

A Case Study of the Founding Years of Liberty Hall Academy: The Struggle Between Enlightenment and Protestant Values on the Virginia Frontier

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The history of higher education during America's Revolutionary years offers a rich commentary on the competing ideologies of the colonists. An understanding of the basic elements and transformations in higher education during this time can shed light on the chronic debate over Enlightenment ideals overtaking traditional Protestant mentalities. Traditional Protestant education typically focused on conformity or unity within a particular religious branch or cultural tradition. The encroaching Enlightenment, however, sought to free education from these limitations, and provided students with a platform to think independently.

This substantial educational transformation found roots in Virginia as well. Until 1770, the College of William and Mary remained the only institution of higher education in the southern colonies. In 1776, the Presbytery of Hanover founded Liberty Hall Academy in Augusta County, Virginia. This case-study of Liberty Hall's founding years reveals several important factors concerning its unique curriculum and overall significance in the new Republic between 1776 and 1793. Liberty Hall operated under unique societal conditions. As a Presbyterian school founded in the midst of America's establishment of democracy, Liberty Hall provides an excellent glimpse into the ideological struggle between Protestant roots and Enlightenment ideals facing both higher education and society at large. Further, Liberty Hall is one of the few schools at the time catering almost exclusively to those in the Virginia frontier. Many studies focus on the dichotomy between Enlightenment and Protestant ideals in the established coastal areas, but little has been done on its frontier impact. While a narrow case study such as this cannot address the ideological battle on a national scale as thoroughly as a colonial survey work, it can identify this dichotomy for frontier education and the struggles of one school in providing a consistent curriculum in a period of radical ideological inconsistency.

An evaluation of research in educational history helps place the experience of Liberty Hall in a proper context. Lawrence Cremin's 1970 classic, *American Education: The Colonial Experience 1607-1783*, argues that this new age of Enlightenment education, the ability to think and internalize whichever information you chose, and the massive push toward the classics "played a significant role in the creation of the Republic."¹ According to Cremin, individuals were immersed with republican ideals of freedom through education, media, newspapers, and other general literature. The result of this, then, was once again the recreation of societal structure. In Cremin's understanding, societal changes both reflect and are the result of educational patterns. Further, Cremin does not argue for a battle of ideologies, but presents a smooth transition between the traditional model and the progressive ideals of Enlightenment influence.

¹ Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience 1607-1783* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970), 551.

Sharply contrasting Cremin's work, Allen Oscar Hansen's *Liberalism and American Education in the Eighteenth Century* (1965) makes a clear divide in the prevailing ideologies during this period. Hansen argues that all of these different theories fell into one of two dominant ideological movements: the Enlightenment movement or the "democratic revolutionary movement led by Rousseau."² This concept is radically different from other educational historians who presume that the Enlightenment and revolutionary movements were inseparable in education.

Howard Miller's 1976, *The Revolutionary College: American Presbyterian Higher Education 1707-1837*³ is an excellent treatment of Presbyterian influence in education during this period. Miller's work is essentially a cultural history, calling on aspects of church, state, society, and education to paint a broad picture of the transforming mentalities of Revolutionary America. In Miller's understanding, Liberty Hall's founding years fall into a Presbyterian ideological period labeled a "virtuous republic." He argues that Presbyterians came to believe that education "could solve the most difficult problems and resolve the most persistent tensions in their society."⁴ The change in curriculum from vitalization to professionalization based on liberal and Enlightenment ideals, in Miller's rationale, marks a transformation of Presbyterianism which focused on America as a Christian nation, a notion which has become a staple in American society to this present day.

Lastly, Mark Noll's *Princeton and the Republic, 1768-1822* (1989) provides an excellent case study on the struggle to balance Christianity, Enlightenment, and Republican ideals at the College of New Jersey. Ultimately, Noll argues that the "amalgam of republican, Enlightenment, and Christian values that John Witherspoon created in his early years at Princeton and that he passed on. . . was an unstable entity."⁵ This argument is a growing consensus among colonial intellectual historians. However, an evaluation of Liberty Hall Academy reveals Noll's interpretation of Princeton's experience may not be applicable for every school, particularly one on the frontier.

Liberty Hall was no exception to the struggle of identity amidst multiple competing ideologies in the late-eighteenth century. Originally funded by the Presbyterian Church, the school was founded as a grammar school, informally called Augusta Academy in 1749. While no immediate physical evidence has survived from this time, oral tradition and later records validate the school's 1749 origin date. The initial academy did not grow beyond a grammar school until 1776, when the name was officially and patriotically changed to Liberty Hall, making it the second college in Virginia and fourth in the southern colonies. With the growing prosperity of the Hanover Presbytery and the transforming culture of the public in Virginia, the establishment of the school as a frontier locale for higher education became incredibly important. Having proposed the idea to the Presbytery, the establishment of Liberty Hall was formerly agreed upon in October, 1774. The presbytery "returned the consideration of a school for the liberal education of youth. . . [which they] unanimously judge[d] to be a great

² Allen Oscar Hansen, *Liberalism and American Education in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1965), 1.

³ G. Howard Miller, *The Revolutionary College: American Presbyterian Higher Education, 1707-1837* (New York: New York University Press, 1976).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁵ Mark A. Noll, *Princeton and the Republic: 1768-1822* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1989), 10.

importance.”⁶ This founding statement demonstrates the clear change in the perception of higher education from ministerial training centers to “liberal” education.

The founding of earlier schools in the colonies reveals a sharply different philosophy of education. In 1693, the established Church of Virginia founded The College of William and Mary as a “seminary of ministers of the gospel, and that the youth may be piously educated in good letters and manners, and that the Christian faith may be propagated amongst the Western Indians, to the glory of Almighty God; to make. . . [a] College of Divinity, Philosophy, Languages, and other good Arts and Sciences.”⁷ A decade later, the Colony of Connecticut founded The Collegiate School, present day Yale University, where “youth may be instructed in the arts and sciences who through the blessing of Almighty God may be fitted for Publick employment both in Church and Civil State.”⁸

Within the short period of eighty years, perceptions of education transformed from “ministers of the gospel” to “liberal education of youth.” Outside of requiring board meetings to “at all times be open and concluded with prayer,” nowhere in Liberty Hall’s founding charter or the Hanover Presbytery’s commissioning documents are there explicit spiritual requirements or purposes for the institution.⁹ Despite the corresponding Presbyterian origins, there is no clear intent to specifically train ministers for the propagation of the Gospel. This is also demonstrated in an ad placed in the November, 1776 issue of the *Virginia Gazette*, which served to publicize the opening of the new academy. The rector, William Graham, reiterated that the school was “for the liberal education of youth,” and while the “education and morals of youth. . . [are] great objects of view, those peculiarities which form the complexion of any party shall have no place in the scheme.”¹⁰ This change in language and purpose is a striking one given the short period in which perceptions had changed. Neither the founding documents nor the publicized advertisement point to a theological school; rather, they imply that no one “party” will be represented over another.

Liberty Hall’s purpose statement reveals how the Enlightenment ideals of a universal education consisting primarily of languages, philosophy, and the “arts and sciences” were taking over traditional educational models where religious denominations primarily sought to conform and prepare students for public ministry. However, the daily activities and requirements of Liberty Hall students seem to suggest a struggle in following through with this Enlightenment model completely. Of the thirteen student guidelines listed by the Trustees, five are religious in nature, with the other eight prohibiting immoral behavior. Students were required to attend both morning and evening prayers, attend mid-morning worship, and were responsible “for all transgressions” they had committed throughout the week.¹¹ Among several other limitations, students could not play cards, dice, swear, lie, or go to the tavern during unruly hours.¹² While the purpose of the college may have been designated for pure

⁶ Washington and Lee University, “Liberty Hall Board of Trustees Minutes,” October 13, 1774, 3.

⁷ College of William and Mary, Royal Charter, 1693.

⁸ Yale University Charter, Connecticut Legislation Act, 1701.

⁹ Liberty Minutes, January 30, 1783, 37.

¹⁰ *The Virginia Gazette*, November 8, 1776, 3.

¹¹ Liberty Minutes, February, 1784, 37-38.

¹² *Ibid.*, 38.

liberal education, the day-to-day operations functioned more as a religious school, with students bound by codes of ethics and committed prayer and worship times.

The most prominent individual in the founding of Liberty Hall was the New Light preacher William Graham. Graham was born in Pennsylvania in 1746 to Scotch-Irish parents. Having spent most of his adolescent life working on a farm, Graham then went to the College of New Jersey at the late age of twenty-one. Following his studies there, he briefly studied theology under the notable Rev. John Roan at the Presbytery in Hanover. By Samuel Stanhope Smith's recommendation, the Presbytery considered Graham's leadership and pastoral abilities, which in 1774 led to his appointment as rector of Liberty Hall.¹³

What distinguishes Graham is his seemingly divided approach to education. His personal education under Witherspoon at the College of New Jersey, divinity training under John Roan, and relentless strict moral code suggest that he was also a man of great religious conviction. The full extent of his personal religious conviction cannot be traced to a journal or personal letter, but his ethical persuasion certainly depicts a man overtly concerned with the morality of his students. Many times throughout the Trustee's Minutes, Graham records student's dissolute actions ranging from lying or swearing to a student threatening to burn the school down.¹⁴ At one point he records the slight incident of students reprimanded for having "taken a beehive from Charles Kirkpatrick."¹⁵ As the first two decades of the college's existence progressed, these noted misdemeanors took up more of the Trustee's energy, or at the very least, more of Graham's recorded minutes. As an ordained Presbyterian minister and rector of the academy, Graham had many weekly responsibilities to "warmly recommend" the attendance of worship, to assist in school rule violations, and to account for the "transgressions" of students at the close of each week.¹⁶ Further, he served as the pastor of Lexington Presbyterian Church from its founding to his eventual retirement in 1796.¹⁷ As Robert Calhoon illustrates, Graham "modeled a religious grounded moderation," a moderation which influenced every area of his life, in both private and public spheres.¹⁸

Despite these seemingly traditional roles of a Presbyterian administrator, Graham's divided personality hints at progressive thinking and a contemporary understanding for humanistic principles. Liberty's repeated purpose statements for the academy, as noted above, do not allude to religion, nor to the training of Presbyterian ministers. As the *ex officio* secretary of the Trustees, Graham rarely provided explicit sectarian leanings in his recordings, which was uncharacteristic for institutions founded previously in the century. Given this paradox, it seems Graham, along with the rest of society, struggled with balancing his need for traditional Protestant values and the pervading Enlightenment ideals. This paradox in values continued through Graham's career. In considering the American Revolution, he seemingly blended "democratic rhetoric (and an aversion to centralized power) with a fervent desire to hold society to

¹³ Robert M. Calhoon, *Political Moderation in America's First Two Centuries* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 170-171.

¹⁴ Liberty Minutes, February, 1787, 58.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 38.

¹⁷ Cremin, *American Education*, 14.

¹⁸ Calhoon, *Political Moderation*, 171.

strict moral standards.”¹⁹ Though many Early-National Protestants espoused this view as well, Graham’s zealous political writings eventually led his censorship by the Presbyterian Church, a further indicator of moderated, or struggling, ideological systems during the period.²⁰

The role of curriculum and resources used at the school is one of the most significant aspects to understanding the ideological struggle at Liberty Hall. Upon his appointment as rector, Graham went to Philadelphia to purchase “books and... apparatus” for the school’s use.²¹ Of the one-hundred and one books purchased, forty-six percent were religious or theological in nature. The remaining books comprised the vast subject matters of language, classics, philosophy, law, history, literature, and the sciences; with languages and the classics composing only eight percent.²² This contrasts the average private library in Virginia which was composed of twelve percent religious works and twenty-six percent languages and the classics.²³

This imbalance seems to suggest that Liberty Hall’s advertisements and self-proclaimed mission to provide a comprehensive and nonsectarian liberal education are skewed. A further assessment of the books, however, sheds light on this inconsistency. When inspecting the nature of the religious works, it becomes apparent that there is no common theme, nor is there a bias toward a particular theological system. While there are a limited number of Presbyterian works, a multitude of dissenting religions were all equally represented. What is more notable is that nearly every religious author in the library was known for their religious and political tolerance, with Jonathan Edwards being the sole exception.²⁴

Graham’s selection of non-religious books represents some of the most notable resources in Enlightenment literature, including *Universal History*, *Spectacle de la Nature*, *Ancient History* and *Philosophia Britannica*. Further, as evidenced in the binding usage, page connotations, and references in class notes, these Enlightenment works were by far the most widely read and distributed books at the school; whereas many works of religious nature appear to have been rarely, if ever, used.²⁵

Liberty Hall also maintained a unique approach to its curriculum. Historically, the majority of colleges in the country designed programs to meet the specific purposes of the respective institutions. Mirroring their seemingly disjointed Trustee’s notes, Liberty Hall had no set curriculum, and “students were allowed to study in areas of their own choice.”²⁶ Going against the traditional Presbyterian hierarchy and established rules, students were given the freedom to study the subjects they wished. The only set requirements were that every student who graduated from Liberty Hall was to be educated in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and possibly other languages. The growth of student autonomy and the widespread use of languages and classical literature points toward a growing appreciation for Enlightenment ideals at the expense of the other subjects,

¹⁹ Jeffrey Robert Young, *Proslavery and Sectional Thought in the Early South, 1740-1829: An Anthology* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 167.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Liberty Minutes, March, 1776, 14.

²² Betty Ruth Kondayan, “The Library of Liberty Hall Academy,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (Oct., 1978), 434-435.

²³ George K. Smart, “Private Libraries in Colonial Virginia,” *American Literature*, X (March 1938), 39.

²⁴ Kondayan, *Library of Liberty Hall*, 437.

²⁵ Ibid., 439.

²⁶ Miller, *Revolutionary College*, 185.

including religion and some sciences.²⁷ This was not a common trend among contemporary schools, but found later advocates as Thomas Jefferson proposed a similar model in his plans for the University of Virginia in 1800.²⁸ For Jefferson, the primary purpose of education was to “inculcate ethical behavior,” which in turn would lead to moral and responsible citizens.²⁹ While not explicitly stated in the founding documents, Liberty Hall’s synthesis of a Christian framework with Enlightenment ideals may have led to a loosening of the traditional hierarchy within the classroom with a similar purpose in mind.

Without a detailed record of book usage and curriculum mapping, the extent to which Enlightenment themes were specifically illustrated in the classroom remains speculation. However, Liberty Hall stressed languages, the classics, and a variety of theological “schemes” as promulgated in the public advertisements.

When the school relocated to Lexington in 1782, it also petitioned the Virginia legislature for official incorporation. Under this Act, Liberty proposed to abide by the “Constitutions and Laws of this Commonwealth. . . for good order and government.”³⁰ At this point Liberty Hall was officially renamed Liberty Hall Academy, illustrating the formality of change from a private to public institution. While the explicit avowal of civic responsibility is certainly notable, what stands out more clearly is the fact that Liberty Hall incorporated at all. The action in pursuing government affiliation indicates a break from the control of the Presbytery. The *Historical Papers* of the college state that this action caused the Presbytery to lose “control over the academy which they had founded.”³¹ The shift in official control should not be overlooked as part of the broad ideology of the school. As a chartered school, it was now able to attract a more diverse body of students. Further, Liberty was eligible for public funds or grants that were withheld when it was a congregation-support school. Perhaps incorporating seemed logical to attract new students with diverse theological backgrounds. On an ideological level, however, it indicates an internal move away from the traditional private hierarchy of higher education in America toward a progressive public form. Despite this substantial break, the twenty members of the board of Trustees remained and were all Presbyterians, four being ordained ministers under the Hanover Presbytery.³² Clearly ties were not completely severed as the Trustees stayed consistently Presbyterian until 1793. Further, there is no noted change in curriculum between parochial and public affiliation.

Having incorporated in 1783, the Trustees debated the nature and extent to which degrees should be granted, and in 1785 they “resolved that the. . . young gentlemen alumni of this academy be admitted to the Degree of Bachelor of Arts.”³³ Among these, Samuel Carrick graduated and went on to found Blount College in 1794, which has developed into present-day University of Tennessee. The school was formed based on the

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁸ Edward M. Healey, *Jefferson on Religion in Public Education*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 16.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 261.

³⁰ Liberty Minutes, Act of Incorporation, October, 1782, 35.

³¹ Henry Ruffner, *Historical Papers: Early History of Washington College, Now Washington and Lee University*, (Baltimore: John Murphy and Co. Publishers, 1890), 31.

³² Crenshaw, *American Education*, 13.

³³ Liberty Hall Minutes, September, 1785, 53. The following names were listed as the first graduating class: Samuel Blackburn, Samuel Carrick, Moses Hoge, Samuel Houston, William McClung, Andrew McClure, John McCue, James Priestley, Adam Rankin, Archibald Roane, Terah Templin, and William Willson.

“seminary courses once taught from his home.”³⁴ While the history of Blount demonstrates a foundation of religious courses, Carrick’s intent was to provide education “to students of all denominations,” thus demonstrating the divided theoretical-educational structure of Liberty Hall Academy.

Moses Hoge was ordained a minister through the Hanover Presbytery and went on to assume presidency of neighboring institution, Hampden-Sydney College, from 1806 until his death.³⁵ Hampden-Sydney considers its founding as the “southernmost representative of the ‘Log College’ form of higher education. . . whose academic ideal was. . . the Scottish Enlightenment.”³⁶

Perhaps one of the most notable characters from this first graduating class was Samuel Houston. Houston went on to lay the foundations for America’s acquisition of Texas. Later in life he was a U.S. Senator and became known for his disgust with extremists of any kind, favoring tolerance and balance.³⁷

Lastly, Archibald Roane went on to frame the Tennessee State Constitution, was a general in that state militia, and eventually served on the Supreme Court of Errors and Appeals until his death in 1818. Roane also contributed a great deal to the advancement of higher education. Throughout his political career, he was highly supportive of public and liberal education to youth, echoing, perhaps, his time spent at Liberty Hall.³⁸

If the actions of alumni are any gauge to the nature of education received, then it is a fair assessment to understand the educational model at Liberty Hall as one committed to the Enlightenment ideals of balance and tolerance, while still compelled to produce graduates in professional ministry. While many alumni went on to serve in important roles throughout the country, many still remained committed to the Presbyterian Church and were ordained for public ministry.³⁹ No matter the career path, however, Liberty Hall had become distinguished for providing excellent, moral citizens. In a letter to the Synod of Virginia in September of 1792, the Trustees at Liberty Hall stated their graduates were “useful men upon the stage of public action. And. . . into the ministry of the Gospel. Yea in this respect we have purposed every seat of learning in the State.”⁴⁰ Further, Liberty acknowledged that their school was “the most useful to the church of any in the state.”⁴¹ This distinction indicates both the influence of the graduates and also its growing reputation within the state. During this period Virginia was “developing [a] utilitarianism about learning,”⁴² thriving on the Lockean principles of “virtue, wisdom, breeding, and

³⁴ University of Tennessee, “UT’s First Presidents,” Available on <http://web.utk.edu/~mklein/firstpre.html>, Internet; (accessed on November 11, 2009).

³⁵ Hampden-Sydney College, “Our History: Presidential Gallery,” Available on http://www.hsc.edu/hschistory/presidents/moses_hoge.html, Internet; (accessed on November 12, 2009).

³⁶ Hampden-Sydney College, “Our History: History of Hampden-Sydney College,” Available on <http://www.hsc.edu/hschistory>, Internet; (accessed on November 12, 2009).

³⁷ Sam Houston Obituary, *The Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, Vol. XXIX – Houston, July 29, 1863, No. 3711.

³⁸ “Governor Archibald Roane Papers 1801-1803,” Tennessee State Library and Archives, (Microfilm Processed Elbert Watson, 1964), 3.

³⁹ Among many examples, see James Mitchell, Andrew McClure, or Adam Rankin; “Catalog of the Officers and Alumni of Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia, 1749-1888” (Baltimore: John Murphy and Co., 1988).

⁴⁰ Liberty Hall Minutes, September, 1792, 73.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴² Cremin, *American Education*, 365.

learning.”⁴³ For a small frontier academy to carry significant weight indicates a sound footing in society and perhaps a growing status among the colonies at large.

In 1792, the Synod of Virginia suggested that Liberty Hall divide their program into two separate spheres, one for “a Branch of Science . . . taking in connection with it the Science of human Nature,” the other as a designated strictly for ministry purposes.⁴⁴ After tabling the discussion for nearly a year, Liberty Hall resigned to divide on certain conditions. Given the waning religious fervor in the 1790s and the school’s chronic financial instability, this assistance from the Synod was a reasonable solution.⁴⁵ After a short existence, however, the divinity school eventually dwindled away, and formal ties were officially broken from the Presbyterian Church. When the Trustees sent their final decision to the Synod of Virginia in 1793, they were severing their ties officially with the Church. Liberty Hall is not mentioned in the Synod’s minutes after 1796.⁴⁶

Liberty Hall Academy went on to receive a considerable endowment from George Washington in 1796, which placed the school on solid financial ground. The application for these funds alone signifies the truly public and liberal nature of the school, as the funds were only available to nonsectarian institutions. Liberty formalized as a “college” shortly after, renaming their institution after Washington. It continues to exist today as Washington and Lee University, still operating to “provide a liberal arts education that develops students’ capacity to think freely, critically, and humanely and to conduct themselves with honor, integrity, and civility.”⁴⁷

Liberty Hall Academy operated under unique conditions for higher education during this period. As one of two frontier Presbyterian schools in the country, Liberty Hall had to adapt the changing trends in education to a frontier people. With a rector trained at the College of New Jersey, it would be easy to assume that his leadership at Liberty Hall pushed forward the progress of liberal Enlightenment thinking. However, with a soundly Presbyterian Board of Trustees and the financial backing of local churches within the Presbytery, a total Enlightenment indoctrination could never take place. Further, other existing institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary catered to individuals from developed coastal backgrounds. The College of New Jersey’s student body was composed of both agrarian and developed areas. In contrast, however, Liberty Hall catered almost exclusively to frontier, agrarian individuals who were unfamiliar with changing educational patterns. A great number of graduates went on to pursue ordination through varying established churches, insinuating that traditional theological training remained a centerpiece of study at the school. However, despite the large number of students pursuing professional ministry, Liberty Hall did not prevent them from seeking out classical writers and actively studying languages. It appears that the classical and Enlightenment works were the most widely read and distributed books among the students; whereas, a large percentage of the original divinity works appear lightly used or untouched. Liberty Hall functioned in an atypical “universal” educational pattern where students had substantial freedoms in their learning. However, it did so under the direction

⁴³ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education: Section 134*. Available on <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1692locke-education.html>, Internet; (accessed November 2, 2009).

⁴⁴ Liberty Hall Minutes, April, 1972, 67.

⁴⁵ Cremin, *American Education*, 14.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Washington and Lee University, “About W&L: Mission Statement,” Available on <http://www.wlu.edu/x35.xml>, Internet; (accessed November 11, 2009).

of an established church and among a conservative frontier culture, leaving the school's ideology both reflecting and rebuking the changing American mentalities. Hansen argues late-eighteenth century education changed dramatically where "man had been a means, he now became the end, and all institutions existed in order to make him free for creative, effective living."⁴⁸ Clearly, however, this was only a partial truth in the founding years of Liberty Hall Academy.

Given the large percentage of graduates who went on to excel, Liberty Hall's diverse approach to education may illustrate a superior method than other models during the time. Garrett Sheldon argues that Jefferson's political synthesis shows a combination of "Classical Republicanism, Lockean liberalism, and Christianity."⁴⁹ With the founding of the school in 1774 and the incorporation date at 1782, it is possible that Liberty Hall founded at precisely the right time to incorporate these very ideals without severely diminishing the role of any. The model can show how these multiple influences, coinciding with the Presbyterian urge for higher education, may have produced a more balanced approach to educational pattern than is traditionally understood. That is not to say that the leadership did not wrestle with competing ideologies. Rather, they established a suitable balance both in the classroom and in moral conduct, allowing for Enlightenment literature and ideas to be discussed alongside the traditional values of Presbyterian theology without preferring or demeaning either.

Lastly, this opens door for further studies related to higher education during this period of transformation. While this certainly demonstrates both the advantages and difficulties in Liberty Hall's balancing of education, an institutionally-comparative study specific to the educational transformation during this period may place the often-discussed ideological origins of the country in a more grounded context, giving a foundation of education to the extensive body of ideas already in discussion among historians. Ultimately, a comparative study of Revolutionary educational history must reveal that "education means not only the development of intellectual and manual skills. . . but is also, and perhaps more importantly, an integral part both causes and effect of the psychological, demographic, economic, and social change taking place in society."⁵⁰ While an extensive work of this nature has yet to be published, specific treatments, such as the history of Liberty Hall Academy, provide a further step in clarifying American ideological origins and how culture transmits itself across generations.

⁴⁸ Hansen, *Liberalism and Education*, 14.

⁴⁹ Garrett Ward Sheldon, "Liberalism, Classicism, and Christianity in Jefferson's Political Thought" in *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson's Virginia*, Garrett Ward Sheldon and Daniel L. Dreisbach, eds. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 94.

⁵⁰ Ronald D. Cohen, "Socialization in Colonial New England," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring, 1973), 79-80.