its field, Guillaume François de L'Hôpital's *Method of fluxions*, was among the volumes acquired from the deceased president's effects.


Astronomy was represented in Henley's selections by the works of James Ferguson, a dominant figure in eighteenth-century astronomical research; these included Ferguson's most influential production, *Astronomy explained*, which went through thirteen editions before 1811, his popular *Lectures on select subjects in mechanics*, and his *Tables and tracts*. Two works on navigation—Archibald Patoun's *Complete treatise of navigation* and William Emerson's *Mathematical principles of geography*—together with copies of Charles Leadbetter's *Mechanick dialling* and Richard Jack's *Mathematical principles of theology* also appeared on the Henley list. Another entry covered several unspecified pamphlets and three untitled "calendriers." The latter may have been almanacs or, as Professor Neiman has suggested, tables of considerable substance inasmuch as they cost the college nine shillings.

But the most notable components of the accession, aside from Bayle's great dictionary and Newton's major works, were in the fields of physics and electrical research. Interest in these areas had been promoted at William and Mary by Small's lectures and by the laboratory equipment that Small had purchased for the college in England in 1767. Horrocks had obviously been intrigued by the same subjects, for his private library contained copies—acquired by Henley for the college—of Benjamin Franklin's *Experiments and observations on electricity*, Joseph Priestley's *History and present state of electricity*, and Benjamin Wilson's *Short view of electricity*. In short, a useful collection of treatises reflecting contemporary scientific thought was added to the shelves of a library that had previously stressed theology and the classics.

The other volumes in Horrocks' extensive private library were sold in Williamsburg, according to the August 13, 1772, *Virginia gazette*, "at Mr. William Pearce's Store... where Catalogues, with the Prices annexed, may be seen." No copy of the catalogue is known to have survived. But at least one volume thus dispersed—Volume II of Croker, Williams, and Clark's *Complete dictionary of arts and sciences*—has come to light within recent years and has been given to the college. The fact that this work was dismissed by Henley in making his selections for the library may indicate that a set of the multivolume compilation was already on the college shelves in 1772.

The mid-eighteenth-century development of book collections within the frameworks of undergraduate societies and clubs is indicative of the limited role allotted the library in the life of the academic community. Its stately folios and ponderous sets of patristical, theological, and philosophical lore, as well as any lighter resources in the fields of art, history, belles-lettres, the classics, and biogra-
phy, were assembled solely for the use of the masters and graduate students. The undergraduate was expected to form his own personal shelf of books for general and recreational reading. If a youth fancied the lively works of the restoration dramatists or the witticisms of Alexander Pope, he had to acquire the volumes either from a dealer in Williamsburg or through his family's London agent.

But valuing good fellowship, a group of William and Mary students in 1750 banded together and organized the first undergraduate fraternity thus far discovered in the annals of an American university or college. The members, in their private correspondence, secretive referred to the organization as "the F.H.C. Society." It is now generally believed that the initials, despite the redundancy of the resulting phrase, stood for Flat Hat Club. Miss Jane Carson, writing in the Thomas Perkins Abernethy fest-schrift entitled The Old Dominion (1964), which was edited by Darrett B. Rutman, has suggested, on the other hand, that the initials could just as well have stood for Fraternitas Hilaritas Cognitioque. In any event, the F.H.C. Society sought to develop a library for the edification of its brethren.

Undergraduate societies founded later in the century at other academic establishments were motivated by similar aims. At Harvard, for example, both the Hasty Pudding and Porcellian clubs undertook the development of book collections. The Harvard fraternities kept their respective collections in an undergraduate librarian's room, affording the members "an opportunity of general reading for which the College Library was then ill-equipped."30

The F.H.C. Society from about 1770 to 1776 enjoyed the patronage of Thomas Gwatkin, a Christ Church, Oxford, master of arts who had come to William and Mary in 1770 as professor of natural philosophy and mathematics. Gwatkin was requested by the brethren to prepare a catalogue of "the most useful and valuable books with which it would be proper to begin the establishment of a Library."32 In complying, Gwatkin provided posterity with a glimpse of what was considered good undergraduate reading matter at the college on the eve of the American Revolution. He listed his recommendations under six headings: (1) moral philosophy and civil law, (2) mathematics, natural philosophy, and natural history, (3) history, (4) government, (5) trade, and, of course, (6) miscellaneous works.33 As proof of his familiarity with the works thus cited, he arranged the titles under each heading according to the size of the volumes, folio, quarto, octavo, and duodecimo.

Many of the works proposed by Gwatkin for the F.H.C. Society must have duplicated works already on the college library shelves. For example, Newton's Principia, listed in the section on mathematics, natural philosophy, and natural history, had been purchased from the Horrocks estate. Newton's Opticks, Priestley's Electricity, and Simpson's Geometry, also proposed by Gwatkin, had come from the same source. And Burnet's celebrated History of the reformation, a F.H.C. Society desideratum, had probably been given to the college by the author himself.

The emphasis on mathematics and the physical sciences noted in connection with the books that Samuel Henley had selected from Horrocks' effects was even more pro-
nounced in the fraternity checklist. Nearly 50 per cent of the titles touched those subjects. This means that the impressive sets of theological and classical literature that were gathered on the college shelves had virtually assumed the status of antiquarian memorabilia. The college itself, as a matter of fact, was in the throes of an intellectual ferment that was to culminate, during the American Revolution, in a drastic revision of its academic organization and aims.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Good Foundation to Improve Upon

1776–1793

THE departure in 1776 and 1777 of several Tory members of the faculty signaled the dissolution of ties that had bound the college to its English supporters and to English academic thought and precedent since 1693. The severance of these links was not altogether unheralded, for spirited conflicts had marred relations between the native-born visitors of the college and its Oxford-bred faculty since the middle of the century. Any attempt to relate the library to this intracollegiate struggle, however, would give undue emphasis to the library’s role in the life of the academic community. Innovations adopted shortly after 1776 nevertheless suggest that liberal elements within the collegiate establishment had already prepared the ground for possible modifications to the library program.

A preview of the possible impact of revolutionary hostilities on the library collections came in June 1776 when a representative of the Virginia Convention appeared at the college gates, armed with a commission to determine whether or not the main academic building could be converted into “a proper hospital for the reception and accommodation of sick and wounded soldiers.” After tour-
ing the premises, and presumably conferring with Librarian Emanuel Jones and other officials, the commissioner concluded that quarters for the proposed hospital would have to be sought somewhere else. The convention was advised that the structure, by reason of numerous partitions, would not admit proper circulation of air, that it was already prepared for the reception of “scholars” scheduled to return to classes the following week, and that the “large and valuable library” might be damaged by removal, “perhaps totally ruined.”

Despite the turmoil and confusion of the times, the college succeeded in maintaining an uninterrupted academic schedule from 1776 until the spring of 1781. But the siege of Yorktown in 1781 thrust Williamsburg into the main theater of military operations. Classes and lectures were thereupon suspended, and the three principal college buildings—the main structure, the Brafferton or Indian school, and the President’s house—were requisitioned for military purposes. The library collections, left in the main building, were subjected during this interval to pillage and vandalism by the British, French, and American troops who were alternately quartered on the premises. Specific details respecting the damages and losses that were sustained are not revealed in the surviving records. But Richard Randolph, in drafting a claim for damages which was laid before the Virginia General Assembly in 1839, asserted that “many of the books were lost, and the apparatus [that is, the highly prized laboratory equipment that Professor Small had purchased for the college in England in 1767] seriously injured.”

On April 9, 1777, a significant break with the past oc-
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curred when Emanuel Jones, probably angry and bewildered by changes that beset the college, either willingly or unwillingly "resigned . . . as Clerk of the Meeting & Librarian." Rev. John Bracken, "into whose hands the Key of the Library &c were delivered," was appointed on the same date to serve as Jones's successor. Bracken, confronted with a problem that has plagued library keepers since time immemorial, shortly thereafter inserted the following notice in Alexander Purdie's *Virginia gazette*:

It is earnestly requested of all Gentlemen who have any books belonging to the College library in their possession, to return the same immediately.

The plea was repeated a week later in Dixon and Hunter's *Virginia gazette*.

The election in 1777 of Rev. James Madison, a cousin of the statesman of the same name, to succeed the Tory John Camm as president of the college marked a complete break with the past. Madison, the first alumnus of William and Mary to occupy the post, represented a background and ideals closely allied to those of his friend and associate, Thomas Jefferson. In cooperation with Jefferson, Madison was to be responsible for effecting revolutionary changes in the organization and curriculum of the college.

Jefferson, as one of the revisors charged in 1776 with revamping the laws of Virginia, drafted a scheme of general education for the state that embraced three levels of instruction: "elementary schools for all children generally; rich and poor"; colleges "for a middle degree of instruction, calculated for the common purposes of life"; and a university "for teaching the sciences generally, & in their

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8. Books presented to the College of William and Mary by Louis XVI of France. (Courtesy of College of William and Mary)
highest degree." In a bill especially designed to meet the last object, Jefferson sought "to amend the constitution of Wm. & Mary College, to enlarge its sphere of science, and to make it in fact an University." By this measure he hoped to convert his alma mater into a state-supported university and to secularize an establishment that, in his words, was "purely of the Church of England."

But the bill was never enacted into law. It is cited here because it embraced a program for the collection of research materials for the college library that was far in advance of its time. The bill, as drafted by Jefferson, would have abolished the Indian school attached to the college and would have substituted therefor "a perpetual mission among the Indian tribes." This, to be sure, would have respected the requirement of the Brafferton trustees that the Indians be instructed in the principles of Christianity. But, as Professor Julian P. Boyd has observed, an object that must have been uppermost in Jefferson's mind was that of having the missionary to the Indians "collect their traditions, laws, customs, languages, and other circumstances." Jefferson's bill for reconstituting the college stipulated that the missionary should

communicate, from time to time to the said president and professors [of William and Mary] the materials he collects to be by them laid up and preserved in their library, for which trouble the said missionary shall be allowed a salary at the discretion of the visitors out of the revenues of the college.

Jefferson, in other words, was prepared to transform the college library from a depository of printed books into a repository of original source materials.

Though Jefferson's bill for amending the charter of the college was never enacted into law, its author, shortly after becoming governor of Virginia on June 1, 1779, was elected to the college board of visitors. In the latter capacity, Jefferson succeeded in effecting many of the revolutionary changes in the college organization and curriculum that were originally proposed in his unsuccessful bid to amend the charter. On December 4, 1779, acting in cooperation with James Madison, the college president, Jefferson induced the board of visitors to abolish the grammar school and the two chairs of divinity and in their place to introduce chairs of modern languages, of anatomy, medicine, and chemistry, and of law and police. The duties of the professor of moral philosophy were broadened to cover both "the Law of Nature and Nations" and the fine arts, and those of the professor of mathematics and natural philosophy to include natural history. An elective system of study was also adopted. The college was thereupon designated a university.  

A few weeks later, on December 29, 1779, the president and faculty issued the first rules for the government of the college library thus far discovered in the institutional archives. It was resolved that no professor would be allowed to keep books drawn from the collection for more than six months and that all loans would have to be properly entered against the borrowers' names in a register provided for that purpose. John Bracken's 1777 notice in the Virginia gazette had indicated that a slipshod system for recording loans left the librarian uninformed as to the whereabouts of his charges. The librarian was also directed by the faculty on December 29, 1779, to submit thereafter an
annual report on the state of the library, "immediately after the Christmas vacation."

On December 30 the faculty turned its attention to even more fundamental problems confronting the library. The income that the library had enjoyed since 1734 from the provincial duty on alcoholic imports was abruptly terminated in 1776 upon the establishment of the Commonwealth. This does not mean that abstinence accompanied independence: the colonial levy simply expired and authority for its renewal was not exercised by a reconstituted Virginia General Assembly. Independence from the mother country also cost the college other lucrative sources of revenue. The Brafferton estate in Yorkshire, the income from which had been diverted at times to library purposes, was confiscated by the English Crown. In consequence, funds for improving the book collection were not available. Jefferson vainly sought to remedy this deficiency by substituting more certain revenues for the support of the college in his unsuccessful measure aimed at amending its charter.

Regulations, or policy, that limited the use of the library to the masters and graduate students, moreover, were inconsistent with the republican sentiments that motivated Jefferson and Madison in their reorganization of the college in 1779. Perhaps each, as an undergraduate, had suffered the frustration of being denied access to the book collection. Jefferson after 1776 was actually contemplating, in his package of bills aimed at creating a general system of education for the state, the establishment of a "Public Library" for "indulging the researches of the learned and curious."¹⁴

In consequence, moved both by the necessity for raising funds and by a determination to open the library to all students, graduate and undergraduate alike, the president and faculty on December 30, 1779, resolved that

the Ceremony of Matriculation shall be a pecuniary Contribution to the Library, from every Student when he enters the College & annually afterwards, on which his Name together with his Contribution shall be entered in a Book kept for that Purpose by the Bursar, & he shall be entitled to the Use of the Library.¹⁵

The matriculation fee was set at ten shillings per annum. One third of the total proceeds therefrom was appropriated to the administration of the library; the remaining two thirds were to be "laid out in purchasing Books."

The president and faculty on December 30, 1779, also directed Librarian John Bracken to arrange the library collections "according to the different Branches of Literature." It is not known what classification rules or methods of physical arrangement had previously been employed. In 1779 the books were obviously not arranged according to subject matter. In all probability the folios, quartos, octavos, and duodecimos, regardless of content, had been standing on shelves allocated to their respective heights. Or perhaps the integrity of the various donations had been maintained by shelving the books according to provenance in presses carrying the donor's name blazoned over the doors as in Duke Humphrey's library at the Bodleian. The William and Mary officials had certainly toyed with this notion in their 1732 plans for diverting the income from Boyle's bequest to the purchase of books. Speculation on cataloguing methods would be even more futile, for even
the English and Scottish universities were notoriously backward in this respect throughout the eighteenth century. 18

As a result of the decision to reclassify the resources of the library, all of the books in circulation were recalled on May 20, 1780. 19 On the same date Charles Bellini, Jefferson's friend and protegé who occupied the chair of modern languages, was elected to succeed John Bracken as librarian. Abbé Claude Robin, finding the college temporarily closed when he passed through Williamsburg en route to Yorktown in September 1781, met Bellini and flattering observed:

Nous n'avons retrouvé qu'un seul Professeur, Italien d'origine; son esprit, son savoir nous font, d'après ce qu'il nous a dit de ses Confrères, regretter leur éloignement. 20

The conversations between Robin and Bellini may have taken place in the library, “une bibliothèque d'environ trois mille volumes,” for Robin was moved when

j'ai contemplé avec un intérêt bien viv [c]es vrais monumens de la gloire des hommes; en me rappelant des moments heureux, ils me rappeloient des personnes chères à mon coeur. Le tumulte des armes a fait fuir ceux qui en faisaient usage; les Muses, vous le savez, ne se plaisent que dans le séjour de la paix. 21

The faculty on May 20, 1780, resolved to provide Bellini with explicit instructions governing the circulation of books. It decided that

none of the Books be hereafter delivered out of the Library to any but Professors & matriculated Students and to them for one month only at a Time; when they shall be returned, otherwise the Borrower shall not only be accountable for the value of the Book withheld, but be deprived of the Privilege until the Society upon proper amends at a subsequent Meeting agree to restore it . . . If any borrowed Book be defaced, torn or otherwise injured, he who had the use of it shall replace it by another of the same Author, equal to what it was when first put into his hands . . . The first Monday in every Month at 9 oclock Morning is appointed as a Time to receive all Books lent out. 22

The 1780 library regulations were subsequently expanded and incorporated in the college statutes, and published with them in 1792. 23 This was the first appearance in print of any rules and regulations devised for the management of the book collection. Section VI of the statutes stipulated:

1. No Student shall be privileged to take any books from the library, who hath not first paid ten shillings to the Bursar, and produced a receipt of such payment to the Librarian, which sum shall entitle the Student to the use of the library for one year.

2. No Student shall receive more than one book at a time; the value of which he shall previously deposit with the Librarian.

3. Every Student taking a book, shall regularly return it to the Librarian in the Council Chamber, within one month at farthest; otherwise he shall be deprived of the use of the library.

4. No Student shall apply for a book, except on Mondays and Fridays, and then application shall be made to the Librarian, between the hours of nine and ten in the morning.

5. Every Student losing, defacing or in any way injuring a book belonging to the library, shall forfeit the deposit made on receiving the book; and if such book be lost, and be part
of a set, he shall forfeit the full value of the set, or replace the book.

In short, on the eve of its centennial the library, though open to all matriculates, was safeguarded by a somewhat formidable array of rules and regulations governing the circulation of books.

In accessions, the contrast between the colonial period and the period after 1776 was accentuated by several donations received in 1783 and 1784. Before the American Revolution the library had enjoyed the patronage of English kings, archbishops, bishops, royal governors, and men of letters. But a procession of French visitors passing through Williamsburg during and immediately after the Revolutionary conflict ignited a smoldering admiration for France and for French intellectual thought. One of Jefferson’s proudest accomplishments was the introduction of French into the college curriculum in 1779. And in 1782 the college was pleased to bestow honorary degrees on two distinguished French guests, the marquis de Chastellux and Jean-François Coste. Chastellux, in recording his impressions of the college, reported that “if miracles need be cited to enhance her fame, [I might add] that she has made me a Doctor of Law!”28 As a token of his gratitude Chastellux in 1783 presented to the library a set of his two-volume work entitled De la félicité publique.29

Chastellux was instrumental in 1784 in obtaining for the library a substantial gift of books donated in the name of Louis XVI of France. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, the comte de Vergennes, joined Chastellux in soliciting the donation, which was transmitted to the college through the good offices of François Barbé-Marbois, secre-
tary of the French Legation in Philadelphia. The royal gift — “deux cents volumes des plus beaux et des meilleurs ouvrages français” — arrived in New York City in July 1784 on board the French packet Courier de l’Amérique, and from thence was shipped overland to Virginia. But le négociant de Richmond qui était chargé de les faire passer au collège, a oublié assez longtemps dans sa cave milieu des barrils de sucre et d’huile, pour les avoir remis absolument gâtés.26

The books reached the college at the end of the year. If the condition of the two volumes still in the possession of the library is indicative of the condition in which the rest of the volumes were received, the books did not suffer great ill effects from their sojourn in the Richmond warehouse.

The comte de Vergennes, in responding to President Madison’s acknowledgment of the gift, politely explained that

Le Roi a eu une véritable satisfaction à vous envoyer la petite collection de livres dont vous accusez la réception; elle ne saurait être mieux placée que dans la bibliothèque d’une université aussi distinguée que celle que vous possédez; et Sa Majesté se flattera que vous la regarderez toujours comme une marque de sa bienveillance et de son affection pour vos estimable corps.28

Unfortunately, as previously noted, only two out of the two hundred volumes donated by “his most Christian Majesty” survived the disastrous conflagration of 1859.

The University of Pennsylvania was also a recipient, at the same time, of a collection of books donated in the name of Louis XVI.26 Happily, the Pennsylvania consignment, thirty-six titles in one hundred volumes, has been pre-
served almost intact. Professor Howard C. Rice, noting the presence in the Pennsylvania lot of several of the marquis de Chastellux's favorite authors—Buffon, Tacitus, and Metastasio, for example—has concluded that Chastellux had a hand in making the selections. As might be expected, moreover, many of the books were printed in Paris at "la Imprimerie Royale."

On the basis of what little is known about the volumes comprising the gift to William and Mary, there is reason for believing that one half of the collection duplicated the one hundred volumes sent to Pennsylvania. The only two volumes that have survived, copies of Jean Sylvain Bailly's Lettres sur l'origine des sciences and Lettres sur l'Atlantide de Platon et sur l'ancienne histoire de Asie, duplicate, for example, works that were donated to Pennsylvania. And both institutions were favored with sets of Georges Louis Leclerc Buffon's monumental Histoire naturelle. A large percentage of the works given to Pennsylvania touched scientific subjects. This also characterized the donation to William and Mary, for President Madison told the comte de Vergennes:

Our attachment to a Nation so peculiarly distinguished for its Emminence in Science hath always been great, but it cannot fail to become still more close and intimate, since we have experienced so generous and noble a Desire to disseminate a Portion of that Science even amongst us."

As the work by Buffon would suggest, another segment of the gift to Pennsylvania stressed French interest in natural history. Copies of the same works must have been in the much larger collection of books presented to William and Mary, for George Tucker, who inspected the library in 1816, "noticed with great pleasure a donation of many volumes, chiefly Natural History, presented by our unfortunate Louis XVI." In short, it is believed that the components of the Pennsylvania collection, all of which are known by title, were duplicated in the consignment to William and Mary.

The French gift, in consequence, would have brought to the William and Mary shelves copies of such works in the field of scientific inquiry as the marquis de Courtenaux's Journal du voyage... pour essayer, par ordre de l'Académie, plusieurs instruments relatifs à la longitude, Christoph Delius' Traité sur la science de l'exploitation des mines, Philippe de la Hire's Divers ouvrages de mathématique et de physique, Jacques Dortous de Mairan's Traité physique et historique de l'aurore boréale, and a compilation of essays entitled Recueil d'observations faites en plusieurs voyages... pour perfectionner l'astronomie et la géographie.

Natural history was represented by copies of Jean de la Marck's Flore française, Jean Soulavie's Histoire naturelle de la France méridionale, René Réaumur's Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des insectes, and, of course, Buffon's multivolume Histoire naturelle.

As might be expected of a collection of books assembled in Paris, the French gift also embraced a representative array of studies inspired by the history of France. The royal donor's lineage was appropriately recalled by copies of such works as Joseph Desormeaux' Histoire de la maison de Bourbon, Guillaume de Jaligny's Histoire de Charles VIII, and Jean de Joinville's Histoire de Saint Louis. The glory of the royal house was further exhibited
in such volumes as Charles Le Brun’s Grande galerie de Versailles and Charles Lubesac de Livron’s Discours sur le monumens publics de tous les âges... suivi d’une description de monument projeté à la gloire de Louis XVI & de la France.

Volume I—the only volume in print in 1784—of L’art de vérifier les dates des faits historiques, des chartes, des chroniques, et autres anciens monumens, one of the great landmarks of eighteenth-century French scholarship, headed the general historical works. These included copies of Philippe d’Arcq’s Histoire générale des guerres, Jean Philippe René de La Bléterie’s translation of the Annales of Tacitus, the important Annales of Joannes Zonaras, and the Byzantina historia of Nicephorus Gregoras.

Travel and description accounted for still another segment of the royal gift. The works in this field included, for example, copies of Marc Bourriot’s Description des Alpes, Pennines et Rhétienues and Jean d’Anville’s Mémoires sur l’Égypte ancienne et moderne. But the loss of the French collection in the fire of 1859, together with the loss of any checklist that might have been compiled covering its components, has effectively obliterated all traces of at least one hundred of the two hundred volumes comprising the gift.

Another post-Revolutionary benefactor of the library was that bird of exotic plumage, John Paradise, the friend of Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. Paradise, married to Lucy Ludwell, a great-granddaughter of one of the original trustees of the college, removed from London to Virginia in 1787 in order to manage his wife’s extensive Virginia estates. Warmly welcomed in Williamsburg, Paradise was immediately admitted into a congenial circle of intellectuals that included such college officials as President Madison, Professor of Law George Wythe, and Librarian Charles Bellini. Under these auspices Paradise was elected in 1787, shortly after his arrival in Virginia, to the college board of visitors. Evidence that Paradise—a “man of letters and true gentleman,” according to Bellini—donated books to the library came to light in 1928 with the discovery in a privately owned manuscript collection of a fragmented title page bearing the inscription “Presented by John Paradise to the University of William and Mary.” But the fragment was so imperfect that even Librarian Earl Gregg Swem was unable to determine the title and subject of the work.

A gift to the library bringing to mind the days of Rev. James Blair arrived in 1783 from the ancient Dr. Thomas Wilson, “of Bath in Great Britain.” Dr. Wilson, though an eminent book collector, chose to favor the college with the somewhat tedious evangelical works of his own father, Thomas Wilson, the celebrated bishop of Sodor and Man. Even in resolving to “address in a Letter to Dr. Wilson the sense they have of so valuable an addition to the Library,” the faculty was inventing empty phrases. Not a single divinity student had been admitted since 1779. A disturbed Jedidiah Morse informed Ezra Stiles of Yale in 1786 that

Doctor Madison is Professor Divinity, but he never exhibits Lectures upon it—because there is not one Student, nor hasn’t been a number of years, that has any Idea of making Divinity his Study.—Such, however incredible, is the State of William and Mary College.
And a worldly alumnus, Isaac Coles, writing to Henry St. George Tucker toward the end of the century upon the latter's graduation from William and Mary, recalled that the spirit of skepticism which so much prevailed & which every student acquired as soon as he touched the threshold of the college is certainly the first step towards knowledge; it puts the mind in a proper state not only to receive, but also to receive correctly. That it leads to Deism, atheism & I will acknowledge, but on the same grounds we may object to reason. 

Madison, though serving after 1790 not only as president of the college but also as bishop of Virginia, was primarily interested in scientific pursuits. La Rochefoucauld, who visited the college in 1796, was struck by the richness of the personal library that "l'Evêque Madison" had collected "en physique, en chimie, et même en littérature." The Frenchman noted:

Sa bibliothèque, bien moins nombreuse que celle du collège, est composée de livres d'un meilleur choix, sur-tout parmi ceux relatifs aux sciences. Il augmente annuellement sa collection des ouvrages savans et nouveaux les plus estimés. 

Madison's efforts to develop the college library were thwarted, of course, by the loss of income which the college sustained when funds from England were cut off during the American Revolution. Ezra Stiles, the president of Yale, opening a "fraternal communication" with Madison in 1780, confided that he was convinced "the present Revolution in America will necessitate us to collect & embosom the Literature of the Universe." Madison cheerfully concurred and cautiously advised his colleague that "our [William and Mary] Library may be considered as a good foundation to improve upon." Madison, in the same letter, explained that before this unnatural War, we had formed a Plan of importing annually some of the best modern Books, and among the others the Publications of the different Philosophical Societies in Europe, which we shall resume whenever it is practicable.

As previously noted, the college in 1779 levied a matriculation fee of ten shillings a student for the support of the library and allocated two thirds of the total proceeds annually to the purchase of books. But the student body in the years immediately following the American Revolution seldom exceeded sixty to seventy students, so the funds available for library acquisitions never exceeded a paltry £23 per annum. The deficiencies in the library collections noted by La Rochefoucauld in 1796 substantiate the surmise that Madison's plans for importing "the best modern Books" floundered on the shoals of inadequate financing.

Even so, despite the destruction of its original holdings in the fire of 1705, the library in 1781, contained some three thousand volumes. It was, in consequence, the second largest academic book repository in the new republic. The Harvard collection at that time numbered approximately twelve thousand volumes, Yale had around twenty-seven hundred, and Princeton fifteen hundred. When the college celebrated its centennial anniversary in 1793, the library collection, thanks mainly to the gift of Louis XVI, would have increased to approximately four thousand volumes.

Virtually all of the visitors or commentators who recorded their observations at the college during the last
decades of the eighteenth century were impressed by the library. Chastellux noted in 1782 that the college

is a magnificent establishment which adorns Williamsburg and does honor to Virginia. The beauty of the building is surpassed by the richness of the library, and the worth of this library by several of the distinguished professors, such as Doctors Madison, Wythe, Bellini, etc., etc., who may be looked upon as living books, in which both precepts and examples are to be found.43

Jedidiah Morse on his circuit of the southern states in 1786, though shocked by the low state of interest in theology and religion at William and Mary, told Ezra Stiles of Yale that “their Library, like ours, is well stocked with Ancient Authors.”44 Edmund Randolph, writing to Alexander Addison of Philadelphia in 1792, alluded to William and Mary’s “admirable library, containing the most rare gems of ancient learning.”45 And La Rochefoucauld, a guest at the college in 1796, noted that it “possède une bibliothèque assez bien fournie de livres classiques; presque tous sont de vieux livres, à l’exception de deux cents volumes . . . envoyés en présent par Louis XVI.”46

The surviving evidence relating to the growth of the book collection and the management and utilization of the library during its first one hundred years, 1693–1793, is obviously slender. President Madison, who knew the library as well if not better than anyone else, must therefore be given the last word: he concluded, on the eve of its centennial, that it was “a good foundation to improve upon.”
CHAPTER ONE
The Founding of the College, 1617–1693


2. Land, op. cit., p. 483.

3. For evidence touching the East India School, see Land, op. cit., passim; Bruce, op. cit., I, 346-349; Neill, Virginia vetusta, p. 179; and Tyler, op. cit., p. 4.


5. Ibid., p. 487.


8. Ibid., p. 580.

9. Ibid., p. 421.


13. Ibid., p. 497.


16. Bruce, Economic history, I, 397.


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20. Bruce, Institutional history, I, 375.
25. Bruce, Institutional history, I, 381.
27. Charter, transfer, and statutes, p. 110.
28. Ibid., p. 5.
31. Charter, transfer, and statutes, p. 45.
32. Ibid., pp. 47-51.
33. Adams, op. cit., p. 15.
34. See James Blair to Francis Nicholson, December 3, 1691, in Virginia magazine of history and biography (hereafter abbreviated to VMHB), VII (1899), 160-161.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
38. Charter, transfer, and statutes, pp. 133-137.
39. Ibid., pp. 6-7, 29-37.
40. Ibid., pp. 31-37.
41. Tyler, College of William and Mary, p. 13.

CHAPTER TWO
The First Book Collection, 1693-1705

2. WMO, 1st ser., XIX (1910-11), 42.
5. Charter, transfer, and statutes, p. 15.
6. For a description of the Edinburgh library during the seventeenth century, see Sir Alexander Grant, The history of the University of Edinburgh (London: Longmans, Green and co., 1884), II, 168-184.
9. Ibid., pp. 276-286.
15. Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1695 ... 1702 (Richmond: [Colonial press], 1913), pp. 165-167.
16. [Nicholson], op. cit., p. 35.
17. Ibid.
18. The full Nicholson catalogue, with expanded title entries, has been published as an appendix to J. M. Jennings, “Notes on the original library of the College of William and Mary in Virginia,” Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, XLI (1947), 258-267.
19. Mentioned in the articles on Nicholson in DAB and in The dictionary of national biography (hereafter abbreviated to DNB).
20. WMO, 2d ser., VIII (1928), 223.
21. For an account of “Blome’s Bible,” see Notes and queries, 2d ser., IV (1857), 310, 398.
23. L. B. Wright, The first gentlemen of Virginia (San Marino, Calif.:
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27. James Blair to Thomas Tenison, February 13, 1700, in W. S. Perry, Historical collections (Hartford: Privately printed, 1870), I, 112-113.
31. Berkeley's The lost lady; a tragicomedy, for example, possessed sufficient merit to gain a place in Dodsley's collection of old plays.
32. For a full account of the peregrinations of this volume, see J. M. Jennings, "Rare book returned to library," Alumnae gazette [of the College of William and Mary, XIV (1947), 10-16.
34. Morison, op. cit., p. 270. See also Predeek, op. cit., p. 19.
35. Clark, op. cit., p. 41.
40. [Nicholson], op. cit., pp. 34-35.
41. Grant, op. cit., I, 173.
44. Ibid., p. 295.
45. Whiffen, op. cit., p. 33.
46. See official letter of notification sent by Governor Nott to the Board of Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, December 24, 1705, P.R.O., C.O. 5/1/15, transcript in Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
49. Mungo Ingle to Henry Compton, September 20, 1707, previously cited.

Notes to Chapter Two

CHAPTER THREE
Rebuilding the Book Collection, 1705-1743

2. Bounty warrant entered in "Old Queen's Warrant Book No. 17" (Treasury 12, Vol. 24, pp. 7-9, March 21, 1708/9), transcript in William and Mary College Papers, Folder 11A.
5. Ibid., June 20, 1716, p. 173.
6. Charter, transfer, and statutes, pp. 84-85.
7. Journal of the faculty, February 26, 1773, in William and Mary College Papers.
8. Ibid.
10. Ibid., June 13, 1716, p. 170.
15. Ibid., p. 90.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., pp. 85-86.
CHAPTER FOUR
Expanding the Book Collection, 1743–1776

1. William Dawson to George Fothergill, August 18, 1747, Dawson Papers.

2. [Citation available]
CHAPTER FIVE
A Good Foundation to Improve Upon, 1776–1793

1. This is suggested by Canby in his "Note on the influence of Oxford University upon William and Mary College," previously cited.

2. Journal of the Virginia Convention, June 15, 1776, transcript made about 1839 or 1840 on behalf of the college by Richard Randolph, in William and Mary College Papers, Folder 13A.

3. Ibid.

4. Filled with transcripts from the journal of the Virginia Convention of June 15, 1776, in William and Mary College Papers, Folder 13A.

5. Journal of the faculty, April 9, 1777.

6. October 24, 1777, p. 3.

7. October 31, 1777, p. 3.


10. Ibid.


12. For more details on these reforms, see Adams, op. cit., pp. 36-41, and Tyler, College of William and Mary, pp. 60-62.


15. Journal of the faculty, December 30, 1779.


19. Ibid.


21. Statutes of the University of William & Mary (Richmond: Printed by Augustine Davis, 1792), pp. 6-7.


23. Journal of the faculty, November 25, 1783.

24. François Alexandre Frédéric La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, Voyage dans les Etats-Unis d'Amérique (Paris: DaPonte, 1799), IV, 291.

25. Comte de Vergennes to James Madison, June 8, 1784, transcript in William and Mary College Papers, Folder 215.


27. Howard C. Rice, Jr., in Chastellux, op. cit., I, 310.

28. A set of Buffon's Histoire naturelle, donated by the king of France, was cited in contemporary newspaper accounts describing the losses sustained by the library in the conflagration of 1859. See clippings in William and Mary College Papers, Folder 17.

29. James Madison to comte de Vergennes, January 1, 1785, transcript in William and Mary College Papers, Folder 215.


32. Earl Gregg Swem to W. A. R. Goodwin, December 20, 1928, William and Mary College Manuscript Virginia: Cities: Williamsburg, Folder 4A.

33. Journal of the faculty, July 12, 1781.

34. Jedidiah Morse to Ezra Stiles, December 30, 1786, Stiles Papers, Yale University Library.

35. Isaac A. Coles to Henry St. George Tucker, July 20, 1799, in WMO, 1st ser., VIII (1890-1900), 178-179.

36. La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, op. cit., IV, 294.

37. Ezra Stiles to James Madison, July 12, 1780, Stiles Papers, Yale University Library.

38. James Madison to Ezra Stiles, August 1, 1780, Stiles Papers, Yale University Library.


41. Chastellux, op. cit., II, 444.

42. Jedidiah Morse to Ezra Stiles, December 30, 1786, Stiles Papers, Yale University Library.


44. La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, op. cit., IV, 290.
The Library of The College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1693-1793

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