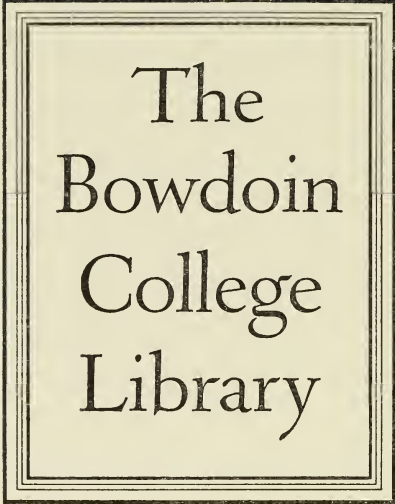


JAMES BOWDOIN

Patriot and Man of The Enlightenment



BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART



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52. *James Bowdoin II*, Version B, ca. 1791, by Christian Gullager *Frontispiece*

JAMES BOWDOIN

Patriot and Man of the Enlightenment

By Professor Gordon E. Kershaw

EDITED BY MARTHA DEAN

CATALOGUE

By R. Peter Mooz

EDITED BY LYNN C. YANOK

An exhibition held at the

BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

BRUNSWICK, MAINE

May 28 through September 12, 1976

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Brunswick, Maine

FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION: Number 16, *James Bowdoin II*, by Robert Feke, 1748, Bowdoin College Museum of Art.

BACK COVER ILLUSTRATIONS: Number 48, Silhouette of James Bowdoin II, by an Unknown Artist, courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society; Number 47, signature of James Bowdoin II, from *Autograph Letter, Boston, 1788*, permission of Dr. and Mrs. R. Peter Mooz.

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Foreword and Acknowledgments

JAMES BOWDOIN's role in the American Revolution has never received proper public recognition. Bowdoin's friendship with Franklin, Washington, Revere and others put him in the midst of the struggle for Independence; at the same time his social position and family ties gave him entrée to British leaders and officials. In 1770, his own brother-in-law was Colonial Secretary for the Governor, yet Bowdoin wrote the tract on the Boston Massacre, which clearly blamed the British for the incident and sent Boston down the road toward Revolution.

This exhibition seeks not only to reveal Bowdoin's importance in the Revolution, but also his contributions in the field of finance, science, literature and the arts. He was as well educated as any American in the eighteenth century and subscribed to the principles of The Enlightenment, which encouraged investigation into the natural world and practice of the graces of life.

*To accomplish these goals, the Museum commissioned the first major biography of Bowdoin in the form of a catalogue which will be published on July 4, 1976. We are most grateful to Professor Gordon E. Kershaw, author of *The Kennebeck Proprietors, 1749-1775*, and specialist on James Bowdoin, for writing the catalogue.*

The Museum has also attempted to tell the Bowdoin story purely with objects of art. Like books, objects contain data and ideas. Their stories can be "read" if only one examines the object and asks certain questions such as: what kind of society is needed to produce such a work? What traditional or European motifs are used, which motifs are rejected and what new ones are introduced? What was the use or function of the object? Beyond this, the exhibition is intended to show that James Bowdoin expressed an interest in art not only in commissions for painting and silver but also in the execution of a bank note or scientific instrument. Thus, the exhibition indicates Bowdoin exercised his love of art in everything that touched his life.

We wish to thank all the lenders who permitted their precious possessions to be brought together and allowed these objects, scattered in many parts of America, to be reunited for the first time.

The majority of the surviving Bowdoin objects have found their way to the College—the pictures and silver to the Museum, books and letters to the Library, and scientific instruments to the President's Office. The first deposit of objects, mostly scientific, came from James Bowdoin III at the opening of the school. In 1826, the portraits were given by James's widow. In 1947, the books, originally in the care of The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, were placed on permanent loan at the College. The intervening years brought silver and paintings from the Winthrops, who carried on the Bowdoin line, Mrs. Weston, Mrs. Hupper and Mr. Tevritz. Just two years ago, Mrs. Judson Falknor presented the College with twelve forks owned by James Bowdoin. The latter encouraged the idea for the present exhibition.

We wish to thank President Roger Howell, Drusilla Fielding, Arthur Monke, Richard Reed and Mary Hughes, our colleagues in whose care some of the objects are placed, for their great support and cooperation.

Many objects still remain in Boston at the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Public Library, Harvard University, and in nearby Worcester at the Art Museum and the American Antiquarian Society. We greatly appreciate the help of all the staff members at these institutions who were involved. Literally an army of people helped: directors, curators, registrars, packers, secretaries, security guards and many others. We especially wish to thank Stephen T. Riley, Director of the Massachusetts Historical Society; Sinclair Hitchings and James Lawton, Keepers of Prints and Rare Books at the Boston Public Library, respectively; Professor David P. Wheatland and Ebenezer Gay, Curators of the Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments at Harvard; Richard S. Teitz, Director, Dagmar Reutlinger, Curator, and Stephen B. Jareckie, Registrar, at the Worcester Art Museum, and Marcus A. McCorison, Director, and Georgia B. Bumgardner, Curator of Graphic Arts at the American Antiquarian Society.

Other objects are more scattered. We thank Edward H. Dwight, Director, Marjorie C. Freytag, Registrar and, especially, Carol E. Gordon, Curator of Decorative Arts, of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute for informing us of the location of the Bowdoin funeral

ring and making it available; Richard W. Moll of Vassar College for lending his grave rubbing; and my wife for allowing me to enter our Bowdoin letter. The Smithsonian Institution has also graciously furnished the air pump, still owned by the College. We are most grateful to Dr. Walter F. Cannon and Martha Morris, who arranged for the delicate instrument to be removed from their exhibits for this special occasion and Rodris Roth, who so cordially helped us locate the pump.

A special acknowledgment is due John Miller, whose fine photographic ability and laboratory technique provided the series Bowdoin's Boston Revisited. Taken on a bitterly cold but clear April morning, they are a tribute to the art of photography and remind us of the beauty that has been replaced by contemporary commercialization.

Many other people offered assistance and provided advice. Mrs. Josiah A. Spaulding was especially helpful in the initial stages for locating possible loans. Professor Thomas B. Cornell came in at the last critical moments to design our posters and catalogue. And, throughout, Lynn Yanok, Brenda Pelletier, Judith Perkins and Russell Moore offered their time and talent to administering the exhibition, the opening and the catalogue.

In addition to those who participated in the show, there is another large group who have helped particularly with the catalogue. Our deepest appreciation goes to Professor Gordon Kershaw, the principal author. His enthusiasm for the project and his special background in interpreting material culture, based on the programs of the University of Pennsylvania, were indispensable to the catalogue's success. He, in turn, was greatly helped by Martha Dean, who edited the manuscript in Maryland. To the printers, Anthoensen Press and Salina Press we give great thanks. Harry Milliken and Norman Poltenson care very much for fine work and excellent printing. They have given freely of their knowledge and expertise to produce this catalogue. We wish to thank Edward Born, College Editor, for suggesting these presses to us, and Joe Kachinsky for photography.

To Dana Bourgeois, Merle Pottle, Joe Ribas and Michael Mahan, who installed the show, go our sincere appreciation. The lighting was done by John Green, whose great knowledge and cheerful good

nature we have called upon before. His work was superb. Special mention should also be made of the willing help given to us by Professor Marian Anderson, Susan Simpson and Judith Bean, each of whom contributed their special talents to the opening of the exhibition, and Sarah Richardson for her research.

Finally, all this could not have taken place without the financial assistance of the Maine State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission and The First National Bank of Boston. Donna Thibodeau Mundy, Director of the MSARBC, and her Commissioners were the first to respond with a fine grant. Equally important were the people of The First National Bank of Boston who greeted our plans with great enthusiasm and interest. We wish to acknowledge the good offices of Mr. Richard D. Hill, Chairman of the Board, Mr. William L. Brown, President, and Mr. Arthur M. Jones, Vice-President of Public Relations, and extend our most heartfelt thanks to Mr. John W. Calkins, who worked so closely with us on the project. He met with me in Boston on several occasions and gave us his most energetic support. We look forward to a continued association between two of the longest lasting institutions set in motion by James Bowdoin—The First National Bank of Boston (The Massachusetts Bank) and Bowdoin College.

R. PETER MOOZ
Director

Chronology

JAMES BOWDOIN II

- 1726 Born in Boston, August 7.
- 1742 Entered Harvard.
- 1745 Graduated from Harvard.
- 1747 Inherited a large fortune at death of father, James Bowdoin I.
- 1748 Married Elizabeth Erving of Boston; received a Master's degree from Harvard.
- 1750 Visited Benjamin Franklin at Philadelphia.
- 1753 Elected Representative to the General Court for Boston.
- 1757 Elected member of the Massachusetts Council.
- 1759 Published *A Paraphrase on Part of the Oeconomy of Human Life* at Boston.
- 1761 Published his article, "An Improvement Proposed for Telescopes" in the *London Magazine*.
- 1767 As Councilor, joined the Massachusetts radicals in opposition to Governor Francis Bernard.
- 1769 Negatived from the Council by Bernard.
- 1770 Reentered the House as Representative; edited and published *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre*.
- 1772 Reelected to the Council.
- 1774 Negatived from the Council by Governor Thomas Gage, elected Chairman of the Boston Committee of Safety; declined to represent Massachusetts at the First Continental Congress.
- 1775 Elected President of the Massachusetts Revolutionary Council.
- 1779 President, Massachusetts Constitutional Convention, and Chairman of the sub-committee to draft the Constitution.

- 1780 Founder and first President, The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, declined office of Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts.
- 1784 First President, The Massachusetts Bank (First National Bank of Boston).
- 1785 Elected Governor of Massachusetts; published scientific articles in the first volume of the *Memoirs* of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- 1786 Reelected Governor; crushed Shays' Rebellion in western Massachusetts.
- 1788 Delegate to the Massachusetts Convention to approve the Federal Constitution; elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London.
- 1790 Died of a "putrid fever and dysentery" on November 6.

JAMES BOWDOIN

Patriot and Man of The Enlightenment

There are some persons, whom God has blessed at once with riches, and with large, sagacious, and contemplative minds, who may both very worthily as to themselves, and usefully to the world, devote the greater part of their time to study, to making observations on, and discoveries in, the word and works of God, and communicating their discoveries to mankind. . . .

JONATHAN MAYHEW, *Christian Sobriety*

THE foregoing observations, made by the Reverend Jonathan Mayhew of West Church, Boston, in the course of a sermon delivered in 1763, might well have been written with his good friend, James Bowdoin II, in mind. For James Bowdoin was the American personification of the eighteenth-century Man of the Enlightenment. The gentleman of leisure in colonial America, whether Southern planter or New England merchant, took his position in life seriously, striving for the ideal which was occasionally achieved by his models in Great Britain and on the Continent.

According to this formula, the man of parts would manage his business affairs with diligence and prudence but take heed that the time spent in the countinghouse did not outweigh the hours devoted to his study. As a man of letters, possessing the advantages of a formal education, he must be skilled in use of the ancient languages and develop a conscious literary style. He might try his hand at the writing of verses and distribute his efforts to his friends for their amusement and edification. He should assemble the library of a connoisseur, complete with volumes of history, government, philosophy, science, law, politics and *belles lettres*, and expand his knowledge by absorbing the contents of the works which graced his bookshelves. He must be at least a dabbler in scientific experimentation, and his cabinet might well contain the curiosities which he had collected. As a child of the Enlightenment his religion would be rational, strongly influenced by the laws of Newton and tintured with Arminianism,

Socinianism and Deism. He would be keenly aware of both the prerogatives and responsibilities of his class. A gentleman should associate with other gentlemen and expect others to keep their place. Charity to those less fortunate than himself he would approve but it must be measured, judicious and uplifting. In fulfilling his obligations to mankind the gentleman might consent to stand for public office but only if his friends entreated him to serve and not for motives of personal gain, for according to the eighteenth-century dictum, the office sought the man. The attaining of this gentlemanly ideal was to be accomplished gracefully, with flair and style. During his lifetime James Bowdoin II achieved this ambitious goal better than most and perhaps surpassed it. Wealth, family background and influential connections were undoubtedly important in his success, but from his boyhood Bowdoin also exhibited the characteristics of persistence, ingenuity and industriousness, attributes which contributed materially to his achievements.

The Setting

James Bowdoin was born in Boston on August 7, 1726. His father, James Bowdoin I (1676-1747), was a self-made man who was then already well upon his way to becoming the richest merchant in New England. The senior Bowdoin was the son of a Huguenot refugee who had fled the French city of La Rochelle to seek temporary safety in Ireland. Pierre Baudouin (?-1706), prudently left France several years before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV, and thus perhaps escaped with some material wealth. He found employment in the English customs service at Dublin, but upon losing this position decided to remove to America where Huguenots were welcomed in the British colonies. Pierre emigrated to Massachusetts aboard his own small ship, *The John of Dublin*, but upon arrival at the port of Salem was obliged to sell the vessel for £40.¹ He then took his family to lands he had purchased at Falmouth in Casco Bay. They had hardly settled in frontier Maine before Indian attacks threatened their lives. The Baudouins quickly moved back to Boston only a few days before Fort Loyal, the stronghold at Falmouth, fell to the Indians. In Boston Pierre remained. He became a merchant-trader, joined the Huguenot Church and upon his death left a modest fortune of £1344, most of it in cash.² His son James had shared the hardships of persecution in France, lean days in Ireland and the dangers of Indian raids in Maine, but he would succeed where his father had enjoyed only limited achievement.

Building upon his parent's legacy, James Bowdoin I, who changed the spelling of the family name, profited from nearly every business venture he attempted. In 1706, the year of his father's death, young Bowdoin was described as only a "marriner" in an official deposition.³ By 1711, he was part owner of the ship *Thomas and Elizabeth*. In time he accumulated other ships, expanded his trading connections with well-known firms such as Stoke and Gainsborough of London and invested his mercantile profits in wild lands on the Kennebec River in Maine [No. 12], on the upper Housatonic in Connecticut, and in rich farmsteads throughout the countryside. He purchased tenements, stores and warehouses in Boston, and lived on Middle Street in an elegant mansion which was valued at £10,000. He served



11. *James Bowdoin II as a boy, 1736, by John Smibert*

as judge on local courts and was eventually elected a member of the Governor's Council. Wealth, prestige and power all came his way. In a day when many clever merchants were "getting money quick," Bowdoin's success story was almost legendary.

James Bowdoin I sat for his portrait at least twice. The earliest portrait [No. 1] was painted probably by the Pollard Limner at about the time of the birth of Bowdoin's son James, known in his youth as "Jemmy." He may have posed for the second for Joseph Badger shortly before his death in 1747 [No. 14], although some have speculated the portrait was posthumous. Neither picture is by any means a masterpiece but, nevertheless, allowing for age differences, the artists appear to have captured similar features. The first, however, concentrated his skill upon painting the baroque trappings and background of the period, the second on a well-worn pose copied from a mezzotint of Sir Isaac Newton by Faber after Vanderbank.⁴ Whatever their shortcomings, these portraits, much admired in their day, hung with others on the walls of the splendid Middle Street mansion.

Here, also, appeared the likenesses of Bowdoin's two sons. William, the elder, was painted as a child [No. 2]. William was the merchant's son by Sarah Campbell, his first wife. The portrait is wooden; the artist is unknown and perhaps deserves to be. Jemmy, the second son and thirteen years younger than William, was the child of Bowdoin by his second marriage, to Hannah Portage. He was also painted at an early age; perhaps his portrait was meant to match that of his brother, but Jemmy sat for the best Boston artist then available—John Smibert. The boy stands resolutely in a romantic landscape, bow clutched firmly in one hand and arrow raised aloft in the other. His face is serious, alert and intelligent [No. 11]. One feels that, despite his father's great wealth, he had been reared in a sensible manner, was not indulged unnecessarily and was generally treated as a miniature adult. Such was the custom in eighteenth-century Boston.

The Boston of Jemmy Bowdoin's day [No. 3] still exists in places; several of the buildings with which he was familiar in manhood survive today, as do the narrow, crooked streets of the North End. Boston was a town not unlike the European medieval city—seething,

crowded and unsanitary. Some of the old, wooden gabled houses with their overhanging upper stories were still standing at that time, such as the one occupied by Paul Revere and his family; but more and more the town was becoming one of brick. When young James Bowdoin was reaching maturity, handsome public buildings were being erected, some of which remain today [Nos. 4 to 9]. Bowdoin attended numerous sessions of the General Court in the (old) State House [No. 7] and spoke out at political meetings in Faneuil Hall, the gift of a fellow Huguenot to the town. He walked on the Common, strolled by the Anglican King's Chapel and inspected the family burying ground at the Old Granary Cemetery [No. 9], where the Bowdoin Coat of Arms, carved in high relief, ornamented a tombstone which stood out boldly among its less ambitious fellows [No. 58]. But many of the structures of Bowdoin's Boston are long departed—his great mansion on Beacon Hill [No. 5], the similar one owned by John Hancock nearby, the church in Brattle Square [No. 6] which he attended, and the Manufactory House, where Bowdoin's Massachusetts Bank was located [No. 8].

The Student

Young James Bowdoin had entered South Grammar School after the usual earlier preparation in the fundamentals. The school was already an institution, presided over as it was by the long-remembered but often tyrannical preceptor, Master John Lovell. Jemmy studied Latin, composition and the rules of grammar in his preparation for admission to Harvard, which more and more was becoming the "suitable" and stylish training ground for the sons of rich merchants and less the seminary for prospective Congregationalist ministers. At Master Lovell's, perhaps, he applied himself to John Read's *Latin Grammar*, a work published in Boston in 1736 [No. 10] which even in later years he retained in his library. At the age of fifteen, whether as a result of Lovell's stern tutelage or his own application, James Bowdoin was proficient in Latin, had acquired at least a smattering of Greek and was accordingly admitted to Harvard in the Class of 1745.

The Harvard College of the 1740's was generally recognized as British America's center of learning and its faculty was justly renowned. It still resembled the famous Burgis view of 1726, with its three simple brick Georgian buildings forming a quadrangle on the sprawling green in the center of Cambridge. The great Edward Holyoke presided over the college during Bowdoin's years there. Earlier, as Congregational minister at Marblehead, Holyoke had earned a reputation for religious views so liberal that the orthodox regarded him with suspicion.¹ Arminianism was on the rise in Massachusetts, and Harvard's president encouraged its advances. Holyoke's taint however, must have been viewed as a positive strength by the Bowdoin clan, who now attended the Brattle Square Church in Boston. At the time of its inception in 1699, the Church had been notorious, for its founders had deliberately omitted the requirement of a religious experience for church membership. The Bowdoin family, accustomed to the sweet rationalism of the Reverend Benjamin Colman's sermons, could only applaud the religious liberalism of a college president who also brought prosperity and stability to his institution. But if young James Bowdoin approached the formidable Holyoke with awe and admiration, he must have

MATHEMATICAL
ELEMENTS
OF
Natural Philosophy,
CONFIRM'D BY
EXPERIMENTS:
OR, AN
INTRODUCTION
TO
Sir ISAAC NEWTON'S Philosophy.

VOL. I.

Written in **LATIN**
By **WILLIAM-JAMES**'S **GRAVESANDE**,
Doct^r of Laws and Philosophy, Profess^r of Mathe-
maticks and Astronomy at *Leyden*, and Fellow of the
Royal Society of *London*.

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By *J. T. Desaguliers*, LL. D. Fellow of the Royal Society,
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been far more attracted to the chief ornament of the college—John Winthrop IV, Hollis Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.

John Winthrop had succeeded the brilliant but alcoholic Isaac Greenwood in the Hollis Chair in 1738 but, as the foremost colonial astronomer of his day, soon outdistanced him. It was to Winthrop that Bowdoin was drawn; the professor became his mentor and life-long friend. Under Winthrop's direction Bowdoin studied the latest scientific texts which the professor had introduced in 1743—Watt's *Astronomy*, Gordon's *Geographical Grammar* and Gravesande's *Mathematical Elements of Natural Philosophy* [No. 15]; the last-named work still survives in his library.² Winthrop's course in Natural Philosophy included lectures on astronomy and demonstrations of electrical experiments; both subjects would absorb Bowdoin throughout his lifetime. James Bowdoin was a serious student but he nevertheless formed several lasting friendships at Harvard. He roomed in the old Massachusetts Hall, conveniently close to Professor Winthrop's laboratory. Bowdoin shared his quarters with two other students, one considerably older and the other younger. Joshua Prentiss, Harvard 1738, had returned to take his Master's degree and would later become minister of the First Church of Holliston. At the time he shared a room with Bowdoin, Prentiss had recently been converted by the revivalists of the Great Awakening. Bowdoin's other roommate, John Erving, Class of 1747, must have been more congenial, for he, like Bowdoin, was quiet and studious and, since both young men were sons of rich merchants, their social standing was similar as was their outlook. Two years later Erving would become Bowdoin's brother-in-law.

By virtue of his father's high political standing in the Province, James Bowdoin was awarded the coveted position of second in his class; hard work and a natural curiosity combined with a reserved, somewhat passive nature won him approval from the faculty as well as respectable grades. Many years later his obituary would describe Bowdoin the student as grave and sober, “. . . a stranger to the sallies of youth, common to most men, but which always degrade them . . . modesty, politeness and philanthropy excited expectations the most flattering as to his eminence.”³ Perhaps his eulogist erred in reading

future merit into the still partially formed character of youth. At any rate, Bowdoin appears to have escaped whatever pitfalls and temptations the Harvard of his day presented, including the unchecked religious enthusiasm of the Reverend George Whitefield. Whitefield swept much of Harvard's student body before him during his visit in 1740, including Joshua Prentiss. But James was not affected by the revivalists who preached in Cambridge, for he was calm, rationalistic and, above all, prudent. He carried away from Harvard the baggage of the intellectual: a passion for books, a love of learning for its own sake and a predilection for scientific experimentation, all tempered by a strong sense of the fitting and the practical.

James Bowdoin received the baccalaureate at Harvard Commencement in June 1745, but this was not to be the end of his formal education. He continued his studies and at Commencement in 1748 received a Master's degree, defending the proposition: "An Justitia commutative requalitatem postulet inter Laborem et Mercedem?"* —translated as the question of whether commutative justice may require equality between work and wages. The proposition, probably Bowdoin's own selection and derived from the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas, raises questions which cannot be answered, for the manuscript has not survived. Was Bowdoin arguing a simple, classical question of commercial ethics, or did he eloquently plead for justice for the working man? Does the choice of this proposition have implications for his later role of leadership in the contest with Great Britain? One is disinclined to believe that the aristocratic Bowdoin would voluntarily argue the rights of man in 1748, or later, for that matter. Furthermore, by 1748 he had already assumed the control of a great fortune and had become a capitalist. He had also taken a wife.

Home and Family

In mid-eighteenth-century Boston a match arranged with a young lady of "agreeable fortune" was still more important than marriage to a maiden whose only assets were her agreeable charms. Money usually married money. In 1748, the year after his father's death, James Bowdoin, at twenty-two, married the seventeen-year-old Elizabeth Erving of Boston. Probably it was a love match, but the bride came complete with a handsome dowry in any case. Her father was John Erving, a rich Scottish-born merchant and, like Bowdoin's father, a self-made man and a member of the Council. The young couple had much in common and through this marriage James Bowdoin gained powerful in-laws as well.

John Erving raised a large family and all of his children married to advantage. In 1754, Bowdoin's brother-in-law and college roommate, John Erving, Jr., married a daughter of Governor William Shirley. George Erving, another brother-in-law and particular friend of Bowdoin, married successively the daughters of Isaac Winslow and Isaac Royall, both wealthy and influential men in Massachusetts. One Erving daughter married Duncan Stewart, a British customs official stationed at New London, while a second married George Scott, a British Army officer and sometime Royal Governor of Dominica and Grenada. Bowdoin liked his numerous in-laws and, following the English tradition of the extended family, accepted them on a par with his own connections. He supported them in time of trouble and lent them money freely whenever it was needed. This backing in time became a genuine sacrifice, for by the outbreak of the American Revolution many of his in-laws were firmly entrenched in the Tory camp. This complication could not possibly have been foreseen when the young lovers were married in the Brattle Square Church on September 15, 1748.

That Elizabeth Erving was young and rich cannot be disputed; that she was also beautiful can be attested to by her portrait, painted by Robert Feke in the year of her marriage. Even the competent artist's skill in reproducing the splendor of her blue satin gown does not detract from her charm [No. 17]. Her bridegroom was painted by Feke at the same time to serve as a suitable pendant and appears



34. *Silver Loving Cup*, by an Unknown Maker

appropriately romantic and even somewhat heroic, posed as he is in embroidered satin vest and long velvet coat [No. 16].

Observations by his contemporaries reveal that James Bowdoin was a tall man. Feke's picture shows that he was stocky as well, and reproduces the cleft chin that John Smibert had noticed in his painting of Bowdoin as a boy. The tilt of the head was perhaps a device to avoid depicting the long, pointed nose which a later artist would less tactfully emphasize in his old age. On the whole, the young couple made a handsome appearance; they must have begun their married life with as much in their favor as any couple in colonial America.

It is not known where the newlyweds set up housekeeping—perhaps in the substantial house on Ann Street which Bowdoin had recently inherited from his father—but there is no doubt that they lived in style. Some of their wedding silver was ordered from London, including a pair of mugs engraved with the Bowdoin coat of arms [No. 25]. James Bowdoin, like other Bostonians of the period, had a passion for buying at vendue; his Cash Book records many goods so purchased. One of his favorite auctioneers was William Molyneux. On October 19, 1765, during the Stamp Act crisis, he paid Molyneux £11.9.3 for "Silver handled knives and forks &c" bought at a recent vendue.¹ Perhaps the set of Irish dessert forks, hallmarked by Skinner and Miller [No. 27], was among this lot. But Bowdoin purchased many other household items besides silver in this manner. In 1766, he picked up a round mahogany table for £2.12—, and two years later bought a "circular arm'd chair" from Thomas Sherburn for £1.12.8. In 1770, he successfully bid in seventeen shillings, two pence, for plaster busts of Addison and Shakespeare, probably for his library.² Many of his books came from vendues as well.

The Bowdoins rapidly accumulated silver from all sources. A household inventory conducted in 1779 reveals "500 oz Plate or less. Most of it old."³ Probably this "old Plate" included silver inherited from earlier generations of the Bowdoin and Erving families, with the sugar tongs [No. 28] among it. A much more complete inventory dating from September 15, 1774, lists individual items in the silver collection which can still be identified. These include the

famous "Bowdoin Bishop"—a loving cup complete with cover, weighing 56 ounces, reportedly used to offer cheer to General Washington [No. 34], a "punch strainer" by Paul Revere [No. 31], as well as a second punch ladle by David Moseley [No. 30]. Smaller ladles, spoons and cases of knives and forks [possibly No. 29 and 26] appeared on the inventory in abundance. The large silver soup tureen and stand made in Paris, 1774-1775 [No. 32], naturally do not appear on the inventory nor is their purchase mentioned in surviving letters and other documents. They may, however, have been acquired by Bowdoin towards the end of his life or may even have been the property of his son, James Bowdoin III, who served as American Minister to both Spain and France in the early 1800's. The notable collection of silver owned by the Bowdoins was in perfect character with the age, for it was handsome, useful, and its abundance in a household added prestige to its owners. Furthermore, in a financial crisis the silver could be melted down and sold as bullion. On one occasion at least, James Bowdoin did just that. Hard pressed for cash in 1770, he sent a small box containing "90 oz. of Old plate or Bullion" to his business correspondent, Henry Bromfield of London. He directed Bromfield to sell the silver for the best price he could obtain and apply the proceeds to the payment of articles then on order.⁴ Bowdoin's acquisitive nature soon more than made up for the loss.

In 1756, eight years after his marriage, James Bowdoin purchased the home of his father-in-law, John Erving, which stood on the corner of present-day Beacon and Somerset streets in Boston. The mansion was approached by an impressive flight of stone steps which lent further dignity to its prominent location. Behind the house, extensive gardens as well as an orchard stretched their way up Beacon Hill, which was then still largely uninhabited. Bowdoin enjoyed his home and gardens and planned substantial improvements to them in the years preceding the American Revolution. In the spring of 1766, he and his neighbor, William Phillips, ordered the construction of a party wall in the latest taste—a "Chinese fence." Bowdoin's share of the cost, which included the expense of painting the fence as well as the addition of a new pump, came to £43.12.6¼.⁵ In September of the same year, he hired John Joy of Boston to build a fence front-

ing his house at a cost of £22.19.10. Still unsatisfied, Bowdoin sent to London in 1771 for "three good stock locks" equipped with covers to keep out the weather since they were intended, as he explained, "for Garden Gates."⁶ Meanwhile he concentrated upon the remodeling of the exterior of his mansion.

James Bowdoin was determined that his home should reflect the latest architectural taste and he proceeded with the renovation in his usual methodical way. He began by purchasing several books on architecture from Moses Deshon, a Boston bookseller.⁷ By the fall of 1770, he was ready to begin his improvements. He insisted that the clapboards covering the main front of the house be replaced with a smooth, uninterrupted facade. Bowdoin ordered a large quantity of boards from his old friend Abraham Preble of Bowdoinham in the Kennebeck Purchase, stipulating that the boards were to be at least four and a half feet wide, for as he explained, "The use I want them for is to cover the front of my house, to fill up the space between the windows without any joint."⁸ Probably he wished to achieve the effect of a building with a stone front.

The next step was to alter what must have originally been an early Georgian doorway to a more up-to-date, classical style. On September 4, 1772, James Bowdoin recorded in his Cash Book the payment of £3 to Adam Air for constructing a pair of pillars for his new front porch. These were balanced by two flat pilasters attached to the house itself and all four were surmounted by Ionic capitals carved by Edward Burbeck at a cost of £5.6.8. Twelve running feet of carved moldings further ornamented the new portico,⁹ which was protected from the elements by a lead roof. Finally, the erection of a summer house in the garden nearby contributed to the outward appearance of a mansion which, as remodeled, was both stylish and tastefully executed.

Bowdoin lavished an equal amount of concern on the decoration and furnishing of the interior of his mansion, as an inventory of household belongings taken in 1774 bears witness. The house was a large one, containing a central hall and four spacious rooms on both the first and second floors, as well as other finished chambers in the third-story attic. There were three public reception rooms on the ground floor, undifferentiated as to function, as was still the custom

in eighteenth-century New England. Each might have served as dining room if the occasion demanded, for all three contained large tables and quantities of chairs—ten “Leather bottom Marlboro^o [Marlborough] Chairs” valued at £4.10— in the West Front room, twelve “Bla. Walnut Chairs” worth £12.12— in the East Front room, and fourteen mahogany chairs appraised at £14 in the “back Parlour.”¹⁰

Probably the West Front room was most frequently used for company. It held, in addition to the chairs, a writing table, a card table, a “Turkey carpet,” a small Wilton carpet, a painted floor cloth and what must have been an exceedingly elaborate mirror valued at £13.3—. The room was further graced by two “handsome bird cages” which Bowdoin had ordered in London from Lane, Son, and Fraser.

Furnishings in the other downstairs reception rooms were equally fine. The East Front room featured another card table, a Wilton carpet, a “large Lanthorne and Frame” valued at £6.6— and a barometer. On the hall staircase stood a grandfather clock worth £10. The Back Parlour, probably more often used for dining than the other rooms, boasted a marble slab side table—always a rarity during the Colonial period—a set of four girandoles and several family portraits. It is clear that James Bowdoin and his family enjoyed the best in material comforts; one notable omission, however, was that of a settee or sofa, even in the “best” room. But sofas were rare in New England in the eighteenth century, even in the most affluent families.

Above stairs, the furnishings were in proportion to those of the ground floor. The West Front chamber held a tester bed covered in green harrateen and window curtains to match; the whole valued at £15. Also present were two desks—one an elaborate secretary with glass doors in the upper section and the other described as an “old Walnut” one appraised at only £3.3—. A third desk is listed in the “Kitchin Chamber” as “an Old Maple Desk”; this may well be the one which survives today at the American Antiquarian Society [No. 45]. The East Front chamber must have been very grand. Its mahogany four-poster with “Linen furniture” was valued at £10.10—. The room also contained a fine cedar wardrobe worth £4.10—, and a “Japan’d Case of draws,” probably decorated in the Chinese taste, appraised at only £1.10—. By 1774, the piece was no longer in vogue; it must have been regarded as old-fashioned and may originally have

belonged to Bowdoin's father. The two front chambers were certainly elegant but, judging from the inventory, the Back East chamber was most elaborate of all. For this reason, it may well have been occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Bowdoin. The bedstead was covered in red damask; window curtains and cushions were made to match. The complete suite of "bed furniture," including featherbeds and pillows, was valued at £20. The room was further enhanced by a large Wilton carpet, eight chairs covered in damask upholstery, a mahogany bureau, an easy chair and three large gilt-framed looking glasses, one an overmantel piece; the three appraised at £16.16-. The bedroom was splendid and must have been Mrs. Bowdoin's pride, but it was in his study that her husband spent much of his time.

Since Bowdoin's study or library was located in the "great Upper Chamber," it was probably the largest of the second-floor rooms. Evidently he often entertained his friends here, for the room contained no less than eight leather-bottomed walnut chairs and seven with cane bottoms which must have been nearly antique in his own time. There were three tables which were probably used for writing, since no desk was available. The 1200-odd volumes of one of the most notable of colonial libraries must have been housed in built-in bookshelves, for the inventory makes no mention of standing bookcases. The library's walls were ornamented with a family portrait, seven smaller pictures [possibly No. 46] and a set of eight pictures "painted in Italy." The room also held the "scientific apparatus" which Bowdoin valued so highly—five telescopes [No. 50], a microscope, two "Electrical Machines" and a pair of eighteen-inch globes, of which one still survives [No. 51].¹¹ The air pump [No. 53] so magnificently displayed in a Chippendale cabinet was not a possession of James Bowdoin II, for it was commissioned by family members some years after his death for presentation to the new Bowdoin College. Certainly he must have admired the orrery he presented to Harvard College in 1768 [No. 49], which was fine enough to compete with the splendid orreries constructed for Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania by David Rittenhouse. Bowdoin's orrery was made in London by Benjamin Martin and cost him £86.5-sterling. That his own equipment was used to advantage is attested to by Bowdoin's correspondence with other scientists in America and

abroad, and by his own considerable achievements. His study, like the rest of the mansion, epitomized the qualities of discernment and refinement so much expected of the man of taste in eighteenth-century America. The Bowdoins were fond of entertaining, and their home provided a fitting setting not only for the reception of their friends and distinguished guests, but also as an appropriate environment for the rearing of their family.

Two children were born to James Bowdoin and his wife: a daughter, Elizabeth (1750-1809), and a son, James Bowdoin III (1752-1811). In 1760, the children were painted by Joseph Blackburn, an English artist then living in Boston. The double portrait [No. 18], perhaps meant as an overmantel decoration, depicts Elizabeth seated on the grass with a collection of fruit clutched in her apron, one of which she offers to her kneeling brother, who is resplendent in blue coat and red breeches. The pose was one often used with variations by Blackburn and the figures are enhanced by the setting of a classical landscape, complete with carved stone urn. The children appear healthy enough but young Jemmy's constitution was precarious and his life was threatened by tuberculosis.

James Bowdoin's correspondence reveals a constant concern for his son's welfare but displays little regard for his daughter Elizabeth. This omission may simply mean that her rearing and education presented no problems to her parents. She probably attended a polite finishing school where she learned needlework, manners and dancing, for Boston had many such establishments. After this preparation her parents must have expected to marry her off to an eligible suitor at an early age, which is exactly what occurred.

In 1767, at the age of seventeen, Elizabeth Bowdoin married John Temple (1732-1798), a commissioner of the customs who was eighteen years her senior. Yet the marriage was an eminently suitable one, as her own parents' match had been. Temple was a native Bostonian whose father, Captain Robert Temple, had owned a great mansion located on the family estate, Noddle's Island, in Boston Harbor. John Temple's granduncle, Sir Thomas Temple, had been Royal Governor of Nova Scotia, and he himself was in line for a baronetcy through an English branch of the Temple family.¹² Temple's career in the customs service was beset with intrigue. He was

eventually dismissed from his post because of complicity with Benjamin Franklin in the theft from England of a series of confidential letters written by Governor Thomas Hutchinson and others. These letters, delivered to Boston radicals by Franklin, stirred up a hornet's nest in the Massachusetts General Court which hastened the American Revolution. Temple was recalled to England, where he stayed for most of the war years. He was a stalwart Whig in the English tradition who remained popular in Massachusetts but was suspect in British governmental circles. When the Revolution ended he returned to America, which he had always considered his true homeland, to serve as first British Consul, stationed in New York City. His wife shared Temple's shifting fortunes in England and America and spent as much time as possible in her parents' Boston home.

The pastel portraits of John and Elizabeth Temple painted by that greatest of American colonial artists John Singleton Copley, must have been completed shortly after their marriage in 1767. The bride had the freshness of youth, but was overplump, with a well developed double chin and the sort of features which would coarsen with age, as seen in the portraits of Elizabeth by Samuel King [No. 20], Gilbert Stuart [No. 22], and Edward Green Malbone [No. 24]. Her dowry had brought John Temple £1343.6.8 in Massachusetts currency (£1007.10— sterling)¹³ and she would eventually receive one-third of her father's estate. The Temples had several children and in 1785, the entire family sat for a group portrait by Jonathan Trumbull. Shortly afterward they moved to New York City, where they passed the rest of their lives in apparent contentment. Elizabeth, Lady Temple, had traveled extensively during her lifetime; the same was true of her younger brother, James Bowdoin III, who became a diplomat.

It was upon James Bowdoin III that the hopes of the family centered; despite ill health he survived until the age of 59. While he was never as well known as his father, the younger Bowdoin also enjoyed a distinguished career. Careful planning and guidance on the part of his parent did much to bring this about. The senior Bowdoin's concern extended to the ordering of school books from London through his bookseller, George Keith, in the fall of 1762.¹⁴ Young Jemmy must have attended the usual grammar school in preparation

for Harvard. In 1766, James Bowdoin III was fourteen years old. On December 1 of that year his father paid £4.1- to "Sam'l Holbrook for my son James' schooling."¹⁵ James duly passed all of the hurdles of the Harvard entrance examination and entered that institution in 1767 as a member of the Class of 1770. His progress appears to have been slow, either because of poor health or a lack of application. At any rate, his father paid James Lovell £2.8- in 1768 for tutoring Jemmy in both arithmetic and French. The bill covered assistance given during four vacation periods.¹⁶ Somehow young James made the grade. On July 8, 1771, the senior Bowdoin recorded in his Cash Book the payment of a £4.8- gratuity to "President Locke as a Present on acc't of my son James having a degree at Coll."; a similar present was given to his tutor, Andrew Eliot.¹⁷ In September of the same year, James Bowdoin II paid John Allen £2.4.2 "for writing &c two Diplomas of my son's having taken his first degree at Harvard College this year."¹⁸

Once Jemmy's education was completed, his father had intended him to pursue the career of a merchant but the young Bowdoin's worsening tuberculosis made even the completion of his senior year at Harvard seem doubtful. Surely it must have been at this time that James Bowdoin acquired Ebenezer Gilchrist's work, *The Use of Sea Voyages in Medicine*, which advocated long ocean voyages as a cure for consumption.¹⁹ Bowdoin must have been highly impressed with the book, for on January 2, 1771, he informed his London correspondents Lane, Son, and Fraser that the letter they were about to receive would arrive "by the hands of my son who goes to England . . . for the recovery of his health."²⁰ Some indication of the seriousness of the young man's illness may be gleaned from the fact that his uncle, Duncan Stewart, accompanied him on the voyage. Bowdoin authorized Lane, Son, and Fraser to advance up to £250 sterling for his son's requirements. Young James went abroad with excellent credentials, for he carried letters of introduction to former Governor Thomas Pownall, Colonel Alexander McKay, Admiral Samuel Hood and Benjamin Franklin. The young man's health must have improved immeasurably during his Atlantic crossing. By May, 1771, his father, writing to Duncan Stewart, enthusiastically approved his son's plans to enter Oxford to begin the study of law,

as well as to enroll in the Royal Riding School. Nevertheless, Bowdoin insisted that Jemmy return home within the year allotted for his travels.²¹ But Jemmy left Oxford in November, began lessons in French, dancing and fencing, and predictably requested additional cash advances from his father.²² By April, 1772, he was back in Boston.

He did not stay at home for long. This time his travels seemed to be occasioned not so much by a search for health as by a desire to make the Grand Tour. On October 3, 1773, James Bowdoin notified Lane, Son, and Fraser that his son was again about to take ship, this time for the Continent.²³ The vessel, *The King of Naples*, would make port at Naples in January, 1774, after a brief stop in Newfoundland. From Naples Jemmy proceeded to Rome, Florence, Bologna and Lyons, this time without a chaperone, and there is every evidence that he was enjoying his tour. But his father was becoming impatient. On September 5, 1774, he commented to his London correspondents that "I suppose by this time my son is arrived in England. & by the time this reaches you will be coming to America."²⁴ Bowdoin was to be disappointed. Writing again to Lane, Son, and Fraser on March 30, 1775, he noted that he expected Jemmy home "... this Spring in consequence of my last letters to him. . . ."²⁵ He also acknowledged that the London correspondents had advanced Jemmy no less than £475.4.6 sterling—far more than the £300 allotted for the journey. Young James did not leave for America until September 16, 1775, nearly five months after the beginning of the Revolutionary War. Perhaps his departure was delayed by the beginning of hostilities. Certainly he could not have returned to the British-held port of Boston, which was then under siege by the American Continental Army. Instead, Jemmy took passage for Philadelphia, finally reaching Massachusetts on November 29. By that time his father, himself gravely ill with consumption, had abandoned his Boston home and was living as a refugee at the former Middleborough estate of the Tory Chief Justice, Peter Oliver. Jemmy may have softened the impact of his extravagance by presenting his father with suitable souvenirs of the Grand Tour. His baggage was extensive and included a portrait painted during his travels [No. 19]. The artist is unknown and authorities disagree as to whether it was painted in

Italy or in England. There is general agreement that it is not a masterpiece but, judging from later portraits of James Bowdoin III, it does appear to be a good likeness.

In a sense, the painting marked the young man's coming of age and the beginning of his own career. Once back in Massachusetts, he entered a trading partnership with John Read, the onetime manager of his father's Naushon Island property. Liberally financed by the senior Bowdoin, who had always intended his son for a merchant, young James ran his ships through the British blockade during the war years. In 1780, he married his cousin Sarah, who was the sole heir of her father, William Bowdoin. The alliance made James Bowdoin III independently wealthy even before his father's death. Freed of the cares and restrictions of a business life, James Bowdoin III chose to enter politics. He served in the Massachusetts House as a representative from Dorchester, 1786-1790, and as a state senator in 1794 and 1801. In 1796 he was a member of the Governor's Council.²⁶ Until this point his political career had been much like that of his father, although less distinguished. In 1804, however, he entered the field of diplomacy, where his proficiency in French and Spanish served him well. President Thomas Jefferson had appointed James Bowdoin III the American minister plenipotentiary to Spain; his treaty negotiations took him to Great Britain and France before his retirement in 1808. During this period James was a major patron of Gilbert Stuart, who established a studio in Boston in 1805. James commissioned the portraits of Jefferson and Madison in 1803 and his wife's portrait before 1805. James's own portrait [No. 21] was probably not done in his lifetime and seems to have been taken from the miniature by Edward Green Malbone [No. 23]. In failing health, Bowdoin returned to Massachusetts, where he died at his Naushon Island estate in 1811.²⁷ James Bowdoin III was a man of education, taste, and refinement. The library which he accumulated rivaled that of his father. While not a scientist, he did assemble a noteworthy mineral collection which, together with his many drawings and paintings and his father's "philosophical apparatus," eventually passed to Bowdoin College. Here, also, hangs the portrait of the young James Bowdoin III, which must once have graced the summer home of Peter Oliver during the early years of the Revolution.

Comfortable though Oliver's estate was, James Bowdoin II no doubt longed to return to his own home in Boston. He did not move his family back to the city, however, until October, 1778.²⁸ He had been critically ill with tuberculosis, the disease which plagued his son, for much of his exile; now, upon his return to the metropolis, the Bowdoins could resume a style of living which must have been sadly missed during their country retirement. Even the shortages and crippling inflation of the war years did not completely curtail the famous Bowdoin hospitality.

The Bowdoins were accustomed to living luxuriously and entertaining grandly. James Bowdoin II enjoyed a magnificent income but his expenses were also high. His mansion, as we have seen, had been remodeled in the Palladian style in the early 1770's and it enhanced the handsome walnut and mahogany furniture, the glittering gilt mirrors and candle sconces, the oriental rugs and Wilton carpets and the extensive collection of massive plate found throughout the interior. Here, during the troubled decades of the 1760's and 1770's Bowdoin entertained not only Whig leaders but also ranking officers of the British Army and Navy. Admiral Hood, for example, was a frequent visitor. Bowdoin's many wine orders testify to the excellence of his cellar and often included the admonition to deliver only "the best sort, as it is for my own use."²⁹ He especially favored the "best old Madeira of an amber colour," but Fayal, Passaida, and Methuen wines were almost equally acceptable. The food Bowdoin offered his guests was prepared with care and served to perfection; his household included both slaves and white servants.

James Bowdoin may have been a leading Whig in Massachusetts but, like other wealthy colonial liberals of his day, his political persuasion did not extend to a belief in democracy or equality. There is no reason to suspect that he believed the holding of other men in bondage to be a corruption of his principles or that he even considered black slaves to be human. Certainly he never freed any of his own bondsmen, nor raised his voice in support of the freeing of others. Considering the expenses he encountered in maintaining his own household slaves, it is difficult to understand why he bothered to keep them in the first place.

James Bowdoin ordinarily kept one or two slaves for general household use but they appeared to die at a fairly regular rate and

those who survived proved to be more trouble to him than their services warranted. On April 14, 1762, he requested that his brother-in-law, George Scott, Governor of Grenada, purchase him a "likely Negro Boy about 14 or 16 years old" whom he "intended for a Coachman."³⁰ The slave, called Polydore by his new master, who paid Scott £55 for him, did not arrive in Boston until May 1764. Apparently, Bowdoin was well pleased with him, commenting that "he is a fine Boy; and if one may judge by his phiz, the essence of good humour."³¹ While awaiting Polydore's arrival, however, Bowdoin was having difficulties with another slave, of such a nature that the most drastic action seemed necessary. As the master explained the situation to his brother-in-law:

My man Caesar has been engaged in an amour with some of the white ladies of the Town, which occasioned his being sent to neighbor Sisenby's; and as Mrs. Bowdoin did not incline he should come into the house again, he now embarks on board Capt. Thompson's Brig to seek his Fortune at Grenada.³²

Bowdoin asked Scott to "dispose" of the erring slave, and requested payment either in "Island Produce" or another young slave. Nevertheless, once Caesar arrived at Grenada Bowdoin relented and allowed him to be employed at the Scott plantation rather than to mount the auction block.

When Governor Scott died in 1767, however, Bowdoin soon wrote his widow requesting that she sell the slave immediately and invest the proceeds in either a barrel of coffee or Muscovado sugar.³³ But before this commission could be executed, Mrs. Scott followed her husband to the grave. The anxious owner next contacted the executor of her estate, Francis Margaret, a merchant of Dominica. Unfortunately for Bowdoin, Mr. Margaret failed to trade the slave for either coffee or sugar, but produced a sedan chair in exchange. When he received this exotic item Bowdoin dashed off a quick letter to Margaret. Undoubtedly irritated, he nevertheless remained polite, stating that:

This sort of vehicle is not in use among the ladies here and therefore I sold it for what it cost: I am however obliged to you for your intention to please Mrs. Bowdoin with it.³⁴

He sold the sedan chair to his brother-in-law, George Erving, for

£40, the equivalent of £50 in island currency. One wonders what in the world Erving did with it.

The final disposition of Caesar did not solve Bowdoin's servant problem. In April 1767, another slave, Yarmouth, died and was replaced by a new man, Cyrus, at a cost of £60.³⁵ Almost exactly two years later the much admired Polydore was buried.³⁶ This time his master did not seek a replacement. Somehow he made do with the services of Cyrus until he sold him in 1777 for £23.18.³⁷ Thus ended James Bowdoin's experience as a slave owner. Probably he had learned that he could maintain white servants at less cost and risk, even allowing for their room and board.

In addition to their slaves, the Bowdoins kept several household servants—perhaps a cook, a coachman and several maids—but probably the number varied. Since the servants were not paid regularly and were not identified by Bowdoin in his Cash Book by function when he did pay them, it is difficult to ascertain their exact roles in his household. On November 3, 1775, for example, he paid John King £20 for nine months' wages, and on January 30, 1776, reimbursed Hannah Wheeler only when she left his service after three and one half years. Her bill was only £21.13.4; we must assume that the conditions of her employment had included full room and board. In addition, of course, Bowdoin paid many workmen's bills for improvements made to his house; he also remitted to a professional barber, John Moody, £4 per year for his regular shaves. But, whatever servants James Bowdoin employed, it is safe to assume that one of these was a coachman. He kept several horses in his stable at all times and went to considerable expense to maintain an elegant equipage.

In 1768 a French visitor to Boston took the trouble to list twenty-two owners of carriages in the town. Such ownership carried great prestige. Among these aristocrats were James Bowdoin, his father-in-law, John Erving, and two brothers-in-law, Thomas Flucker and James Pitts.³⁸ Bowdoin especially admired brown or black horses, and a succession of them passed through his stables. Ordinarily they were grazed on the pasture lands on Beacon Hill owned by the Boston artist, John Singleton Copley, who was paid for this service. Bowdoin owned several wheeled vehicles but they seem to have

been often out of condition. He was forever paying large sums for repairs to Adino Paddock, the famous carriage maker and future Tory. Rather surprisingly, he ordered chariot fittings directly from London rather than purchasing them from Paddock. On March 31, 1770, Bowdoin ordered ten yards of light-colored cloth for a chariot lining and a "sett of green silk Chariot Blinds fixed with Springs to roll them up," for which he furnished the proper dimensions.³⁹ In December 1770, he paid Adino Paddock £7.8.6 for additional renovations. The chariot still was not satisfactory. It went back to Paddock once more in January 1773, for a bill of £6.1.5, again for further repairs in March 1774, when the cost was £6.14.4, and to Paddock permanently in 1775. On April 24, 1775, one week after the Battle of Lexington-Concord, Bowdoin paid the carriage maker £56.19.8 on a total bill of £120.0.4. He turned in his used carriage for an allowance of £13.6.8, and received in return a new phaeton valued at £100, a pair of horses for £30, and other incidentals.⁴⁰ The purchase of a completely new rig at this time was a fortunate one, for Boston was already under siege. Prominent patriots were getting out of town and Bowdoin, ill with consumption, followed their example by moving to Dorchester early in May. Presumably the new phaeton furnished good value for the money but, if it did not, Bowdoin had to make the best of it. Adino Paddock, with hundreds of other Tories, fled to Halifax when the British Army evacuated Boston in March 1776.

The Bibliophile

James Bowdoin also spent large sums of money on both his "philosophical apparatus" and his extensive library. During his lifetime he assembled a truly remarkable collection of over 1200 volumes and several hundred pamphlets as well. According to the terms of Bowdoin's will, the library, appraised at £540 in 1790, was left to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, of which he was a founder and first president. We may look to several sources for information about this extraordinary collection. After Bowdoin hastily departed Boston in May 1775, his house was occupied by General John Burgoyne, who remained there until the general evacuation of the next March. Bowdoin, living in exile in Middleborough, was understandably concerned about the fate of his possessions, especially the library, and apparently asked his brother-in-law, George Erving, a Tory then living in Boston, to make an inventory of his library holdings. This inventory was completed on September 9, 1775,¹ and provides an excellent list of the collection Bowdoin had assembled until that time. Next, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences published a complete catalogue of its library in 1802, only twelve years after Bowdoin's death.² Nearly all of its accessions at that time had come from the Bowdoin bequest and its listings can be compared with the inventory of 1775. The Bowdoin collection remained on the shelves of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences until 1947, when the Academy, liquidating its collection, assigned the library to Bowdoin College on permanent loan. No less than 357 titles in 565 volumes remain. These books, together with the noteworthy library of James Bowdoin III, are splendidly housed in the Special Collections division of the Hawthorne-Longfellow Library.

The collection of James Bowdoin II is perhaps fourth in size, scope and interest to the much earlier colonial libraries of William Byrd II, James Logan and Cotton Mather. It is difficult to generalize about this library without having recourse to some system of classification and, for this purpose, the system adopted by Frederick B. Tolles for evaluation of Quaker libraries in colonial Philadelphia seems useful here:

A
PARAPHRASE
ON PART OF
THE OECONOMY
OF
HUMAN LIFE.
INSCRIBED

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THOMAS POWNALL, ESQ;



GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS-BAY.

BOSTON NEW-ENGLAND :

PRINTED AND SOLD BY GREEN AND RUSSELL,

AT THEIR PRINTING-OFFICE, IN QUEEN-STREET.

MDCCLIX.

54. *A Paraphrase on part of the Oeconomy of Human Life*, 1759,
by James Bowdoin II

- I. Religion
- II. Philosophy and Conduct
- III. Politics and Law
- IV. Science, Medicine and Practical Arts
- V. History, Biography and Travel
- VI. *Belles-Lettres*³

While it can well be argued that the presence of a work in an individual's library is of little value in determining whether he actually read the book, and of far less worth in estimating the extent to which it may have influenced him, nevertheless the contents of a given collection do at least indicate the direction of the owner's interests. Keeping this consideration in mind, the library of James Bowdoin II is of immense value in determining the religious, philosophical and scientific bents of this notable and creative intellect in eighteenth-century America.

The evidence indicates that James Bowdoin did in fact exercise remarkable discernment in the selection of his library and that he exhibited all of the characteristics of the confirmed bibliophile. Bowdoin obtained his books from several sources, perhaps the most important of which was his London bookseller. George Keith, located at the Bible and Crown in Gracechurch Street, London, published his book catalogues regularly; a well-thumbed copy in Bowdoin's library dated January 22, 1759, reveals careful checkmarks beside the titles not only of works he hoped to acquire but of books he already owned.⁴ Between October 2, 1760 and November 19, 1770, Bowdoin placed many orders with Keith, listing his selections by title, author, size and price. His first order came to no less than £20, and included several works on law by ancient and modern authors, as well as many Greek and Latin classics, mostly in translation. Subsequent orders consisted of works dealing with botany, animal husbandry, mathematics, philosophy and religion.

Bowdoin was by no means always satisfied with the books he ordered by mail. Sometimes the print was "too small for [his] eyes." Sometimes Keith sent the wrong works; then there were the problems of exchange. Keith seems to have had difficulty in locating the back issues of the *Monthly Review* and *Critical Review* which Bowdoin required. When they did arrive, they were often lacking in

plates and indexes and had to be returned. As time passed, Bowdoin's letters to Keith took on more and more of a querulous tone, as in his note of August 13, 1763, when he stated:

I have been very unlucky in many of the books you have sent me: they being defective in some respect or other. This is the case with regard to several of the last parcel you sent, particularly the compendious treatise of Anatomy adapted to the art of designing, in which the explanation of several of the Copper Plates is not bound nor sent with them. . . . The persons you have the books of, seem inclined to dispose of the defective ones first. I should be glad to have no more of them. . . . The amount of the books sent . . . I have given you credit for, thô there are several of them overcharged.⁵

The treatise on anatomy which Keith sent to replace the first one was just as defective and Volume 16 of the *Critical Review*, enclosed in the same package, was lacking in both title and index. Bowdoin insisted that in the future his bookseller personally examine the volumes to be sent, but the problem persisted and his orders became fewer. In November 1770, Bowdoin settled up his account with Keith with a curt comment that Gutheries' *History of the World* was lacking the index. He did not order again from George Keith, but after 1770, he purchased few books in any case. Besides, by that time Boston bookstores had a good supply of desirable books; it was no longer necessary to order from England.

James Bowdoin occasionally ordered books through his brother-in-law James Erving, who resided in London during the early 1760's, but more and more purchased works in his native Boston, sometimes from booksellers but more often at auction. On February 22, 1766, he recorded in his Cash Book the purchase of books from Elias Dupee, probably a book dealer, for £2.17-. He bought books, maps and a pocket globe from Moses Deshon in 1767. In February 1768, he attended the vendue of the effects of Jeremiah Gridley, noted Boston editor and publisher, and purchased books worth £6.6.1. Several works remaining in Bowdoin's library bear the inscription "bôt of Jer. Gridley," including Cleiac's *Coustumes de la Mer*, published in Bordeaux in 1661. With the opening of the American Revolution, Bowdoin acquired fewer and fewer volumes, but by that time his library was largely completed; his own poor health and wartime activities limited the hours he could spend in his

study and new books were difficult to obtain during the war in any case. But even in 1775, Bowdoin's library was a comprehensive one, as an examination of important works grouped according to Frederick B. Tolles' six general categories will demonstrate.

The religious books owned by James Bowdoin are a curious lot, surprising in their diversity, and one can well imagine that they were selected as their owner developed his own religious creed. Some of the small collection of Bibles and New Testaments may have belonged to earlier generations of his family, such as *La Sainte Bible*, printed in French in 1707 by the Reverend David Martin, pastor of the "Wallonne" Church of Utrecht, Amsterdam, which could have been his father's. Other Bibles and Testaments were in Greek and Latin, sometimes both, and were probably used to compare parallel texts as well as to improve Bowdoin's mastery of ancient languages. Another group of religious works, mostly pamphlets, dealt with the quarrel between Anglican and Congregationalist leaders which racked New England in the early 1760's. Congregationalist champions such as Charles Chauncy and Jonathan Mayhew claimed that they had won victory in the controversy by defeating Anglican attempts to create the first American bishopric. Their works are represented here as are those of the Anglican protagonists, East Apthorp, Henry Caner and even the Archbishop of Canterbury. Bowdoin, a staunch but liberal Congregationalist, must have followed the religious struggle with great interest, especially since Apthorp was the son of a fellow proprietor in a speculative land company, the Kennebeck Purchase Company.

A third group of books appear to have been purchased because of Bowdoin's interest in other religions, especially the Roman Catholic (for his forebears had been persecuted Huguenots), or chosen to satisfy his curiosity concerning strange, sometimes bizarre religious ideas. This group included Sir Richard Steele's *An Account of the State of the Roman Catholick Religion Throughout the World*, the anonymous *History of Popery* and two of the Reverend Samuel Mather's odd pamphlets: "An Attempt to Show that America must be Known to the Ancients" and "A Modest Account Concerning Salutations and Kissings in Ancient Times." Strangest of all is Richard Dean's *An Essay on the Future Life of Brutes* (London, 1768)

in which the author concluded that the brute animals of the earth would enter Paradise at the Last Judgment.

The heart of James Bowdoin's ecclesiastical library, however, is found among those works which either helped to form his own religious convictions or reinforced them. Many of these were written by England's most outspoken Deist and Arminian thinkers, most of them Anglican churchmen, and included: Thomas Chubb's *A Collection of Tracts*; Samuel Clarke's *Complete Works*, as well as his *Paraphrase On the Four Evangelists* and *A Discourse Concerning the Being and Attributes of God*; William Derham's *Astro-Theology* and *Physico-Theology*; Humphrey Dutton's *A Discourse Concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*; John Ray's *Three Physico-Theologica Discourses*; James Foster's *Discourses on all the Principal Branches of Natural Religion and Social Virtue*; and William Wollaston's *The Religion of Nature Delineated*. These classics of the early eighteenth century were augmented by a work published in 1775 by Joseph Priestley, the English chemist and Non-Conformist minister: *An Appeal to the Serious and Candid Professors of Christianity*. Works by New England Arminians were represented by Jonathan Mayhew's *Sermons*; James Dana's *An Examination of the late Reverend President Edwards's Enquiry on Freedom of the Will*; and the *Salvation for All Men* and *The Mystery hid from Ages and Generations made Manifest by the Gospel Revelation* of Charles Chauncy. Possession of the foregoing works certainly indicates James Bowdoin's interest in eighteenth-century Arminian and Deist thought. Indeed, little else could be expected of an intellectual born into the liberal Brattle Square Church who was a follower of Newton, a correspondent of Dr. Richard Price and a friend of Benjamin Franklin. James Bowdoin seldom put his religious beliefs on paper but his few recorded thoughts, as well as his religious library, lead one to believe that, like the other Newtonians, he thought of God as the "prime mover" who had established the universe as a marvelous clockwork mechanism and had then left man to work out his own destiny. According to this theory, God was a rational Being who operated according to predictable laws; earth's disasters could be explained as natural phenomena, not as the divine hand of retribution. Bowdoin must have been inclined toward a belief in universal

salvation, at least for those who had led a good life. Indeed, his own philosophy of "Natural" as opposed to "Experimental" religion emphasized Christ's moral teachings; morality occupied a large place in his personal creed. In the sermon preached at the funeral of Bowdoin, the Reverend Peter Thatcher, who knew him well, observed that "He feared God; he believed, professed, and practiced the religion of Jesus Christ"; but he also added that his subject's "... religion was rational, uniform, and energetick. . . ."⁶ To James Bowdoin, rationality and morality were the keynotes in his religion and he made them important in his everyday life.

Philosophy and religion, and probably scientific beliefs as well, were intricately intertwined in the mind of Bowdoin; it is significant that many of the philosophical works in his library were composed by religious writers. Among these was Bishop George Berkeley's *Alciphron: or The Minute Philosopher, In Seven Dialogues*, which Bowdoin acquired in 1748. This volume is among a very few of his books to carry marginal notes. He also owned Berkeley's *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, as well as John Clarke's *An Enquiry Into the Cause and Origin of Moral Evil*. Two works may perhaps be regarded as the foundations of the philosophical library: Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and a 1664 edition of Rene Descarte's *Principia Philosophiae*. Francis Hutcheson was a particular favorite; Bowdoin owned copies of his *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, his *Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* and also his *Inquiry Into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. Hutcheson was an early utilitarian; Bowdoin thought enough of his ideas to copy his obituary from the *London Magazine* of 1746 in the front of the *Essays*. A work by Henry Grove, *A System of Moral Philosophy*, reinforced his interest in that area but Bowdoin was also a student of logic, as works by Isaac Watts and William Duncan testify. He had apparently read and digested John Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*, so influential on the religious thought of Jonathan Edwards, and owned a copy of David Hume's *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, which dealt with the same topic. The presence of Hume in Bowdoin's library seems almost inevitable; he had been a student of Hutcheson. All of the contemporary works mentioned above were, of course,

bolstered by editions of the Greek and Latin scholars, which will be considered under *Belles Lettres*.

Bowdoin's holdings in the areas of political science and law were, if anything, even stronger than his collection of philosophical works. True Whig that he was, he had studied all of the standard English political philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and many of the Continental political theorists as well. His collection is a choice one but it probably could have been duplicated in the libraries of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and many other American leaders of the Revolutionary period. In the field of politics Bowdoin possessed Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism* as well as his *Letter to Sir William Windham*; *Some Reflexions on the Present State of the Nation*; several volumes by John Locke, including his *Works*, in three volumes, which contained the *Second Treatise on Government*; Edward Wortley Montagu's *Reflections on the Rise and Fall of the Antient Republicks*; Rousseau's *Social Compact*; Sidney's *Discourse on Government*, a French edition; and Trenchard's classic, *Cato's Letters*. He also owned copies of Voltaire's *Letters Concerning the English Nation* and John Witt's *Political Maxims of the State of Holland*.

Bowdoin kept up-to-date on more recent political events as well. Americans looked upon John Wilkes as a defender of their liberties in Parliament. Bowdoin owned a copy of *An Authentic Account of the Proceedings against John Wilkes* which was published in Boston in 1763. The *Account* included Wilkes' famous "North Briton No. 45," the publication of which resulted in Wilkes' trial in the House of Commons. He also owned the anonymous *Examination of Doctor Benjamin Franklin*, which had taken place before the House of Commons during debate over the repeal of the Stamp Act. Naturally he had copies of the works of his friend and correspondent, Dr. Richard Price: *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty*, the *Principles of Government*, and the *Justice and Policy of the War with America* as well as his *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty*. Finally, towards the end of his life Bowdoin subscribed to the publication of John Adams' *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America*, an important work which appeared in 1788. With such a library, Bowdoin's political

sentiments can hardly be doubted. His collection of works relating to ancient and contemporary law further bolstered his political opinions.

James Bowdoin's volumes on law included several works dealing with Continental law which were considered classics in his time. They ranged from George Harris' translation of the *Institutions of Justinian*, through a 1724 edition of Hugo Grotius' *Le Droit de la Guerre, et de la Paix* to the *Frederician Code* of Frederick the Great of Prussia. The writings of Samuel Puffendorf were required reading for those in the eighteenth century interested in law. Bowdoin owned three of his works: *The Law of Nature and Nations*, *The Whole Duty of Man According to the Law of Nature* and his *Introduction to the History of the Principal Kingdoms and States of Europe*. He also owned two of the seminal works of Montesquieu: his *Spirit of the Laws* and *Reflections on the Causes of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*. These were books one might expect to find in a comprehensive library but James Bowdoin was a practical man and as a merchant it was necessary that he be aware of international, commercial law as well. This he contrived to do through such books as Cleirac's *Coustumes De La Mer*, Johann Heineccius' *Methodical System of Universal Law* and an anonymous *Principles of Negotiations: An Introduction to the Public Law of Europe*.

James Bowdoin, like the Renaissance Man he strove to become, wished to achieve competence in many areas, but it was in the field of science that his overwhelming interest lay. As might be expected, his accessions in science, medicine and the practical arts were numerous. Some of the first category may originally have been college texts but this nucleus was expanded with every opportunity. Bowdoin's scientific works divide themselves naturally into several categories: mathematics, botany, astronomy and electricity; taken as a whole they would be considered the essential elements of "Natural Philosophy."

James Bowdoin owned a copy of Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* printed in 1714, which may have been a college text, since it is well known that Professor John Winthrop IV taught from the *Principia* at Harvard. It has been said that only a handful of colonial Americans ever really understood this work because they lacked the necessary mathematical background. Benjamin

Franklin was not among this number; it is a matter of conjecture whether Bowdoin ever attained this goal. In any case, a comprehension of Newton was unnecessary, for several followers of the great mathematician had published semipopular versions of his work. Bowdoin's favorite was William Whiston, who had succeeded Newton in his chair at Cambridge before being dismissed for heresy. Bowdoin owned his *New Theory of the Earth* and a second edition of *Astronomical Lectures Read in the Publick Schools at Cambridge*. He even had an account of Whiston's trial. But he also owned a work by the Reverend John Clarke, Dean of Sarum, which was familiarly known as "Clarke's Newton," a copy of *The Elements of Euclid*, Benjamin Martin's *The Young Trigonometer's Compleat Guide*, Colin Maclauren's *Treatise of Algebra*, William-James Gravesand's *Mathematical Elements of Natural Philosophy* and Philippe de la Here's *New Elements of Conic Sections*.

Guided by Professor Winthrop, Bowdoin naturally turned from a mastery of mathematics to astronomy. Here he collected texts by the best-known astronomers of the century. These included Edmond Halley's *Miscellanea Curiosa*, James Ferguson's *Astronomical Tables and Precepts*, David Gregory's *Elements of Astronomy, Physical and Geometrical*, John Keil's *Introduction to the True Astronomy* and Roger Long's *Astronomy in Five Books*. Gradually he added current pamphlets to his collection: Benjamin Martin's *An Essay on Visual Glasses* and the works of his mentor, John Winthrop IV, including his *Two Lectures on Comets, Relation of a Voyage . . . For the Observation of the Transit of Venus* and *An Essay on Comets in Two Parts*. Bowdoin's interest in electrical experiments must have been nourished only by his correspondence with others and accounts published in the *Transactions* of the Royal Society; the only book on the subject which he possessed was Franklin's *Experiments and Observations on Electricity* and a 1769 edition at that! His interest in botany was probably a passing one; nevertheless, he owned James Lee's *Introduction to Botany* and the renowned *Families of Plants* by Carl von Linnæus. Undoubtedly a work which Bowdoin particularly cherished was the first volume of the *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, to which he had contributed several articles.

The Boston of James Bowdoin's day was noted for its physicians

and surgeons; one of the best of these was his close friend, Dr. Silvester Gardiner. But Bowdoin suffered from many ailments and he was enough of a hypochondriac to read up on suspected disorders. Whether he also attempted to treat his diseases is unknown but he did own copies of Dr. John Freind's *Nine Commentaries upon Fevers* and even his *Emmenologia*, an analysis of female disorders, as well as Daniel Turner's *The Art of Surgery. A Treatise on the Diseases and Lameness of Horses*, by William Osmer, seems much more practical.

Actually, a good many of Bowdoin's books were concerned with the practical application of scientific discoveries, a preoccupation, if not a mania, with eighteenth-century Americans as well as Europeans. Works such as Joseph Collyer's *Parent's and Guardian's Directory*, Richard Bradley's *The Country Housewife and Lady's Director* and the anonymous *London and Country Brewer* were on a fairly low level but Bowdoin also owned well-worn copies of volumes aiming at the overall improvement of agriculture, navigation and industry, which enjoyed great vogue in America in the 1760's and early 1770's when the colonies were struggling to reach economic self-sufficiency. Samples of such works included Lawrence Ellis' *Chiltern and Dale Farming* and his *Timber-Tree Improved*, Jared Eliot's *Essays Upon Field-Husbandry in New England*, *A Treatise of Hemp-Husbandry* by Edmund Quincy and Francis Holmes' *Experiments on Bleaching*. John Gray's *A Treatise of Gunnery* and Roger Stevenson's *Military Instructions for Officers Detached in the Field* were perhaps purchased during the Revolutionary War years, although neither Bowdoin nor his son saw military service.

James Bowdoin was a sedentary individual who never traveled farther from his native New England than a trip to Philadelphia made shortly after his graduation from Harvard. Nevertheless, he was very much interested in the world and sought through means of his books to learn more about it. History—any history—fascinated him. His library included selections dealing with the ancient world, modern Europe and the history of his own country. Other sources of information were the biographies, geographies and atlases which he owned.

Bowdoin's historical library contained a balanced collection of the

classics as well as the latest efforts and included a number of approaches to the study of history. Perhaps the simplest form of history, and probably the dullest, is chronology. Nevertheless, a comprehensive knowledge of the chronology of the past is essential to its understanding. *The Chronological Tables of Universal History, Sacred and Profane, Ecclesiastical and Civil* of Nicholas Dufresnoy, published in London in 1762, and Baron Ludwig Holberg's *An Introduction to Universal History* must have been extremely helpful to an amateur like Bowdoin. Histories of the ancient world, such as John Potter's *Archeologia Graeca*, Basil Kennett's *Romae Antiquae*, Pierre Danet's *A Complete Dictionary of the Greeks and Roman Antiquities* and *The Roman History* of Lawrence Echard, provided works which appealed to the aesthete as well as to the lover of history. In studying England's past, Bowdoin turned to books which had become classics by his own time: a very handsome set of Raleigh's *History of the World*, a seventh edition published in 1733; John Oldmixon's *History of England*; Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*; and Bishop Burnet's folio volumes of *History of His Own Time* as well as his *Abridgement of the History of the Reformation of the Church of England*. Of more recent vintage were George Buchanan's *History of Scotland* and an English translation of *The History of England* by René Rapin, the last replete with magnificent copperplate engravings. Bowdoin's interest in European history was perhaps satisfied by John Mottley's *History of the Life and Reign of the Empress Catherine*, the Abbé Vertot's *History of the Revolution in Sweden* and, somewhat narrow in scope, *A Complete History of Algiers* by John Morgan. Even more specialized were Thomas Corbett's *An Account of the Expedition of the British Fleet to Sicily, in the Years 1718, 1719, and 1720* and John Dalrymple's *An Essay Towards a General History of Feudal Property in Great Britain*.

James Bowdoin's bookshelf of works relating to American History concentrated for the most part on the New England scene. He owned a first edition copy of Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*, printed in London in 1702, and the fragment, completed only to the 1630's, of the Reverend Thomas Prince's *Chronological History of New England*. Bowdoin's older brother William is known

to have been a subscriber to the latter work but this copy appears to have been originally owned by John Winslow. These early works were supplemented by Daniel Neal's *History of New England* printed in 1747. At first glance it might appear surprising for Bowdoin to be interested in the *Historical Memoirs Relating to the Housatunnuk Indians* of the Reverend Samuel Hopkins but the Bowdoins owned extensive lands in the Housatonic area of Connecticut. Thomas Hutchinson's *A Collection of Original Papers Relative to the History of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay* represented a much more scholarly attempt than earlier colonial historical works; James Bowdoin, interested in land titles because of his connection with the Kennebeck Purchase Company, must have found this an invaluable source. Hutchinson was Bowdoin's political enemy, yet one wonders why he did not own at least the first volume of the Royal Governor's *History of Massachusetts-Bay*. Bowdoin showed particular discernment in his selection of Cadwallader Colden's *History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada*, printed in London in 1747. The work is still invaluable as a source for the customs of these tribes. Equally good was William Douglass' *A Summary, Historical and Political, of the First Planting, Progressive Improvements, and Present State of the British Settlements in North America*, published in Boston, 1747-1750. Bowdoin also owned Edmund Burke's *Account of the European Settlements In America*. The great English orator once served as Agent for the Colony of New York. Last but not least, George Minot's *History of the Insurrections in Massachusetts In the Year 1786* is of particular interest not only because Bowdoin received a signed presentation copy from the author but also because Minot made him the hero of the work.

James Bowdoin further fulfilled his desire to become familiar with the past through his collection of biographical works which for the most part centered on the great men of history, many of them military leaders. These included J. Bancke's *History of the Life and Reign of the Czar Peter the Great*, John Campbell's *History of John Duke of Marlborough*, Walter Harte's *History of the Life of Gustavus Adolphus*, *The Life of Frances Bacon* by David Mallet, as well as a French translation of the same work, and Isaac Kimber's *Life of Oliver Cromwell*. Bowdoin must have received the last-

named work, a fourth edition, soon after it was published in 1741, for two years later he copied into the flyleaf a long extract from the *Boston Weekly News-Letter* describing the death at age 118 of a man in Ireland who claimed to have been the executioner of Charles I. The bizarre and remote always seemed to attract him. This may account for the presence in his library of James Fraser's *History of Nader Shah*, the emperor of Persia, and Sharaf al-Den Ali's *The History of Timur-Bec, Known by the Name of Tamerlain the Great*. But works written by great men intrigued him as well, for he owned Frederick the Great's *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg* and Voltaire's *Age of Louis XIV* and *Age of Louis XV*.

Studying the lives of the illustrious may have stimulated Bowdoin's interest in travel and geography for, as we have seen, he was a traveler of the armchair variety. He possessed several general geographies, such as *A Short Way to Know the World: Or, a Compendium of Modern Geography*, by an anonymous author, the Abbé Expilly's *Le Geographe Manuel* and Thomas Salmon's *A New Geographical and Historical Grammar*. No less than three atlases of Great Britain can still be found in his library: Bodeslade and Toms' *Chorographia Britanniae*, the six-volume *Magna Britannia et Hibernia, Antiqua et Nova*, which had once belonged to his brother William, and what must have been the pride of his collection, Herman Moll's *A Set of Fifty New and Correct Maps of the Counties of England and Wales*. The work is folio size and Bowdoin paid all of £6.6— for it in 1748. He could not have found the price too dear, for the plates are hand colored and very decorative.

Bowdoin's volumes on travel, however, carried him farther afield than Great Britain or North America. He owned Bulkeley and Cummin's *Voyage to the South Seas, In the Years 1740-1741*, the exciting tale of the shipwreck of H.M.S. *Wager* and its crew's subsequent perilous trip through the Straits of Magellan; the *Voyage to South-America* of Don Juan and Don De Ullon; and Walter Richard's *Voyage Round the World*, an account of Lord Anson's voyage to the South Seas, 1741-1744. Undoubtedly more conventional but still interesting was the *Travels Through the Low-Countries, Germany, Italy and France*, by one of Bowdoin's favorite authors, John Ray. The Chevalier de Bourgoanne's *Travels In Spain* (1789) may

have been recommended to Bowdoin by his son, for Jemmy, then a budding diplomat, owned an identical set.

Perhaps some of Bowdoin's travel books might better be described under the classification of *belles lettres*, as is probably true of other volumes in his library. Conversely, many of his Greek and Latin works, which fall into the *belles lettres* category, would seem to fit under the classification of history. Certainly his holdings among the ancient historians were sizable, including the History of Herodotus, Sallust's *The History of Catiline's Conspiracy*, the *General History* of Polybius, Livy's *Roman History* and, of course, the works of Julius Caesar, including his history of the Gallic Wars. Judging strictly by sheer volume, one would have to conclude that Bowdoin's favorite author among the ancients was Cicero. Bowdoin, like most educated men of his time, must have read the orations of Cicero. He also owned a copy of Cicero's *Morals* and, interestingly enough, his *Cato Major or a Treatise on Old Age*, published in Philadelphia in 1751 with notes supplied by the Quaker statesman, scholar and bibliophile, James Logan. If additional works dealing with public speaking were necessary, Bowdoin also possessed a volume of the *Oration*s of Demosthenes.

All of the major classicists and many of the minor ones were represented in Bowdoin's library: Plutarch, Virgil, Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Xenophon, Isocrates, Plautus, Lucretius, Seneca, Suetonius, Anacreon. He had copies of the *Morals* of Epicurus, the *Satyricon* of Petronius Arbiter and the *Satyrae* of Juvenal. Unaccountably, however, he completely neglected the works of Plato and Aristotle. Since books by these authors appeared in other colonial libraries, it is difficult to account for their omission. An interesting feature of his library, which may have been present in the collections of his contemporaries, was that most of his classical authors appeared in pairs: one in the language of the original and the other in English translation. Bowdoin's Latin must have been excellent and his Greek at least respectable; nevertheless, he preferred to keep the translations available for speedy reference.

One measure of the scholar and writer may be the number of reference works which he keeps readily at hand. James Bowdoin was well supplied. He owned copies of Ainsworth's *Thesaurus Linguae*

Latinae Compendiarus, Bailey's *Dictionary* or *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (which had originally belonged to his mother-in-law), a French and Italian dictionary, a *Dictionary of all Religions, Ancient and Modern* and Benjamin Martin's *Bibliotheca Technologica: Or, A Philological Library of Literary Arts and Sciences*. Finally, towards the close of his life he purchased a five-volume set of Chamber's *Cyclopaedia*, the last volume composed of plate illustrations. This work was probably the best encyclopedia of the arts and sciences then available.

The remaining works in James Bowdoin's library which may be classified as *belles lettres* are a varied lot indeed. Naturally he owned a copy of Joseph Addison's *Works*, which were so important to writers who hoped to develop a style. Books such as Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* and Charles Fresnoy's *The Art of Painting* helped to instill taste and sensibility as well. Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* might awaken sensitivity. Fénélon was one of the most popular French writers; Bowdoin owned copies of his *Lives and Most Remarkable Maxims of the Antient Philosophers*, his *Characters and Criticisms upon the Ancient and Modern Orators, Poets, Painters . . .* and naturally his *Télémaque*, which was to be found almost universally in the libraries of the literate.

Bowdoin's library certainly was that of one of colonial America's foremost intellectuals. It was one of discernment, taste and practical utility. Yet it was essentially a working library. As such, it contained no superfluities and among these in Bowdoin's mind were novels and poetry. The possessors of other notable libraries, even the Quaker grandees, found novels to their liking but not James Bowdoin. Liberal as he was, his objections could not possibly have been upon religious grounds and probably not because of moral scruples. One is inclined to believe that he simply did not have the time to spend on reading material which was of questionable utility. Poetry was another matter. He had studied Greek and Latin poetry in the original at Harvard and could hardly have avoided the reading of modern English poetry there. Furthermore, he fancied himself to be a poet. Therefore, it is difficult to understand why a comprehensive library like Bowdoin's contained no poetry.

James Bowdoin wrote passable poems on at least two occasions, the first representing his contributions to the famous "Harvard verses" and the second involving the writing of poetry which he himself had privately printed for distribution to friends. In 1760, George II died and was succeeded to the throne by his grandson, the young George III. The faculties of Oxford and Cambridge conceived the plan of composing verses in honor of the new sovereign. The idea spread back to America and somehow the decision was made that Harvard should follow suit. That institution offered prizes for the best Greek, Latin and English poetry submitted by students and alumni upon the theme of the accession of George III. James Bowdoin himself made the effort, as did many of his friends. As published in Boston in 1761, the work entitled *Pietas et Gratuloso Cantabrigiensis Apud Novanglos* contained thirty-one poems, of which three were in Greek, sixteen in Latin, and the remainder in English.

While the authors of the verses in *Pietas and Gratuloso* were not identified, scholars have since attributed the efforts to a number of prominent Massachusetts residents. James Bowdoin has received credit for four: numbers eight, nine, seventeen, and thirty. The first two, of six and four lines respectively, are written in Latin. The last two, in English, "Hail Kindred Spirit!" and "Tho' Wealth and Power" are much longer and more ambitious. "Tho' Wealth and Power" is the more interesting of the two and describes the process by which George's emissaries cross the English Channel, proceed to the Court of Frederick of Brunswick, escort his daughter Charlotte back to England and there deliver her in marriage to the happy king. The scene closes delicately with the newlyweds safely ensconced in the marriage bed:

In Hymen's sacred rites you mutual join'd
May gracious heav'n its choicest influence shed;
And with a num'rous offspring bless your bed:
From your embrace may future monarchs spring,
And to Britannia future triumphs bring.⁷

Bowdoin's prediction was at least correct concerning the fertility of the marriage of George III and Charlotte of Brunswick, but whether the royal pair ever read his verses is open to conjecture. A copy of

Pietas et Gratuloso, splendidly bound, was at least presented to the King by the Massachusetts Agent, Jasper Mauduit. But there was another purpose behind the volume of verses besides honoring the new king, and James Bowdoin was involved in this effort.

The Overseers of Harvard were determined not to be outdone by the English universities but their real interest was to bring to the attention of the king the existence of a small, struggling, eminently worthy colonial college which could well profit from the royal subsidy. This purpose is made clear in the book's preface. As Bowdoin commented to Mauduit, "I am very glad to hear the College Verses have been approved, and heartily wish with you that the hint in the didication may be the means of obtaining the royal countenance."⁸ This hope unfortunately came to nothing but *Pietas et Gratuloso* was highly regarded in Boston until events of the American Revolution made several writers of the verses sorry they had ever written the adulatory lines to a king of England.

At the time James Bowdoin contributed his verses to the Harvard Overseers he had already appeared in print as a poet, for his *Paraphrase on Part of the Oeconomy of Human Life* [No. 54] had been privately published in Boston in 1759. The original work was supposedly "translated from an Indian Manuscript, written by an Ancient Bramin"—a common enough pose for eighteenth-century English literature—and was widely believed to be the creation of Robert Dodsley. Actually, the *Oeconomy*, first published in 1750, is known to have been written by the Earl of Chesterfield. Notwithstanding the confusion about the author, the work soon became immensely popular, even in the American colonies, as must have been the case if Bowdoin was to "paraphrase" it only nine years after first publication.

Bowdoin dedicated his *Paraphrase* to his friend, Governor Thomas Pownall, and dated it March 28, 1759, only a few months before Pownall returned to England. Unlike the original, the piece is written in verse—the heroic couplet form which owes much to Pope. Since it is only a "part of a paraphrase," it is by no means as complete as the original, yet it follows the same general scheme, with sections dedicated to a consideration of anger, desire and love, woman, husband, father, religion and others included in its eighty-eight pages.

It is in his verses on religion that Bowdoin presents his idea of a reasonable God who has devised a universe which functions according to his laws:

At his creative word—at his command—
Nature sprung forth all-glorious from his hand:
To guide whose course his sov'reign well ordained
Long-long ere nature had existence gain'd,
Laws suited to each being's proper kind;
Laws that declare their author's boundless mind;
So varied in each species, that they raise
Our highest wonder, and transcend our praise.⁹

The *Paraphrase* shows some originality in its theme and, according to Bowdoin, even more so in its execution, for he believed that he had gone beyond the original *Oeconomy*, stating that "even the title it now bears: 'A Paraphrase' does not properly belong to it: for thô, in some parts of it, it may be a paraphrase; in other parts, the matter is not the same."¹⁰ In the "Advertisement" preceding his verses, the author promised his narrow public that if the first part was approved, it might be followed in print by the remainder. The sequel, however, never appeared, and it is not known whether in fact it was ever written, or even how the printed portion was received. But James Bowdoin had no intention of becoming a professional poet and he had proved his point: that a gentleman of parts, taste and superior understanding could write acceptable verses, even in provincial America. Besides, he was far more interested in the pursuit of science and it was in this field that he chose to make his mark.



57. *Benjamin Franklin*, by Jean Antoine Houdon

The Votary of Science

James Bowdoin had first studied Natural Philosophy at Harvard under the guidance of John Winthrop IV. After graduation he continued the study of astronomy, but at this stage in his life he was a dabbler, like so many other eighteenth-century devotees of science. In 1749, however, he purchased his first electrical apparatus. His preoccupation with electrical experimentation caused him to neglect the study of astronomy for a time. Probably his interest in electricity was kindled by the same catalyst which first attracted Benjamin Franklin [No. 57] to the new science.

In 1746, Franklin returned to Boston for a visit which was to make a turning point in his life. As he later explained it,

... I met there with a Dr. Spence, who was lately arrived from Scotland and showed me some electric experiments. They were imperfectly performed, as he was not very expert; but, being on a subject quite new to me, they equally surprised and pleased me.¹

Franklin's friend "Dr. Spence" was actually a Scotsman named Archibald Spencer, who had been conducting a "Course of Experimental Philosophy" in Boston. There seems little doubt that the young James Bowdoin, fresh from Harvard, must have attended Spencer's lectures as well. Certainly his friendship with Franklin dates from that period. Franklin returned to Philadelphia, encountered Spencer there also, and bought his electrical equipment. He soon outdistanced his teacher and went on to make the contributions to modern electricity which made him famous in Europe as well as in America. What is not so well known is the role played by his friend James Bowdoin in the same field of scientific endeavor.

Bowdoin began his experimentation in 1749. The next year he undertook the longest and probably the most exciting journey of his life: a trip to Philadelphia with visits in New Haven and New York. Bowdoin made the expedition with his friend and pastor, the Reverend Samuel Cooper of the Brattle Square Church, and seven other friends. His chief purpose for making the trip seems to have been to renew his acquaintance with Franklin. At any rate, by the following year a serious correspondence between the two had developed

which lasted until the death of Franklin in April 1790. By December 1751, Bowdoin was writing excitedly to his friend about the series of electrical experiments then being conducted at Faneuil Hall by Franklin's Philadelphia colleague, Ebenezer Kinnersley. He commented that "The Experiments are very curious, and I think prove most effectually your doctrine of Electricity."² He then went on to explain how Franklin might test for himself the passage of an electrical spark through a vacuum. Bowdoin admitted that he himself had not made the experiment, "...not knowing of an Air Pump nearer than Cambridge..."³ but suggested that Franklin might obtain the necessary apparatus at the Pennsylvania State House. Finally, he remarked that "With respect to your Letters on Electricity it will be no new thing to you to be told, that they are very curious & entertaining, and by far the best and most rational that have been written on that Subject. Your hypothesis in particular for explaining the phaenomena of Lighting is very ingenious."⁴ Such comments would have been presumptuous in a man less skilled in electrical experimentation than Franklin but Bowdoin was Franklin's equal. The letters continued. In 1752, having completed his famous *Experiments and Observations on Electricity*, Franklin paid his younger friend the compliment of sending him a newly completed manuscript. As Franklin explained:

The enclos'd I intended to send to London but have not yet sent any Part of it. Some of the Letters being yours, I ought first to have your Permission. When you have perus'd the whole, please to send it after me per Post to Rhode island, where I expect to be at least 10 days.⁵

Bowdoin read the manuscript and returned it to his friend. Franklin then forwarded it to his London correspondent Peter Collinson as "a course of correspondence on Philosophical Subjects between Benjamin Franklin Esquire of Philadelphia and Several of his Friends in North America." The letters were presented by Collinson to the Royal Society where they were read to its members.⁶

Bowdoin's correspondence with Franklin continued. On April 12, 1753, he received a letter from the great man advising him that "I have shipt 18 Glass Leyden Jars in Casks well pack'd, on board Capt. Branscombe for Boston. 6 of them are for you, the rest I under-

stand are for the College.”⁷ Franklin kept his American colleagues well informed of his scientific progress and as much as possible gave them credit for their own achievements but it was Franklin upon whom honors were heaped by an admiring Europe; he received several honorary degrees, but probably he most valued his membership in the Royal Society.

James Bowdoin, who had collaborated with Franklin, failed to gain such recognition. If he felt piqued at the slight of the Royal Society, he must have relished a volume in his library entitled *A Review of the Work of the Royal Society of London*.⁸ The work, written by John Hill, attempted to discredit the quality of papers printed in the Society’s *Transactions* by reducing them to absurdity. Hill’s writing was amusing; Bowdoin must have enjoyed reading of ridiculous attempts to “scientifically” prove that fish could not live out of water, or that animals could not survive without food. Even American corresponding members such as Boston’s own Paul Dudley did not escape lampooning. Yet the failure of the Royal Society to recognize him must have hurt, and when the opportunity presented itself Bowdoin eagerly joined a newer, less prestigious English society.

In October, 1762, James Bowdoin dispatched a letter to Lord Romney, President of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. He reminded Lord Romney that he had recently been elected a corresponding member of the group and, since he believed that the Society was “formed upon an excellent plan for answering the design of its institution,” he was making a contribution of twenty guineas “towards the promoting that design.”⁹ Bowdoin thoroughly approved of the aims of the Society for, like most colonials, he judged the goals and achievements of a group by their practicality and utility. The Society not only professed to encourage the arts, manufactures and commerce of the British Empire but supported these objectives by offering premiums—

in the several branches of the polite and liberal arts, useful inventions, discoveries, or improvements in agriculture, manufactures, mechanics, and chemistry; or the laying open any such to the public; and in general all such useful inventions, discoveries, or improvements, as may appear to have a tendency to the advantage of trade and commerce.¹⁰

These objectives coincided exactly with Bowdoin's own, for he had taken what action he could to encourage manufactures within his own province. As early as 1758, he had contributed £80 to the Boston Society for the Importation of Foreigners, and in the same year subscribed £100 (old tenor) to the establishment of a linen factory in Boston. Neither of these ventures had contributed measurably to the economic prosperity of Massachusetts but Bowdoin saw in the London Society's scheme for offering premiums a practical means of improving trade and commerce in the American colonies.

Bowdoin made every attempt to secure the Society's volumes of *Transactions* as they were issued and he paid careful attention to its premium lists, some of which might be attractive to would-be American manufacturers. The *Transactions* often arrived several years after issue but he usually managed to obtain copies of the premium offers. The premiums listed in the Society's publication for 1762 must have been of especial interest to him. There were the usual offers of prizes for the exportation of the largest quantities of pickled sturgeon, raw silk, hemp, the cultivation of olive trees, production of raisins and distillation of wines from the North American colonies into Great Britain but the premium for potash and pearl ash were of particular attraction. The individual who exported the largest quantity (not less than fifty tons) of potash from the American colonies to Great Britain before December 1, 1762, would receive a premium of £100; the similar delivery of pearl ash (not less than thirty tons) would merit the same amount.¹¹ The offers for potash and pearl ash were repeated in subsequent years and Bowdoin made every effort to take advantage of them. There were several practical reasons for his interest. In 1751, Parliament had removed all duties on potash imported from the American colonies. As an added inducement to action, the Sugar Act of 1764 placed potash and pearl ash on the enumerated list.¹² Both were much in demand in Great Britain in the manufacture of soap. The Society was interested enough in promoting the manufacture of potash in New England to send a British expert, James Stewart, there in 1763.¹³ Here was the impetus needed to stimulate a valuable new American industry. In 1767, Bowdoin wrote to Lane, Son, and Fraser, his London correspondents, describing a remarkable new process of producing potash invented by a Mr.

Frobisher, "whereby it may be made much better than it is, from a less quantity of Ashes; and brought to a certain Standard."¹⁴ He predicted that if the method could be generally adopted it would not only be beneficial to trade but also "...effectually establish the character of American Potash."

Bowdoin informed his correspondents that four barrels had already been sent by Frobisher to Haruton, Bernard, and Company of London as a sample; Frobisher had also applied to the Board of Trade for a reward of £700 sterling, in return for which he would make public his process. Bowdoin hoped that Lane, Son, and Fraser would support the petition. He made no further written appeals to London in support of Frobisher but this may not be the end of the story. Among his extensive pamphlet collection is a work by Robert Dossie entitled *Observations on the Pot-Ash brought from America*. In this pamphlet Dossie described the results of his examination of the American potash, which he found inferior to the British variety. In fact, he pronounced the sample to be an alkali rather than a true potash. Nevertheless, he did provide instructions for the processing of this "American alkali." Dossie's pamphlet was published in 1767, the same year in which Bowdoin wrote to Lane, Son, and Fraser. Furthermore, Dossie's title page indicates that the American potash process was revealed to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce and was published by the Society at the request of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Some pieces of the puzzle remain to be fitted together but it appears that James Bowdoin, keenly aware of the British need for potash through his Society's publications, promoted Frobisher's process in England through his own correspondents and perhaps used his influence in the Massachusetts House to gain support as well. In the end his plan came to nothing, since the American variety of potash was of limited commercial use, but Bowdoin's interest illustrates his continuing concern for the application of science to the solution of practical problems.

During the 1760's, James Bowdoin turned from electrical experiments back to his first love, astronomy. He had purchased several reflecting telescopes in London from the best instrument makers available but found their products less than satisfactory, largely be-

cause the barrels could not be adjusted with any degree of accuracy. Finally he hit upon the idea of attaching an adjustable micrometer to the pedestal of a telescope, thus permitting it to be manipulated at the viewer's convenience with a high degree of accuracy. Bowdoin sent an explanation of his improvement to *The London Magazine*, which printed his brief article together with a diagram as "An Improvement Proposed for Telescopes" in its November 1761, issue.¹⁵

But Bowdoin still was not satisfied. While he had produced what appeared to be a workable sketch of his invention, he had not been able to find a metalworker in Boston who was capable of executing a model. In desperation he wrote to Franklin, then at Philadelphia but soon to leave for Great Britain, for suggestions for improvement of his invention before sending a reflecting telescope to John Canton, a skilled instrument maker in London.¹⁶ He had written a highly detailed letter to Canton somewhat earlier describing his needs. Time passed and Bowdoin heard nothing from Canton. In August 1764, he contacted his London correspondents, Lane and Booth, and requested that they inquire about the telescope.¹⁷ Apparently Lane and Booth were able to expedite matters. Writing to them again in May 1765, Bowdoin reported that he had "...received... the Telescope deliver'd you by Mr. Canton: for which you had paid Mr. Edward Nairne the optician £8.18.6 for repairing it. . . ."¹⁸ The letter is a puzzle. While it is clear that Nairne, not Canton, actually worked on the telescope, Bowdoin's reference to "repairing it" leaves some doubt as to whether his "improvement" was ever constructed. The price of £8.18.6 indicates that it was, but Bowdoin never discussed the subject again.

James Bowdoin involved himself in the observation of the transit of Venus in the British colonies in 1761 and again in 1769. The earlier venture was inspired by Franklin, who believed that the activity should center in the American colleges. Franklin urged that each institution determine its own exact latitude and longitude well before the transit was to occur. Such preparations were of the utmost importance since, by the use of a procedure devised by Edmund Halley in 1716, data obtained during the transit of Venus could be utilized to calculate the solar parallax as well as the distance from the sun to the earth.¹⁹ At Harvard, Professor John Winthrop was

absorbed with the project and, realizing that the passage of Venus across the sun could best be viewed in America from the coast of Newfoundland, he turned to his old friend James Bowdoin for assistance. Using his influence in the Massachusetts Council, Bowdoin prevailed upon Governor Francis Bernard to furnish Winthrop's transportation. Bernard responded admirably, supplying the Province sloop which carried Winthrop and two of his most promising students to St. John's, Newfoundland. Here the trio observed the transit and compiled careful figures which were utilized by James Short, English astronomer, in calculating the mean horizontal parallax and thus the distance from the earth to the sun. Winthrop's contribution was the only one offered by an American college in 1761. His *Relation of a Voyage from Boston to Newfoundland for the Observation of the Transit of Venus* was published in Boston the same year. Short's calculation could be further verified at the next transit of Venus in 1769. This event was anticipated with excitement both in Europe and the American colonies and again John Winthrop IV made preparations to observe the phenomenon. Once more James Bowdoin tried to help, although his attempt to give assistance proved abortive.

On January 23, 1769, Bowdoin wrote to General Thomas Gage, then stationed at New York City. The two had become acquainted during the latter's tour of duty at Boston. Bowdoin began his letter diplomatically, addressing Gage as "a Friend to Science" who would be willing to seize "any opportunity to promote it."²⁰ He then proceeded to the business at hand. Professor Winthrop of Harvard, whom Bowdoin referred to as "a very ingenious Gentleman," had made plans to observe the transit of Venus on June 3, 1769, but unfortunately the best place from which to view the occurrence in the American colonies was in the general region of Lake Superior, an area which fell under Gage's command. Winthrop would be able to supply trained scientific personnel for the expedition if General Gage were willing to offer the assistance of the military commanders of forts located in the vicinity. On the same day that Bowdoin wrote to Gage he dashed off a note to Professor Winthrop assuring him that he had made every effort to obtain the general's aid. He also commented on a subject which he had not mentioned to Gage but

had perhaps implied in his letter: "As the purposes, which may be answered by such an undertaking (besides observing the transit) are so useful, and of such public concernment, I have hopes the Gen'l. will make the expence of it a contingency within his own department."²¹ In his courteous letter of January 30, Gage offered official letters and passes; Bowdoin answered with his own of February 28. By this time it had developed that Winthrop was too ill to undertake the arduous journey himself but that a party of four headed by Thomas Danforth, Harvard tutor, would make the attempt. The group would proceed to Lake Superior by way of Albany, Oswego, Niagara and Detroit. However, there was yet another impediment; Danforth's party would be unable to proceed westward without financial aid from the Massachusetts Council, assistance which was still in doubt.²² By March 1, Bowdoin had to admit to the general that in spite of his own influence there, the Council was unable to provide funds. Therefore, unless Gage could furnish the money "in behalf of the Crown," the expedition was off. But Gage could not or would not agree. In turn, he proposed that the public-spirited citizens of Massachusetts raise the amount through general subscription. In his final letter of March 27, 1769, Bowdoin gave up. Pleading lack of time, he sadly informed General Gage that the expedition had been abandoned. Professor Winthrop had to be content with viewing the transit of Venus from Cambridge using equipment owned by Harvard. His figures were accepted by European astronomers and published by the American counterpart of the Royal Society, Philadelphia's American Philosophical Society.

The prestigious Royal Society had flourished as a model and an ideal for the systematic pursuit of scientific endeavors since its inception in 1662, and during the hundred-odd years of its history a number of Americans had been honored by membership. But American gentlemen of science were ambitious and felt the need of a native society to encourage, sustain and direct their efforts. At Philadelphia two rival societies, one founded by Franklin, competed for prestige and membership for years but finally merged as the American Philosophical Society in 1768. Yet the American Philosophical Society seemed infected by the same disease that plagued the Royal Society, for it was too much the private preserve of gentlemen who dabbled

at experimentation when it pleased their fancy and submitted occasional papers on "scientific" subjects of varying degrees of importance. The American Philosophical Society may have been known in Europe as "Franklin's Society"²³ but even he seems to have lost interest in it. Nevertheless, the Society's achievements—the encouragement of basic science and the publication of its first volume of *Transactions* in 1771—were not inconsiderable. The beginning of the American Revolution put an end to the Society's activities for the duration of the war. It did not, however, halt the formation of a new northern-based rival scientific society in which James Bowdoin was to play an outstanding role.

Strangely enough, the leadership in founding the new society came not from a New England devotee of science but from a political figure. It was John Adams who, tired of hearing references in France to the scientific society at Philadelphia, returned to Boston in 1779 determined to found an institution which would reflect New England's scientific endeavors.²⁴ Adams soon gained support from the Reverend Samuel Cooper, James Bowdoin, the Reverend Manasseh Cutler and others, especially the members of the Harvard faculty. Using their influence and his own he was able to induce the Massachusetts General Court to incorporate the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1780. As might be expected, this new organization was dedicated to "promoting useful knowledge"—or, more fully, to support the arts and sciences as:

. . . the foundation and support of agriculture, manufacture and commerce; as they are necessary to the wealth, peace, independence, and happiness of the people; as they essentially promote the honor and dignity of the government which patronizes them; and as they are most effectually cultivated and diffused through a State by the forming and incorporating of men of genius and learning into public societies.²⁵

It seemed appropriate that James Bowdoin, amateur scientist whose lifelong goals so closely coincided with those of the Society, should have been elected first president. His selection was a logical one; probably the only New Englander with superior claims to the honor—John Winthrop IV—had died the year before. Bowdoin continued as president of the Academy until his death. Fittingly enough, the first meeting of the American Academy of the Arts and Sciences

was held in the "Philosophy Chamber" of Harvard Hall; its membership comprised the best scientific minds of New England, as well as key political figures and members of the gentry.

The Academy's rolls included the names of John Adams; John Hancock; Joseph Willard, president of Harvard; the Reverend Edward Wigglesworth; Dr. Edward Holyoke; and such great merchants as Francis Dana, John Lowell and John Pickering. But the Society looked beyond the borders of Massachusetts to render homage to great Americans everywhere. Its honorary members eventually included George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Warren, Ezra Stiles, David Rittenhouse and Thomas Jefferson.²⁶ The election of Franklin was no doubt a foregone conclusion; Bowdoin forwarded the news to his old friend:

I had the honour of writing to you by Mr. Guild some months ago. He probably acquainted you there was a bill then depending in our Assembly for incorporating the society formed under the name of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. They have had several meetings; and at the last several gentlemen of distinguished characters were put in nomination, and there is no doubt will be chosen members at the next meeting. Among them is my much esteemed friend [Dr. Franklin] the first ambassador of the American United States, on whose election I hope to have the pleasure of felicitating the Academy.²⁷

As the years passed Bowdoin forwarded to Franklin a number of papers which had been read before the members of the Academy, some of which were undoubtedly his own. In 1785, he had the great pleasure of informing his correspondent that these papers or "memoirs" would . . . "make a part of a volume now printing here under the direction of the Academy. It will be completed in a few months, when I shall transmit a copy to your Exe'y unless I should have, which I earnestly hope for, an opportunity of presenting it personally."²⁸ The first volume of the Academy's *Memoirs* was published before the end of 1785.

As President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, James Bowdoin displayed justifiable pride in announcing the publication of his Society's *Memoirs*. A learned society, especially a scientific society, was judged largely by the quality (and frequency) of its publications. Any American with an interest in science was familiar with the *Transactions* of the Royal Society. The great triumph and glory of the American Philosophical Society had been the publication

of its *Philosophical Transactions* in 1771. Widespread distribution of this publication had earned the Philadelphia Society fame not only in England but throughout Europe.²⁹ It became a matter of honor and prestige that the American Academy should rush into print as soon as possible, especially since its recognized competition, the Philosophical Society, had not yet ventured a second volume of its *Transactions*. The *Memoirs* received very favorable notices in Europe and firmly established the American Academy as one of the new nation's two scientific societies.³⁰ Its success was only slightly blunted by the publication of the second volume of the Philosophical Society's *Transactions* in 1786. James Bowdoin's pride in his Society's *Memoirs* represented both a personal and an institutional triumph, for his own scientific papers appeared in the work.

Bowdon contributed no less than four pieces to the *Memoirs*, including a "discourse" he had presented before the Academy at the time of his induction as President. The four essays were reprinted in 1786 as a pamphlet of seventy-one pages [No. 55].³¹ Bowdoin's "Philosophical Discourse" discussed the projected aims of the new Society, which the President described as being:

to promote and encourage the knowledge of the antiquities of America, and of the natural history of the country; and to determine the uses, to which its various natural productions may be applied: to promote and encourage medical discoveries; mathematical disquisitions; philosophical enquiries and experiments; astronomical, meteorological, and geographical observations; improvements in agriculture, arts, manufactures, and commerce; and, in fine, to cultivate every art and science, which may tend to advance the interest, honour, dignity and happiness of a free, independent, and virtuous people.³²

After expanding suitably upon these objectives, Bowdoin closed with a statement typical of the logic of eighteenth-century rationalism: that ". . . these works of nature, which no human eloquence can adequately describe . . . force upon us the idea of a SUPREME MIND, the consummately perfect author of them. . . ."³³ Thus the pursuit of science teaches us more about the glorious achievements and splendors of God. This is standard doctrine; it is to Bowdoin's scientific pieces that we must look for an estimate of his achievements in the field.

Two of James Bowdoin's papers focused upon the properties of light; the third, much more controversial, attempted to show that

an "orb" surrounds the entire solar system both by applying Newton's gravitational principles and, somewhat regrettably, by reference to the Scriptures. It was Franklin who had first raised to his friend the possibilities of a wave theory of light which Bowdoin now contradicted, making recourse to Newton's corpuscular theory. Bowdoin acknowledged his debt to Franklin in the first of his essays, "Observations upon an Hypothesis for solving the Phaenomena of Light: with incidental Observations, tending to shew the Heterogeneousness of Light, and of the electric Fluid, by their Intermixture, or Union, with each other."³⁴ The hypothesis was Franklin's; Bowdoin chose to disagree with it. In terms of modern scientific theory, both were incorrect, but Bowdoin perhaps came closer to the present with his view that light waves are composed of particles rather than fluid. Current theory is that light is composed of particle-waves.

Bowdoin's orb theory appears in his second and third papers: "Observations on Light, and the Waste of Matter in the Sun and fixt Stars, occasioned by the Constant Efflux of Light from them," and "Observations tending to prove, by Phaenomena and Scripture, the Existence of an Orb, which surrounds the whole visible material System." In these two articles he submits that, while there is no *a priori* reason to assume that the universe is being destroyed or conserved, he rather arbitrarily favors conservation.³⁵ He then explains conservation in terms of the "orb concept," backed by the Bible, since he believes that ". . . in regard to the subject in hand, there seems to be a happy coincidence between phenomena and scripture . . ." although he admits that "It seldom happens that natural philosophy is made to borrow assistance from thence. . . ."³⁶ Bowdoin's religious arguments seem sincere but forced. In expressing them he perhaps does violence to the science of Sir Isaac Newton but not to Newton's popularizers, such as William Whiston, one of Bowdoin's favorite authors, who attempted to harmonize the latest scientific developments with natural and revealed religion. More important than present-day incredulity at the very idea of linking science with religion is the reception which Bowdoin's speculations received in his own day.

Comments Bowdoin received from the Reverend Richard Price of

Newington-Green in Great Britain were both laudatory and discouraging. Price's opinions were important; he was not only an English dissenting minister who had encouraged the American Revolution, but a leading natural philosopher. On the nature of light, Price was in agreement with Bowdoin, stating that "My sentiments of light are the same with those you defend in your first and second memoir; and your observations in answer to Dr. Franklin's objections are, I think, decisive." While he viewed Bowdoin's idea of the all-encompassing orb as opening "the imagination and lead[ing] to enlarged views of the grandeur of the universe" he felt obliged to correct the American "You will, therefore, I dare say, not be displeased with me for observing that Mr. Herschel's late discoveries in the heavens have overthrown some of your arguments for the existence of such orbs."³⁷ Price intended to be helpful, not derogatory but his observations must have stung to the quick. Bowdoin's old colleague Franklin was equally tactful.

Although James Bowdoin's theories of light had contradicted those of the older man, Franklin, rather than taking him to task, thanked him for sending copies of the papers in a letter dated January 1, 1786 [No. 56], adding that:

It was not necessary to make any Apology for the liberty you say you have taken in these Memoirs in making Observations on my Queries upon Light, for I am sure they will help me to understand it better and that will make them agreeable to me.³⁸

Rather than disagree with Bowdoin, Franklin consoled himself by writing a new paper, "Loose Fluids on a Universal Fluid," in which he further expanded his wave theory.³⁹ In this course he showed more fortitude than Bowdoin, who did not pursue the subject. In 1786, Bowdoin was serving as Governor of Massachusetts and quelling Shays' Rebellion occupied all of his time. From then until his death he was much concerned with political affairs and never again returned to the laboratory. But James Bowdoin had, as much as any colonial American after Franklin, followed an active career as a votary of science. Like Franklin also, he was a man of many parts. While he was able to devote himself to science and to politics, he never neglected his business affairs. Trading had been his inheritance.



43. *Seal of The Massachusetts Bank, 1784, by Joseph Callender*

The Man of Affairs

James Bowdoin I had died in 1747, and by the terms of his will his two sons, William and James, had both become very wealthy men. Bowdoin's estate was valued at over £80,000; of this William and James each received $\frac{2}{7}$ ths. The remainder was divided among two brothers-in-law, James Pitts and Thomas Flucker, each receiving $\frac{1}{7}$ th on behalf of their wives, with a final $\frac{1}{7}$ th held in trust for Mary Bayard, a Bowdoin sister, and her children. Since the estate was a vast one, with debts to be paid, money let out at interest to be collected and landed property to be divided, the final settlement of the will took nearly seven years. First, there were the funeral expenses to be paid. These were substantial; Bowdoin's funeral was one of the most costly and elaborate ever staged in eighteenth-century Boston. James, the executor of the estate, did not settle some of these debts until they were long outstanding. On May 27, 1750, he recorded in his ledger the payment of £5.17.4 to Jacob Hurd for "Sundry Gold Rings wg. 1 oz 2 at £40 old tenor," undoubtedly tardy settlement for rings distributed to mourners at his father's funeral [No. 13].¹ But James Bowdoin had many such obligations to discharge; he was also beginning to administer his own share of the estate, which in view of the size of his inheritance must have been extremely time-consuming.

Bowdoin's share came to over £23,000, enough to make him a rich man in his own right. Property which he received included: $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of the Elizabeth Islands off Martha's Vineyard; a glass factory at Germantown (Quincy); an iron foundry at Bridgewater; two full shares in the Kennebeck Purchase Company, a speculative land company; three brick stores and four houses in Boston, one of the latter valued at £7250; and farms and land at York, Falmouth, Barnstable and Roxbury.²

James Bowdoin let out his stores on King and Middle Streets and rented the houses in Boston, meanwhile operating the iron foundry and glass factory. His Cash Book records not only the receipt of rentals but also the payment of numerous bills for the repair of his houses. The rents were moderate for the period but Bowdoin's tenants paid the taxes.³ From the iron foundry at Bridgewater he

sold bar iron at £200 per ton. He charged £50 per box for his 8" x 10" glass panes, and £28 per crib of diamond glass—both from the Germantown factory.⁴ Whether James Bowdoin made a profit from these sales is difficult to determine; it is certain, however, that he disposed of the glass factory in the 1750's, and the iron foundry in 1770 for a price of £122.13.4.⁵ It was expensive to operate these two small industries and troublesome to find and keep experienced foremen. Bowdoin preferred to keep his capital fluid and ready to invest in opportunities of the moment which promised a more speedy return on his investment.

Such opportunities, in addition to money let out at interest, included the consignment of "risques" or "adventures" on ships owned by others for, unlike his father, James Bowdoin preferred not to hazard his fortunes on his own shipping. An illustration of such a "risque" is provided in his shipment of whale fins to England. Probably his inspiration for the venture came from knowledge that the Sugar Act of 1764, while raising the duties on imported sugar, molasses, wines and other products, also increased the number of goods on the enumerated list, which guaranteed a market in Great Britain for many raw materials from British America. These new enumerated articles included whale fins, or whalebone, which was much in demand in England for manufacture into various small articles. Early in 1770, Bowdoin found the opportunity to purchase several thousand pounds of choice whale fins from John Read for what he considered to be a bargain price—£589.17.11.⁶ The whale fins were packed into bundles, crated and shipped to two London merchant houses operated by his regular business correspondents, Lane, Son and Fraser, and Henry and Thomas Bromfield. Bowdoin advised the merchants to sell his stock when the whalebone market appeared to be highest.⁷ The cargo arrived in London in the early summer of 1771; during the following months he deluged his correspondents with inquiries about the whale fins, which he believed to be worth at least £420 sterling per ton. Late in 1772 he received word from the Bromfields that their consignment had brought £275.3.7 sterling. Lane, Son, and Fraser did not sell their quota until May, 1773, and obtained a price for it of only £208.17- sterling. Bowdoin was disgusted. He went so far as to accuse his correspon-

dents of selling inferior whalebone and crediting it to his account and he characterized the whole transaction as "a very sorry affair!"⁸ He had good cause for disappointment. Allowing for the difference between depreciated Massachusetts currency and pounds sterling and allowing for shipping and handling costs, he had lost nearly £150 on his "adventure." But Bowdoin's purse was full and what he lost on one transaction he more than made up on another. In the area of land speculation he was generally far more fortunate.

While James Bowdoin bought and sold farmlands in several towns of Massachusetts [No. 47] and Connecticut, his chief interest lay in the development of the Kennebeck Purchase Company (Plymouth Company), of which he was a leading proprietor and officeholder. William and James Bowdoin had each inherited a double share ($1\frac{1}{2}$ shares) in the speculative land company from their father, and their brother-in-law, James Pitts, received one share as well. The tract was well worth improving, for the proprietors held title to land stretching for nearly one hundred miles along Maine's Kennebec River, and for fifteen miles into the interior on either side. James Bowdoin I died shortly before the Company, long dormant, was reactivated in 1749, but his heirs were in a favorable position to assert their claims. William was active in the Kennebeck Company from its reorganization and served as moderator until ill health forced his resignation. James did not become interested in the Company until 1751, when the proprietors initiated plans to settle French and German immigrants in a proposed town along the Kennebec. In September 1753, James Bowdoin became Company treasurer. He was re-elected to this post regularly for the next twenty-five years, and after the American Revolution became moderator as well. In influence he was second only to Dr. Silvester Gardiner, who served as perennial moderator until 1775. Gardiner and Bowdoin, dubbed Don Quixote and Sancho in a contemporary lampoon, worked splendidly together, and not only led the Company in the establishment of a dozen or so towns along the river but also supervised several extensive land divisions by which the great proprietors profited handsomely.

As a general rule the proprietors voted themselves land in each new town proportionate to the size of their shares, so the Bowdoin brothers owned land all along the river. They took a special interest,

however, in Bowdoinham, the town which still bears their name. When the settlers there erected a Congregational Church in 1769, James Bowdoin donated 28 windows, complete with glass, at a personal cost of £14.18.8.⁹ He could well afford to show an interest in the settlers and their aspirations; many were his tenants. As they improved the land its value rose and the land was no small consideration. By 1795, James Bowdoin or his heirs had received 20,360 acres in the Kennebeck Purchase, with more to come. Much of this was in valuable timberland, which could be exploited. Under these circumstances Bowdoin was more than willing to invest a portion of his capital in the development of the Kennebeck tract and to use his influence with two royal governors of Massachusetts, William Shirley and Thomas Pownall, as well as with the General Court, to advance the Company's interests.¹⁰

Another profitable source of income for Bowdoin was Naushon Island, one of the Elizabeth Isles, which he had inherited from his father. While Naushon was managed by John Read, his agent, Bowdoin maintained a strong interest in its development. His table was often enriched by produce from the island. Writing to his brother-in-law, George Scott, Governor of Dominica, in 1765, he commented that "I have just received a parcel of our Island cheese. As it generally turns out pretty good, I have ordered three to be packed up and sent to you by this vessel."¹¹ While Bowdoin kept some of the Naushon Island beef, pork and grain for family use, he sold the rest for a good profit. Much of his income was thus derived from his land; whatever remained after expenses were paid was either invested in even more land or, more likely, put to work in other ways.

Diversification was the keynote of Bowdoin's success in financial affairs. Farmlands showed a good profit, but investment in Province Notes or money let out at interest was more dependable and required less supervision. Bowdoin's Cash Book presents ample evidence of the buying and selling of Massachusetts securities. On March 26, 1766, for example, he purchased Province Notes to the value of £1332; on May 27 of the same year, he bought additional notes valued at £8300 and on December 19, two more worth £400. The notes paid only five percent interest yearly but they were convenient, reliable and easily managed. Bowdoin's father had been one of the

leading directors of the Silver Bank scheme in Massachusetts in the early 1740's and his son continued his interest in paper money, always providing that the notes were properly funded. Years later Bowdoin would play an important part in the founding of the first public banking institution in Massachusetts.

By the close of the American Revolution the commercial interests of Massachusetts were stagnating, in large measure because of the absence of a reliable medium of exchange, sadly lacking in a new nation which possessed not a single public bank until 1780. In that year, a group of Philadelphians headed by Thomas Willing and Robert Morris established the Pennsylvania Bank, whose chief purpose was to raise funds in order to supply provisions for the Continental Army.¹² The directors of the new bank were soon able to pay interest rates of six percent from capital investments. Success breeds success and within a year several of the directors of the Pennsylvania Bank applied to the Continental Congress for a charter for their proposed Bank of North America, also to be located in Philadelphia. The new bank began operations in January, 1782; its spectacular success was an incentive for the establishment of a similar institution in Massachusetts.

Bostonians became familiar with the Bank of North America through the influence of at least one director of the Bank, as well as through its local agent. Samuel Osgood, a native of Massachusetts, was one of its directors and Thomas Russell, a Boston merchant, had contracted to sell Bank shares to local investors. By the end of June, 1782, Russell had sold no less than thirty-three shares in Massachusetts worth a total of \$13,215.70.¹³ During the same year the Bank of North America consolidated its position in the state through a legislative act which awarded it a monopoly of banking business and stipulated that all "taxes debts & due . . . or payable to or for the account of . . . the United States"¹⁴ were receivable in its paper money. The act, however, was to remain effective only for the duration of the American Revolution.

It was a foregone conclusion by 1782 that a peace treaty would soon be negotiated with Great Britain, and a group of interested Boston merchants, including some of the shareholders in the Bank, began to consider the possibilities and advantages of a local institu-

tion. Upon learning the news of the signing of the Treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783, this group swung into action. William Phillips, a prominent merchant and next-door neighbor of Bowdoin, took the lead. On December 10, Phillips, John Lowell, Thomas Russell and three others wrote to Thomas Willing, President of the Bank of North America, for information concerning the steps to be taken in creating a new bank.¹⁵ Willing was most helpful. Thus encouraged, the six men petitioned the General Court for a charter for a new bank, to be called the Massachusetts Bank, in January, 1784. The proposed charter encountered little hostility in the legislature; many of its delegates were interested parties. The bill for a Massachusetts Bank rushed through its third reading in both houses on February 7, 1784. By a series of limitations imposed by the General Court the new bank was to be strictly commercial, was to be limited in size and was forbidden to compete with merchant houses already in business.¹⁶ Its promoters sold 511 shares at \$500 per share in 1784, thus attaining a capitalization of \$255,500. Directors and a president were selected, a seal was struck [No. 43], and The Massachusetts Bank was soon a going concern.

Rather surprisingly, James Bowdoin was elected first President of the new bank. He had not been active in promoting its charter, unless from behind the scenes, for his name was not included among those of the six petitioners. He was not a substantial investor and at the conclusion of his second term of office not only left the Board of Directors but sold off his shares. Nevertheless, while serving as President, Bowdoin personally signed the notes of the Massachusetts Bank as they were issued [Nos. 38-42]. Furthermore, on April 1, 1784, shortly before the Bank opened its doors, he wrote to Thomas Fitzsimmons, an official of the Bank of North America, to tender hearty thanks for Fitzsimmons' aid in supplying banknote paper, plates, and even the first currency used by the new Boston institution. In this letter Bowdoin stipulated that the ". . . sheets on which the Bills are struck, shou'd be bound in a Book and the Bills cut out of it as they are wanted . . .," and informed his correspondent that Peter Dalton, accountant for the Massachusetts Bank, would soon arrive in Philadelphia for a crash course in banking management [No. 44].¹⁷ With this letter James Bowdoin fades from the picture

as an active participant in the affairs of the Massachusetts Bank. It is difficult to understand either his initial, although subdued, interest in the Bank or his abrupt withdrawal from it. He may have been induced to serve as first President by his friend William Phillips as a means of insuring the Bank's success; by 1784, he was second in influence only to John Hancock in Massachusetts. If the office proved too time-consuming, as it must have done, it would have been characteristic of Bowdoin, who loved his privacy and leisure pursuits, to have resigned. Nevertheless, by his prestige Bowdoin may have contributed stability to the Bank during his brief period of interest. The institution continues today as the First National Bank of Boston.

During his few remaining years James Bowdoin was much concerned with politics and kept his financial commitments to a minimum, but still embarked upon an occasional "adventure," where the risks seemed bearable and the opportunities for a quick profit appeared promising. On February 3, 1789, Bowdoin sent a letter to Edward Dowse, stationed at Canton in China, to inform him that he was sending a consignment of 4,000 Spanish milled dollars to that place aboard the ship *Astrea* out of Salem. He had placed the money in the care of Captain James Magee and Thomas Handasyd Perkins, supercargo of the *Astrea*, and requested that they use the funds at Canton for the purchase of tea or whatever other Chinese goods seemed most likely to bring a good price.¹⁸

The *Astrea* had everything in its favor. The vessel was well built and was owned by the renowned Elias Hasket Derby of Salem, the greatest shipowner of his day. Bowdoin emphasized the "good character" of Captain Magee, and as for Perkins—he commented that "The letters I have seen recommending him to Mr. Derby from Gentlemen of distinction speak of him in terms of the fullest confidence in his integrity, capacity for business, sobriety and good sense. . . ."¹⁹ The superior qualities of these two men had persuaded Bowdoin to entrust his money to their judgment and he urged Dowse to do everything in his power to assist them in their mission. However, Bowdoin took the usual precaution of insuring the valuable cargo with his old correspondents, Lane, Son, and Fraser of London.²⁰ On the whole, Bowdoin's optimism was well founded, especially in the trust he placed in Thomas H. Perkins.

Elias Hasket Derby began collecting a cargo for the *Astrea* as early as March, 1788. Writing to his correspondents Ludlow and Gould of New York City on March 8, he confided that "I have the ship *Astrea* of about 360 Tons, I have agreed to fix her out for Canton, James Magee Master. I want to collect a large stock for this Ship."²¹ The *Astrea* was scheduled to sail for Canton via India in October, 1788, but Derby had great difficulty in assembling a suitable cargo for the outward voyage. Ginseng, that well-known prescription for virility, seemed the most marketable commodity in the Orient and Derby hoped to load at least 50,000 pounds.²² He also wanted about thirty tons of lead and a smaller quantity of iron. Finally, because he lacked the money to fill his ship with tea at Canton, Derby decided to offer businessmen the opportunity to invest in the voyage, as well as a chance to send small "adventures" on the *Astrea*. Derby would receive a stated percentage of the profits they made.

In spite of careful preparation the sailing date for the *Astrea* was postponed repeatedly. The ginseng was late in arriving at Salem; the *Astrea* itself was delayed in its return from the previous voyage. Although Derby's agent advertised for investors in the Boston newspapers, he had difficulty in finding anyone willing to risk his money in so long and hazardous a voyage. It was not until late January 1789, that Captain Magee began recruiting his crew. On January 29, after many months of haggling, Derby and David Sears, who represented a group of Boston investors, signed an agreement that Sears would provide \$15,000 in specie as well as 5,570 pounds of ginseng for the voyage.²³ Earlier that month Shippey and Company of New York City had agreed to send 5,000 Spanish milled dollars and 23 tierces of ginseng on the *Astrea*, so the cargo was complete.²⁴ At last James Bowdoin was able to record in his Letter Book that "the Ship *Astrea* sailed the 15th of Feby. from Salem with a fair wind."²⁵

During its voyage to Canton the *Astrea* made two ports of call and undoubtedly traded to advantage in each. The first stop was at Batavia in the Dutch East Indies in August, 1789. Here Thomas H. Perkins disposed of a variety of goods which had been consigned by the *Astrea*'s investors. His inventory included pipes of madeira, barrels of salmon, boxes of spermaceti candles, hogsheads of salted codfish and even a saddle and an expensive carriage. At Bombay, Perkins

sold only bar iron, which brought 2,653 rupees. The cash receipts realized from these two port visits would be converted into tea at Canton.

By November, the *Astrea* had reached its destination and anchored in the harbor at Canton beside several other Derby-owned vessels: the *Light Horse*, the *Atlantic* and the *Three Sisters*. The first task was to dispose of the remaining cargo: madeira, Teneriff and Port wine, candles, beef, chocolate, rum and 41,443 pounds of ginseng. Next Perkins began the bargaining for Chinese tea—Bohea, Hyson, Suchong and Gunpowder—to the total value in Spanish dollars of \$43,046.60. By late January 1790, the *Astrea's* hold was overflowing and she was ready for the return voyage. She entered Salem Harbor on June 1, 1790, after an uneventful passage.

James Bowdoin was one of the many investors in the *Astrea's* mission who must have been pleased to learn of her safe return. Following the usual procedures, Derby probably paid the customs duties on his imports from the Orient and then supervised the unloading of the cargo and its storing in the warehouses adjacent to his own docks. Next began the complicated task of dividing the cargo among its many investors after the owner's percentages had been calculated. This process took several months. Meanwhile, back in Boston, Bowdoin became ill of "a putrid fever and dysentery" in August which took his life on November 6, 1790. During his months of illness he must have fretted over the unresolved status of his investment in the *Astrea's* voyage and chafed at what appeared to be inaction regarding the distribution of the profits. At the date of his death he still had not received his share.

James Bowdoin's investment had been under considerably different terms from those who had consigned their "ventures" to Elias H. Derby, or who had placed their money with David Sears. Bowdoin had made a private agreement with Magee and Perkins who, as principals in the voyage, received not only fixed portions of the profit but also enjoyed the privilege of cargo space on the return trip as a part of their agreement with Derby. According to his contract with Magee and Perkins, Bowdoin was to advance the 4,000 Spanish dollars and they in turn were to "... lay out the money in China, to pay all Expences of Freight, Commission, Insurance, and

other charges, and were to receive on their return to Boston one half of the Profits which might arise on the Sale of the Goods, shipped as aforesaid.”²⁶ The terms of the agreement seem extremely generous to Magee and Perkins but even after they had taken their share the volume of goods which was delivered to Bowdoin’s estate was impressive: seventy-eight chests of Hyson tea, weighing 5,223 pounds, valued at seven shillings per pound, and 159 pieces of Nankeen cotton valued at nine shillings per piece. The complete inventory was appraised at £1899.12-. Since Bowdoin’s investment of 4,000 Spanish milled dollars was the equivalent of £1600, his net profit on his last “adventure” was in the neighborhood of eighteen percent. If he had lived to enjoy this windfall there seems little doubt that James Bowdoin, always a man with a keen eye for new investment opportunities, would in the future have expanded his financial horizons to the eastward as did so many canny capitalists in New England in the 1790’s. What can never be determined, however, is the relative importance which he attached to his business affairs, which after all occupied only a single facet of his varied career. Was James Bowdoin primarily the merchant, the scientist, the scholar, or the public man? Certainly politics exerted a life-long fascination, and Bowdoin not only excelled in this field, but in it achieved his greatest reputation.

The Statesman

The political career of James Bowdoin spanned nearly thirty-seven years, extending from the day of his election to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1753 at the age of twenty-seven until his death in 1790. Perhaps he entered politics as a duty—public service, after all, was the obligation as well as the prerogative of the eighteenth-century gentleman. It appears likely that Bowdoin, in his own reserved way, was even politically ambitious. Nevertheless, during his long years of officeholding he felt free not only to resign when he believed the circumstances demanded it, but to decline other positions of authority even in times of great crisis. One might conclude that politics both fascinated and repelled him. This ambivalent position may have given him an air of detachment, separating him from the scramble for position and power which characterized many of those around him, for there were self-seekers aplenty in provincial Massachusetts politics. But Bowdoin preferred to believe that the position sought the man.

He entered the political arena, appropriately enough, at the lowest level: the Boston town meeting. Boston was New England's busiest and most important city. Its political base was large enough for the town government to serve as a springboard to higher office, and it was here that the fortunes of generations of political leaders had been made, from Elisha Cooke, Jr., to Samuel Adams. The Boston electorate was both fickle and demanding, however. Somehow, young Bowdoin was able to capture its loyalty, in spite of his reserved nature which some, like his future political enemy, Peter Oliver, equated with cunning. His youthful inclination appeared to be towards public service, but only upon his own terms. In 1749, he was elected a tax collector by the town meeting, but declined this important position.¹ On the other hand, he did consent to serve on carefully selected committees whose purpose demonstrated a social concern. These included an inspection team which supervised the public schools, and another which, in the tradition of the much later Watch and Ward Society, attempted to identify those who might become charges upon the town.²

In 1753, reflecting the growing confidence of the townspeople in

The BLOODY MASSACRE

Printed and Sold by PAUL REVERE, No. 29, NASSAU STREET, BOSTON.

29 PRG



Printed and Sold by PAUL REVERE, BOSTON.

Unhappy Boston! see the Sons of Liberty
 In hallow'd Walks being led by the late Gov
 While faithless Penn and his savage Braves
 With murderous Rancour to their throats
 Like fierce Barbarians against their Brethren
 Approve the Carnage and stain the Day.

If speaking days from Rage from Anguish
 Or if a weeping World can ought appeal
 The plaintive Ghosts of Victims stretch as they lie
 The Patriots copious tears for each are shed
 A glorious Tabute which embains the Dead.

But know Fate summons to that awful Goal
 Where Justice strips the Murderer of his Soul
 Snatch the relentless Villain from her Hand
 Keen Execrations on this Plate inscrib'd
 I shall reach a JUDGE who never can be brib'd.

The unhappy... *Rev's* SAM^l GRAY SAM^l MAVERICK, JAM^s CALDWELL, CRISPUS ATTUCKS & PAT^r CARE
 Authors of the above, two of them (CHRIST^p BLOOM & JOHN CLARK) Mortally

35. The Bloody Massacre, 1770, by Paul Revere

his abilities, James Bowdoin was elected a representative to the General Court, but by a slim margin. Here he showed a particular interest in Indian affairs on the Maine frontier, and in September 1753, joined Governor William Shirley and fellow members of the General Court in a conference with the Maine Indians at Fort Richmond.³ Probably more than public concern motivated Bowdoin's interest in peaceable relations with these Indians. As a prominent shareholder in the Kennebeck Purchase Company, then extending its control over the Kennebec Valley, Bowdoin was in a prime position to protect his private investments as well. He remained a member of the House until 1757, when, in a special election held there to fill vacancies in the upper House, he was selected as a Councillor.

The honor was an unusual one for a man of thirty-one, and Bowdoin made the most of it. His father had not achieved this distinction until the close of a busy mercantile career. Like his father, young Bowdoin had the advantage not only of wealth and established family position, but close friendship with the royal governor to boot. After 1748, he was regarded as a warm supporter of William Shirley, as was his father-in-law and fellow Councillor, John Erving, Sr. This political alliance placed Bowdoin in intimate association with powerful figures who would eventually become his enemies: Thomas Hutchinson and the Oliver brothers, Andrew and Peter.⁴ But in the decades of the 1740's and 1750's Bowdoin, like many Massachusetts politicians, was a King's man, and a stalwart adherent of the prerogative, or court party, as opposed to the more radical country party. Furthermore, he was a friend of the governor, and often entertained Shirley at his Boston mansion. Political allegiances and personal advantages often went hand in hand. Governor Shirley supported the objectives of the Kennebeck Company by his expedition to the Maine frontier in the summer of 1754, and by the letter he wrote to the Board of Trade in December of the same year recommending that a fuller, explanatory charter be granted the proprietors. For these services he received a full share in the Company.⁵

Royal governors came and went in colonial Massachusetts; local politicians, in order to endure, learned to adjust to changes in administration. William Shirley returned to England in disgrace for his mishandling of the Niagara campaign during the French and Indian

War. He was replaced as governor by Thomas Pownall in 1757. The ambitious Pownall's tenure in Massachusetts was brief, but the genial bachelor made many friends among the merchant aristocracy of Boston. Among these was James Bowdoin. Although Thomas Pownall, like Shirley before him, assisted the Kennebeck proprietors in their machinations,⁶ there is every indication that the friendship between Royal Governor and Councillor was genuine. Indeed, it continued through a voluminous correspondence long after Pownall's recall to England in 1760. Ex-Governor Pownall was a man well worth cultivating, for he sat in the House of Commons during the troubled years of the 1760's when Massachusetts desperately needed a friend at court. He continued to advise the radical leaders there, including friend Bowdoin, until the beginning of hostilities in 1775. After the war they resumed their correspondence.

Historians have more than once commented that James Bowdoin, Councillor, was regarded as "a friend of government," meaning royal government, until well after the conclusion of the Stamp Act Crisis in Boston, and then perhaps only changed sides because of personal pique directed at Governor Francis Bernard, Pownall's successor. It seems evident, moreover, that Bowdoin was becoming politically ambitious at last, and aspired to the Massachusetts governorship.

Bowdoin's schemes to advance himself and his family connections in public office helped drive the first wedges in his political allegiance to the mother country. By 1767, two years after the Stamp Act Crisis in which he had proven himself so ineffectual, the political situation was becoming very warm for Governor Bernard, and Bowdoin was contributing to this state of affairs. Bowdoin's first scheme was aimed at the removal of Bernard. He saw his opportunity in Captain George Scott, who had married Abigail Erving, one of his sisters-in-law. In 1763, Captain Scott was appointed Governor of Grenada, a sugar island post yielding immense profits. Scott wisely invested in sugar. The island governorship became even more desirable when his territory was extended to include nearby Dominica. This move gave Scott more absolute power than was enjoyed by any continental royal governor, since there was no representative assembly, as in Massachusetts, to check his ambitions. Bowdoin even admitted that

"This is a Situation I would like mighty well, tho (I think) in a latitude more northerly."⁷ He must have been referring to Massachusetts, and assumed that Scott would feel that same way.

James Bowdoin began to hope that Governor Bernard would not object to exchanging his province for a post so remunerative and uncontroversial as Dominica. Elaborating upon his plan, he wrote Scott that "supposing you should offer an exchange with Governor B [Bernard]— perhaps he may not be averse to it, especially as you say, *you* would not change *yours* for one and a half of his in point of income."⁸ Two years later he advised Scott that "you may depend I shall use every argument my cranium can furnish to induce him to accept it."⁹ Rumors that Grenada would soon become a free port encouraged Bowdoin's dream, for it would then be a prize much desired by any governor. The enactment of the Townshend duties, however, changed the picture, for according to plan, its revenues would guarantee the governor of Massachusetts a salary of £1200 sterling per year. Bowdoin reluctantly warned Scott that "If this shall turn out a Fact, I fear there will be no chance for an exchange between you and Mr. Bernard."¹⁰ In any event, time ran out when Scott died unexpectedly in the fall of 1767. James Bowdoin had to turn to other means in his effort to unseat Bernard.

His choice next fell upon his new son-in-law, John Temple, although he had not been close to Temple before the wedding. The alliance brought an abrupt change in Bowdoin's politics, evident especially in the Council, where his opposition to the Governor now became open. Thomas Hutchinson noticed this conversion and wrote that "Mr. Temple, the surveyor-general of the customs, having married Mr. Bowdoin's daughter, and having differed with Governor Bernard, and connected himself with Mr. [James] Otis, and others in the opposition, Mr. Bowdoin, from that time, entered into the like connection."¹¹ From that time onward, James Bowdoin saw to it that the Council cooperated with the resolutions passed by the more radical House, where the likes of Samuel Adams, James Otis and John Hancock set the political tone. Hutchinson, like his brother-in-law, Peter Oliver, themselves friends of government and not without bias, saw the motivation for Bowdoin's change of colors as ambition, not patriotism. Oliver himself commented that Bowdoin

“. . . was a Man, who had his full share of Pride, Wealth and Ill-nature, and had been soothed by that Son in Law [Temple], into Persuasion of his being appointed to a Government.”¹²

By 1768, Governor Bernard was complaining about Bowdoin in his dispatches to the Earl of Hillsborough. Bernard's description of Bowdoin as the “. . . perpetual President, Chairman, Secretary and Speaker of this new Council”¹³ showed Bowdoin's influence. Exacerbating the conflict, Bowdoin insolently published documents that he and his fellow Councilmen had promised the Governor to keep confidential. Bernard angrily confronted Bowdoin, but received no satisfaction. The enraged Governor later reported that “Upon my observing that they had promised to keep no Copies of the Papers they had used upon the last Occasion, he [Bowdoin] answered that the Publication was not from Copies but the Originals.”¹⁴ Clearly, James Bowdoin was capable of deviousness.

While his control of the Council gave the Whigs an advantage over the Governor, Bowdoin also rendered valuable service to the radical cause as a propagandist. He had opposed the stationing of British regiments in Boston in 1768; when their presence resulted in the famous Massacre two years later, his opportunity arrived. As chairman of a committee named by the town to compose an account of the Boston Massacre, James Bowdoin held hearings, took affidavits, and edited the *Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre* [No. 36]. This highly inflammatory and often exaggerated work was printed and circulated in Boston well in advance of the trials of Captain Preston and his men, thus making an unbiased hearing impossible. Paul Revere's well-known engraving of the Massacre [No. 35] undoubtedly increased tensions as well. The *Short Narrative* quickly went through seven editions in 1770, three of which were published in London. The printing of Bowdoin's *Additional Observations on a Short Narrative* helped to heighten dissension as the American Revolution approached.¹⁵ Equally effective were his contributions to the *Journal of the Times*, a radical periodical published during the years 1768-1769.

Bowdoin's antagonism to Governor Bernard was well understood by that neurotic gentleman long before the *Short Narrative* appeared in print in 1770, and Bernard took steps to diminish his rival's in-

fluence. In 1769, Bowdoin was as usual elected by the House to take his place in the Council. This time, the Governor used his negative, dropping Bowdoin along with ten others. Surprisingly, Bernard retained Bowdoin's father-in-law John Erving, Sr., and his brother-in-law, James Pitts, although they were obviously members of the same cabal operating within the Council. But James Bowdoin responded magnificently to the slight, turning what some considered disgrace into a triumph. The speech which he delivered in the House at the time of Bernard's rejection was carefully controlled, yet biting and insolent nevertheless:

Your Excellency has thought proper to confer upon me a Mark of Distinction, which I should think it a Happiness to be intitled to, I say a Happiness, because your Excellency is such a Judge and Rewarder of Merit, that your Favours of this sort have always been a Consequence of it, and afford a pretty good Proof of their being something valuable in the Persons on whom they are bestowed. All the Observation I shall make on this Mark of your Distinction is, that under such circumstances as have occasioned it your Excellency's Censure is Praise, is an Honour to the Man who is the Subject of it, and the best Evidence that he has done his Duty.¹⁶

He was alluding to the cause of his being negatived—reports made to the Governor that Bowdoin was about to attack him in the Council and continue the fight in the public press.¹⁷ There are also allusions in this speech to Bernard's use of the patronage to reward his own supporters. There may be veiled references as well to Bernard's support of the customs racketeering then so notorious in Massachusetts—support which was extremely profitable personally, since he received as prizes one third of all the ships and cargoes condemned by the customs inspectors. John Temple, Bowdoin's son-in-law, stood alone among Boston's customs officials in denouncing this practice. The pair had their revenge. Bernard returned to England in July, 1769, and was replaced as governor by Thomas Hutchinson.

The political stance then taken by Bowdoin and Temple made them among the most popular men in Boston, and hereafter Bowdoin openly allied himself with Sam Adams and the Sons of Liberty.¹⁸ Curiously enough, his social contacts with high officials of the British Army and Navy increased during this period, while his relationship with the Hutchinson-Oliver faction declined to the most

formal and distant communications. Commodore Samuel Hood, Commodore James Gambier and Colonel Alexander MacKay became intimates, and Bowdoin continued a friendly correspondence with them long after they left their American stations. Perhaps their influence exerted some pressures on Governor Hutchinson, who did not repeat Francis Bernard's tactics of negating hostile councillors. James Bowdoin was reelected to the Council annually, 1770-1773, where he continued his opposition to the Crown, in spite of Hutchinson's attempts to win him over.¹⁹

What were the political motivations of this man, James Bowdoin, an unlikely candidate for rebel leadership by reason of birth, position, sympathy or even inclination? Certainly he was conservative enough, but in the mold of the eighteenth-century English Whig. He had absorbed the political principles of Harrington and Sidney, Trenchard and Gordon, Bolingbroke and Locke, and was conversant with the natural rights theory. Still, the right of revolution was not assumed lightly, and then only by responsible men. If it were successful, reasonable persons assumed that a moderate, stable, well-ordered government would replace that of the tyrant, and it would *not* be a democracy. A republic containing a judicious mixture of the familiar elements of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy—a "mixed government"—would be best. It would be similar to the British constitutional system that colonials until recently had pronounced "the best of all governments," but without the King. He would be replaced by a chief executive whose powers were suitably limited. The new republic would naturally be independent of Great Britain. Probably Bowdoin felt this way about the need for change in government—at least all of his educated, upper-class friends in Massachusetts did: Hancock, the two Adameses, the Reverend Samuel Cooper. It would have been characteristic for him to have arrived at his political opinions gradually, gropingly and even painfully over a span of years. Yet Bowdoin also had an independent mind; his own concerns were not necessarily shared by other thinking men.

James Bowdoin was reticent about his political beliefs, even in his personal letters, but surviving correspondence indicates several grievances against Great Britain upon which he forcefully expounded. One of these was the issue of the judiciary, which he pro-

posed to make completely dependent upon the people. As he saw the situation:

In an independent state it is proper the Judges should be independent, as in England. But in a subordinate state, as this Province, it is not so clear that they should be independent of its Assembly. It is easy to conceive, and we now have abundant facts to verify it, that a parent state by superior power may impose taxes on, and transfer its revenue and other laws to the subordinate state.²⁰

Bowdoin argued for control of Massachusetts judges by the people, or at least by their representatives, the legislators, in November 1772, at a time when the British Ministry was moving to place all royal officials in America, including the judiciary, upon a civil list. This action, which was to be financed by appropriating customs collections in the colonies, would make the judges answerable only to the Crown and thus immune to public censure.

James Bowdoin also supported the well-publicized issue of the unconstitutionality of taxation without representation, but did so long after 1765, when the question had first arisen in connection with Parliamentary passage of the Stamp Act. He had shifted his position drastically by 1773. In reply to an address made by Governor Hutchinson to the Council concerning his theory of the constitution of the British Empire, Bowdoin retorted that "he could defend Lord Chatham's doctrine that Parliament had no right of taxation. . . ."²¹ Hutchinson indignantly reported Bowdoin's position to General Gage, adding that ". . . by his repugnant arguments he has exposed himself to contempt."²²

No matter how "repugnant" his views were to Governor Hutchinson, Bowdoin was consistently far more interested in the state of American trade than in the rights of man. This concern was the basis of his opposition to the Tea Act, which he saw as destroying the prosperity of American traders to further the interests of the great British merchants and a few favored American importers. He insisted that:

A greater power of taxing the Colonists so as to answer the purpose of revenue cannot be easily conceived than the compelling them to take from Britain all the articles they want, and these at the British merchant's price, and at the same time laying a duty on those articles—a duty that has no limitation but the will of the imposer and the inability of the imposee. Is it not an abuse of language to call the exercise of such a power government, and the subjection to it liberty? ²³

James Bowdoin increasingly invoked the cause of liberty both in his private correspondence and in positions taken in the Council. Governor Hutchinson tried to ignore this opposition even when Bowdoin led a successful fight to impeach the Governor's own brother-in-law, Chief Justice Peter Oliver. But the new military governor, General Gage, imposed upon the Massachusetts Bay Colony as punishment for the Boston Tea Party, saw the matter in a different light. The House elected Bowdoin to his usual Council place in 1774, but Gage dropped him, acting upon specific orders from the King. Bowdoin could not have been too surprised; he had become one of the most objectionable members of the legislature. Under the terms of the Government Act his place and those of others denied their seats in the upper house were filled by the Mandamus Councillors, men "well disposed" towards royal government who might be expected to support Gage's faltering political position. The Massachusetts radicals, however, tendered Bowdoin a vote of confidence by naming him as a delegate to the first Continental Congress meeting at Philadelphia. This honor he declined on the grounds of ill health; the weak eyes of which he had complained in 1772, had been succeeded by tuberculosis and accompanying fever. His wife also was gravely ill. Nevertheless, Bowdoin continued to lead the Boston Committee of Safety until the beginning of the American Revolution.

The battle of Lexington-Concord found Bowdoin still inhabiting his Beacon Hill mansion, but he did not long remain there. Taking advantage of an opportunity to leave what had become a city under seige, he fled to Dorchester on May 14, 1775. Here, severely ill, he boarded with the Bowman family for three weeks before proceeding to Braintree for further convalescence at the home of James Hayward.²⁴ His illness was still critical, as the redoubtable Abigail Adams confirmed. Dropping in for a visit on her new neighbor she was appalled to find that:

He, poor Gentleman, is so low that I apprehend he is hastening to a house not made with hands, he looks like a mere skeleton, speaks faint and low, is racked with a violent cough, and, I think, far advanced in a consumption . . . is very unable to converse by reason of his cough.²⁵

Somehow Bowdoin found the strength to move his family from

Braintree to Middleborough on June 24, where he occupied the country estate of his political enemy, Judge Peter Oliver. Oliver, of course, was by this time shut up in Boston, now a place of Tory refuge. Bowdoin noted in his cash book that Oliver had given him permission to move into the house;²⁶ probably the owner was relieved that a gentleman of his acquaintance would keep the place in order. However, since the selectmen of Middleborough had already confiscated the property, Bowdoin agreed to pay a rental of £10 per year. The Bowdoins, joined by their son upon his return from Europe and their niece Sally Bowdoin, remained in the country retreat until October 1778.

James Bowdoin did not live in insolation at Middleborough nor, in spite of his poor health, did he abdicate all political responsibilities. A procession of revolutionary leaders made their way to Middleborough to confer with the sick man, and they usually ended by entreating him to return to Boston and take his place in directing the revolutionary crisis. Upon observing his low physical condition they realized that the rumors that he was feigning illness to avoid complicity in what might prove an unsuccessful revolt were groundless. Whatever his health, Bowdoin did consent to serve as Councillor in the new revolutionary state government which was established at Watertown, and acted as president of that body. It was in the capacity of President of the Council that he officiated at the ceremony proclaiming the Declaration of Independence at the State House in Boston on July 21, 1776. He was reelected to the Council in 1777, but, as he himself explained the situation, ". . . my ill state of health obliged me to resign my Seat at the Board."²⁷ Gradually James Bowdoin recovered his strength and, after his return to Boston late in 1778, he began to resume his interest in public affairs.

Meanwhile the political situation was changing in Massachusetts, and Boston was declining in influence. Many of the old leaders like Samuel Adams, John Adams and John Hancock were either otherwise engaged in the war effort or, like Bowdoin, were incapacitated. Representatives from the western counties, more radical than the earlier eastern leadership, pushed into the breach and for a time threatened to dominate the government. Among their demands the pressure for a more democratic government under a new state con-

stitution were foremost. One of their chief grievances was the Council which, as in pre-Revolutionary days, was still the stronghold of the aristocratic eastern gentry. The westerners had their way, with the result being the proposed Constitution of 1778, which was drawn up by members of the Council and House acting as a committee of the whole. But the Constitution of 1778, a compromise between eastern and western ideas, although representing the most favorable plan of government the radicals were then likely to obtain, did not go far enough.²⁸ Submitted to the Massachusetts towns for ratification, it was rejected, failing to gain the support of the two-thirds of the voters required for acceptance. This was not the end of the matter. Bowing to pressures exerted by westerners for a new constitutional convention, the General Court acted, calling a meeting, this time of delegates from the towns, to convene in Cambridge on September 1, 1779. James Bowdoin was elected a representative from Boston.

Bowdoin was but one of 313 delegates chosen to attend the constitutional convention but his role proved to be an important one. Of the delegates, no less than 143 represented the three westernmost counties. It appeared from the start that the radical westerners would prevail, especially in view of the fact that John Hancock was openly supporting their cause in a bid for the governorship. He was opposed by a faction headed by his former ally, Samuel Adams. At the opening session the delegates chose James Bowdoin as president—a victory for the Adams faction, with which he was allied. Furthermore, Bowdoin was also selected as chairman of a committee of thirty which was appointed to draft a constitution, and as one of three subcommitteemen given chief responsibility for drawing up the document. Conservatives were well represented in the larger committee, which included, besides Bowdoin, Samuel Adams, John Adams and John Pickering. John Adams served on the subcommittee, along with Bowdoin, and it is Adams who generally receives credit for writing the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780.²⁹ Nevertheless, this conservative document, with its separation of powers and qualifications for officeholding, suited James Bowdoin to perfection. It was only by manipulating returns from the towns that the Convention was able to find a two-thirds majority for the constitution, which became the basis of government in 1780. As presi-

dent of the Convention, Bowdoin must have been a party to that manipulation of votes.³⁰ Certainly he thought enough of the new constitution to send a copy to Benjamin Franklin, then in Paris, on May 1, 1780, even before the document had been officially approved. While he did not specifically recommend the constitution to his old friend, he did comment that "It is time there should be a *supersedeas* on the old Constitution, things being circumstanced as they are."³¹

The struggle for the acceptance of the new constitution was closely followed by the fight for the governorship. The contest, between John Hancock and James Bowdoin, was bitterly fought. Hancock won, but the choice of a lieutenant governor fell to the General Court, which chose Bowdoin. On October 31, 1780, however, in a letter to the Senate and House, he declined the honor, stating that "... the duty I owe to the public forbids me to engage in it while my health continues in so precarious a state."³² In spite of his ailments, Bowdoin remained in the public eye as Justice of the Peace and Justice of the Quorum. His name was submitted for the governorship, probably against his will, in 1782 and 1784. By this time, if unwilling to serve under his rival, Hancock, he may have been opposed to holding office under any circumstances. Writing to his brother-in-law, George Erving, in 1783, apparently in reference to the previous year's election, he remarked that:

The election you refer to, was never my wish; on the contrary it is my wish never to be concerned with it. It does not comport with my inclination to be the only slave in the State, a slave to the humours and caprices of the multitude, as he must be who wishes for an office dependant on their suffrages.³³

Bowdoin's big opportunity for the governorship, if he considered it that, came in 1785. Governor Hancock announced his retirement, leaving the field open for the succession of his lieutenant governor, Thomas Cushing. Bowdoin was persuaded by his followers to oppose Cushing. In the hotly contested campaign which followed, Bowdoin fared badly, for the opposition labeled him unreliable and therefore not fit to hold public office, and a British sympathizer as well. It was true that he had declined a succession of governmental appointments, including that of delegate to the Second Continental Congress. To the Cushing faction, this reluctance translated as lukewarm loyalty to the patriot cause. In addition, Bowdoin's efforts to preserve the

estates of his Tory relatives from confiscation and his campaign to make his son-in-law, John Temple, former British collector of customs, acceptable in Massachusetts even before the end of the Revolution cast further doubts upon his political integrity. But the contest for the governorship was decided in the General Court, and Bowdoin won the election because of his strong support in the Senate.³⁴

Massachusetts was a state beset with problems in 1785. Her trade had been devastated by the war, her whaling and fishing fleets were depleted, she had lost her West Indian market during the previous year, and her production of a surplus had declined to the point that exports were affected. The carrying trade had diminished as well. Furthermore, the state was saddled with heavy war debts, and the wartime government had supported its depreciating paper money through the issuance of public bonds. When these faltered in 1784, the legislature funded the bonds at par. There was widespread opposition to the payment of this state debt, estimated at five million dollars, because it would enrich the merchant-speculators at the expense of the general taxpayer.³⁵ Western Massachusetts seethed in near-revolt, its poverty-stricken inhabitants believing that only the closing of the courts could protect them from foreclosure. Court costs, they felt, were exorbitantly high, and there was the further grievance of excessive poll taxes.

During his first term of office Governor Bowdoin attempted to respond to the crisis. He appealed to the governors of several states to abolish the tariff restrictions which were crippling American trade generally. He tried to encourage the growth of industry in Massachusetts, in particular the manufacture of potash, an earlier interest. He strove to pay the obligations of his state towards the expenses of the Confederation.³⁶ It is significant, however, that the main thrust of his endeavors was in the direction of the revival of trade and commerce, not direct alleviation of the plight of the small taxpayer.

James Bowdoin was reelected governor of Massachusetts in 1786, in time to reap the harvest of years of governmental ineptitude and inefficiency. The people of the country districts already held a majority in the House; now they were organizing. During the summer of 1786, the radicals announced their determination to prevent the fall term meeting of the court at Concord. When Bowdoin decided

to call out the militia to prevent this outrage, western members of the House advised mediation instead. He reluctantly rescinded his order, but regretted it, for rebels converging upon Concord in September prevented the opening of the court, as they had earlier predicted. The governor believed that he now had no choice but to call out the militia, and at a special session of the General Court on September 27 he asked that body for this authority, which was granted. The legislature was without funds to pay the militiamen, however, so Bowdoin and a group of similar-minded "gentlemen of fortune and ability" were obliged to underwrite the expense in order to keep the militia in the field. The move was expedient and unavoidable, but regrettably gave further substance to what had all the appearance of class warfare. Bowdoin had no alternative to private support for a public cause; the General Court, dominated by delegates from western counties, tended to sympathize with the insurgents. And so the insurrection popularly known as Shays' Rebellion ran its course during the winter of 1786 and the spring of 1787. Governor Bowdoin took command of the situation, and military commanders in the field reported to him, as did the "well disposed" country gentry, now isolated in the west. Gradually General Benjamin Lincoln's militiamen subdued the rebels. To all intents and purposes the revolt had ended by February 1787. On May 8, Bowdoin was able to spare time from his labors to inform George Erving that:

The insurrectionary disposition of our Western Counties has found me so much employment, that I have had scarcely time to attend to anything else. It is in a fair way of being quelled: and would ere now have been effectually so, could our militia have followed the insurgents beyond the boundaries of the State. . . .³⁷

Bowdoin had written to Governor George Clinton as early as March 6, 1787, for assistance in apprehending rebels who had fled to refuge in the state of New York,³⁸ and repeated his request to Clinton, as well as to the governors of Connecticut and Vermont, on May 16.³⁹ To encourage compliance, Bowdoin emphasized that ". . . the spirit of insurrection is infectious . . . if it be not perfectly subdued it will create perpetual disturbances in the States and may finally issue in anarchy and general confusion."⁴⁰

Governor Bowdoin had been able to suppress the rebellion largely through his own personal efforts, and conservative forces throughout

the states applauded his courage. In 1788, George R. Minot published his *History of the Insurrections in Massachusetts in the Year 1786 and the Rebellion Consequent Thereon* at Worcester, ironically enough the center stage of the recent troubles. Not surprisingly, he not only made Bowdoin the hero of the whole affair, but personally inscribed a copy of his book to the governor. Yet Minot combined a discerning analysis of the causes of the rebellion with some sympathy for the instigators. In the preface to his *History* he expressed the conviction that the grievances which had led to insurrection had been corrected, commenting that:

The spirit of party had yielded to systems of conciliation; freedom of inquiry, and the privilege of forming opinions for ourselves, are unrestricted; and whilst we preserve decency of expression, there is neither a disposition in our magistrates, nor any authority known in our laws, to silence or control the language of truth.⁴¹

The General Court did not agree with Minot's assessment of Bowdoin's role. Taking its revenge, at its January 1787 session, the legislature voted to cut the governor's salary in the interest of economy. Bowdoin vetoed the bill, an action which undoubtedly contributed to his defeat by John Hancock in the next gubernatorial election.

Thomas Jefferson could not have left his presidential office in 1809 with any less reluctance than Governor Bowdoin departed the Massachusetts State House in 1787. He did not again hold office in the state, but did serve as a delegate to the convention which approved the Federal Constitution in 1788. Bowdoin, as might be expected, heartily approved of the new national frame of government. As he explained to George Erving,

Having experienced the Evils arising from inefficiency, they [the states] will the more readily submit to a firm and efficient government, to which from choice as well as necessity they will be strongly attached. . . .⁴²

James Bowdoin, the conservative and reluctant revolutionary, remained unchanged. Circumstances beyond his control had compelled the support of a rebellion against Great Britain, but his natural inclinations would always align him with "a firm and efficient government." He refused to consider officeholding in Washington's administration, but entertained the first President during his triumphal

tour of New England in 1789, presenting Washington with a fine cane from his collection [No. 37]. Had Bowdoin lived into the 1790's he would certainly have been as firm a supporter of the Federalist Party as his friend John Adams.

One of the most distinguished of Massachusetts' elder statesmen, James Bowdoin aged gracefully. He no longer resembled the confident youth painted by Robert Feke in 1748, but he was as well groomed and attentive to the niceties of attire as ever. In 1785, as Governor, he officiated at a review of Massachusetts militia and was described by a contemporary:

His appearance and dress, as the troops passed by him, are well remembered. . . . He was a tall, dignified man . . . dressed in a gray wig, cocked hat, and white broadcloth coat and waistcoat, red small-clothes, and black silk stockings. His face was without color, his features rather small for his size, his air and manner quietly grave.⁴³

A silhouette of Bowdoin [No. 48] was made at this time and Christian Gullager, the Danish artist, painted just such an elderly, dignified gentleman in 1791 [No. 52], apparently from family descriptions, one year after Bowdoin's death. Gullager's son later commented that the portrait ". . . was so correct that it was immediately purchased by his family and several copies taken for friends."⁴⁴ James Bowdoin would have approved of this final portrait, which depicted him standing at ease in his study, globe, maps and books scattered about, and a bust of John Locke surveying the scene.

Bowdoin's last days were brightened by the achievement of what had become almost a lifelong goal: membership in the Royal Society. What he had failed to merit because of scientific accomplishment, even though he did achieve some distinction in the field, he gained through leadership and example; his role as founder and promoter of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences could no longer be ignored. Bowdoin received notice of his election as a "foreign member" of the Society in a letter dated July 31, 1788. He expressed his elation in a reply to its secretary:

I embrace this first opportunity of expressing the high sense I have of the distinguished honour conferred upon me by that most illustrious body; and beg the favour you will communicate it to them, together with my very grateful acknowledgements for the honour conferred.⁴⁵

Among the list of members of the Society who had recommended his membership appeared the name of Bowdoin's friend and correspondent, Dr. Richard Price. The new Fellow lost no time in sending for his diploma and subscribing to the Royal Society's *Transactions*. Bowdoin had received many honors during his lifetime, but probably no other meant so much to him.

James Bowdoin died on November 6, 1790. His state funeral was long remembered in Boston. He was buried with high honors in the old family burial plot in the Old Granary cemetery, his tomb embellished by an elaborate coat of arms [No. 58]. In accordance with his wishes, friends and relations refrained from wearing mourning clothes.

By the will of James Bowdoin one of New England's largest estates was divided. Specific bequests indicated his philanthropic nature: the gifts included encouragement to religion, charity, education, and science. The Reverend Peter Thatcher of the Brattle Square Church received a legacy of £50; another £100 was left in the care of the deacons of the poor of that church, with the interest to be distributed annually in the parish. Harvard College obtained a gift of £400, "in good Securities," which was to be used "for the advancement of useful and polite literature among the Residents" through the means of annual prizes. To the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Bowdoin left his library of more than 1200 volumes, as well as £100 in cash. The remainder of Bowdoin's estate was divided among his widow, his son James Bowdoin III and his daughter, Elizabeth, Lady Temple.⁴⁶ Elizabeth Bowdoin received the Beacon Hill mansion and its contents, which would pass intact after her death to her son. To James went his father's share of the Elizabeth Islands. All other property was apportioned equally among the heirs; the real estate alone was considerable. The division of Bowdoin's notes, bonds and mortgages, on December 31, 1790, brought the three beneficiaries £3580.19.6 each. As we have seen, the heirs also received £633.4- apiece from the proceeds of the *Astrea* venture. Finally, there was the division of Federal bonds. The three percent bonds had been purchased by the executors of the estate on December 13, 1790, using cash found in Bowdoin's strongbox. The share of each heir at their division on January 6, 1791, was \$1183.00.⁴⁷ The

apportionments received from the estate by Mrs. Bowdoin, Lady Temple and James Bowdoin III were more than enough to make each one independently wealthy for life.

In James Bowdoin's funeral sermon, the Reverend Peter Thatcher accurately described the deceased as ". . . great in the faculties of his mind," a man who had "improved with singular diligence and industry, the advantages which God had given him. . . ." Furthermore, Bowdoin

merited the approbation of his country, from his patriotick exertions in the period of its distress; he was favoured by his fellow citizens with their warm esteem, and he was repeatedly invested with their highest honours. Under these honours, and amidst the flattering distinctions given him by several illustrious literary societies, at home and abroad, he conducted with that decent but sincere humility, which proved him to be truly a great man. . . . He lived an amiable, useful and honourable life, and he died a calm and peaceful death.⁴⁸

James Bowdoin was all of the above and much more. He made his mark on his eighteenth-century world in numerous fields of endeavor and it is his versatility that best characterizes his life. He truly exemplified the Man of the Enlightenment.

Notes

THE SETTING

1. Gerard Brault, "Pierre Baudoin and the Bowdoin Coat of Arms," *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, October, 1960, 245.
2. "Inventory of the Estate of Peter Bowdoin," September 7, 1706, Bowdoin Family Papers, Special Collections, Hawthorne-Longfellow Library, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Me.; hereafter cited as B.C.L.
3. Deposition concerning the brig *Sarah*, October 4, 1706. Massachusetts Archives, Vol. 7, 301.
4. Marvin S. Sadik, *Colonial and Federal Portraits at Bowdoin College* (Brunswick, Me., 1966), 22. Some scholars have suggested this portrait was posthumous.

THE STUDENT

1. Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard* (Cambridge, 1936), 82.
2. *Ibid.*, 89.
3. *The Massachusetts Magazine*, III (1791), 6.
4. Clifford Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, XI, 515.

HOME AND FAMILY

1. James Bowdoin Cash Book, October 19, 1765, Bowdoin and Temple Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; hereafter cited as Cash Book.
2. Cash Book, August 10, 1770.
3. "Memorandum of James Bowdoin's Rateable Estate in Boston, Feby. 1779," Bowdoin and Temple Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; hereafter cited as M.H.S.
4. James Bowdoin to Henry Bromfield, November 19, 1770, James Bowdoin Letter Book (1759-1797), 211, M.H.S., hereafter cited as Letter Book.
5. Cash Book, April 19, 1766.
6. James Bowdoin to Lane, Son, and Fraser, June 10, 1771, Letter Book, 213.
7. Cash Book, June 18, 1767. No works relating directly to architecture remain in the Bowdoin Library.
8. James Bowdoin to Abraham Preble, September 18, 1770, Letter Book, 209.
9. Cash Book, September 4, 1772.
10. "An Inventory of Goods at present in the house of James Bowdoin Esqr. . . . done at his request this 15th September 1774," Bowdoin and Temple Papers, M.H.S.
11. In December, 1749, Bowdoin listed a number of recent purchases in his Account Book (Letter Book) which included the following: a telescope at £6.6-, "Electrical Apparatus" at £7.8-, and "a pr. Globes & Thermometer" for £9.7-.
12. Temple succeeded to the baronetcy in 1784.
13. Bowdoin presented Elizabeth's dowry to Temple in the form of Massachusetts Province notes to the value of £1,343.6.8. Cash Book, January 21, 1767.

14. James Bowdoin to George Keith, March 3, 1762, Letter Book, 26.
15. Cash Book, December 1, 1766.
16. *Ibid.*, August 26, 1768.
17. *Ibid.*, July 8, 1771.
18. *Ibid.*, September 4, 1771.
19. Ebenezer Gilchrist, *The Use of Sea Voyages in Medicine* (London, 1757). The work is still a part of the Bowdoin Library.
20. James Bowdoin to Lane, Son, and Fraser, January 2, 1771, Letter Book, 213.
21. James Bowdoin to Duncan Stewart, May, 1771, Letter Book, 217.
22. Sadik, *Colonial and Federal Portraits at Bowdoin College*, 137.
23. James Bowdoin to Lane, Son, and Fraser, October 3, 1773, Letter Book, 226.
24. James Bowdoin to Lane, Son, and Fraser, September 5, 1774, Letter Book, 227.
25. James Bowdoin to Lane, Son, and Fraser, March 30, 1775, Letter Book, 229.
26. Sadik, *Colonial and Federal Portraits*, 141-142.
27. *Ibid.*, 144.
28. Cash Book, October, 1778. Entries for this month indicate that Bowdoin had paid the bills he had accumulated while in Middleborough and had returned to Boston.
29. James Bowdoin to Alexander Graham, May 5, 1789, Letter Book, 283.
30. James Bowdoin to George Scott, April 14, 1762, Letter Book, 28.
31. James Bowdoin to George Scott, July 16, 1764, Letter Book, 84.
32. James Bowdoin to George Scott, October 14, 1763, Letter Book, 56.
33. James Bowdoin to Abigail Scott, December 26, 1767, Letter Book, 186.
34. James Bowdoin to Francis Margaret, December 9, 1768, Letter Book, 195.
35. Cash Book, April 25, 1767.
36. *Ibid.*, April 13, 1769.
37. *Ibid.*, May 8, 1777.
38. "Names of Carriage Holders In Boston, 1768," *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, 2nd Series, I, 225.
39. James Bowdoin to Lane and Booth, January 8, 1770, Letter Book, 6.
40. Cash Book, April 24, 1775.

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2. *Catalogue of Books In the Library of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* (Boston, 1802).
3. Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House* (Chapel Hill, 1948), 162.

4. George Keith, *A Catalogue of Several Libraries and Parcels lately Purchased* (London, 1759).
5. James Bowdoin to George Keith, August 13, 1763, Letter Book, 55.
6. Peter Thatcher, *Mr. Thatcher's Sermon on the Death of the Hon. James Bowdoin, Esq. LL.D. F.R.S.* (Boston, 1791).
7. "Tho' Wealth and Power," *Pietas at Gratuloso Cantabrigiensis Apud Novanglos* (Boston, 1761).
8. James Bowdoin to Jasper Mauduit, April 25, 1763, Letter Book, 49-50.
9. James Bowdoin, *A Paraphrase on Part of the Oeconomy of Human Life* (Boston, 1759), 77.
10. *Ibid.*, Advertisement (Preface).

THE VOTARY OF SCIENCE

1. Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree *et al* (New Haven, 1964), 240.
2. James Bowdoin to Benjamin Franklin, December 21, 1751, Special Collections, B.C.L.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Benjamin Franklin to James Bowdoin, December 31, 1752, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.
6. Raymond P. Stearns, *Science in the British Colonies of America* (Urbana, Illinois, 1970), 630n.
7. Benjamin Franklin to James Bowdoin, April 12, 1753, M.H.S.
8. John Hill, *A Review of the Works of the Royal Society of London; containing Animadversions on Such of the Papers as deserve Particular Observation* (London, 1751).
9. James Bowdoin to Lord Romney, October 15, 1762, Letter Book, 35.
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12. Oliver Dickerson, *The Navigation Acts and the American Revolution* (New York, 1951), 180.
13. Brooke Hindle, *The Pursuit of Science in Revolutionary America* (New York, 1974), 208.
14. James Bowdoin to Lane, Son, and Fraser, August 26, 1767, Letter Book, 180.
15. James Bowdoin, "An Improvement Proposed for Telescopes," *The London Magazine*, November, 1761, 602-604.
16. James Bowdoin to Benjamin Franklin, January 18, 1764, Letter Book, 67.
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18. James Bowdoin to Lane and Booth, May 14, 1765, Letter Book, 112.

19. Hindle, *Pursuit of Science*, 99.
20. James Bowdoin to Thomas Gage, January 23, 1769, Letter Book, 197.
21. James Bowdoin to John Winthrop, January 23, 1769, Letter Book, 197.
22. James Bowdoin to Thomas Gage, February 29, 1769, Letter Book, 198.
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25. Dirk J. Struik, *Yankee Science In the Making* (New York, 1962), 73-74.
26. *Ibid.*, 74.
27. James Bowdoin to Benjamin Franklin, January 11, 1781, *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Bowdoin-Temple Papers, I*, 449.
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3. Cash Book, 1765-1781.
4. Ledger, M.H.S.
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6. *Ibid.*, December 2, 1769-February 1, 1770.
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20. *Ibid.*, 531.
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Catalogue

1. Unknown Artist
James Bowdoin I (1676-1747), ca. 1725
Oil on canvas, 34 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Bequest of Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn. 1826.4
The picture has been attributed to the Pollard Limner, the painter of Anne Pollard dated 1721.
2. Unknown Artist
William Bowdoin (1713-1773) as a boy, ca. 1725
Oil on canvas, 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 25"
Bequest of Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn. 1826.3
3. John Bonner (act. 1722) and William Price (1684-1771)
A New Plan of ye Great Town of BOSTON in New England in America, 1743
Line engraving on paper, 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 18"
Inscribed: To his Excellency Jonathan Belcher Esq. . . . William Price
Lent by the Boston Public Library
This view is based on the earlier Bonner view of 1722 and was issued to honor the dedication of Faneuil Hall.
- 4.-9. John Miller
Bowdoin's Boston Revisited
"The Hindenburg" (The site of the school Bowdoin attended)
"Joe Twiss Corner" (The site of Bowdoin's house)
"Eat Til 1 A.M." (The site of the Brattle Street Church where Bowdoin was a parishioner)
"Walsh Movers" (The site of the Boston Massacre and the State House where Bowdoin read the Declaration of Independence from the balcony)
"Orpheum Theatre" (The site of the Manufactory House, first location for The Massachusetts Bank)
"Police Taketh Notice" (The site of Bowdoin's grave)
Black-and-white photographs, 14" x 18"
Museum purchase. 1976.21.1-6

10. John Read

A Latin Grammar

Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1736

Lent by the Bowdoin College Library, Special Collections

This copy was used by James Bowdoin II at the South Grammar School under the direction of Master John Lovell. The copy is annotated by James Bowdoin II.

11. John Smibert (1688-1751)

James Bowdoin II (1726-1790) as a boy, 1736 (before March)Oil on canvas, 34 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 26 $\frac{7}{8}$ "

Bequest of Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn. 1826.5

This picture is listed on p. 25 of John Smibert's notebook (see: Massachusetts Historical Society, *The Notebook of John Smibert*, Boston, 1969).

12. Thomas Johnston (1708-1767)

Map of Casco Bay (Kennebeck), 1754Line engraving on copper. Cut, plate 31 $\frac{7}{16}$ " x 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

Inscribed l.r.: To his Excellency William Shirley Esq. Capt. General & Governour in Chief in & over his Majesty's Province of ye Massachusetts Bay in New England. This Plan of Kennebeck & Sagadahock Rivers and Country adjacent (whereon are delineated ye Boundaries several Ancient Grants) being taken from actual Survey made by Joseph Heath Esq. and Mr. Phineas Jones/John North Esq. & Mr. Ephraim Jones, is most humbly inscribed by ye Excellency's most obd^t and humb^le serv^t Tho^s Johnston Boston Novemr: 20, 1754.

Lent by the Worcester Art Museum, Goodspeed Collection

13. Jacob Hurd (?)

Funeral Ring, 1747Gold, enamel, glass, diam. 1 $\frac{3}{16}$ ", w. $\frac{7}{8}$ "

Inscribed: Hon/J. Bowdoin/Esq:OB:8/Sept:1747./AE:71

Lent by Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York.

Gift of John Devereux Kernan

14. Joseph Badger (1708-1765)
James Bowdoin I (1676-1747), ca. 1747
 Oil on canvas, 50 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 40 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
 Bequest of Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn. 1826.6
 There is a replica of this picture in the Detroit Institute of Arts. The pictures may be posthumous. The format is taken from a mezzotint of 1726 of Sir Isaac Newton by Faber after Vanderbank.
15. William James's Gravesande
Mathematical Elements of Natural Philosophy, Confirmed by Experiments: or, An Introduction to Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy, Vol. I
 London: J. Senex, W. Innys, R. Manby, T. Longman, 1737
 Lent by the Bowdoin College Library, Special Collections
 This text was used by James Bowdoin at Harvard as an undergraduate.
16. Robert Feke (1707-1752)
James Bowdoin II (1726-1790), 1748
 Oil on canvas, 50" x 40"
 Signed and dated l. l.: R F Pinx/1748
 Bequest of Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn. 1826.8
 This portrait and its pendant are thought to be wedding pictures. The couple was married September 15, 1748.
17. Robert Feke (1707-1752)
Mrs. James Bowdoin II née Elizabeth Erving (1731-1803), 1748
 Oil on canvas, 50 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 40 $\frac{1}{8}$ "
 Signed and dated l.r.: R Feke Pinx/1748
 Bequest of Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn. 1826.7
18. Joseph Blackburn (act. in America, 1754-1763)
Elizabeth (1750-1809) and her brother *James Bowdoin III* (1752-1811) as children, ca. 1760
 Oil on canvas, 36 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 58"
 Bequest of Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn. 1826.11

19. Unknown Artist

James Bowdoin III (1752-1811) as a young man

Oil on canvas, 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Bequest of Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn. 1826.1

The painting is thought to have been painted during a trip James Bowdoin III made to Italy in 1774.

20. Samuel King (1749-1819)

Elizabeth Bowdoin, Lady Temple (1750-1809), probably ca. 1790

Oil on canvas, 30 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 26 $\frac{3}{8}$ "

Bequest of Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn. 1826.2

21. Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828)

James Bowdoin III (1752-1811)

Oil on canvas, 29 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 24 $\frac{7}{8}$ "

Bequeathed to Bowdoin College in 1826 by Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn, with the proviso that her grandniece, Mrs. George Sullivan, be permitted to retain it during her lifetime. It came to the College after the death of Mrs. Sullivan's son, George Sullivan Bowdoin, in 1870. 1870.6

The picture may be posthumous, based on the miniature by Malbone (No. 23).

22. Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828)

Elizabeth Bowdoin, Lady Temple (1750-1809)

Oil on panel, 28" x 23"

Gift of Mr. Robert Winthrop. 1966.89

23. Edward Greene Malbone (1777-1807)

Miniature of James Bowdoin III (1752-1811), probably November-December, 1804

Watercolor on ivory, 3 $\frac{3}{16}$ " x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " oval

Signed l.r.: Malbone

Gift of Mrs. Dorothy Hupper. 1951.7

24. Edward Greene Malbone (1777-1807)
Miniature of Elizabeth Bowdoin, Lady Temple (1750-1809),
 probably November-December, 1804
 Watercolor on ivory, $3\frac{3}{16}$ " x $2\frac{7}{16}$ " oval
 Gift of Mrs. Dorothy Hupper. 1951.8
25. William Grundy
Pair of Mugs, ca. 1748-1749
 Silver, h. 5", diam. $3\frac{1}{2}$ "
 Engraved with Bowdoin Crest
 Gift of Miss Clara Bowdoin Winthrop. 1943.3.1-2
 These mugs are thought to have been made for Bowdoin's wedding.
26. Maker T.CC
Three Spoons
 Silver, engraved decoration, l. $6\frac{1}{2}$ "
 Bequest of Mr. Frances Erving Weston. 1912.4.3-5
 These spoons and the following silver belonged to James Bowdoin II.
27. Christopher Skinner (Irish) and Henry Miller (English)
Twelve Fruit Forks, ca. 1754
 Silver and silver gilt, chased ornamentation, l. 6"
 Engraved with Bowdoin Crest
 Gift of Mrs. Judson Falknor. 1974.49.1-12
28. Unknown Maker
Sugar Tongs
 Silver, engraved decoration, l. $6\frac{1}{2}$ "
 Engraved with Bowdoin Crest
 Gift of Mrs. Mary Prentiss Ingraham Davies for the Daniel
 Cony Memorial Collection. 1935.17
29. Ebenezer Moulton
Pair of Ladles
 Silver, l. $6\frac{3}{4}$ "
 Engraved with Bowdoin Crest
 Gift of Miss Clara Bowdoin Winthrop. 1956.10.1-2

30. David Mosely (1753-1812)
Punch Ladle
 Silver, repoussé ornamentation, l. 14 $\frac{3}{8}$ "
 Bequest of Mr. Frances Erving Weston. 1912.4.2
31. Paul Revere (1735-1818)
Punch Ladle
 Silver and ebony, l. 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
 Marked PR
 Gift of Miss Clara Bowdoin Winthrop. 1943.3.3
32. Charles-Louis Spriman (French, act. ca. 1776-1783)
Covered Tureen with Liner, 1775
 Silver, l. 12", w. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", h. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
 Engraved with Bowdoin Crest
 Gift of Miss Clara Bowdoin Winthrop in the name of "The Children of Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr." 1924.3.1
 The cover, lid and liner are marked by Spriman.
33. Unknown Maker (French)
Oval Tray
 Silver, l. 18", w. 12"
 Engraved with Bowdoin Crest
 Gift of Miss Clara Bowdoin Winthrop in the name of "The Children of Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr." 1924.3.2
34. Unknown Maker
Silver Loving Cup
 Silver plate on copper, h. 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
 Lent by the Massachusetts Historical Society
 This is said to have been used by George Washington when he visited Bowdoin in 1789.
35. Paul Revere (1735-1818)
The Bloody Massacre, 1770
 Line engraving on copper, colored, 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ "
 Inscribed: The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King---i---

Street BOSTON on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th
REG^t Engrav'd Printed & Sold by Paul Revere BOSTON
Lent by the Worcester Art Museum, Goodspeed Collection

36. James Bowdoin II (1726-1790)
*A Short Narrative of the horrid Massacre in Boston, perpetrated
in the Evening of the Fifth Day of March, 1770 by Soldiers
of the XXIXth Regiment; which with the XIVth Regiment
Were then Quartered there: with some Observations on the
State of Things prior to that Catastrophe*
Boston: Edes and Gill, and T. & J. Fleet, 1770
Lent by the Bowdoin College Library, Special Collections
37. Unknown Maker
Walking Stick
Malacca with gold head, l. 4' 8"
Lent by the Massachusetts Historical Society
This walking stick belonged to George Washington and was given to him
by James Bowdoin II in 1778.
38. Unknown Maker
Bank Note, Colony of New Hampshire, 1775
#279. Signed: Nich^s Gilman
Lent by The First National Bank of Boston
39. Unknown Maker
Bank Note, three dollars, State of Massachusetts-Bay, 1780
#128024. Signed: R. Cranch
Lent by The First National Bank of Boston
40. H. Sellers
Bank Note, United States, 1780
Inscribed: Exitus in Dubio est. Signed: Peter Boyer
Lent by The First National Bank of Boston

41. Unknown Maker
Bank Note, twenty dollars, State of Massachusetts-Bay, 1780
 #8581. Signed: T. Henshaw
 Lent by The First National Bank of Boston
42. H. Sellers
Bank Note, United States, 1780
 Inscribed: VI Concitatae. Signed: Peter Boyer
 Lent by The First National Bank of Boston
43. Joseph Callender
Seal of The Massachusetts Bank, 1784
 Silver, diam. 2¼"
 Lent by The First National Bank of Boston
 James Bowdoin was elected President of The Massachusetts Bank in 1785.
 The bank continues today as The First National Bank of Boston.
44. James Bowdoin II (1726-1790)
Autograph Letter, signed to Thomas Fitz Simons Esq, Philadelphia
 April 1, 1784
 Ink on paper, 8¾"
 Lent by the Bowdoin College Library, Special Collections
 The letter discusses the printing of bank notes in Philadelphia.
45. Unknown Maker
Desk (Slant Top), before 1774
 Maple, with inlay, h. 46", w. 36", d. 20"
 Lent by the American Antiquarian Society
 The desk belonged to James Bowdoin. It is listed in his inventory of 1774.
 The legs are later additions.
46. Unknown Artist, 18th century
Bust Portrait of Mirabeau
 Oil on canvas, 14" x 19½"
 Bequest of the Honorable James Bowdoin III. 1813.16
 The portrait was copied in the eighteenth century from a full-length picture in Aix, France, by Joseph Bose of the economist, Mirabeau.

47. James and Elizabeth Bowdoin
Autograph Letter, Boston, 1788
 Ink on paper, 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
 Lent by Dr. and Mrs. R. Peter Mooz
 The letter discusses family business affairs.
48. Unknown Artist
Silhouette of James Bowdoin II (1726-1790)
 Black paint on white plaster, 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (white surface only)
 Lent by the Massachusetts Historical Society
49. Benjamin Martin (1704-1782)
Orrery with Clockwork Mechanism, 1765-1766
 Brass, silvered brass concentric rings, ivory earth
 H. 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", diam. of drum 20 $\frac{7}{8}$ "
 Inscribed: Made & Improved by B. Martin in Fleet Street London./The Gift of the Hon. James Bowdoin Esq. to the Apparatus of Harvard College N.E. May 1764
 Lent by the Harvard University Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments
50. Unknown Maker
Telescope
 Brass, wood, glass, l. 54", h. 23"
 Lent by the President's Office, Bowdoin College. 1976.28
51. Unknown Maker
Celestial Globe
 Wood, paper, iron, h. 27", diam. 26"
 Inscribed: Smith Celestial Globe containing all the known Stars, Nebulae, etc. Complete from the works of Wollaston, Farnsted, de la Caille, Havelius, Mayer, Bradley, Herschel, Maskelyne. The Transactions of the Astronomical Society of London, etc., etc.
 London sold by C. Smith and Son 172 Strand
 Lent by the President's Office, Bowdoin College. 1976.29

52. Christian Gullager (1759-1826)

James Bowdoin II (1726-1790)

Version B, ca. 1791

Oil on panel, 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ "

Received from the estate of Mrs. George Sullivan Bowdoin (whose husband changed his name to Bowdoin agreeable to the will of Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn). He was a son of Mrs. George Sullivan in whose possession the picture was, subsequent to the death of Mrs. Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn. 1894.2

The *Columbian Centinel* for November 16, 1791, printed the following notice: Portrait of Mr. Bowdoin. Mr. Gulliger, of this town, has lately executed a fine portrait of the late Hon. Mr. Bowdoin, which, we are told, is the only one ever taken of that distinguished, learned and virtuous character—and which from this circumstance alone, must be highly valuable. The industry, genius, and attention of Mr. G. point him out as worthy the highest encouragement of every class of citizens—on this effort of his, in creating, if we may be allowed the expression—a likeness of Mr. B. must to the friends of Philosophy, Science, and the liberal Arts.

53. Unknown Maker, possibly John Prince

Air Pump, ca. 1800

Brass and wood, 22" x 30" x 66"

Courtesy of the National Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution; on permanent loan from Bowdoin College.

54. James Bowdoin II (1726-1790)

A Paraphrase on part of the Oeconomy of Human Life

Inscribed to his excellency Thomas Pownall, Esq; Governor of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay

Boston: Green and Russell, 1759

Lent by the Bowdoin College Library, Special Collections

This entire book is written in verse.

55. James Bowdoin II (1726-1790)

A Philosophical Discourse Addressed to the American Academy

of Arts and Sciences in the Presence of a Respectable Audience Assembled at the Meeting-House in Brattle-Street, in Boston, on the Eighth of November, 1780 After the Inauguration of the President into Office

Boston: Benjamin Edes and Sons, 1780

Lent by the Bowdoin College Library, Special Collections

56. Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)

Autograph Letter, Signed to James Bowdoin, Boston

January 1, 1786

Ink on paper, h. 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ "

Lent by the Bowdoin College Library, Special Collections

The letter discusses mutual scientific interests.

57. Jean Antoine Houdon (1741-1828)

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)

Plaster bust, h. 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Gift of Mr. Benjamin Vaughan. 1850.1

Presented by Dr. Franklin to Benjamin Vaughan, Esq., who donated it to the College.

58. David C. Whitman

Gravestone Rubbing, 1969

Wax crayon on rice paper, 42 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 32"

Lent by Mr. Richard W. Moll

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1. *James Bowdoin I*, ca. 1725, by an Unknown Artist



2. *William Bowdoin as a boy*, ca. 1725, by an Unknown Artist



3. A New Plan of ye Great Town of BOSTON in New England in America, 1743,
by John Bonner and William Price



4. "The Hindenburg," from *Boerdoon's Boston Revisited*, by John Miller



5. "Joe Twiss Corner," from *Bowdoin's Boston Revisited*, by John Miller



6. "Eat Til 1 A.M.," from *Bowdoin's Boston Revisited*, by John Miller



7. "Walsh Movers," from *Boardman's Boston Revisited*, by John Miller



8. "Orpheum Theater," from *Bowdoin's Boston Revisited*, by John Miller



9. "Police Taketh Notice," from *Bowdoin's Boston Revisited*, by John Miller

A
L A T I N
Grammar.



By *John Read,*
Of Boston in New-England, Gent.

B O S T O N :

Printed by S. KNEELAND & T. GREEN
in Queen-street. M,DCC,XXXVI.



12. Map of Casco Bay, 1754, by Thomas Johnston



13. James Bowdoin's *Funeral Ring*, 1747, by Jacob Hurd (?)



14. *James Boscawen I*, ca. 1747, by Joseph Badger



16. *James Bowdoin II*, 1748, by Robert Feke



17. *Mrs. James Bowdoin II* née Elizabeth Irving, 1748, by Robert Feke



18. *Elizabeth and James Boscawen III as children*, ca. 1760, by Joseph Blackburn



19. *James Bowdoin III* as a young man, by an Unknown Artist



20. *Elizabeth Bowdoin, Lady Temple*, probably ca. 1790, by Samuel King



21. *James Bowdoin III*, by Gilbert Stuart



22. *Elizabeth Bowdoin, Lady Temple,*
by Gilbert Stuart



23. *Miniature of James Bowdoin III, 1804,*
by Edward Greene Malbone



24. *Miniature of Elizabeth Bowdoin, Lady Temple,*
1804, by Edward Greene Malbone



25. *Silver Mugs*, ca. 1748-1749, engraved with Bowdoin Crest,
by William Grundy



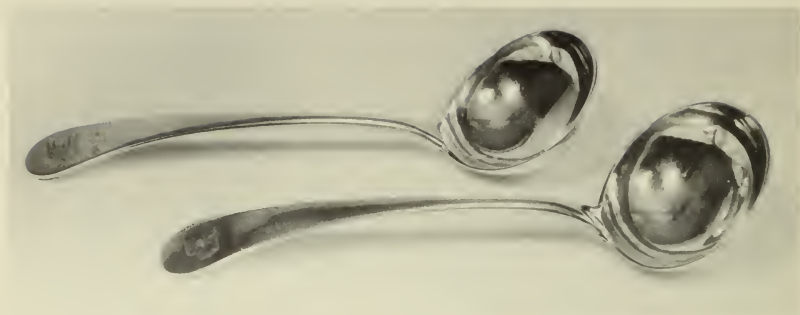
26. *Silver Spoons*, by Maker T.C.C



27. *Fruit Forks*, ca. 1754, by Christopher Skinner and Henry Miller



28. *Sugar Tongs*, engraved with Bowdoin Crest, by an Unknown Maker



29. *Silver Ladles*, engraved with Bowdoin Crest, by Ebenezer Moulton



30. *Punch Ladle*, by David Mosely



31. *Punch Ladle*, by Paul Revere



32. *Covered Tureen with Liner*, 1775, engraved with Bowdoin Crest, by Charles-Louis Spriman



33. *Oval Tray*, engraved with Bowdoin Crest, by an Unknown Maker

A Short
NARRATIVE
OF
The horrid Massacre in BOSTON,
PERPETRATED
In the Evening of the Fifth Day of *March*, 1770;
BY
Soldiers of the XXIXth Regiment ;
WHICH WITH
The XIVth Regiment
Were then Quartered there :
WITH SOME
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
STATE OF THINGS
PRIOR TO THAT
CATASTROPHE.

Printed by Order of the Town of BOSTON,
And Sold by EDES and GILL, in Queen-Street,
And T. & J. FLEET, in Cornhill, 1770.



37. *Walking Stick*, by an Unknown Maker (Gift of James Bowdoin II to George Washington)

Colony of
New Hampshire. [N^o 279] June 20. 1775

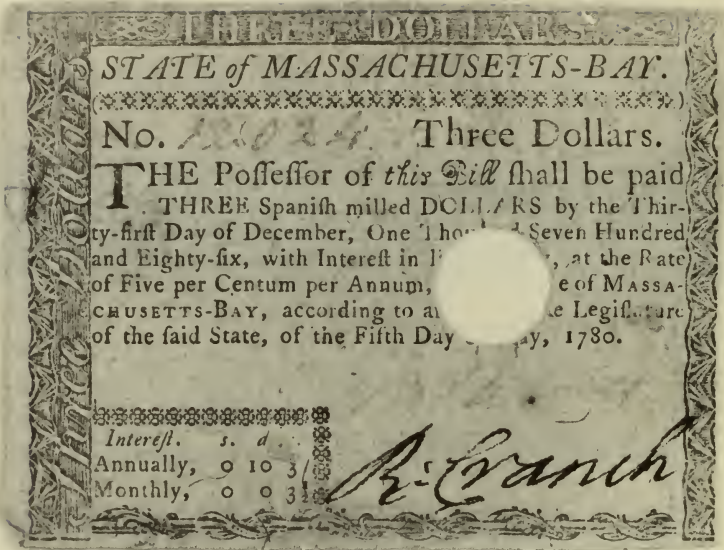
The Possessor of this Note shall be Entitled to receive out of the Treasury of this COLONY the sum of Twenty Shillings lawful Money, on the 20th of December 1775, with the same rate of Six per Cent. per Annum; And this Note shall be received in all payments at the Treasury, at any time after the date hereof, for the principal sum without Interest, if so paid before the said 20th day of December A.D. 1775.

E. Thompson
Nich. Gilman Receiver General.

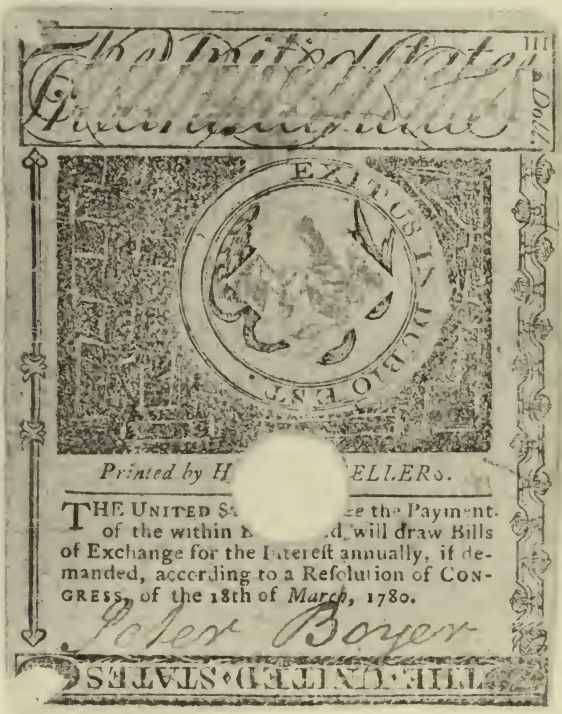
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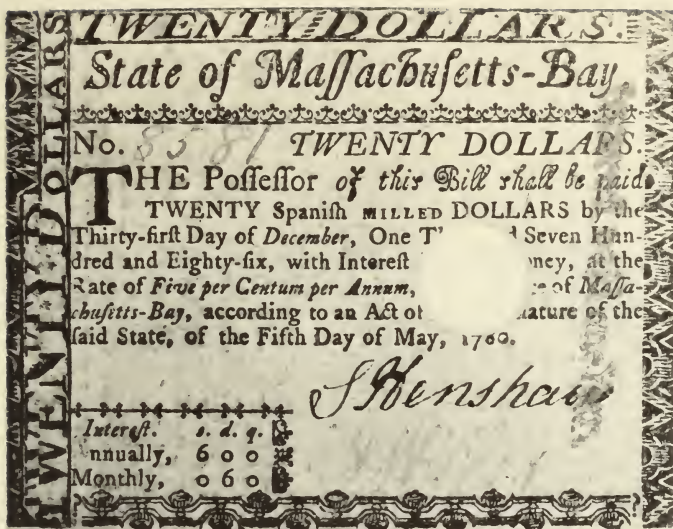
38. *Bank Note*, Colony of New Hampshire, 1775, by an Unknown Maker



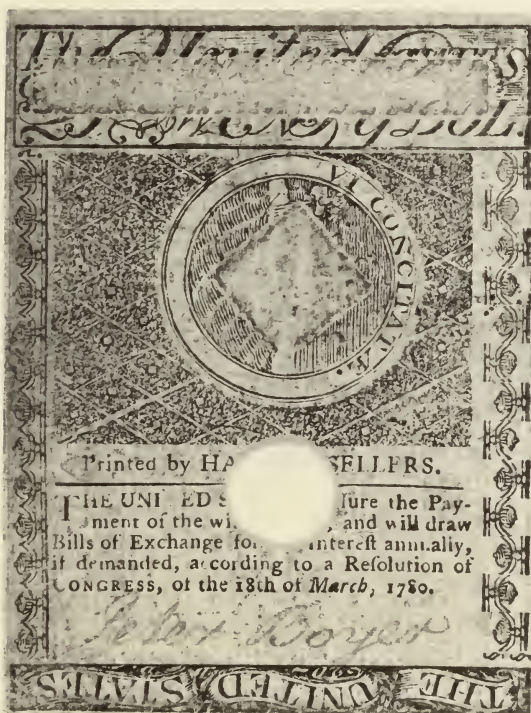
39. Bank Note, State of Massachusetts-Bay, 1780, by an Unknown Maker



40. Bank Note, United States, 1780, by H. Sellers



41. Bank Note, State of Massachusetts-Bay, 1780,
 by an Unknown Maker



42. Bank Note, United States, 1780, by H. Sellers

Thomas. Fitz. Simons Esq

J. M. Dalton Philadelphia

Feb. 17 -
Bankers & Merchants
J. Bowdoin



45. *Desk*, before 1774, by an Unknown Maker



46. *Bust Portrait of Mirabeau*, by an Unknown Artist, 18th century

Boston September 4. 1788 Received of William Cross
James Bowdoin & Eliz. Wendell Executors of the
last Will of the Hon^{ble} John Oving Esq^r deceased the Sum of
Fourteen hundred and eighty eight pounds, Six Shillings
and two pence being in full for me Share and
Interest Viz, one seventh, in the last Estate of the said
deceased lying in the Towns of Boston and Roxbury in the
County of Suffolk and Sold pursuant to his said, last Will.
And Also Received of the said Executors the further Sum of
Shilken hundred and Seventy three pounds, Six Shillings,
and three pence being for me Share and
Interest Viz, one Seventh, in the last Estate of the said
deceased lying on the East side of Connecticut River, and on
both sides of Millis River being partly in the Towns of
Wendell and Orange, but for the most part unincorporated
land lying between the Towns of Uxal, Orange, Warwick,
Northfield, Montague, Wendell & New Salem in the County
of Hampshire, and Sold pursuant to his said last Will,
both the said Sums amounting to Two thousand, eight
hundred and Sixty one pounds, twelve Shillings and five
pence. having signed, three Receipts of this tenor and date,
One in the hands of each of the said Executors.

Eliz^d Bowdoin
James Bowdoin



48. *Silhouette of James Boreddoin II, by an Unknown Artist*



49. *Orrery with Clockwork Mechanism*, 1765-1766, by Benjamin Martin



50. *Telescope*, by an Unknown Maker



51. *Celestial Globe*, by an Unknown Maker



53. *Air Pump*, ca. 1800, by an Unknown Maker, possibly John Prince

A PHILOSOPHICAL
DISCOURSE,
ADDRESSED TO THE
AMERICAN ACADEMY,
OF
ARTS AND SCIENCES,
IN THE PRESENCE OF A RESPECTABLE AUDIENCE,
ASSEMBLED AT THE
MEETING-HOUSE
IN
BRATTLE-STREET, IN BOSTON,
ON THE EIGHTH OF NOVEMBER M.DCC,LXXX;
AFTER THE INAUGURATION OF THE
PRESIDENT
INTO OFFICE.

By James Bowdoin, Esq;
PRESIDENT OF THE SAID ACADEMY:

“ The Book of Nature open, ———
————— ——— explore the wond’rous work.
————— ——— An Institute
Of laws eternal, whose unalter’d page
No time can change, no Copier can corrupt.”

B O S T O N :
PRINTED BY BENJAMIN EDES AND SONS,
IN STATE-STREET.

M,DCC,LXXX.

To

The hon^{ble} James Bowdoin, Esq^r

Boston

Benjamin Franklin

PHILA
MAY 1786



56. Autograph Letter, 1786, by Benjamin Franklin



HON. JAMES BOWDOIN FIRST OF THAT NAME
BUILT THIS TOMB BEFORE 1744 · PROBABLY
MUCH EARLIER · · · IN IT WERE BURIED
PERHAPS PIERRE BAUDOUIN THE HUGUENOT
WITHOUT DOUBT GOV. JAMES BOWDOIN OF
REVOLUTIONARY MEMORY AND NUMEROUS
OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BOWDOIN FAMILY

58. *Gravestone Rubbing*, 1969, by David C. Whitman
(The Bowdoin Headstone)



James Bowdoin