold the position for a few years. By the time students were seniors, they were instructed directly by the college president.

According to the college laws, “The President and each of the Tutors according to the best of their Discretion shall teach and instruct his own Class in the three learned Languages, and the liberal Arts and Sciences.” One of the ways that tutors and the president delivered instruction was through lecture. It has been suggested that this method allowed the instructor to “present his own ideas or those of others in systematic and critical form.” Recitation was another strategy that was employed. Tutors would simply ask students rote questions about whatever text they were studying. President Clap detailed the process in the following manner: “In reciting any Book upon the Arts and Sciences, the Tutor asks

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171 Rudolph, *Curriculum*, 49.
172 Stiles, 290-1.
174 Roche, *Colonial Colleges*, 43.
175 College Laws, 7.
them Questions upon all the principal Points and Propositions in it; and they give such Answers, as shew whether they understand it; and the Tutor explains it, as far as there is Occasion." To be sure recitation as an instructional strategy must have been a mind-numbing experience for many students. As a consequence of this state of affairs, some tutors resorted to bribery to motivate their students. Ebenezer Fitch recalled in his diary that one of his tutors offered a book as a prize to the student who wrote the best composition. Most exams – which by the late eighteenth-century occurred quarterly - were also oral, and while the standards were not particularly high that was not to last. By 1784, the academic bar for seniors had been noticeably raised. While few failed the old exams, Stiles now actually graded them – this had never happened before at Yale - and ended up failing four students in 1785. This new standard caused some students to leave to attend other institutions while others worked to pass based on merit. While the fear of failure pushed some students, others were motivated by the opportunity to win academic awards. Part of the gift given to the school by George Berkeley was a farm in Newport, and he asked that the rent it earned each year be divided between three “graduate students who showed proficiency in Latin and Greek. As provided by the will, the president and the senior Anglican minister of the state examined the candidates every May.”

177 Clap, History of Yale College, 81-2.
178 Kelley, Yale: A History, 81.
179 Fitch, Memoir of Rev. Ebenezer Fitch, 9.
Students were also required to deliver oral recitations and disputationa that were evaluated and subjected to the criticism of both the instructor and their peers. Being forced to illustrate their ability in public was sure to motivate many students to perform so as not to embarrass themselves.\textsuperscript{183} At Yale, students participated in disputationa in which they would be given a question and had to develop contentions to support both sides and make arguments, often in front of the president.\textsuperscript{184} In his memoirs, Fitch noted that during the 1776 commencement, students disputed the question “Whether all religions ought to be tolerated.”\textsuperscript{185} Juniors and seniors were required to engage in disputes twice a week.\textsuperscript{186} Some of the disputationa became increasingly political in tone during the Revolutionary years. In a notebook kept by Simeon Baldwin, he detailed disputation topics such as “Whether the Continental Money ought to be redeemed according to the face of the bill”, “Whether it would be proper for America to keep a standing army in time of peace” and “Whether the Members of congress ought not to be chosen by the Assembly instead of the freemen.”\textsuperscript{187} In any event, some experts have suggested that it was this method that fostered the development of the critical thinking skills so important to political leaders in the colonies.\textsuperscript{188} Although originally conducted in Latin, these debates began to be held in English as well during the latter part of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{189}

\textsuperscript{183} Thelin, \textit{American Higher Education}, 19.
\textsuperscript{184} Lathrop, \textit{Yale College, a Sketch of its History}, 78.
\textsuperscript{185} Fitch, \textit{Memoir of Rev. Ebenezer Fitch}, 9.
\textsuperscript{186} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 81.
\textsuperscript{187} Baldwin Family Papers, (RU %)
\textsuperscript{188} Thelin, \textit{American Higher Education}, 19.
\textsuperscript{189} Rudolph, \textit{Curriculum}, 45.
Students at Yale and at other colleges also participated in declamations which helped to build public speaking skills. Unlike the disputes, declamations were prepared speeches that were reviewed by a tutor prior to their formal presentation. Some students walked away from their experience with inflated egos. Elijah Backus commented in his journal how he “Declaimed this morn. And plainly showed to the wondering scholars my immense eloquence.” One wonders if this hubris was shared by most of his classmates or was a characteristic that was limited to only a few students. No matter what course a Yale student took, there would be both disputes and declamations involved. It is no wonder that so many college graduates became influential during the formation of the new American government, holding forth in the legislative chambers of the new nation and also with their pens.

The Colonial College Student

In the last third of the eighteenth-century, college students in America were burdened with an expanded set of expectations. As the Revolution drew near and then produced an independent republic, there was a belief that students were future leaders who must be trained to govern virtuously in addition to learning about the Western tradition. In order to achieve these lofty expectations, those who attended college were expected to be diligent students. But who were these

192 Roche, *Colonial Colleges*, i, 3.
young men who went off to college to be groomed for greatness? By 1775, it is estimated that only one in a thousand American colonists had any sort of college experience.  Although small in numbers, colonial college students did have some common characteristics. In his 1888 work *Yale and Her Honor-Roll in the American Revolution, 1775-1783*, Phelps Johnston contended that Yale College students were “typical colonists.” Yet “typical” was never clearly defined. Recent scholarship has examined and explained the role of college students of this era. These studies suggest that because tuition costs kept schools like Yale unattractive or out of reach to most colonists, and student bodies were not heterogeneous by any stretch of the imagination, they consider those enrolled in higher education “sons of privilege.” Still others consider the curriculum as a contributing factor that helps explain the homogenous student population. According to those in this camp, colleges were not for ordinary people, the course of study simply would not be attractive to someone who held what were considered to be “practical inclination(s).” Yale College would seem to bear this out. While many graduates during the late eighteenth century would go on to careers in the law or in medicine, there was little to no direct instruction on these subjects at the school before or during the Revolution.

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196 Thelin, *American Higher Education*, 24, 25. Tucker notes that annual tuition in 1795 was $16 per year, Morgan cites total annual costs including room and board between £25 and £35.
Distinctions within the College

Even though the students admitted to colleges like Yale were relatively homogenous, this is not to say there were no differences. Each class was composed of a range of ages with differences of up to five years being commonplace.\textsuperscript{198} When one takes a close look at the makeup of individual college classes, social distinctions and a pecking order become evident. Despite the fact that outsiders might consider all college students to be basically the same, the students themselves did not adhere to that belief. Students operated within a framework in which there was a rigid hierarchy with the college president at the top followed by the faculty, then tutors, then the various classes with freshman at the bottom. This point was illustrated in a 1765 letter by student David McClure to Eleazar Wheelock when he remarked “I can’t help laughing when I see the poor Freshmen creeping down stairs without the least noise, from the lash of their superiors. Freshmen have attained almost the happiness of negroes.”\textsuperscript{199} Yale historian, Brooks Kelley, points out that sophomores in particular enjoyed picking on freshman for violations of the rules. Indeed, the rules for freshman were quite specific requiring them “...to do any proper Errand or Message required of him by any one in an upper Class...” under pain of punishment.\textsuperscript{200} It was only during designated study periods that freshman were relieved from their obligations to serve upperclassmen: a good excuse to focus on academics. The rules were so rigid that one freshman who

\textsuperscript{198} Roche, Colonial Colleges, 8.
\textsuperscript{199} David McClure to Eleazar Wheelock in “Yale College 100 Years Ago,” Hours at Home, Vol. 10, (Jan, 1870): 331.
courteously aided president Ezra Stiles, who had fallen on the ice, was fined by the college for failing to doff his hat.\textsuperscript{201}

The description of this hierarchical system makes the whole arrangement seem not unlike a modern military academy.\textsuperscript{202} There was ranking within each class as well. From early in its history, Yale ranked its students not by academic achievement but by the societal position of the family.\textsuperscript{203} In practice this meant that the son of a governor would rank higher than the son of an artisan. Once ranked in this manner, even a student’s seating position in class would be affected.\textsuperscript{204} This is not to say that one’s ranking was unchangeable. Indeed, there was a system of degradation in which students could see their rank dropped for a variety of infractions. Yet, after the close of the French and Indian War, and as tensions between Great Britain and her colonies began to intensify, Yale shifted its policy to one in which students were ordered alphabetically. It is important to note that Kelley sees this not as a result of political motivations but because the classes themselves were becoming too large. At the same time, he points out that this new system would not have been possible were it not for the rising tide of democracy present in society.\textsuperscript{205} Still, it is a topic that deserves further investigation of college documents and records to either confirm or to call into question these claims. In any event, Yale never again returned to this system of ranking even when classes became smaller during the war years. Later, when Timothy Dwight ascended to

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\textsuperscript{201} Simeon Baldwin. \textit{Life and Letters of Simeon Baldwin}. (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor Co. 1918) 19.
\textsuperscript{203} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 75.
\textsuperscript{204} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 75.
\textsuperscript{205} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 77.
\end{flushright}
the presidency, he removed the lingering differences between the classes that led to senior students holding more privileges while freshman languished at the bottom of the hierarchy.\textsuperscript{206}

\textit{Daily Life}

In his senior-year diary, Simeon Baldwin described his daily experience thusly: “My School employs 6 good hours which, with attendance on meals & College exercises, consumes most of the day...”\textsuperscript{207} The challenges that students faced during their daily lives in the second half of the eighteenth century were not unlike the issues that would be familiar to college students in the twenty-first century. Some complained about the costs involved in attending.\textsuperscript{208} Others complained about the quality of the education. One student by the name of Allyn Mather suggested that Yale was not adequately developing his academic skills. He argued that “Some private school, I should think, would be better for that purpose.”\textsuperscript{209} In a 1764 letter to his father, Roswell Grant wrote that he “Should be very glad of a Cheese if it co’d be conveniently sent me, as our Commons are poor.”\textsuperscript{210} Grant, like students today, was asking his family for care-packages to supplement what they considered to be the inferior food available in the college commons.

\textsuperscript{206} Cunningham, \textit{Timothy Dwight}, 258.
\textsuperscript{207} Baldwin, \textit{Life and Letters}, 71.
\textsuperscript{208} Lathrop \textit{Yale College, a Sketch of its History}, 90.
\textsuperscript{209} Allyn Mather in “Yale College 100 Years Ago,” \textit{Hours at Home}, Vol. 10, (Jan, 1870): 334.
Students would also sometimes act impetuously. Food fights, for example: their meals of potatoes, cider, brown bread, and meat would end up hurtling through the air. Pranks were also part of life at Yale, as students would sometimes ring the bell in the middle of the night. They also were known to cut the bell rope so that it would be impossible to ring. Freshman who felt they were being unjustly harassed by a particular sophomore, would occasionally retaliate by breaking their tormentor’s window with a brick. Students also engaged in less destructive recreational activities -- swimming, walking, fishing, and skating depending on the season. They also attended and performed in plays even during the war. These recreations cushioned the rigid structure formed by study and by religious observance.

That observance was a central feature of a student’s college life that cannot be discounted. The very purpose of colonial colleges upon their founding was to train ministers who would help instruct the laity throughout the colonies. Indeed, each school had its own denominational ties with Yale’s connection being to the Congregationalist or Puritan church. While the institution was staunchly Congregationalist, it should be noted that the few Episcopalians who enrolled were allowed to attend their own services on Sundays.

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211 Emily Ellsworth Fowler Ford, and Emily Ellsworth Ford Skeel (ed.). *Notes on the Life of Noah Webster*. (New York: privately printed, 1912), 22.
After 1757, Yale students were able to join the College Church, very much a New Light institution yet it never had a large membership. Like other New Light churches, admission was not a simple matter; one had to have “a religious experience conveying assurance of salvation” in order to become a full-fledged member. This alone may have kept membership low but there were other reasons as well. Most individuals who joined churches during the period were, on average, older than Yale students upon graduation. In addition, students could never be permanent members of the church due to their temporary residence at the college. Finally, the number of female church members was typically double that of males, and since Yale did not admit female students, that further hindered the growth of the church.

The Yale College laws required that “All the Scholars are required to live a religious and blameless Life according to the Rules of God’s Word, diligently reading the holy Scriptures...” To help the college realize this mission, all students were required to attend prayers upon penalty of fine. Even though only a fraction of the student body were members of the College Church, established in 1757, students were still expected to be present for both daily prayers and Sunday services. This is not to say that there were no critics of the school’s approach. Following the Revolution, one prominent Episcopal priest and stanch Jeffersonian by the name of John C. Ogden complained that students were forced to attend the

216 Some scholars have suggested that it tended away from its New Light orientation over time.
219 College Laws, 5.
220 College Laws, 5.
221 Gabriel, Religion and Learning at Yale, 50.
College Church in spite of earlier practices. For Ogden, “This last offense against law, justice, love of truth and order, is persisted in merely to give an opportunity to the President [Dwight] to spread Edwardean (sic) tenets, of which his grandfather and Calvin were teachers, that his family pride may be indulged, and his desire to appear a champion, and leader in divinity and politics – may be gratified.”\textsuperscript{222} Even in the years after the new nation had been established, disputes over the nature of Christianity were felt by students on a daily basis.

In any event, religion held a prominent position at Yale throughout the Revolutionary Era. According to one historian of Yale, the Sabbath was “the most important day in the week.”\textsuperscript{223} Still, over time the importance of religion at Yale diminished. Whereas in 1726, both Friday afternoon and Saturday had been dedicated to theology, by the mid-1740s only Saturday was devoted to the subject.\textsuperscript{224} In Simeon Baldwin’s papers, there are only two disputations that deal with theology.\textsuperscript{225} A decline can also be inferred from the percentage of students who chose the ministry as a profession. This is not to say that students did not care about God. The importance of the Almighty on individual students can be seen in the diary of future Williams College President Ebenezer Fitch when he remarked on his 19\textsuperscript{th} birthday in 1775, “I feel that I am laid under great obligations to devote myself wholly to the service of Him who made me, and has preserved me so long a time; who has favored me with so many undeserved mercies, and such distinguished religious privileges. Time is ever on the wing. It passes away with an

\textsuperscript{222} Quoted in Fitzmier, \textit{New England's Moral Legislator}, 65.
\textsuperscript{223} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 42.
\textsuperscript{224} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 80.
\textsuperscript{225} Baldwin, \textit{Life and Letters}, 7.
amazing rapidity. Therefore whatsoever I do must be done with diligence and perseverance; for death will soon come and close my probation.”

In his diary, Fitch carefully detailed his daily routine in which reading scripture plays a prominent role. Although not all graduates would go into the ministry as Fitch would -- indeed, more and more would enter the legal field or government service -- the belief in a higher power would have been prevalent throughout the colonies in general and Yale College in particular. A strong sense of faith would even be seen at the dawn of the nineteenth century, when few Yale students would risk questioning “the divinity of the gospel, lest his comrades despise him for stupidity, ignorance and depravity.”

In this religiously scented milieu, students still managed to support one another both academically and personally. In December of 1767, David Avery wrote about how classmates would meet at night once or twice a week and deliver speeches to one another. Once a student had finished speaking, Avery remarked how “…in the most friendly manner, without the least disrelish, we take the freedom to make observations on his pronunciation and gestures, according to the best of our knowledge.” This anecdote seems to illustrate, that at least some students attended Yale not simply for the credential, but to hone skills they believed would serve them in the future. Still, academics were not the only things these young men worked together on. In his diary, Simeon Baldwin noted how he

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227 Fitch, Memoir of Rev. Ebenezer Fitch, 9.
228 Stats compiled from data derived from Dexter’s Biographical Sketches.
229 Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 302.
230 David Avery in “Yale College 100 Years Ago,” Hours at Home, Vol. 10, (Jan, 1870): 334.
engaged his roommates in a discussion on how best to write to a young lady.\textsuperscript{231} This point is significant to note as it indicates that the young men at Yale were constantly looking forward, not just to their professional lives, but to their personal lives as well.

While attending Yale, students had to contend not just with the cost of tuition but with the all of the associated costs of living in New Haven. Students or their families were required to pay six shillings for their rooms plus an additional six to eight shillings a week for board. In a wonderful example of New England frugality, the students, eager to beat the system, sometimes resorted to requesting approval to room in town or even to stay at home for a time after the scheduled end of vacations in order to save the cost of living and avoid the poor food available in the commons.\textsuperscript{232}

Outside of classes, students found various ways to occupy their time. Students wrote and performed in their own dramatic productions in spite of official college policy. In an example from 1784, one character, who was cautioned against opposing the prevailing opinion of the day, responded with shock about the need to temper his opinions in a free state, suggesting that the authors were nervous about the power the Revolution had bestowed on the people and what it meant for individuals of their station.\textsuperscript{233}

In addition to creating dramatic productions that illustrated the fears Yale boys had internalized, students filled time in much the same way students in the

\textsuperscript{231} Baldwin, \textit{Life and Letters}, 39. \\
\textsuperscript{232} Morgan, \textit{Gentle Puritan}, 327. \\
twenty-first century do: by drinking. In his journal, Elijah Backus made several references to tippling; this despite the fact that such habits were regulated: students were not allowed to drink rum for example. But students were willing to break the rules when it suited them.\textsuperscript{234} They tried to eat and drink outside the college when possible. It is conceivable that a reason why students dined outside the commons – other than to obtain more high quality food – was to drink to excess. A 1766 diary kept by Joseph Bissell Wadsworth details how he filled his time dancing (one dance was in honor of the repeal of the Stamp Act), watching court proceedings, attending steeple raisings, and gawking at criminals as they were put in the stocks.\textsuperscript{235}

In attending these off-campus events, Yale students would come into contact with the residents of New Haven and the surrounding towns. While the college laws required that “All the Students are required to behave inoffensively and blamelessly toward the Inhabitants of New-Haven, not needlessly frequenting their Houses, or interesting themselves in any of their Controversies…” this did not stop students from visiting the homes of local residents in order to enjoy a meal of a quality not available in the commons.\textsuperscript{236} Yet town-gown relations were not always the best. Backus took the time to complain about local residents protesting in February 1777, referring to them as a “mob...sufficient to strike any sensible person with horror and raise his indignation against a set of men that not only

\textsuperscript{234} Backus, “Yale Boys of the Last Century,” 355 and College Laws, 11.
\textsuperscript{235} Joseph Bissell Wadsworth in “YALE COLLEGE IN 1766” The College Courant, Vol. 3, No. 9 (Published by: Trustees of Boston University: 1868) 131-2.
\textsuperscript{236} College Laws, 14.
disgrace the name of Whig by being called by it, but human nature.”

Even though Yale students would engage in their own protests, there was something unseemly in the local protests to Backus. It is possible that his position as a Yale student led him to hold a sense of superiority to those people who lived in town.

In some ways, college students seemed to embrace protest even more following the Revolution. Harvard, Brown, Dartmouth, William and Mary and Princeton all had instances of student violence during this period. Indeed, according to Wood, the era between 1798 and 1808 saw a spike in rebellious activities at American colleges. One 1798 instance at Brown, saw the president of the college forced to sign a document that set up a procedure for students to air their grievances in the future. In perhaps the most dramatic example, Princeton’s Nassau Hall was nearly destroyed by fire in the midst of student riots.

One cause for violence at Yale were confrontations between students and people from New Haven. One example from early 1799 saw an hour-long brawl on campus between students and sailors from the port who were itching for a fight. When all was said and done, at least three students were left injured. Further riots occurred again in 1806 and 1812, the latter incident involving around 400 people with weapons.

For some scholars, the main reason for the increasing amount of town/gown violence was the growth of the port of New Haven.

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238 Fitzmier, New England’s Moral Legislator, 55.
239 Wood. Empire of Liberty, 343. Wood goes on to note that institutions tried to combat student rebellion through tougher discipline codes but that the plan backfired. He notes one 1805 example at the University of North Carolina in which a majority of the student body withdrew from the school in protest over the new rules.
240 Fitzmier, New England’s Moral Legislator, 54-5.
241 Kelley, Yale: A History, 125.
According to this view, the growing numbers of both students and sailors in such proximity was akin to holding an open flame next to black powder. Still another reading of the history contends that it was not simply the fact that there were more people and that they were in close contact – it was who the people were. This interpretation sees the most problematic students – including those who pushed back against the college – as those who had parents that played roles in the Revolution. In their own way, these students were simply trying to recapture what they found most inspiring about their own parent’s history. While it is true that Yale students at this time did not have any firsthand knowledge of the Revolution, the legacy of that period found its way to them through their parents and expressed itself in their willingness to stand up to what they viewed as injustice. This would seem to accord with scholars like Appleby who have contended that “what Independence brought was an enlarged scope for acting on desires and convictions that had long lain close to the surface of colonial life.” While this analysis may apply to Yale’s student body, it is just as likely that the root of their animosity was simply youthful indiscretions combined with a strong sense of class-consciousness. Indeed, if one accepts the notion that Yale boys were, ultimately, most interested in preserving their future prospects, then by engaging in combat with those of a lower social strata it would, in a sense, prepare them for maintaining the status quo as adults. Where Appleby’s thesis does seem to stand on stronger ground is

244 For more on the view which suggests that the generation born after the Revolution was something wholly apart from the Revolutionary generation see Appleby’s *Inheriting the Revolution*.
with those whom the students battled. In her interpretation, “the Revolution had introduced a political philosophy subversive to distinctions based on birth, confusing local mores...”\textsuperscript{246} It is certainly plausible that from the perspective of town residents that they were trying to seize the mantle of the egalitarian notions embodied in the ideals of the Revolution. At the same time, Yale boys pushed back against the notion.

**College Rules**

Rules governed student life perhaps more than any other factor. Indeed some recent scholarship has gone so far as to suggest that “the establishment of codes of conduct, or laws of the college” were crucial components in inculcating students with the values of virtue and honor.\textsuperscript{247} Much of the power to govern students rested with the Yale Corporation. The Corporation had the authority “to adopt all measures for governing students.”\textsuperscript{248} Although the Corporation technically set the rules, it was the president who was responsible for their enforcement on a day to day basis. The published laws of the college – which all students were required to purchase - detail the expectations of students and reveal a great deal.

Students had to contend with rules relating to spoken language and their hour-to-hour existence. Early on in the history of the college, students were

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{246} Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution*, 129-130
\item \textsuperscript{247} Craig Bruce Smith. *American Honor: The Creation of the Nation’s Ideals during the Revolutionary Era.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 52.
\item \textsuperscript{248} Sheldon S. Cohen "Benjamin Trumbull, the Years at Yale 1755-1759." *History of Education Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1966), 34.
\end{itemize}
required to speak in Latin, although it is thought this rule was not strictly enforced.\textsuperscript{249} The requirement was finally abolished in 1774.\textsuperscript{250} The daily schedule was also strictly regimented and regulated, not unlike today’s military academies. The first thing students did each day was to pray, then they attended recitation, after that they were finally allowed to enjoy breakfast, typically consisting of beer and bread. The rest of the schedule included individual study (students were not even allowed to visit a classmate’s room), an evening class, and more prayers.\textsuperscript{251} This state of affairs was similar to other colleges. At the College of Rhode Island, students were required to attend prayers twice a day and to stay alone in their rooms for 10 hours.\textsuperscript{252} Back at Yale, even privacy was restricted. The tutors made daily visits to students’ rooms “…to observe whether they be there, and at their Studies, and shall punish all those that shall be absent without Liberty of Necessity.”\textsuperscript{253}

The list of offenses that could result in punishment was long. A student could be expelled for “Blasphemy, Cursing, Robbery, Fornication, Forgery...” although there is little to suggest that many students suffered this fate.\textsuperscript{254} Lesser offences included disrespecting superiors, “…Drunkenness, Lasciviousness, wearing Womens Apparel, Fraud, Injustice, Idleness, Lying, Defamation...”\textsuperscript{255} While some of these laws were based on Scripture, like any institution, some were likely crafted as a result of prior student behavior.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[252] Phillips, \textit{Brown University}, 34.
\item[253] College Laws, 7.
\item[254] College Laws, 9.
\item[255] College Laws, 10.
\end{footnotes}
As previously mentioned, freshmen had to endure the most restrictive rules. They had to give way to superiors in the stairs, or narrow halls, they had to stand up when a superior entered a room, and they could only speak when spoken to. It has been suggested that even in light of these rules, the worst thing freshmen had to face was the stipulation “to perform all reasonable Errands for any superior, always returning an account of the same to the Person who sent them.” This kind of system, endorsed by the institution must have been a burden for freshman to bear, yet is hard to imagine those same students complaining about it once they became sophomores. Eventually Yale, under the leadership of President Dwight decided to abandon this approach, first by not allowing sophomores to mistreat freshman and later abolishing the system altogether.

Some of what is known about the enforcement of rules at Yale can be deduced by examining disciplinary records. One scholar chronicled a Yale student by the name of Denison (class of 1756) as the student appearing to have the most offenses, including as a freshman “card playing, bell ringing, brandishing a pistol, and swearing and scuffling. His sophomore year he participated in three riots for which he was variously fined...And during his senior year he was convicted of stealing £10 from a fellow student and running away.” While the Denison example may be towards the extreme end of the spectrum as far as rule violations go, to be sure there were others who felt the consequences of breaking the rules.

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One such student was Joseph Marsh who confessed in 1761 to making “...a great Hallooing & Screaming so as to be heard a great way...” When the president arrived to investigate the disturbance Marsh replied “You have no Business here, if you come you come at your Peril; the Man that enters dies.”\textsuperscript{259} The idea of yelling at the president struck at the very core of the hierarchical system in place and although Marsh was willing to resist in the moment, his confession illustrates his subsequent repentance and realization that he was in need of Yale degree more than a pyrrhic victory against the president.

Records from 1771 show several students who ran afoul of the college laws. Both John Brown and James Nichols confessed to trying to convince students to leave college early, although the reasons for their action were left unstated.\textsuperscript{260} A judgment against a student, named Balding from the same year declared him guilty of:

Neglect of Studies, Neglect of Prayers...indecent Behaviour at Prayers and public Worship and particularly on a Sabbath lately past

Instances of criminal and Scandalous Behaviour he hath been repeatedly admonished by the President and Tutors in private without its having the desired Effect of any Reformation of his conduct. But on the contrary, he appears to be growing worse and worse, in Contempt of all the Orders and Authority of College.\textsuperscript{261}

As a consequence, Balding was not expelled but publicly admonished in front of his classmates in order to set an example. According to both scholars and

\textsuperscript{259} Yale College Records Concerning Student Discipline (RU 811).
\textsuperscript{260} Yale College Records Concerning Student Discipline (RU 811).
\textsuperscript{261} Yale College Records Concerning Student Discipline (RU 811).
presidents of Yale, this was an important mechanism to maintain order within the college.\textsuperscript{262}

While students were often singled out for judgment or confessed individually, there were also instances where they confessed collectively. One notable of example involved twenty-six students including Noah Webster and Joel Barlow who confessed to running “...out of the Chapel contrary to Order in a very indecent irregular Manner when two of our class were about to receive that Discipline which they justly deserved.”\textsuperscript{263} Perhaps by performing this act of contrition as a group, they were able to escape the full brunt of the college laws that sometimes were unleashed on individual students.

**Student Protest**

Student protests are part of the institutional history of most colonial colleges, and Yale is no exception. Causes for these protests ranged from complaints about the food, to rules they felt were unfair, to poor teaching.\textsuperscript{264} Some scholars see other potential causes for student displeasure. One of these factors was the hierarchical system in which students were forced to operate: one in which they were the inferiors.\textsuperscript{265} Others have gone so far as to suggest that it was the republicanism surging after 1770 which helped foster more confrontation, not only with the British government but also with college leadership.\textsuperscript{266} Still others

\textsuperscript{262} Smith, *American Honor* 54.
\textsuperscript{263} Yale College Records Concerning Student Discipline (RU 811).
\textsuperscript{265} Moore, "The War with the Tutors," 40.
\textsuperscript{266} Thelin, *American Higher Education*, 22
describe the reasons for protests at Yale shifting in the 1750s from “youthful ebullience” to anti-administrative activism.\textsuperscript{267} To be sure, there was no singular cause, in the end it was an amalgam of all of these factors that led to specific student outbursts.

At Yale, student movements against the administration date back further than 1770. One striking example that highlights the strain between students and the administration can be seen during the presidency of Thomas Clap. By the 1760s, students felt Clap behaved in an “arbitrary” manner “from which they had no appeal.”\textsuperscript{268} A gap had formed between the students and Clap, and students began to rebel against the rules by not attending prayers or classes. Instead, they chose to visit local taverns.\textsuperscript{269} Perhaps the most prominent example was the conflict over examinations described at the opening of this chapter. Although attempts to undermine the authority of Clap were unsuccessful student resentment still simmered. By 1766, they were so upset that only forty or so remained enrolled in the college, and they sent a petition asking the Corporation to terminate his tenure as president. Although the Corporation did not remove Clap, he ultimately resigned in September of 1766.\textsuperscript{270} It is worth noting that when it became clear that the institution was unwilling to expel Clap, students refused to attend prayers or class.\textsuperscript{271} Still, it is important to recognize that while the voice of students may have played a role, the Connecticut Assembly was another important factor in bringing

\textsuperscript{267} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 247.
\textsuperscript{268} Lathrop, \textit{Yale College, a Sketch of its History}, 90.
\textsuperscript{269} Tucker, \textit{Puritan Protagonist}, 248.
\textsuperscript{270} Peckham, “Collegia Ante Bellum,” 57.
\textsuperscript{271} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 69.
about the change in leadership. It was the opinion of the government that there were too many men of the cloth in the Corporation. All of this combined with the belief that Clap had been too soft on issues like the Stamp Act were enough to force him out of office.272

Clap was not the only president to face pressure from his students. His successor, Naphtali Daggett, endured a similar situation when, in the 1775-6 academic year, a student-led petition was submitted to the Corporation asking for his removal.273 Although the petition went nowhere, the very fact that the students felt empowered to petition the Corporation speaks both to their dissatisfaction as well as a general willingness to challenge authority that was percolating in the months leading up to the Revolution.

Of course not all relationships between the students and the president were so strained. A case in point would be Ezra Stiles, the man who would guide the College through the war years. According to one scholar, upon his arrival, Stiles “set himself with all his characteristic enthusiasm to correct the evils of the country...and...soon restored order among the students and gained their respect and confidence.”274

Under Stiles, students made their voices heard on matters other than who would guide the institution. In 1776, the seniors asked the Corporation to permit them to be instructed in “rhetoric, history and belles lettres – all in English – from Timothy Dwight.”275 The Corporation acceded to this demand; although it did

273 Dexter, On Some Social Distinctions, 598.
274 Lathrop, Yale College, a Sketch of its History, 105.
275 Rudolph, Curriculum, 39.
require that students who would attend this new course have permission from their parents.\textsuperscript{276} Another instance of students successfully influencing college policy can be seen in 1781 when the student body petitioned for a public commencement.\textsuperscript{277} Simeon Baldwin authored the petition which acknowledged the need for private ceremonies in the past but also suggested that the college “...not let such a stimulus to literature be deprived of its effect...having the honour of the College much at heart, we are unanimous in making this Petition which is our earnest request to & that they would give us the honour of exhibiting to the world the acquirements which we have obtained from our residence at this Society.”\textsuperscript{278} Although the degree to which this petition impacted the Corporation’s decision making is unclear, after all, the fighting in Yale’s region of the country was essentially over, in the end, Yale agreed to reinstitute the public ceremony.\textsuperscript{279} As the Revolutionary War drew to a close, the occasional conflicts between the student body and the institution persisted. Indeed, it has been pointed out that in 1782, twenty to twenty-five students destroyed the building known as Old College in response to the announcement of punishments to be meted out for vandalism that had taken place earlier that year.\textsuperscript{280}

Even after independence had been won and the new government under the Constitution was underway, students continued to voice their concerns to the school when they deemed it appropriate. In 1786, after the college began to grade

\textsuperscript{276} Kelley, \textit{Yale: A History}, 82. \\
\textsuperscript{277} Lathrop, \textit{Yale College, a Sketch of its History}, 106. Public commencements had been suspended during the early years of the war in favor of private ceremonies. \\
\textsuperscript{278} Baldwin, \textit{Life and Letters}, 72. \\
\textsuperscript{279} Lathrop, \textit{Yale College, a Sketch of its History}, 106. \\
student exams, protests erupted resulting in students breaking the windows of their tutors. When all was said in done, two scholars who confessed were pardoned while one was expelled and three additional students rusticated. Later, in 1791, when Elijah Waterman was suspended for three months for not living on campus, the senior class wrote a letter to President Stiles describing his punishment as being of “Unusual and disproportionate severity...we can never consent to remain quiet spectators.” This seems to suggest that student discipline was not always a private matter but one in which the entire class felt compelled to speak out about when they felt an injustice had been committed.

Even after the dawn of the nineteenth-century, students continued to speak out about what they considered to be inappropriate actions of staff who worked in the kitchens of the college. They framed their complaint in the form of a petition signed by four students including future Congressmen Isaac Chapman Bates and addressed to President Timothy Dwight. They couched their argument by stating that they presumed that “the President is ignorant of the conduct of those employed in the Hall.” Then launched into a list of wrong-doings, including accusing employees of using sundries for their own use, for “excessive drinking,” for being “openly profane” and for “constantly violat[ing] the Sabbath, by admitting into their company disreputable persons, and by diverting themselves with ludicrous and improper amusements.” Students then held a “trial” during

281 Morgan, Gentle Puritan, 402-3.
282 Yale College Records Concerning Student Discipline (RU 811). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, Dexter Vol. IV.
283 Bates Family Papers (MS 65). “Petition to the President of Yale College (1800-1801?)” Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.
which they heard the testimony of various witnesses to substantiate the allegations in their petition. While the outcome is not known for certain, one scholar concluded that “Justice must have been done effectively, for the affair was not repeated until 1807.” In December of that year, the kitchen staff was once again brought before the students.\textsuperscript{284} In his journal sophomore, Samuel Morse, later inventor of the eponymous code, recorded the scene:

The college cooks were arraigned before the tribunal of the students, consisting of a committee of four from each class in college; I was chosen as one of the committee from the Sophomore class. We sent for two of the worst cooks, and were all Saturday afternoon in trying them; found them guilty of several charges, such as being insolent to the students, not exerting themselves to cook clean for us, in concealing pies which belonged to the students, having suppers at midnight, and inviting all their neighbors and friends to sup with them at the expense of the students...The committee, after arranging the charges in their proper order, presented them to the president; he has had the authorities together, and they are now considering the subject.\textsuperscript{285}

The following month Morse recorded that one of the cooks had been removed while “two remain on trial for good behavior, the rest are in their former standing.”\textsuperscript{286}

What is interesting about these cases is the turnabout. It was now the students lecturing the administration on proper conduct and asking for redress.

\textsuperscript{284} Cunningham, \textit{Timothy Dwight}, 276.
\textsuperscript{286} Morse quoted in Prime, Samuel I. \textit{The Life of Samuel F.B. Morse, LL.D., Inventor of the Electro-magnetic Recording Telegraph.} (New York: Appleton and Company, 1875), 18.
At the same time, it is one window that sheds light on the town-gown tension that existed at the time. In any event, it seems clear that even though America had secured its independence in 1783, the tension that existed between student and school continued much as it had for decades.

**Faculty-Student Relationships**

While generally speaking students were outwardly respectful of college faculty – as they were bound to be by the laws of the college – on occasion the animosity that students felt became visible. During the First Great Awakening, after listening to preachers like George Whitefield, some students became more willing to criticize tutors and professors. There is even an account of students forgoing their studies so that they could preach the word in the town of New Haven. There are a few potential explanations for these actions: one is that the young men were genuinely wrapped up in the emotion of the moment and believed in the message of the Awakening and wished to spread it. Another is that the students were looking for any excuse to cause trouble and buck the system. While the latter might seem most plausible today, and may have played a small role in the eighteenth century, the former is more likely due to the religious milieu in which the events were taking place.

Another example of strained relationships between faculty and staff dates from June of 1786 in the form of a verdict against six students. The verdict details

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287 Gabriel, *Religion and Learning at Yale*, 16.
an April event wherein “riotous & tumultuous disorders...[including] breaking the Windows of the Tutors Chambers together with a premeditated attempt to force open the Doors of said Chambers with the express purpose...of offering insult indignity & violence to the Persons of the Tutors.”\textsuperscript{288} The destruction of property was clearly prohibited by the college laws, but it was the treatment of the tutors in this instance that seems to have received the most attention. It is interesting to note that the first student to confess to the offense and offer up his classmates was let off without a punishment. Three other students were suspended, while Thomas Butler was “expelled as unworthy of a standing in this University” as he was considered “the first instigator and audacious ringleader in the aforesaid daring attempt against the Door of said Chamber for the purpose of offering insult indignity and violence to the Persons of the Tutors aforesaid...[he was] contemptuous towards the Authority of the College.”\textsuperscript{289} While some students like Butler may have pushed back against what they considered to be unfair treatment, the college was swift to react and make an example of students they considered to be agitators in an attempt to prevent future incidents. Indeed, it is likely that his actions may have been transmitted to other schools resulting in “blacken[ing] his reputation throughout the colonies as a whole.”\textsuperscript{290}

Of course not all interactions between students and their instructors were so violent. In his 1777 diary, Elijah Backus noted how in April some satirical letters

\textsuperscript{288} Yale College Records Concerning Student Discipline (RU 811).
\textsuperscript{289} Yale College Records Concerning Student Discipline (RU 811).
\textsuperscript{290} Smith, \textit{American Honor}, 54.
about the tutors and the president had been discovered, which must have led to a minor commotion on campus.\footnote{291 Backus, “Yale Boys of the Last Century,” 272.}

None of this is not to say there were no positive interactions. Indeed, Backus notes how he received welcome feedback from a tutor on a sermon that he had been composing.\footnote{292 Backus, “Yale Boys of the Last Century,” 237.} During Simeon Baldwin’s time as a tutor, his students actually took up a collection to buy him a new coat as a sign of their appreciation.\footnote{293 Baldwin, Life and Letters, 197.} It is conceivable that tutors, being so close in age to their students, would be able to establish close relationships. At the same time, students might see the tutors as unworthy of their respect due to that same closeness resulting in the situation which resulted in Butler’s expulsion and the satirical commentary.

\textbf{Student Societies}

While there is no question that the formal curriculum was formative for students, some scholars have argued that it was the informal curriculum, formed in large part by student societies, that brought “increasing attention to rights, freedoms, and obligations,” as well as a Whig worldview.\footnote{294 Cremin, American Education: The Colonial Experience, 467 and Tucker, “Centers of Sedition,” 25.} Some of the interest in these societies can be attributed to the slow rate at which the college incorporated \textit{belles-lettres} into its curriculum.\footnote{295 Baldwin, Life and Letters, 24.} At Yale, the Linonian Society was
founded in 1753 out of a desire of students to further their studies in literature.\(^{296}\) According to the *Catalogue of the Graduated Members of the Linonian Society*, the purpose of the organization was to provide enrichment outside of the formal curriculum and give students an opportunity to develop their rhetorical skills, all in an environment designed to at least partly diminish the rigid barriers between the different classes.\(^{297}\) Because the Yale Library was filled with books written in Latin that did not completely meet student needs - and of those only a limited number were eligible to be checked out – the Linonian society created its own library.\(^{298}\) By 1779, members were required to pay taxes (dues) to be used so that the society might purchase its own books.\(^{299}\) Built on donations, the Linonian collection was entirely in English and included authors from Milton to Shakespeare.\(^{300}\) Its collection was large enough that the society organized it into collections including history, divinity, biography, travels, poetry and plays, novels and miscellaneous works, by 1822, the collection totaled over 1,100 volumes.\(^{301}\) While the college’s library included many of the same categories, it did not have any novels. For the student who was interested in the humanities, the collection must have served as a welcome addition to the main college library.\(^{302}\)


\(^{297}\) Straka, 184.

\(^{298}\) Straka, 184–5.

\(^{299}\) Straka, 188.

\(^{300}\) Straka, 186.

\(^{301}\) *Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Linonian, Brothers’ And Moral Libraries: Yale College, September, 1822*. New Haven [Conn.]: Printed at the Journal office [by Sherman Converse], 1822.

\(^{302}\) See Appendix 3 for the categories of works held in the College Library’s collection.
Still, not all students at Yale were enamored with the Linonian Society. This state of affairs helps to explain the creation of a new group named “Brothers in Unity,” formed in 1768. According to one scholar, the group was, “on account of its democratic constitution...was able for a time to eclipse the older society in its popularity among the students.”303 The society allowed freshman to become members in contrast with the competing student organizations.304 The society was proud of the group’s mission to destroy “…that senseless class distinction, and degrading servility, which had so long disgraced the senior members of the College, and had done so much injury to those newly entered on its catalogue.”305 In its own Catalogue, the society highlights the founding role of David Humphreys and leans into his revolutionary credentials as a member of Washington’s staff who was tasked with bringing the surrendered colors of Cornwallis to Congress.306 The society also boasted Noah Webster and Joel Barlow as members as well as its own library. For his part, Barlow seemed to espouse democratic ideals throughout his life as evidenced by his eventual support for France which taken together remind even a casual observer of the philosophies of Thomas Jefferson. His embrace of the French Revolutionary project was so complete that in 1793 the National Convention saw fit to bestow upon him French citizenship.307 Fellow member Simeon Baldwin noted how they held their own disputations engaging with such topical subjects such as “Whether the Alliance with France will be beneficial to the

303 Lathrop, Yale College, a Sketch of its History, 95.
305 Society of Brothers in Unity, 2.
306 Society of Brothers in Unity, 1.
Inhabitants of America.”308 In addition to debating, the society also boasted dramatic performances each spring running contrary to the Puritan mores of the time.309

While the Linonian Society and Bothers in Unity were important groups on campus, they were not the only ones. In 1780, Yale College was issued a charter to form a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, making it the second chapter in the United States after the founding of the society at the College of William and Mary.310 This organization seems to have been more closely associated with the school than the others as evidenced by a dramatic event that took place in 1800. In that year, Abraham Bishop had been invited to deliver a speech to the society the day before commencement. Bishop, a graduate of the Yale class of 1778, had spent time in France which may help account for his decision to join the Republican Party and may also have colored the address he was to give.311 When word reached Yale that Bishop’s speech was to be one that was politically charged, they rescinded the invitation. This was not enough to stop Bishop, however, as he simply delivered the address at location adjacent to the college where students were most assuredly in attendance. In the speech, he took aim at the Federalist Party in general by declaring “Republicans! Ye have to contend against principalities and powers and the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places, with the prince of the power of the air at the head of them.”312 He then followed up with what can

308 Baldwin, Life and Letters, 60.
309 Kendall, The Forgotten Founding Father, 30.
310 Dexter, 135.
311 Dexter, Biographical Sketches Vol. IV, 17.
be interpreted to be an attack on President Dwight and Yale by arguing that “Intolerance, with its hydra head, still roams about the state, and no mercy is shewn to those, who doubt the wisdom of the present administration.” While the institution may have been able to place a small roadblock to the dissemination of ideas that were deemed unseemly, they were ultimately unable to stifle thinking that was considered controversial from reaching their students.

Student societies continued to flourish after the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783 with the establishment of new groups like the Moral Society. In addition to promoting “and preserving morality in the college,” the society seemed to even go beyond the mainstream ideology of the new nation, when following a debate they unanimously decided against the question “Ought infidels to be excluded from holding public offices?” Created within the context of the revival movement that would lead to the Second Great Awakening, this group was formed to “facilitate serious discussion of religious questions and to further in a humble way the improvement of society.” Originally formed by twenty-two students, this group has been viewed as a contributing factor that led to an 1808 revival on campus.

Although not a named society, one history of the College notes the creation of a group of students who gathered on a regular basis to discuss religion beginning in the 1780s. These meetings were held with the direct approval of President Stiles. While Stiles took a relatively hands-off approach to this cohort of students,

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Commencement, September 1800. (Early American Imprints. First Series; No. 36976. New Haven?: S.n.], 1800) unnumbered.
313 Bishop, Connecticut Republicanism, unnumbered.
314 Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 302.
315 Gabriel, Religion and Learning at Yale, 74.
316 The Moral Society accepted its first faculty member in 1815.
President Dwight took a far different approach. During his tenure, Dwight made a point to actually attend the meetings and provide his own insights in order to “give a proper religious feeling.”\textsuperscript{317} While it is reasonable to believe that Dwight was interested in saving souls, it is equally plausible that he wanted to maintain a tight grip on the theological discussions that his charges engaged in so as not to lose control and potentially his influence over the undergraduates.

\textit{Commencement}

All of the curriculum and instruction that took place at any of the colonial colleges culminated in a commencement ceremony that had the look and feel of a holiday.\textsuperscript{318} The events were celebrations that involved not only the college community but the town and colony at large.\textsuperscript{319} Dignitaries from the colony’s religious, political, business, and press arenas would be in attendance, and the audience at large would pay particular attention to the debates that took place.\textsuperscript{320} In the years following the end of the French and Indian War, commencement became a forum that enabled college boys to participate in the public discourse surrounding the growing schism between Britain and her colonies.\textsuperscript{321} This is not so say that students presented their thoughts without review. Indeed, drafts of student speeches were subject to examination and

\textsuperscript{317} Kingsley, James Luce. \textit{A Sketch of the History of Yale College in Connecticut.} (Boston: Perkins, Marvin and co., 1835), 34. It should be noted that the fact that Kingsley worked under Dwight may have colored his view on Dwight’s role with students in this circumstance.
\textsuperscript{318} Rudolph, 44-45.
\textsuperscript{319} Thelin, \textit{American Higher Education}, 19.
\textsuperscript{321} Roche, \textit{Colonial Colleges}, 47-8.
changes by professors or tutors. Yet students were still able to send messages as evidenced during the 1769 Yale commencement. To protest the Townshend Acts, Yale seniors agreed to attend the ceremony in homespun rather than clothes made in Britain as a way to participate in the nonimportation stance of the colonies. By the 1774 commencement, two Yale M.A. students spoke “of an English dialogue concerning the Rights of America and the Unconstitutional Measures of the British Parliament.” For the 1778 ceremony, Joel Barlow composed a poem in which he wrote:

The closing scenes of Tyrants' fruitless rage,
The opening prospects of a golden age,
The dread events that crown th' important year,
Wake the glad song, and claim th' attentive ear.
Long has Columbia rung with dire alarms,
While Freedom call'd her injur'd sons to arms;

In his remarks he made it clear that the American effort was a justified one and saw a bright future for the new nation. He built on that same sentiment when he was invited to attend the 1781 commencement, the first to be held in public since 1775, to deliver a new poem, but this time as a graduate. In it he commented on the birth of his new nation and the promise that it held.

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322 Roche, Colonial Colleges, 48.
324 Dexter, Social Distinctions, 513.
325 Joel Barlow. The Prospect of Peace: A Poetical Composition, Delivered in Yale-College, at the Public Examination, of the Candidates for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts; July 23, 1778. (New Haven: Printed by Thomas and Samuel Green, 1778), 3.
326 Joel Barlow, A Poem, Spoken at the Public Commencement at Yale College, in New-Haven; September 12, 1781. (Hartford: Printed by Hudson and Goodwin, 1781).
Political influence aside, commencement must have been an emotional moment for students, even those who were not on the verge of leaving. In July of 1775, two years before his own commencement, Ebenezer Fitch wrote wistfully that “My collegiate life is fast drawing to a close...time is too short; I wish it were longer.”327 This surely was a sentiment that was echoed by more than a few Yale students of any era.

The period from the end of the French and Indian War through the end of the War of 1812 witnessed a series of changes for Yale College students. While the war was brought to the doorstep of the college in 1779, the British Army itself did little to impact the school other than forcing it to disband briefly. The revolutionary spirit that was uncorked with British attempts to recoup the expense of defending the colonies from the French seems to have had a more transformative effect. Students began to agitate, not only against their college but also against the British as well. Of course their daily lives remained highly regimented, but over time they gained the ear of the administration and created student-run societies to expand on the education they were already receiving in a manner they thought best. In the end, the system that they lived in and helped to shape would send them off to be the future leaders of the young nation that was in need of them.

CONCLUSION: YALE AT THE DAWN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The American War for Independence was not the only revolution that would have an impact on Yale College or its leadership. The rhetoric and ideals of the French Revolution, itself partially influenced by events in America, began to reach the United States during the presidency of Ezra Stiles. Yet Stiles was not overly concerned about the impact that events in France would have in New Haven. In essence, Stiles felt that affairs in France tended towards freedom. Stiles’s successor, Timothy Dwight, however, seemed particularly terrified about what was occurring on the other side of the Atlantic and what it might portend for his fledgling nation and his university.³²⁸

It can be attractive to see Dwight as simply a second-coming of his famous grandfather. After all, Jonathan Edwards is synonymous with the Great Awakening as Dwight is often associated with the Second Great Awakening.³²⁹ Additionally, Edwards, like his grandson, “belonged to an elite extended family that was part of the ruling class of clergy, magistrates, judges, military leaders, village squires, and merchants...”³³⁰ Still, although Edwards is sometimes cited as a proto-revolutionary figure who helped spawn a movement that would foment challenges to authority, he was, ultimately, not a radical. There was a reason why

³²⁸ Kelley, Yale: A History, 117.
³²⁹ This interpretation has been challenged by scholars who contend that it was not individuals like Dwight who were responsible for bringing on the Awakening, it was due to “an increase in religious activity – notably missions and religious journalism.” In addition “the leaders of the Awakening were not high profile Federalist clergy, such as Dwight, but local pastors whose visibility was confined to more circumscribed locales.” See Fitzmier, New England’s Moral Legislator, 17.
³³⁰ Marsden, Jonathan Edwards, 3.
he was selected to be president of the College of New Jersey, and it was not because the leadership of that institution viewed him as someone who challenged the standing order. When Dwight was selected to serve as Yale’s president, he already had an established reputation as a “poet, preacher and educator.”331 Once installed as president, he would try to carry on the theological legacy of Edwards into the nineteenth century. In his new role, he sought to strengthen the position of his religion, but while Dwight was interested in revival and reform and worked to “reconcile rival factions, soothe tender egos, and most important craft theological compromises,” he was unwilling to sit silently while the ideology of the French Revolution arrived in the United States.332

In one powerful sermon, Dwight railed against the very nature of the Revolution in Europe. He argued that “In France...an open, violent, and inveterate war has been made upon the Hierarchy, and carried on with unexampled bitterness and cruelty.”333 Not only that, but he nervously remarked that “the Clergy of all descriptions have, in a sense, been destroyed.”334 Both hierarchy and the influence of the clergy were two things that Dwight strove to preserve at Yale in particular and in America more generally following the American Revolution. While it can be rightly suggested that the United States continued to have a strong social hierarchy, it can also be argued that the influence of the church on the state was beginning to wane.

334 Dwight, The Duty of Americans, at the Present Crisis, 9.
Still, throughout it all, Dwight stubbornly stuck to his belief regarding the primacy of religion and education. In one particularly telling sermon entitled “Life – A Race” delivered to graduating seniors in 1799, 1806 and 1812 he described the type of student he detested:

To be learned is the great object of his ambition, and to enjoy the sweets of knowledge the commanding dictate of his relish for pleasure. In his study he dwells; in his books he passes his life. To think appears to him the only proper end of human existence; while to do is not even entered on the register of his duties...In the mean time, he knows not that the whole end of thinking is action...he has not discovered that science is a means and not an end.335

For Dwight, the end of education, like it was for many of his predecessors, including his grandfather Jonathan Edwards, was “to glorify his Maker, and to do good to his fellow creatures is his chief aim, the principal employment of his life.”336 It was religion, Dwight believed, that would provide Yale men with the moral compass they would need for the rest of their lives.337

It has been suggested that Dwight was only partially responsible for his persona; that the context in which he operated played a major role in who he became. To be sure events such as “Jay’s Treaty, the Whiskey Rebellion, the XYZ Affair, the Alien and Sedition Acts, the rise of political parties, to say nothing of the dramatic social and economic changes at home and the French Revolution abroad” were developments that many Americans would need to contend with and Dwight was no exception.338 In addition, it has been suggested that in the 1790s,

Americans had begun to see their society as one in which there existed “a contest between ‘democrats’ and ‘aristocrats’...” with Federalists saddled with the “aristocrat” mantle. Still, the degree to which these events and this environment shaped Dwight’s own worldview or simply confirmed what he already believed is difficult to determine. What does seem clear is that Dwight was of a mind, shared by many Federalists, that society was under threat from those who were bent on destroying the system and it was up to men like him - those who thought of themselves especially suited to lead - to prevent that from happening. If Yale could produce suitable graduates, perhaps they could help stem the Democratic tide.

Dwight’s conservative views persisted through the War of 1812. Although the conflict did not have a direct impact on Yale College in the same way that the Revolutionary War did, that did not prevent commentary from New Haven. In the aftermath of the war, an aging President Dwight put pen to paper and summed up his thoughts in the Remarks on the Review of Inchiquin’s Letters, ostensibly addressed to George Canning, a Tory Member of Parliament. In it, Dwight made clear that he, like other Federalists, believed in a salutary relationship between the United States and Great Britain. In Dwight’s mind, in spite of the war, the two nations shared a common history and language and that the destruction of the relationship between them would be “an evil which cannot be measured.” He

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339 Wood, Empire of Liberty, 216.
340 Wood, Empire of Liberty, 216.
341 Dwight, Timothy, Remarks on the Review of Inchiquin’s Letters: Published in the Quarterly Review; Addressed to The Right Honourable George Canning, Esquire. (Boston: Published by Samuel T. Armstrong, 1815), iii.
made it clear that he held the Democratic-Republicans who served in the new capital of Washington D.C. responsible for essentially manufacturing the conflict, driving a wedge between the United States and Great Britain while embracing France. In referring to Presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, Dwight admitted that “there is no...Englishmen, who regards [their] character with less approbation than myself.” Indeed he considered Jefferson “cunning,” while declaring Madison “weak.” That they, and their party had had tended towards “madness” when the government had “wish[ed] success to Napoleon.” He even criticized the U.S. military for behaving as barbarians in the burning of York (now Toronto), which in turn led to the destruction of the American capital. In his comments, Dwight proved himself to be the most stalwart of Federalists, yet his party’s influence on the national stage was waning.

According to James Banner, the decline of Dwight’s Federalist Party and elitism was caused by a variety of factors. For Banner “...nothing was more important in undermining the habits of elitism than the thousands of individual decisions to participate...in the political process. Once these decisions had been made, voters began to gain a new perspective on the importance of their own vote and to see in a new light their own role in the wider society.” At the same time, Federalists like Dwight were not prepared to wave the white flag just yet. The party tolerated extremist elements within its own party to some degree as a means to

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maintain their own status within American politics. They were willing to do what was necessary in stay in power much the same way that Dwight was. Ultimately though, the days of the Federalist Party were numbered.

Indeed, shortly after Dwight’s death the Connecticut Congregational church would be disestablished and America would move away from Federalist ideology, turning away from what Dwight held most dear. In spite of this state of affairs, Dwight stayed the course. He did his best to resist infidelity while also modernizing Yale’s curriculum in order to help prepare her graduates for non-clerical careers.

During the Revolutionary Era discontent about taxation policy and methods of representation intertwined with philosophies of constitutionalism gradually grew larger until the colonies determined their best course of action was to throw off what they considered to be the yoke of royal oppression in order to found a new nation. During that stretch of time, the new state experimented with government from the excessively weak Articles of Confederation to the much stronger Constitution of 1787.

Throughout this transformative time in American history, Yale College also changed. The school expanded, then contracted, then expanded again, new buildings were constructed to accommodate the needs of the institution. Presidents, professors and tutors embraced new ideas and approaches to

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345 An example of the extremism that was present within the Federalist Party can be seen in the Hartford Convention of 1814-15.
education. The school began to produce more and more lawyers, physicians, elected officials and judges. The curriculum evolved to incorporate the ideas of the Enlightenment and new subjects. Students protested and advocated for change, both institutional and governmental, sometimes seeing their efforts meet with success.

At the same time, the institution and the people who comprised it hewed to a largely conservative tack. The presidents aimed to keep the school relevant and attractive to those with means so that they might send their sons to New Haven. While the curriculum advanced, it still was heavily invested in religion and although more and more of her graduates were entering a variety of vocations, by the end of the eighteenth century many still became ministers. While students were willing to push boundaries, generally speaking, they were unwilling to go so far as to put their credential, and by extension their future prospects, at risk. They were willing to be participations in the Revolution as long as they felt that it would not jeopardize their positions in society. For many of them, the decision to play it safe paid off in the end as they were able to maintain or improve their standing in the new American state.

Yale College at the beginning of the nineteenth century was a far cry from what it would become in the twentieth, yet it had made strides and shown a commitment to gradual improvement in order to maintain its relevance. Still, in order to become the institution known throughout the world today so much more work was yet to be done.
Illustrations

A portrait of Ezra Stiles by Samuel King (1776). The circle in the upper right hand corner states “All Happy In God.” Notable authors on the shelf behind him include Plato, Watts, and Newton, additional works on ecclesiastical and Chinese History are also visible. Source: Wikimedia.org
A dignified and upright Timothy Dwight, by Jonathan Trumbull (1817). The portrait does nothing to suggest the eye ailments that plagued Dwight for most of his life. Source: Wikimedia.org
Noah Webster by James Sharples. The future lexicographer was a student at Yale during the Revolutionary War and witnessed George Washington march through New Haven. Source: Wikimedia.org.
Completed during the tenure of Thomas Clap, Connecticut Hall still stands today and is the oldest building on Yale’s campus. Source: Wikimedia.org.
Naphtali Daggett, who served as President *Pro Tempore* between 1766 and 1777 took up arms against the British during the invasion of New Haven. He was taken prisoner and suffered abuse at the hands of his captors. Source: Wikimedia.org.
Appendix 1

Letter to Webster from Yale Classmates


Sir, We are draughted to do service as private soldiers in the Militia of this State, this we consider as an infringement of our Charter Rights and Privileges as members of Yale College. Although his Excellency GovR Trumbull upon an Application made to him, has given his Opinion against us — yet by the advice of DoctR Stiles and some of the Corporation whose sentiments we have taken respecting the matter, we propose referring the equity of the matter to a judicial Decision. The President with the Corporation, will lay the matter before the General Assembly — provided we should not succeed in an Application to the Superior Court. It is likewise the Opinion of Doct' Stiles, that, as the Affair concerns not only us, but ev'ry member of College in a similar situation we should proceed unitedly in carrying on the Suit. And as we Propose requesting the Assistance of those Gentlemen who are to receive the honors of College in September Next. A Unanimous Concurrence, will render the Cost but very trifling to Individuals. Considering that your Compliance with this request will constitute you a party concerned — we would wish for any Advice or Service in
your power. We propose engaging the Honb” Titus Hosmer, EsqR as Council —
his Opinion coinciding with ours — And shall send a Copy of this Letter to each
individual of Our Class — We beg an Answer to this as soon as Possible and are
with regard (no period)
Appendix 2

List of Questions for Disputations

The following is a list of questions for disputations that were recorded by student Thomas Robbins during his junior year in 1794 and 1795 which was Stiles’s last as president. The questions were compiled by Edmund Morgan in his article “Ezra Stiles and Timothy Dwight.” Which appeared in Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society (1963).

- “Ought a man to be punished for a crime committed when in a state of intoxication.
- Whether a man ought to be imprisoned for debt. Ought a man to be put to death for any crime except murder.
- Whether Democratic societies are beneficial.
- Would foreknowledge encrease our happiness.
- Whether physical knowledge is favourable to morality.
- Ought property to be a necessary qualification for publick office.
- Whether the interest of money ought to be regulated by law.
- Would it be just and politick for the United States to emancipate all their slaves at once.
- Whether raising money by lotteries is politic.
- Whether representatives ought to be directed by their constituents.
- Whether it was right to confiscate the estates of the refugees, last war.
- Can universal salvation be proved from scripture.
- Whether theatres are beneficial.
o Is a republican preferable to a monarchical government.
o Is the observation of the Sabbath a temporal benefit.
o Whether the Indian War is just on the part of the United States.
o Whether those who have suffered by the western insurrection ought to have restitution made by government.
o Is our method of electing members of Congress and our Upper House prefer able to that of other states.
o Whether the Clergy ought to be exempt from taxation.
o Can the various complections of the human species be accounted for from natural causes.
o Whether it would be best for the United States to adapt their spelling to their pronunciation.
o Whether the discovery of the mines in South America have been advantageous.
o Whether sumptuary laws are beneficial.
o Whether the principles of the French Revolution are just.
o Whether a destitution of property ought to exclude a man from voting.
o Whether an insurrection of a minority against a majority can ever be justified.
o Whether a discovery of a mine would be beneficial to the Untied States
o Whether self-love is the sole incitement of action.
o Whether a time ought to be fixed when a person should act for himself.
o Ought the study of dead languages to make a part of a liberal education.
o Whether representation ought to be according to population.
o Are commercial towns in danger of being too populous for the good of community.
o Whether publik is preferable to a private education.

o Whether the Senate and Congress have sufficient reason for holding their debates in private.

o Ought persons to be allowed to set up trades without serving an apprenticeship.

o Would it be politic for this state to diminish their number of representatives in the assembly.

o Whether corporation of mechanics ought to be encouraged.

o Would it be politic for this state to turn out the Upper House of our Assembly.

o Whether divorces ought ever to be granted.
Appendix 3

Library Catalogue Subjects

The following are the subjects in which the library categorized its collection. The list comes from the *Catalogue of Books In the Library of Yale-College, New-Haven, January, 1808.*

- Grammars and Rudiments
- Dictionaries and Lexicons
- Greek and Latin Classics and Translations
- Mathematics
- Natural Philosophy and Astronomy
- Alchymy, Chemistry and Natural History
- Transactions of Learned Societies, the Arts, etc.
- Poetry and Plays
- Philology and Rhetoric
- Logic and Metaphysics
- Ethics
- Anatomy, Physic and Surgery
- Law
- Natural Religion
- Evidences of Revelation
- Bibles, Concordances, etc.
- Annotations of the Bible
- Systems of Divinity
- Sermons
- Theological Works and Treatises
- Polemic Divinity
- Fathers
- Ecclesiastical History
- Antiquities
- History
- Biography
- Geography, Voyages and Travels
- Miscellanies
- Pamphlets
Appendix 4

Colleges Chartered Prior to the American Revolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Chartered[^580]</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harvard College</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Congregational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of William and Mary</td>
<td>1693</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale College</td>
<td>1701</td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Congregational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of New Jersey (later Princeton University)</td>
<td>1746</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's College (later Columbia University)</td>
<td>1754</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Anglican</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^580]: Years listed reference when the schools were charted as colleges, prior status as academies is not considered.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Chartered$^{581}$</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Rhode Island</td>
<td>1764</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen's College (Later Rutgers University)</td>
<td>1766</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Dutch Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dartmouth College</td>
<td>1769</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>Congregational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^{581}$ Years listed reference when the schools were charted as colleges, prior status as academies is not considered.
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# Vita

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>David A. Wilock</th>
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<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate Degree</td>
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<td></td>
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