

Libraries and Print Culture in Early North Carolina

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While there has been much recent discussion about print cultures and the history of the book, little attention has been given to the colonial South.¹ In particular, the role played by the presence (or absence) of printed materials in North Carolina has been neglected.² Scholars have focused more on the production and significance of texts than their availability and use in rural colonial America. This article will study the evidence for the presence or absence of printed materials, especially in the form of books collected in libraries, and what such print collections can suggest about literate coastal and backwoods culture in colonial and Revolutionary North Carolina until 1800.³ Were books largely

1. Anthony Grafton, Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, and Adrian Johns, "AHR Forum: How Revolutionary Was the Print Revolution?" *American Historical Review* 107 (February 2002): 84-129; Alistair Black, "New Methodologies in Library History: A Manifesto for the 'New' Library History," *Library History* 11 (1995): 76-85; Donald G. Davis Jr. and Jon Arviti Aho, "Whither Library History? A Critical Essay . . .," *Library History* 17 (2001): 21-39. See especially Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Robert Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (New York: Norton, 1990), 107-135, 154-158; Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 1-23; and Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

2. Notable exceptions are Stephen B. Weeks, "Libraries and Literature in North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association . . . 1895* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896): 171-267; Thomas Hall Wetmore, "The Literary and Cultural Development of Ante-Bellum Wilmington" (master's thesis, Duke University, 1940); William J. Gilmore-Lehne, "Between Boeotia and Athens: Print Communications and Cultural Formation in North Carolina to 1861" (unpublished typescript, 1996), North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Alan D. Watson, "The Role of Printing in Eighteenth-Century North Carolina," *Carolina Comments* 48 (May 2000): 75-83. See also William J. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1780-1835* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989); Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge Is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Hugh Amory and David D. Hall, eds., *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, vol. 1 of *A History of the Book in America* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); James Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers: Transatlantic Literary Community and the Charleston Library Society, 1748-1811* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002); Thomas E. Keys, "The Colonial Library and the Development of Sectional Differences in the American Colonies," *Library Quarterly* 8 (1938): 373-390. Recent work is easiest referenced in Edward Goedecken's essays in the journal *Libraries and Culture* and the annual bibliographies in *Journal of Southern History* and the *North Carolina Historical Review*.

3. Jesse H. Shera, *Foundations of the Public Library: The Origins of the Public Library Movement in New England, 1692-1855* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949) is classic but somewhat dated, while

absent and unimportant in the South as generally believed, and what does this indicate about the level and importance of literacy and education? Libraries, whether communal or private, were signifiers of the cultures prevalent in an area, and therefore a study of libraries and the presence of books and other print materials is a means of recovering “the construction of different print cultures in particular historical circumstances.”⁴

North Carolina was one of the original thirteen colonies but hardly the most literate or most interested in books. Settled relatively late compared to its northern and southern neighbors, it differed from them in lacking large numbers of prosperous plantations or centralized commercial activities. Some Virginia planters amassed large and varied private libraries and probably led the South in reputation and the display of high culture. In addition, William and Mary College, opened in 1693, considered its library “a common Library” open to the public. Yet the transient nature of Williamsburg’s population—when the legislature was in session, its streets and taverns were full, when it was not, the planters rushed home—precluded it becoming as rich a cultural center as Charleston.⁵ Coastal South Carolinians had books, newspapers, and a relatively literate urban life. Charleston, renowned for its wealth and leisure society, was the South’s largest city, but even there, learning was limited to a few. “Its native sons knew little

Haynes McMullen, *American Libraries before 1876* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000) is valuable but largely limits itself to statistics.

4. Johns, *Nature of the Book*, 20 (quotation); see also Harvey J. Graff, “Literacy, Libraries, Lives: New Social and Cultural Histories,” *Reading and Libraries: Proceedings of Library History Seminar VIII . . .*, ed. Donald G. Davis Jr. (Austin: Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Texas at Austin, 1991), 24-45. While scribal culture was certainly present, attention will be devoted here to print cultures because of the nature of the evidence that has survived. Useful works include Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*, 2d ed. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998); Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Bestsellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: Norton, 1994), 169-197; James Smith Allen, *In the Public Eye: A History of Reading in Modern France, 1800-1940* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 3-19; Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, *A Handbook for the Study of Book History in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 2000); Daniel R. Headrick, *When Information Came of Age: Technologies of Knowledge in the Age of Reason and Revolution, 1700-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); James A. Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Visages of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); and Thomas Augst and Wayne Wiegand, eds., *Libraries as Agencies of Culture*, a special issue of the journal *American Studies* 42 (fall 2001).

5. Seventeen twenty-three letter of the college president, cited in *Public Libraries in the United States of America: Their History, Condition, and Management: A Special Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education, 1876*, 3 vols. (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1971), 1:26 n. 1 (quotation); Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1982), 118, 121-131, 239-240, 294-295; Richard Beale Davis, *Intellectual Life in Jefferson’s Virginia, 1790-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 3-25, 46, 49-54, 73-118; *A Brief and True Report for the Traveller Concerning Williamsburg in Virginia* (Richmond, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg, 1935), 46-52; Brown, *Knowledge Is Power*, 57-58; Cynthia Z. Stiverson and Gregory A. Stiverson, “The Colonial Retail Book Trade . . . in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” *Printing and Society in Early America*, ed. William L. Joyce et al. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), 132-173.

Latin, less Greek, and seldom read books," despite the generosity of a local merchant in leaving his books to the Charles Town Literary Society.⁶

Virginia tobacco and South Carolina rice and indigo, worked by slaves, allowed a wealthy few to support literate, semi-aristocratic cultures. Early colonial North Carolina did not have large numbers of cultured plantation owners, merchants, and lawyers. In the seventeenth century, North Carolinians were more like the poorer folk of the South Carolina and Virginia backcountry who were barely able to read or write and had only limited access to newspapers and printed books. New Bern and Wilmington might envy Charleston and Williamsburg but could hardly emulate them.⁷

News from Britain often took over three months to reach coastal North Carolina and another two weeks or longer to reach settlements in the farther Piedmont.⁸ Ethnic and religious differences increased class, economic, and geographic animosity. The web of print communication was weak in North Carolina and made governing all the more difficult.⁹ But one should not belittle those who had small chance or need to read. As a coastal slave pointed out, Indians and blacks "learned many things from the book of Nature, which were

6. Carl Bridenbaugh, *Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 54-118 (quotation, 117); Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 174, 300; Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers*, 25-26; Walter J. Fraser Jr., *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 132-133.

7. See, in general, Louis B. Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies, 1607-1763* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 7-13; Russel Blaine Nye, *The Cultural Life of the New Nation, 1776-1830* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), 113-116; Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 52-53, 71-76, 134-139, 143-145; Michael O'Brien, *Rethinking the South: Essays in Intellectual History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 1-56; and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1890s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

8. Charles Christopher Crittenden, "Means of Communication in North Carolina, 1763-1789," *North Carolina Historical Review* 8 (October 1931): 373-383. General works include Hugh T. Lefler and William S. Powell, *Colonial North Carolina: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 29-57; Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *North Carolina, The History of a Southern State*, 3d ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 13-31, 45-51, 68-71; William S. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 50-83; and Marvin L. Michael Kay and Lorin Lee Cary, *Slavery in North Carolina, 1748-1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 4-6, 10-25, 250-253.

9. Harry Roy Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Historical Geography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964); Paul D. Escott and Jeffrey J. Crow, "The Social Order and Violent Disorder: An Analysis of North Carolina in the Revolution and the Civil War," *Journal of Southern History* 52 (August 1986): 381, 388, 391; Brown, *Knowledge Is Power*, 42-43. See also Robert H. Wiebe, *The Opening of American Society* (New York: Vintage, 1985); D. W. Meinig, *Atlantic America, 1492-1800*, vol. 1 of *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986); Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Viking, 2001); and J. R. McNeill and William H. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's Eye View of World History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003).

unknown to white folk.”¹⁰ Most white North Carolinians were subsistence farmers living in scattered communities with minimal need to read extensively. Carolina was only a minor part of the Atlantic-Caribbean world, although smuggling sometimes became a way of life.¹¹ North Carolinians early learned to oppose a government, whether near or far, that they saw as unhelpful and unduly restrictive. As the earliest recorded North Carolina poem put it, their contrary character echoed the nature surrounding them: “As blustering Winds disturb the calmest Sea / And all the Waters rave and mutiny / . . . So Tyrants drive the People to Extrems. . . .”¹²

Books were not unheard of in the first half century of European settlement, but they were not plentiful. George Durant, who left England in 1658, was only one of many who brought a Bible with him. When Thomas Miller, the collector of customs, was “put in Irons & in a cruell & barbarous manner shut up” during Culpepper’s Rebellion in 1677, he most missed “his owne Bookes.” But books and even the Bible were rare enough. Of those dying intestate before 1700, only William Fos[ter?], in 1692 with one “bibell” and “7 hondred waight of Tobacko,” and Dr. James Besli, in 1695 with “1 Surment [sermon] books,” seem to have had books at all. Colonial white Americans, whether of the ruling group or the much more numerous farmers and traders of the interior, had much to occupy their

10. David S. Cecelski, *The Waterman’s Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 9 (quotation). Cf., Thomas Hariot, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588; reprint, New York: Dover, 1972), 27; and E. Brooks Holifield, *Era of Persuasion: American Thought and Culture, 1521-1680* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 76, 158. For black autobiographies on the subject of literacy, see Vincent Carretta and Phillp Gould, eds., *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001); and William L. Andrews, ed., *North Carolina Slave Narratives: The Lives of Moses Roper, Lunsford Lane, Moses Grandy, and Thomas H. Jones* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). For a caution against assuming that culture mirrors social class or other categories such as ecology or ethnicity, see Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1978), esp. 29-42.

11. Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg diary (1752), Adelaide L. Fries et al., eds., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, 12 vols. to date (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1922-), 1:31-32; Alan D. Watson, *Society in Colonial North Carolina* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1982); Thomas C. Parramore, “The Merchants Foote,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 46 (October 1969): esp. 367-369; Elizabeth A. Fenn and Peter H. Wood, “Natives and Newcomers,” in *The Way We Lived in North Carolina before 1770*, ed. Joe A. Mobley (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Lindley S. Butler, *Pirates, Privateers, and Rebel Raiders of the Carolina Coast* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). The Atlantic and Atlantic-Caribbean environments are becoming increasingly popular among historians as units of study.

12. Wayne E. Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001); Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); and A. Roger Ekirch, “Poor Carolina”: *Politics and Society in Colonial North Carolina, 1729-1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), esp. 30-33, 168. Richard Beale Davis, ed., “Three Poems from Colonial North Carolina,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 46 (January 1969): 34-35 (quotation).

minds and small inclination to read beyond the Bible and a few other Christian books, almanacs, and practical self-help books, or the stray newspaper that might come their way. Even after the Revolution, a young plowboy complained of the "great scarcity of books" while reading and rereading the one he had.¹³ Yet apprentices and destitute orphans were expected to be taught how to "Reed." Imported books, magazines, and newspapers "were lifelines of identity, and they were direct material links to a present and past European culture."¹⁴

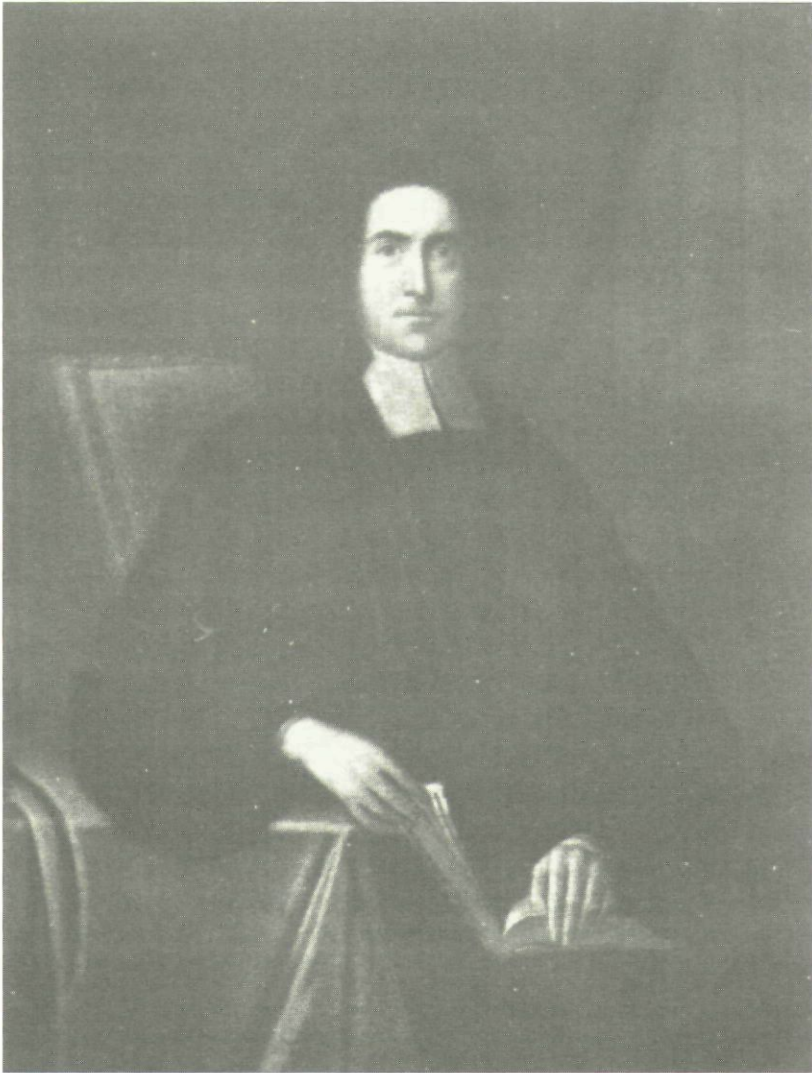
Bath, a hamlet of only six to nine houses, became the home of one of the earliest "public" or community libraries in colonial America and certainly the first library in North Carolina. That it did so was because of an Englishman, not a North Carolinian. Thomas Bray, founder of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), was "convinced, That . . . a LIBRARY, is what will best induce a Learned and Sober Minister to go into the Service of any part of the Church in the Plantations; . . . considering that few Men of Fortunes, who are able to purchase Books of themselves, will go into such remote Parts." Dr. Bray believed that a priest and his parish should have access to more than just religious books, so he sent a series of libraries to the colonies, especially to Maryland.¹⁵

Bray posted the Reverend Daniel Brett to Bath with 166 books in December 1700 and sent a "layman's collection" in 1704. As the legislature only incorporated Bath in 1705, it was one of the few towns in the world to start with a library already in place. The books were most likely housed in a private home or

13. David Beers Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke: Voyages and Colonies, 1584-1606* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 266-267, 329; Ivor Noël Hume, *The Virginia Adventure, Roanoke to James Towne: An Archaeological and Historical Odyssey* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 51, 93; Weeks, "Libraries and Literature," 174; Wendell W. Smiley, *Library Development in North Carolina before 1930* (Greenville: East Carolina University Library, 1971), 4; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Durant (Durand, Duren), George"; William L. Saunders, ed., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 10 vols. (Raleigh: State of North Carolina, 1886-1890), 1:264 (Miller quotation); Mattie Erma Edwards Parker, ed., *North Carolina Higher-Court Records, 1670-1696*, vol. 2 of *The Colonial Records of North Carolina [Second Series]* (Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Archives and History, 1968), 432 (Fos[ter] quotation), 449 (Besli quotation); Alan D. Watson, ed., *Society in Early North Carolina: A Documentary History* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2000), 297 (plowboy quotation). See also Wright, *Cultural Life of the American Colonies*, 126-153; and Richard Beale Davis, *Intellectual Life in the Colonial South, 1585-1763*, 3 vols. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978), 1:288-290, 301.

14. Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers*, 7 (quotation), 112. An awareness of books, literate culture, and their European heritage helped white Americans maintain a distinction between themselves and supposedly savage Africans and Indians. On material culture as the visible proofs of everyday life, see Thomas J. Schlereth, ed., *Material Culture: A Research Guide* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985).

15. Thornton W. Mitchell, *The State Library and Library Development in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Division of State Library, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1983), 1 (quotation); Charles T. Laughler, *Thomas Bray's Grand Design: Libraries of the Church of England in America, 1695-1785* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1973), 3-21, 26-27, 39-41, 67-68; C. Seymour Thompson, *Evolution of the American Public Library 1653-1876* (Washington, D.C.: Scarecrow Press, 1952), 19-30; *American National Biography*, s.v. "Bray, Thomas."



Thomas Bray, founder of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), believed that priests should have access to both secular as well as religious books. Toward that end, he sent a series of libraries—"layman's collections"—to the American colonies, including North Carolina. Portrait of Thomas Bray from W. K. Lowther, *A History of the S.P.C.K* (London: S.P.C.K, 1959), frontispiece.

homes. Unfortunately, some parishioners considered Brett "ye Monster off ye Age," and he left before the second collection even arrived. The particular importance of Brett's library is the list he made of the first collection in 1703. Forty-eight volumes were secular in nature, including a French grammar, a medical book, and various histories and classical authors.¹⁶ This was a diverse

16. Walter Clark, ed., *The State Records of North Carolina*, 16 vols. (11-26) (Raleigh: State of North Carolina, 1895-1906), 22:733 (quotation); Alan D. Watson, *Bath: The First Town in North Carolina*

collection designed to fill the needs of a literate and respectable leader of local society.¹⁷

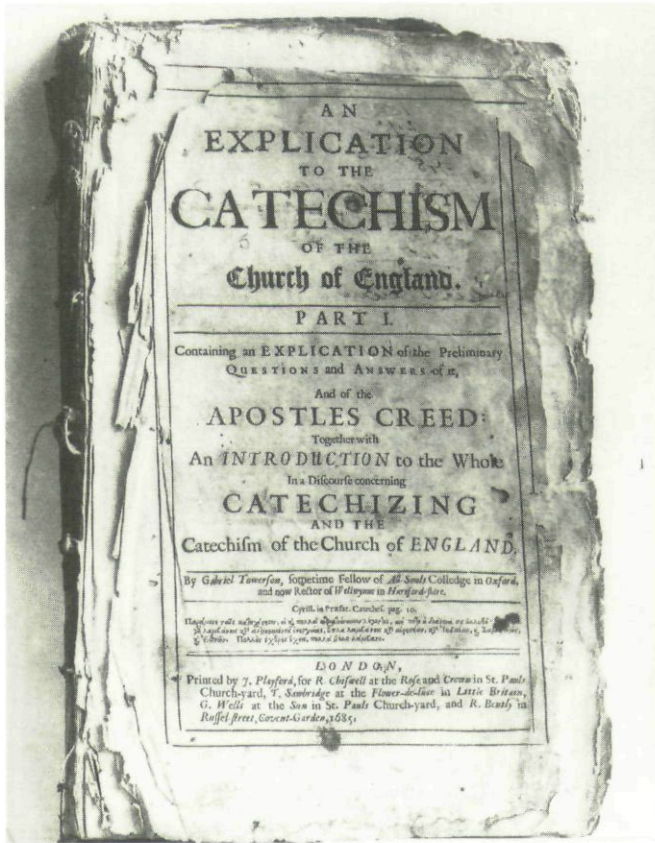
Oddly enough, the SPG layman's libraries were more sectarian in nature than the collections that they entrusted to the ministers. These collections, nonetheless, were "public" in the sense that community members could borrow books and were expected to return them. Each parish that received a library was to maintain it, but by 1712, one observer reported that the Bath books were "all dispersed and lost by those wretches that don't consider the benefit of so valuable a gift." Another minister complained that the books were being used "for waste paper." Many of the books apparently survived but were moved from Bath. The Society sent similar layman's libraries to Currituck Precinct in 1708, Chowan Precinct in 1712, Edenton in 1723, and Wilmington at an unknown date. Other small donations were also made, each layman's collection including religious tracts to be given to the faithful as well as to the unchurched.¹⁸ Nonetheless, North Carolina received relatively few SPG donations compared to Maryland, South Carolina, and Virginia.

In 1715, the North Carolina Assembly enacted a law concerning the SPG libraries that, among other things, endorsed Bray's views on book preservation and personal lending privileges. That such an extensive law was passed indicates that there was concern for the public's right to use the books. Unlike South Carolina, however, North Carolina contributed no money to maintain or increase these libraries. And because there was no practical authority to control the lending of books, the SPG books quickly or slowly dispersed. Some Bray collections appear to have moved with the ministers. In Currituck Precinct, the people, "pretending the Books belonged to them," refused to give the books to the next missionary unless he would stay with them. Virginians seized one collection meant for North Carolina—which, if nothing else, demonstrates popular interest in books. Clearly, there was confusion over ownership of the libraries. Bray inspected the situation

(Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2005), 95-96; Weeks, "Libraries and Literature," 177-179. Brett is not listed in the *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*. John Kenneth Gibson, "The Thomas Bray Libraries, St. Thomas Parish . . . 1700 . . ." (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1986), contains a detailed analysis of the Bath collections. Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 340 n. 5, claims Buenos Aires "as the only city in the world to have been founded with a library."

17. Only one volume from the Bray library at Bath is known to have survived: Gabriel Towerson, *Explication of the Catechism*, part 1 (1685) is in the custody of the St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Bath, Diocese of East Carolina. As late as 1770, the Society might have sent a set of religious books to Rev. John Wills in St. James Parish. Saunders, *Colonial Records*, 8:219-222.

18. Saunders, *Colonial Records*, 1:860 (first quotation), 2:128 (second quotation); for more on Bray and the library at Bath, see 1:572, 601, 715, 884-885; 2:54, 75-76, 119-120, 123, 130, 144, 285-286, 310-311; Clark, *State Records*, 23:73-79, 333; 25:161, 192; and Hugh Talmage Lefler, "The Anglican Church in North Carolina," *The Episcopal Church in North Carolina, 1701-1959*, ed. Lawrence Foushee London and Sarah McCulloh Lemmon (Raleigh: Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, 1987), 4, 530 nn. 23, 24. Laughler, *Thomas Bray's Grand Design*, 67-68, 84-85.



In 1700, Bray sent missionary Daniel Brett to St. Thomas Parish in Bath with a diverse collection of 166 books, both religious and secular. In 1704, he sent another set of books, one of the SPG "layman's collections." This book from the Bray library in Bath, now in the collection of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, is the only volume known to have survived. Photograph courtesy of the North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

in Maryland in 1700, but neither he nor anyone else in the SPG ever went to North Carolina. Although the Society stayed active, its libraries never had the impact Bray had hoped for.¹⁹ A few other ministers, Anglicans and otherwise, had

19. Weeks, "Libraries and Literature," 179-187, 192; Saunders, *Colonial Records*, 1:884 (quotation); cf., 2:130, 310. The N.C. law is in Clark, *State Records*, 23:73-79; for the comparable S.C. law, see Edgar W. Knight, ed., *A Documentary History of Education in the South before 1860*, 5 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949-1953), 1:102-106. See also Davis, *Intellectual Life in the Colonial South*, 2:514-515; Walter Bellingrath Edgar, "The Libraries of Colonial South Carolina" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1967), 77-79; and David D. Oliver, *The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in the Province of North Carolina* (Raleigh, N.C.: Commercial Printing Co., 1910), esp. 23. On the confusion in South Carolina, see Knight, *Documentary History of Education in the South*, 1:108-110.

personal collections, but on the whole, religious leaders in these early decades did little to promote extensive collections of books.²⁰

Edward Moseley, raised in an orphanage in London but a man of great political and social skills, planned to donate a selection of his own books to Edenton in 1723. Perhaps Moseley's intention was to stimulate the SPG into greater generosity, but apparently, the Society never acknowledged him, and it is unlikely that Edenton ever received his collection. When Moseley was a young man new to America, he had cataloged the Bray library in Charles Town, South Carolina. He meant for his donation to be available to the public, but almost all the books were theological, most were in Latin, and some were in Greek or Hebrew. While reading tastes were more religious than today, this collection was hardly suitable for Edenton. Rev. Charles Pettigrew, an Episcopal clergyman from Edenton, observed, "The people in this part of the state do not seem to be very Bookish."²¹

The SPG had trouble raising funds to fully support Bray's ambitious library plans, and his grand design never materialized. As one historian has noted, "Without the addition of new materials, any library soon ceases to hold the interest of its users." The few books from Bray collections remaining today are "silent moldering symbols of an idea in advance of its time."²² When the Associates of Dr. Bray, an offshoot of the SPG primarily interested in Negro and Indian education, later inquired about sending books for the education of blacks in

20. Lefler, "Anglican Church in North Carolina," 1-58; Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, 65; Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), esp. 208-236; David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 704-705; Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), esp. 116-117; Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Lemuel Burkitt and Jesse Read, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association: From Its Original Rise to the Present Time* (Halifax, N.C.: A. Hodge, 1803), in Michaux-Randolph Papers, State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.

21. Charles Pettigrew to Rev. Henry Patillo, January 9, 1789, in Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, ed., *The Pettigrew Papers*, 2 vols. to date (Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Archives and History, 1971-), 1:66 (quotation). See also Davis, *Intellectual Life in the Colonial South*, 2:517; Weeks, "Libraries and Literature," 191; Saunders, *Colonial Records*, 2:583-584; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Moseley, Edward"; and Edgar, "Libraries of Colonial South Carolina," 18, 34, 38, 48, 53-54, 64, 70-77, 86-89. The selection of titles suggests that Moseley was trying to burnish his own image. If Edenton did receive both the SPG and the Moseley collections in 1723, the two collections became intermixed. On Edenton as "a polished society of well-bred and educated people," see John H. Wheeler, *Reminiscences and Memoirs of North Carolina and Eminent North Carolinians* (Columbus, Ohio: Columbus Printing, 1884), xxxi. Moseley's own motto was "peu à peu" (little by little): see his bookplate with three pick axes and three stars in R. Bradley, *General Treatise of Husbandry and Gardening . . .*, 2 vols. (London: T. Woodward and J. Peele, 1726), vol. 2.

22. In 1755 and 1770, the SPG sent a number of religious books to St. James Parish in Wilmington and in the 1760s, sixty-eight books to Brunswick. Parishioners, apparently, could borrow from the St. James Parish library. Laughter, *Thomas Bray's Grand Design*, 30-33 (quotations, 33), 68, 86 (table 4); Weeks, "Libraries and Literature," 180-183; Barbara Beeland Rehder, "Development of Libraries in the Lower Cape Fear," *Lower Cape Fear Historical Society* 7 (February 1964), unpaginated; "Library Chronology," unpaginated, undated typed report, archives, New Hanover Public Library, Wilmington, North Carolina.



In 1703, Edward Moseley, a London attorney, politician, and book collector, cataloged books in Charles Town, South Carolina, for Thomas Bray and the SPG. In 1723, Moseley possibly donated part of his own book collection to Edenton through the SPG. Bookplate from Moseley's library, courtesy of the North Carolina Collection.

Edenton, the town refused.²³ The organization still had not yet learned that libraries cannot be thrust onto communities; communities must spend some effort in securing and maintaining them.

With the 1720s, as European emigration increased and the Indian threat retreated, books began appearing more plentifully in wills and inventories. Richard Marsden, the first rector of St. James Parish in Wilmington but something of a wandering—even “wayward”—minister, exaggerated North Carolina's lack of books in 1735 when he claimed, “There are very few Bibles, common prayer Books, books of devotion &c in this Province.” For example, in 1734, Edward Salter of

23. Letter of Dan[iel] Earl, October 1, 1761, in Knight, *Documentary History of Education in the South*, 1:139, 143, 147-148; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. “Earl, Daniel.” The Associates did send 215 books to Rev. John Barnett in 1769 for a “Negro School” in Cape Fear (Brunswick). Laughter, *Thomas Bray's Grand Design*, 84; Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, and Flora J. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, rev. ed. (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2002), 27-28. See also Robert J. Cain's review of *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The American Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717-1777* in the *North Carolina Historical Review* 63 (October 1986): 546-547; Janet Duitsman Cornelius, “When I Can Read My Title Clear”: *Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 13-16; and Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 315 n. 75.

Bath County had a library large enough to divide into sections—divinity, law, history, mathematics, and other—although no list of the actual titles survives. Seth Pilkington in 1754 had forty-seven books covering navigation, surveying, religion, arithmetic, and dictionaries, and Henry Snode of Beaufort County had both a French and a Latin grammar, along with several volumes of the British journal *Tatler*. Most people, however, had at most only a Bible or a small parcel of books.²⁴

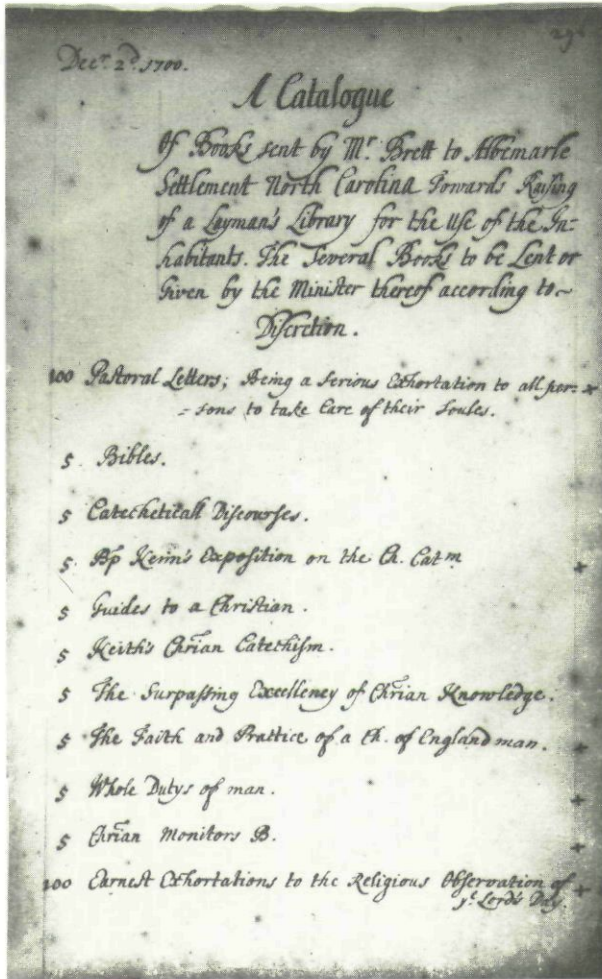
From the 1730s on, the population steadily increased, and a certain number of wealthy rice-growing grandees prospered. The white population grew from just over 10,000 in 1700 to 30,000 thirty years later, to 100,000 in 1760 and almost 300,000 whites and over 100,000 blacks by 1790.²⁵ Immigration from Scotland, for instance, was heavy enough for books to be printed in Gaelic in North Carolina.²⁶ But schools in North Carolina, whether inland or on the coast, were usually brief subscription affairs. Most of these schools or their headmasters would have some books, although records remain sparse.²⁷ The Newberne Academy, for

24. Saunders, *Colonial Records*, 4:13 (quotation); Weeks, "Libraries and Literature," 187; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Marsden, Richard"; "Urnston, John." Smiley, "Library Development in North Carolina," 3-8. For books as "display objects," see Richard Lynn Bushman, "Farmers in Court: Orange County, North Carolina, 1750-1776," in *The Many Legalities of Early America*, ed. Christopher L. Tomlins and Bruce H. Mann (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 400.

25. Fries et al., *Records of the Moravians*, 1:38; Janet Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality . . . 1774 to 1776* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1921), esp. 14; William Attmore, *Journal of a Tour to North Carolina, 1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1922), esp. 28-43; Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina*, 125-133; William S. Price, "North Carolina in the First British Empire: Economy and Society in an Eighteenth-Century Colony," in *The North Carolina Experience: An Interpretive and Documentary History*, ed. Lindley S. Butler and Alan D. Watson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 80-87; Gregory H. Nobles, "Breaking into the Backcountry: New Approaches to the Early American Frontier," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser. 46 (October 1989): esp. 657-661; R. D. W. Connor, *History of North Carolina*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Lewis, 1919), 1:185-189; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Cornell, Samuel"; "Moore, Roger"; and Alan D. Watson, *Wilmington: Port of North Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 5-6, 14. For the sale of a rice plantation of 500 to 1,000 acres, see *Cape Fear Mercury*, September 22, 1773. See also Patricia Cline Cohen, *A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America*, rev. ed. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 52-56, 78-80.

26. William S. Powell, "Eighteenth-Century North Carolina Imprints: A Revision and Supplement to McMurtrie," *North Carolina Historical Review* 35 (January 1958): 63 (entry 164); Archibald S. McMillan Collection, Private Collections, State Archives; Alexander Murdoch, ed., "A Scottish Document Concerning Emigration to North Carolina in 1772," *North Carolina Historical Review* 67 (October 1990): 438-449; Lefler and Powell, *Colonial North Carolina*, 93; Guion Griffis Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 349; Hugh Amory, "Reinventing the Colonial Book," in Amory and Hall, *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, 30.

27. Connor, *History of North Carolina*, 1:199-202; M. C. S. Noble, *A History of the Public Schools of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 7-9, 13-17, 28-30; Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 3 vols. (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1973), 1:80-84, 260; Wetmore, "Literary and Cultural Development of Ante-Bellum Wilmington," 27-28, 150-156; Douglas F. Kelly and Caroline Switzer Kelly, *Carolina Scots: An Historical and Genealogical Study of Over 100 Years of Emigration* (Dillon, S.C.: 1739 Publications, 1998), 108-117; LeGette Blythe and Charles R. Brockmann, *Homet's Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County* (Charlotte: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1961), 27-29; Mildred Morse McEwen, *Queens College, Yesterday and Today*



In those communities with layman's libraries, members could borrow both secular and religious books from the collections. But because there was no central authority to control lending, books were often lost or dispersed. First page of the catalog for one of the SPG layman's libraries in North Carolina, reproduced courtesy of the North Carolina Collection.

instance, was considered a public institution, so Congress deposited a folio copy of Bishop Thomas Wilson's donated works at its library until the University of North Carolina could be opened.²⁸ Informal teaching by parents to children, masters to

(Charlotte, N.C.: Queens College Alumnae Association, 1980), 5-6; Alice L. Bordsen, "Scottish Attitudes Reflected in the Library History of North Carolina," *Libraries and Culture* 27 (spring 1992): 121-142. See also James Reid, *Sermon Recommending the Establishment of Public Schools . . .*, cited in Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Eighteenth Century North Carolina Imprints, 1774-1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1938), 54 (no. 42). On tutors, see also Knight, *Documentary History of Education in the South*, 1:661-664.

28. Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, 2 vols. (1907; reprint, Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Co., 1974), 1:404. *The Works of the Right Reverend Father in God Thomas Wilson* (Bath, England: R. Crutwell, and sold by C. Dilly . . . , 1782), Rare Book Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is a different copy.

apprentices, and scattered clergy to their equally scattered charges, using what books were at hand, probably provided the real basis for what education there was, but unfortunately, such practices leave little evidence for the historian.²⁹ Families who owned seven or eight books in the backcountry in the 1750s possessed a large collection.³⁰

Especially interesting is the case of Liberty Hall Academy in Charlotte. Denied a charter because of Anglican and Royalist fears of Presbyterian democracy, it operated outside the law in the early 1770s as a public forum with an attached library. The debates that led to the anti-British Mecklenburg Resolves were held there. Its library seems to have been founded in 1771, when Waightstill Avery, a lawyer and trustee, bought fifteen books from Matthew Troy of Salisbury. The collection soon grew to forty-three books and may have been the second subscription community library in the colony. Diligent research by Stewart Lillard has also uncovered a number of other small to middling collections in Mecklenburg County.³¹

Germans also settled in the Carolina Piedmont beginning in the mid-1700s. They brought books with them and quickly founded churches and schools. The Reverend Andrew Loretz, for example, came to America from Switzerland in 1784 with "a fine library of theological works, which, however, after his death, was sold in an unappreciative community for a trifle."³² The same year that Loretz

29. A point recognized in Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1960). On the growing use of spelling books, see Ross W. Beales and E. Jennifer Monaghan, "Literacy and Schoolbooks," in Amory and Hall, *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, 383-384; but see also Elizabeth Carroll Reilly and David D. Hall, "Customers and the Market for Books," in Amory and Hall, *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, 387-399, for geographical, age, and gender differences in reading habits.

30. William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina . . .* (1846; reprint, New Bern: Owen G. Dunn, 1966), 125-126, 131-136, 434-435; Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 1:61-65.

31. Stewart Lillard kindly sent me a copy of his manuscript, "The Mecklenburg County (North Carolina) Library of 1771-1772," which includes an annotated catalog of the Liberty Hall library. See also Bordsen, "Scottish Attitudes," 135-137; R. D. W. Connor, *A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1776-1799*, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 1:2-9; McEwen, *Queens College*, 7-15. On the Resolves, see Richard N. Current, "That Other Declaration: May 20, 1775-May 20, 1975," *North Carolina Historical Review* 54 (April 1977): 169-191; Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 176-177. Virginia's Liberty Hall Academy (1776) developed into Washington and Lee University. Betty Ruth Kondayan, "The Library of Liberty Hall Academy," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 86 (October 1978): 432-446.

32. G. William Welker, "Early German Reformed Settlements in North Carolina," in Saunders, *Colonial Records*, 8:727-796 (quotation, 755); cf. William Henry Hoyt, ed., *The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey*, 2 vols. (Raleigh, N.C.: E. M. Uzzell, 1914), 1:45 n. 1; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Loretz, Andrew"; Joseph R. Nixon, *The German Settlers in Lincoln County and Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1912), esp. 54-55; Aaron Spencer Fogleman, "Jesus Is Female: The Moravian Challenge in the German Communities of British North America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser. 60 (April 2003): 295-332; Frances Griffin, *Less Time for Meddling: A History of Salem Academy and College, 1772-1866* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, 1979), 6, 14-19, 98-100; Fries et al., *Records of the Moravians*, vol. 11.

emigrated, the legislature authorized Liberty Hall to open in Salisbury with “suitable and convenient Houses for the same, providing a philosophical [scientific] apparatus and public library.”³³

German and French settlers overwhelmingly could write their names, something that could not be said of all British Americans. A leading student of the history of books in the South claims that French “appears to have been read with relative ease [by elites] from Maryland to Georgia.” He considers southerners at that time to have had a fairly high level of literacy.³⁴ Thirty-seven of thirty-eight officials in Granville County (east-central North Carolina, near the Virginia line) in 1754-1755 could “write their names in a bold, strong hand, and only one signed by mark.” However, almost 40 percent (thirty-one of seventy-nine people) who left wills in that same county between 1750 and 1772 could not sign their names. People leaving wills were generally wealthier and more prominent members of society, or at least landholders, whereas the ability to write one’s name did not mean that one could read a newspaper, an almanac, or the Bible. Indeed, as historians of literacy have pointed out, writing and reading are different skills, with writing only taught later, and often separately. There are also some indications that the earliest settlers were more literate than their children. This is a story hard to quantify until the nineteenth century, when better statistics are available, but does illustrate that male literacy, while widespread, was far from universal.³⁵

33. Bill for the Encouragement of Learning in the District of Salisbury, November, 13, 1784; T. H. McCaule, petition, September 21, 1784, both in Farlin Q. Ball Collection, Private Collections, State Archives.

34. Richard Beale Davis, *A Colonial Southern Bookshelf: Reading in the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 10-16 (quotation, 11). Eleazer Allen had fifty titles in French among his approximately three hundred volumes. Wetmore, “Literary and Cultural Development of Antebellum Wilmington,” 37.

35. Weeks, “Libraries and Literature,” 211-212 n. 2; Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina*, 19, 22; Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, 344-349; Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England: An Enquiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974); Edward Stevens, “The Anatomy of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century United States,” in *National Literacy Campaigns: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Robert F. Arnove and Harvey J. Graff (New York: Plenum Press, 1987), 99-122; Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), 4, 13-14, 197; Robert E. Gallman, “Influences on the Distribution of Land Holdings in Early Colonial North Carolina,” *Journal of Economic History* 42 (September 1982): 559; *Encyclopedia of American Social History*, s.v. “Literacy”; Cohen, *A Calculating People*, 6-7. For literate women and peasants deliberately not signing documents—and thereby potentially misleading later historians—see Alistair Black, *A New History of the English Public Library: Social and Intellectual Contexts, 1850-1914* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), 41; and István György Tóth, *Literacy and Written Culture in Early Modern Central Europe* (Budapest, Hungary: Central European University Press, 2000); but see also cf. Bushman, “Farmers in Court,” 388-413. The complexity and depth of contemporary research into reading are well reflected in Barbara Ryan and Amy M. Thomas, eds., *Reading Acts: U.S. Readers’ Interactions with Literature, 1800-1950* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2002).

At the time of the American Revolution, "most white women in the southern states were probably incapable of even signing their names," notes historian Cynthia Kierner. James Iredell, later a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, claimed, "For my own Part, I know of no Character more pleasing than a sensible Woman who has read elegantly and judiciously." Most signs, indeed, point to substantial growth in female literacy over the eighteenth century. Literacy, however defined and measured, undoubtedly varied but decreased the more one traveled away from towns and into the backcountry. A book survives from the center of the colony inscribed, "David Kennedy his Book he may read good but God knows when." Indeed, because of the fear of semiliterate juries and judges, North Carolina continued the practice of "Benefit of Clergy" long after most states discontinued it. "Clergy"—anyone who could read and write—could have cases removed to a higher court. All this leads to the conclusion that reading was not a necessity of life for common folk.³⁶

It was not that frontiersmen and settlers were against reading, but rather that they were absorbed in the practical business of life. Nor were many books directed toward their interests. What books they did have they probably read closely and discussed with others. Oral communication was more important than reading, even for the transmission of national news. Long-distance communication and rural transportation remained poor and uncertain. On the eve of the American Revolution, it could take a month for mail to be transported from Charleston to Virginia by land through North Carolina. Books were correspondingly expensive and libraries rare in North Carolina, even by the standards of colonial America.³⁷

36. Cynthia A. Kierner, *Southern Women in Revolution, 1776-1800: Personal and Political Narratives* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 53 (Iredell quotation); but see also Joel Perlmann and Dennis Shirley, "When Did New England Women Acquire Literacy?" *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser. 48 (1991): 50-67; Kevin J. Hayes, *A Colonial Woman's Bookshelf* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 3-4; and Beales and Monaghan, "Literacy and Schoolbooks," 380-387. James Iredell to Hannah Johnston, April 1773, quoted in Watson, *Society in Early North Carolina*, 297; Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 715-717 (Kennedy quotation, 715). On benefit of clergy, see Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 178; see also *The Laws of North-Carolina, 1806*, ch. 6, p. 9. On North Carolinians as "plain, incult [uncultured], honest men," see Aratus [pseudonym], "Number V," July 23, 1789, reprinted in Charles Christopher Crittenden, *North Carolina Newspapers before 1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1928), 78. Rural New England was a very different and much more commercial society. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life*, 1-2, *passim*.

37. Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, 121-122; Amory and Hall, *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, 9-10; cf. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life*, 190-192; and Brown, *Knowledge Is Power*, 8-9, 34, 255. See also Watson, "Role of Printing," 80; Wheeler, *Reminiscences and Memoirs*, xxiii; Lefler and Newsome, *North Carolina*, 112-113; Weeks, "Libraries and Literature," 218; Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina*, 28; Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina*, 144-145; Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Vintage, 1958), 338-340; Stephanie Grauman Wolf, *As Various as Their Land: The Everyday Lives of Eighteenth-Century Americans* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1994), 236-239; and Jack Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790-1840* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 204-228. Crittenden, *North Carolina Newspapers*, 27, 50-51, 54-55; Lemmon, *Pettigrew Papers*, 1:237.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1769.

[NUMBER 73]

THE **CAROLINA**  **NORTH-GAZETTE.**
 With the latest ADVICES, FOREIGN and DOMESTICK.

Printed by JAMES DAVIS, at the POST-OFFICE in NEWBERN.

No 2 NEWBERN.

To his excellency William Tryon Esq; his Majesty's captain general, governor and commander in chief in and over the province of North Carolina.

The humble Address of his Majesty's council of the said province.

May it please your excellency,

WE, his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the members of his council, beg leave to return your excellency our thanks for your speech at the opening of this session.

With gratitude we acknowledge his Majesty's paternal indulgence, in leaving the regulation of Indian affairs to the colonies.

The regard your excellency has been pleased to assure us will be shewn to the representations of the general assembly respecting an emission of paper currency, gives us hopes that an act of parliament may be obtained for that purpose, to relieve the inhabitants of this province, from the distresses they labour under for want of money.

We thank ourselves, on all will be passed this session for appointing an agent in England; the necessity of such an appointment is so obvious, that we believe no difficulty can arise upon that subject.

The encouragement given by act of parliament for the culture of raw silk in America, we hope will induce the inhabitants of this province to enter with spirit upon such a cultivation, profitable to themselves and advantageous to Great Britain.

The assurances your excellency has been pleased to give us of the disposition of his Majesty's ministers towards the American colonies, and of their intention to propose to parliament the repeal of the acts laying duties on glass, paper and colours, are truly pleasing, and will be efficacious in healing the unhappy division and jealousies that have been destructive to the trade of Great-Britain and America, and restore that affection and confidence upon which the happiness of both is greatly depend.

We are sensibly affected with the calamities arising to this province from the extreme violence of the late storm; the losses of the inhabitants of this town in particular, are truly deplorable; we sympathize with them in their misfortunes, and shall readily concur in such measures as may be most effectual to prevent the like devastations for the future.

This house, ever actuated to the good of their country, and attached by an inviolable loyalty to his Majesty, will use their utmost influence to preserve that harmony which subsists between every branch of the legislature; and with his Majesty's service and the defence of this government, at this time, when we are enjoying the blessings of peace, permit us first, to say we humbly apprehend, is by no means necessary, as every clog or tax whatsoever upon our trade must necessarily be a discouragement to the same, and of course have such a tendency as to be prejudicial rather than advantageous to the country.

JAMES HASEL President.

To which ADDRESS his excellency was pleased to return the following ANSWER.

Gentlemen of his Majesty's Council, YOUR affectionate solicitude of loyalty to his Majesty, and your zeal for his interest, the welfare of this province, have been repeatedly testified in your public conduct, by promoting the prosperity of his Majesty's government, and the relief of its inhabitants.

I am ever highly honoured by your favourable opinion of my administration; the success of which I place entirely in the addition of your confidence, and the support I have hitherto experienced from the honourable assembly in so honourable an employment is mine, but as it is reflected on me, through the aid and assistance of those branches of the legislature.

WILL. TRYON.

To his Excellency William Tryon Esq; Captain General, Governor, and commander in chief in and over his Majesty's province of North Carolina.

The Address of the assembly of the said province.

Sir,

WE, his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the members of the assembly of the province of North Carolina, return your excellency our sincere thanks for your speech at the opening of this session, and beg leave to congratulate your excellency, on your happy return from Virginia to your government.

The information your excellency has given us, that no petition to his Majesty for the cessation of an emission of paper currency as a legal tender, can meet with success, gives us the utmost content, as we should otherwise, thro' the want of representation of the late assembly, with your excellency's interest at home, which you were pleased to kindly offer, and which we doubt not, has been most strenuously exerted in favour of the province, we find it has obtained the relief so necessary to the distressed situation and circumstances of this country.

We are truly sensible of the necessity of having an agent in England, duly authorized to act in every case, in which the interest of this colony may be concerned. This house therefore, will proceed to the appointment of an agent, in which we hope to have the concurrence of the other branches of the legislature; and will make the necessary provision for supporting such an establishment.

The encouragement given by act of parliament to the culture of raw silk in America, is pleasing and agreeable to us; and we assure your excellency, that it shall meet with such further encouragement (consistent with the true interest of this country) as is so interesting an object may require.

The making provision of powder and lead for his Majesty's service and the defence of this government, at this time, when we are enjoying the blessings of peace, permit us first, to say we humbly apprehend, is by no means necessary, as every clog or tax whatsoever upon our trade must necessarily be a discouragement to the same, and of course have such a tendency as to be prejudicial rather than advantageous to the country.

The state of our public funds at no time since the settlement of the colony, has required a more strict examination than at present; and we agree with your excellency that a statement of the public accounts, should be forthwith obtained, for a general view of them may be made known to the country; and shall be extremely obliged to your excellency for any observations or regulations in the manner of keeping the public accounts that you shall be pleased to lay before us, which may tend to render the same free from that obscurity they have hitherto been in.

We shall ever esteem it our indispensable duty to enquire into, and see how far the laws for the emission of paper currency have had their effect, and in whole hands the fees raised to sink those emissions remain.

It is intelligence your excellency has received from home, and which you are pleased to communicate to us regarding the intention of his Majesty's present ministers having no design to propose to parliament to lay any further taxes on America for the purpose of raising a revenue, and their proposing to take off the duties upon glass, paper, and colours, is very gratifying, and will be much more so, when we find their designs are carried into execution, even upon the consideration of such duties having been had contrary to the principles of commerce; and we rejoice that we are once to be happy as to have the sentiments of the ministry, in that particular, coincide with our own.

We sympathize with the unfortunate sufferers in the late storm in general, and with the inhabitants of Newbern in particular: But the calamities, losses, and misfortunes, occasioned thereby, being general, we cannot, consistent with the duty we owe our constituents, think of granting them assistance, in preference to any other part of the province, least, by so doing, we should shew a partiality we would ever endeavour to avoid.

To which ADDRESS his excellency was pleased to return the following ANSWER.

Mr. Speaker, and gentlemen of the house of assembly,

I Thank you for your congratulations on my return from Virginia to this country. It would have afforded me the much satisfaction if the supply of ammunition for the protection of the country, and the assistance for the town of Newbern, which I recommended to you in my speech, had been honoured with your approbation.

WILLIAM TRYON.

On Thursday last the house of assembly came to the following resolution.

Resolved, *Demise Contravenes*, That the sole right of imposing taxes on the inhabitants of this his Majesty's colony of North Carolina, is now, and ever hath been, legally and constitutionally vested in the house of assembly, lawfully convened, according to the ancient and established practice, with the consent of the council and his Majesty, the King of Great-Britain, or his governor for the time being.

Resolved, non est, That it is the undoubted privilege of the inhabitants of this colony, to petition their Sovereign for redress of grievances; and that it is lawful and expedient to procure the concurrence of

James Davis of Williamsburg, Virginia, established the first printing press in North Carolina in 1749. Because books and periodicals were difficult to print and sell, Davis produced shorter works such as broadsides, almanacs, pamphlets, and the colony's first newspaper, the *North-Carolina Gazette*, from 1751 to perhaps 1761, and again under this title from 1768 to 1788. Front page of the *North-Carolina Gazette*, November, 10, 1769, from the State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.

The history of printing and newspapers is important in the development of a literate culture that would encourage and support the growth of libraries. Yet nine colonies had a printing press before North Carolina. The colony eventually recognized that it needed a resident printer to publish its laws and proclamations, so it levied taxes on wine, rum, distilled liquors, and rice in the 1740s to pay for a printer and printing press. James Davis, a printer from Williamsburg, Virginia, set up North Carolina's first press in New Bern in 1749 and finished printing the laws within two years.³⁸ Davis also published in 1753 the first nonlegal book compiled by a North Carolinian, Clement Hall's *A Collection of Many Christian Experiences, Sentences, and Several Places of Scripture Improved*. An Anglican priest, Hall compiled his short *Collection* mainly from the Bible and Book of Common Prayer but included some original aphorisms. Hall meant for it to "be of some Use to others . . . instead of Drinking, Gaming, or telling of an idel or slandrous Tale."³⁹ Such publications helped spread a public sphere of elite readers across North Carolina. Officials and lawyers, merchants and farmers increasingly immersed in commercial transactions wanted and needed to know about laws and events not easily transmitted or referenced by oral culture.⁴⁰

Books and periodicals were nonetheless difficult to print and sell, so American printers typically produced broadsides, almanacs, pamphlets, and newspapers; sold stationery; and, like most if not all printers, bound books. Even so, James Davis published ninety-nine titles over thirty-three years, mostly of a legal or legislative nature. However, one of his books, *The First Book of the American Chronicles of the Times*, was humorous. It was "to be sold at the Printing Office, and by most of the storekeepers in town and country." In addition, Davis wrote and printed the colony's first newspaper, the *North-Carolina Gazette*, from 1751 to perhaps 1761, and under various titles from 1764 to 1778. Symptomatic of the comparative literary backwardness of North Carolina, there already was a *Maryland Gazette* in 1727, a *South Carolina Gazette* in 1732, and a *Virginia Gazette* in 1736 (which Davis had probably helped print). Davis also became the colony's postmaster in 1755 and published another newspaper, the *North Carolina Magazine*, from 1764 to 1778. A Patriot acquainted by business dealings with Benjamin Franklin, Davis

38. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Davis, James." The first actual printer in North Carolina, albeit a man without a press, was Hugh Meredith. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Meredith, Hugh."

39. Clement Hall, *A Collection of Many Christian Experiences, Sentences, and Several Places of Scripture Improved* (1753; reprint, Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Archives and History, 1961). *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Hall, Clement." By comparison, the printing press was not introduced into Brazil until 1807: David S. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 134.

40. See esp. Gilmore-Lehne, "Between Boeotia and Athens," 3-5, 8; and Richard D. Brown, *The Strength of a People: The Idea of an Informed Citizenry in America, 1650-1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 66, 85-86.

was active in North Carolina's movement toward independence. His printing press proved especially useful in spreading news and opinions about the deepening quarrel with Britain. Although the number of his paying subscriptions, mostly near New Bern, has been estimated at less than one hundred, his and other newspapers carried advertisements directed at rural folk, and he printed letters from as far away as present-day Tennessee.⁴¹ Newspapers would be passed from person to person, while stores kept them as drawing cards for locals to read and discuss.⁴²

Andrew Steuart, originally of Belfast, Ireland, also published a newspaper. He established the *North Carolina Gazette and Weekly Post-Boy* in Wilmington in 1764. Less of a Patriot than Davis, Steuart ran into trouble with fiery local citizens over the Stamp Act while almost simultaneously annoying the royal governor by printing "inflammatory Expressions." "What Part," Steuart complained, "is he now to Act?—Continue to keep his Press open and free, and be in Danger of Corporal Punishment, or bloque it up and run the Risque of having his Brains knocked out?" Steuart soon sold his equipment and type to Adam Boyd. Boyd, born in Pennsylvania and trained as a Presbyterian minister, ran the *Cape Fear Mercury* from 1769 until 1776. The *Mercury* was more literary than Davis's *Gazette*, although even the latter often had a poetry corner for local effusions.⁴³ Significantly, both Boyd and Davis, unlike Steuart, aligned their newspapers with the colonial revolutionaries and helped cement the independence and importance of print in American culture.⁴⁴

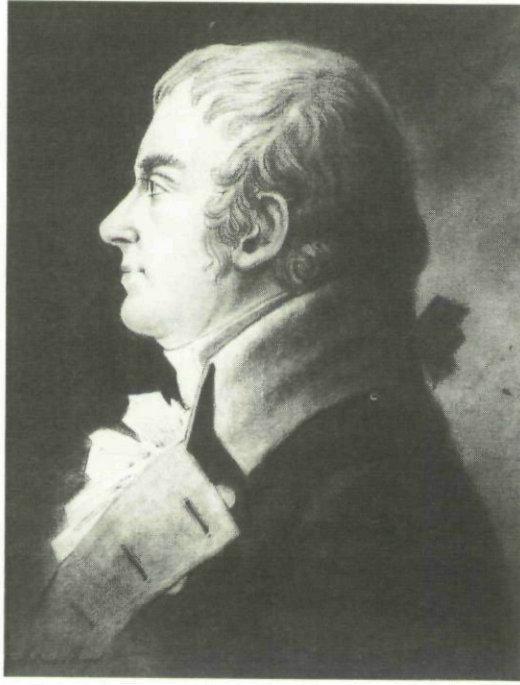
Newspaper printing appears to have ceased in North Carolina during the latter part of the American Revolution, although Lord Charles Cornwallis had a press when he passed through with fire and sword in 1781. Soldiers—both Tories and Patriots—destroyed or sold off a number of private libraries, and the turmoil

41. Crittenden, *North Carolina Newspapers*, 11-23; William S. Powell, "The Bicentennial of Printing in North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 27 (April 1950): 193-199; Robert N. Elliott Jr., "James Davis and the Beginning of the Newspaper in North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 42 (January 1965): 1-20; *First Book of the Americans*, cited in McMurtrie, *Eighteenth Century North Carolina Imprints*, no. 71 (quotation).

42. "Almost without exception these men [merchants] owned books. . . ." Helen R. Watson, "The Books They Left: Some 'Liberies' in Edgecombe County, 1733-1783," *North Carolina Historical Review* 48 (July 1971): 255. See Daniel B. Thorp, "Doing Business in the Backcountry: Retail Trade in Colonial Rowan County, North Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser. 48 (July 1991): 387-408; and Thorp, "Taverns and Tavern Culture on the Southern Colonial Frontier: Rowan County, North Carolina, 1753-1776," *Journal of Southern History* 62 (November 1996): 661-688, which do not, however, mention newspapers or books.

43. *North Carolina Gazette and Weekly Post-Boy*, February 12, 1766 (quotation); *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Steuart, Andrew"; "Boyd, Adam." See also Crittenden, *North Carolina Newspapers*, 36-39, 10 n. 7; Durward T. Stokes, "Adam Boyd, Publisher, Preacher, and Patriot," *North Carolina Historical Review* 49 (January 1972): 1-21; Griffith J. McRee, *Life and Correspondence of James Iredell* . . . , 2 vols. (1857-1858; reprint, New York: Peter Smith, 1949), 194-195; and Wetmore, "Literary and Cultural Development of Ante-Bellum Wilmington," 115-119.

44. Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 47-82, 391.



Other printers joined Davis in publishing North Carolina newspapers, including Andrew Steuart and Adam Boyd. Boyd, a Presbyterian minister from Pennsylvania, published Wilmington's *Cape Fear Mercury* from 1769 until 1776. Portrait of Boyd courtesy of the North Carolina Collection.

continued well after Cornwallis moved the bulk of his troops to Yorktown. Massachusetts printer and Patriot Isaiah Thomas, according to himself, was "burnt in effigy by the royalists of northcarolina [sic]." British soldiers destroyed several libraries, including Guilford County clergyman David Caldwell's "log cabin" library, which held medical and agricultural as well as religious books. The Liberty Hall library in Charlotte was probably also among the collections destroyed, while British troops or Tories apparently left William Hooper of Wilmington his law books but "shamefully injured" the rest of his library. It is only fair to add that the Patriots dispersed or destroyed the governor's library and others owned by Tories.⁴⁵

45. Clark, *State Records*, 14:700; 16:249; 22:881-885; Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 77, 236, 273; Weeks, "Libraries and Literature," 214-215; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Avery, Waightstill"; "Caldwell, David"; Watson, "Books They Left," 252-253; Lillard, "The Mecklenburg County (North Carolina) Library," 2-4 n. 17. See also McMullen, *American Libraries before 1876*, 19; David Schenck, *North Carolina. 1780-'81 . . .* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards and Broughton, 1889); Chalmers G. Davidson, "Independent Mecklenburg," *North Carolina Historical Review* 46 (April 1969): 126; Hugh F. Rankin, *Greene and Cornwallis: The Campaign in the Carolinas* (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2003); John Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse: The American Revolution in the Carolinas* (New York: John Wiley, 1997); and Roger McDonough, "Public Libraries," in *A History of New Jersey Libraries, 1750-1996*, ed. Edwin Beckerman (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 2-4. Thomas is quoted in Russell L. Martin, "Publishing the American Revolution," in *Perspectives on American Book History: Artifacts and Commentary*, ed. Scott E. Casper et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 93.

If the quantity of original publications in North Carolina was not great before 1800, the literary quality was equally low, according to all students of the field.⁴⁶ A few poets expressed themselves, occasionally in German and Gaelic, with the American Revolution inspiring a number of verses and some songs. Thomas Godfrey, a transplanted Pennsylvanian living near Wilmington, wrote the first play acted by a professional troupe in America.⁴⁷

Print culture, including original works, had come to North Carolina, but there was meager ground in which to grow literature. As publishing venues were so thin, books were generally obtained overseas or from other colonies. The general retail markup for books was 300 to 400 percent, and much of the paper used for printing also had to be imported. Newspapers begged for clean rags. "Writing," states a close historian of literary New England, "was the least widely practiced major mode of cultural expression in early America."⁴⁸ The paucity of towns and the lack of easy communication and transportation between them were major obstacles to the growth of libraries in North Carolina.⁴⁹

46. William S. Powell, "Carolina in the Seventeenth Century: An Annotated Bibliography of Contemporary Publications," *North Carolina Historical Review* 41 (January 1964): 74-104; Wesley H. Wallace, "Cultural and Social Advertising in Early North Carolina Newspapers," *North Carolina Historical Review* 33 (July 1956): 281-309, esp. 282; Richard Walser and E. T. Malone Jr., *Literary North Carolina*, rev. ed. (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1986), 1-9; James S. Purcell, "Literary Culture in North Carolina before 1820" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1950) i, ii-iii; Wright, *Cultural Life of the American Colonies*, 128. See also Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise, eds., *Writing North Carolina History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 3-110; H. G. Jones, *For History's Sake: The Preservation and Publication of North Carolina History, 1663-1903* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 129-145; and Marcus B. Simpson Jr., "Copperplate Illustrations in Dr. John Brickell's *Natural History of North-Carolina* (1737): Sources for the Provincial Map, Flora, and Fauna," *North Carolina Historical Review* 62 (April 1985): 119-156.

47. Wetmore, "Literary and Cultural Development of Ante-Bellum Wilmington," 15-18; *American National Biography*, s.v. "Godfrey, Thomas, Jr.," *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Godfrey, Thomas, Jr." "Of a corpulent habit of body," Godfrey died at age twenty-seven in 1763. His editor considered his grammar "sometimes faulty," but *The Prince of Parthia* has some good lines. Thomas Godfrey, *Juvenile Poems on Various Subjects: With The Prince of Parthia, a Tragedy . . .* (Philadelphia: Henry Miller, 1765), note, ix; "corpulent" quotation, vi. Benjamin Franklin disliked Godfrey's father, a glazier by trade who did original work in mathematics, but subscribed to help publish Godfrey's *Juvenile Poems*, as did a number of North Carolinians. Godfrey, *Juvenile Poems*, xxiii-xxvi. See also McMurtrie, *Eighteenth Century North Carolina Imprints*, no. 142.

48. Connecticut had the first copyright law, in 1783, with South Carolina adding one in 1784 and North Carolina and Virginia doing so the following year. Knight, *Documentary History of Education in the South*, 2:52-58. The Moravians opened a paper mill in Salem in 1766, and another one began operations in Hillsborough in 1777. See Stephen B. Weeks, *The Press of North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Historical Printing Club, 1891), 50-52. The *North Carolina Circular and Newbern Weekly Advertiser*, February 24, 1804, for instance, sought clean rags for paper. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life*, 377-383 (quotation, 380); see also Gilmore-Lehne, "Between Boeotia and Athens."

49. Elliott, "James Davis and the Beginning of the Newspaper," 5-6; Watson, *Society in Colonial North Carolina*, 75-87; Harry L. Watson, "An Independent People: North Carolina, 1770-1820," in Mobley, *The Way We Lived in North Carolina*, 161-194; Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina*, 142-172; Charles Sellers, "Old Mecklenburg and the Meaning of the American Experience," *North Carolina Historical Review* 46 (April 1969): 142-156.

Libraries had a long tradition in western culture, but it was a tradition that heavily inclined toward classical and religious learning beyond the reach of pioneers, scattered farmers, occasional tradesmen, and isolated planters. Libraries had always been for the educated leisure class, more for the “learned” than the “common” reader. Latin and French were the languages preferred, or English with a heavy admixture of erudite vocabulary. Edward Gibbon, for instance, first wrote *Essai sur l'Étude de la Littérature* in French before penning *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.⁵⁰ James Davis himself published an introduction to Latin grammar.

As mentioned, many settlers brought books with them from their native land, whether Britain, France, or Germany. They also purchased books during trips home or ordered them through factors (business agents) and relatives—although this could create problems through the carelessness of the agents.⁵¹ While colonial South Carolina had fourteen bookstores—not all of them successful, by any means—North Carolina had few before the Revolution. Charleston’s Robert Wells, a Scot, claimed to be the biggest supplier of books for both Carolinas. General stores and peddlers did carry books, although James Iredell, for one, thought it “impossible to purchase books in the southern colonies.”⁵²

The records of book sales at a general store near Hillsborough, North Carolina, have survived from the 1770s. They show that the overwhelming majority of the books it sold were religious or spiritual self-improvement. Simple texts such as spelling books were also popular, as were histories and children’s books called battledores. One set of Sir William Blackstone’s legal commentaries, in six volumes, also sold. From Blackstone’s known popularity in the colonies one may assume that other copies were ordered directly from Britain. In 1772, the store owners over-estimated potential sales by ordering various “Sm[all] Histories,” a half dozen Aristotle, and an equal number of a history of England. Nothing

50. Elizabeth Cometti, “Notes and Documents, Some Early Best Sellers in Piedmont North Carolina,” *Journal of Southern History* 16 (August 1950): 325; Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001); Elmer D. Johnson and Michael H. Harris, *History of Libraries in the Western World*, 3d ed. (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1976); Pertti Vakkari, “Reading, Knowledge of Books, and Libraries . . .,” in Davis, *Reading and Libraries*, 66-86; for Gibbons, see Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 2 vols. (New York: Vintage, 1966), 1:57.

51. McRee, *Life and Correspondence of James Iredell*, 2:74. A transfer agent stored two hundred books donated by the king of France to the College of William and Mary in his cellar alongside barrels of sugar and oil, which caused great damage. Cited in Marquis de Chastellux, *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781, and 1782*, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 2:606 n. 17; see also “Library of the College of William and Mary,” *William and Mary College Quarterly* 19 (July 1910): 48-51.

52. Edgar, *South Carolina*, 180; David Kaser, *A Book for a Sixpence: The Circulating Library in America* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Beta Phi Mu, 1980), 23-26; Calhoun Winton, “The Southern Book Trade in the Eighteenth Century,” in Amory and Hall, *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, 224, 232-236; Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers*, 84; Weeks, “Libraries and Literature,” 206 (Iredell quotation); see also James S. Purcell, “A Book Pedlar’s Progress in North Carolina,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 29 (January 1952): 8-23; and Wetmore, “Literary and Cultural Development of Ante-Bellum Wilmington,” 34-35.

daunted, they bought more histories and even novels like *Tom Jones* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*. This ambitious attempt to broaden the reading and minds of the backcountry went unrewarded: "Not one of the new items left the shelves." Bookstores became a flourishing business in Charleston, Williamsburg, Baltimore, and Annapolis, but not in North Carolina.⁵³

But the "great scarcity" of bookstores and libraries did not mean that North Carolinians were totally ignorant of the world. Literate people would read aloud to their families and neighbors who could not read. Slaves listened, too, and sometimes turned literacy to their advantage.⁵⁴ Reading was often a collective, communal, and verbal practice, and people closely scrutinized newspapers such as those of Davis or Steuart. They often read the same text—the Bible or perhaps an almanac or religious tract—"again and again."⁵⁵ Some historians believe that people read with more intention in the eighteenth century than they do today and

53. Cometti, "Notes and Documents," 324-337 (quotation, 330); Winton, "Southern Book Trade," 238-239. The *Wilmington Chronicle and North-Carolina Weekly Advertiser*, July 10, 1795, lists several quarto, octavo, and duodecimo books for sale. Editor James Carey came to Wilmington when he found a printer already in place in Fayetteville. *Wilmington Chronicle and North-Carolina Weekly Advertiser*, October 22, 1795. George Washington Paschal, *A History of Printing in North Carolina . . .* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards and Broughton, 1946), 18. Fayetteville apparently did not have a reliable bookstore until 1818, and Charlotte showed almost no bookselling activity until 1824. See also Wetmore, "Literary and Cultural Development of Ante-Bellum Wilmington," 22, 27, 115-116, 119, 122-123; and Reilly and Hall, "Customers and the Market for Books," 399. One wonders if "Aristotle" in this situation meant the works of the philosopher or the notorious book on female bodies avidly read by young men in Jonathan Edwards's New England (n.a., *Aristotle's Masterpiece . . . For All Midwives, Nurses, and Young-Married-Women* [London: Printed by W. B., 1704]).

54. Cornelius, "When I Can Read My Title Clear," 1, 16-17; Crow, Escott, and Hatley, *History of African Americans in North Carolina*, 27, 44; David Waldstreicher, "Reading the Runaways: Self Fashioning Print Culture and Confidence in Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser. 56 (April 1999): 243-272, esp. 263-267; Elizabeth McHenry, *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African-American Literary Societies* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002), 1-24, 34-35, 53-54.

55. "Read again and again the wondrous words which I have quoted at length from His own book. . . SEARCH it, study it, dig into it." Horatius Bonar, *God's Way of Peace: A Book for the Anxious* (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1861), 95, Documenting the American South, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/bonar/bonar.html>. Almanacs often contained circuit court dates, humorous stories, medical advice, church meetings, agricultural tips, aphorisms, astronomical data such as eclipses, rising and setting of the sun and moon, "and many other things useful and necessary." *The North-Carolina Almanack for the Year of our Lord, 1799 . . .* (Newbern, N.C.: John C. Osborn and Co., 1798), title page (quotation). Many almanacs listed their date in terms of how many years had passed since the Declaration of American Independence. They were sold at stores across the state "and by most of the Postriders." *Gales's North-Carolina Almanack for the year 1805 . . . 29-30th of American Independence* (Raleigh, N.C.: J. Gales, [1804]); *Hodge and Boylan's North-Carolina Almanack . . . 1800* (Halifax, N.C.: Abraham Hodge, [1799]), 47 (quotation); *Monds Biertel* [almanac in German] (Lincolnton, N.C.: John Martin Slump, 1800). Many farmers planted according to the signs of the zodiac from an almanac and regarded the editors with superstitious awe. Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina*, 48. See also Crittenden, *North Carolina Newspapers*, 24-30; Gilmore-Lehne, "Between Boeotia and Athens," 33; Stiverson and Stiverson, "Colonial Retail Book Trade," 165-166; and Lise Andries, "Almanacs: Revolutionizing a Traditional Genre," in *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775-1800*, ed. Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 203-222, who remarks (210) that an almanac might form an "entire library" for country people.

that this difference in reading styles is of great importance in how people interpreted texts.⁵⁶

As housing improved, homes provided more space for introspective and personal reading.⁵⁷ Lists of books advertised in the Wilmington press indicate that in the eighteenth century, people “read not so much for pleasure, as for practical purposes.”⁵⁸ Certainly, if one intended to read only a few religious works, one hardly needed a library. One historian theorized that as books became more plentiful, readers dipped into different texts for specific information rather than reading all the way through. The practice of “sequential” as opposed to “segmented” reading may have accompanied the rise of the novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: one read a novel from the beginning to the end to follow the narrative flow. Nonetheless, in speaking of German reading societies at the end of the eighteenth century, Jürgen Habermas makes the telling point that “the people were brought up to the level of culture, culture was not lowered to that of the masses.”⁵⁹

Any catalog of surviving books would show that religious works predominated in early North Carolina. Such books would often be preserved and handed down through the generations and noted in wills, perhaps as tokens of piety, while more secular or illicit books and ephemeral publications would be discarded or sold. In other words, people kept the serious and religious books, while removing ones that later generations might think irreligious, illicit, or of little consequence. Books on the occult and magic may have been as popular with planters as less prosperous folk, but readers were more likely to preserve books by famous or respected authors.⁶⁰ “This book belonged to Pa,” one woman recorded about the family copy

56. Darnton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers*, 217-219; Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life*, esp. 225-343; Johns, *Nature of the Book*, 380-443.

57. Henry H. Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), 15 (fig. 4), 119, 131 (fig. 56); Catherine W. Bishir et al., *Architects and Builders in North Carolina: A History of the Practice of Building* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 1-191; Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 16-33; Wyatt-Brown, *Shaping of Southern Culture*, 92. On the relationship of privacy and reading, see Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, eds., *A History of Private Life*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989-1990), 3:111-159; 4:47-94, 339-450.

58. Wetmore, “Literary and Cultural Development of Ante-Bellum Wilmington,” 51-52 (quotation, 51). But see also Patricia Crain, “Print and Everyday Life in the Eighteenth Century,” in Casper et al., *Perspectives on American Book History*, esp. 58, 63-67.

59. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 166.

60. This does not imply that those making the inventories necessarily discarded the publications. David Cressy, “Books as Totems in Seventeenth-Century England and New England,” in *Libraries, Books and Culture*, ed. Donald G. Davis Jr. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986): 92-106; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), esp. 535-583. Executors were legally bound to inventory a deceased person's complete possessions, but “a parcel of books” may cover many sins. See also, for example, the Michaux-Randolph Papers, and, for a contrary example of

of Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "& has a few words written by him on the margin of a leaf, towards the end."⁶¹

Secular titles, as listed in wills, probably increased in number and proportion by the time of the Revolution. A backcountry South Carolina lawyer and judge whose mother was from North Carolina left an extensive library of 1,145 books, revealing that he was deeply interested not only in law, practical books, and history, but also novels (among them, *The Sorrows of Werther*) and heroic tales. Or consider the bilingual Moravian missionary early in the nineteenth century who had more secular, even scientific, books in his library than religious ones.⁶² Nonetheless, the primacy of the Bible and Christian books accords well with what is known of colonial times. Any increase in secularism should not be taken too literally, as Christian revivals swept British America at regular intervals. People did not view religion and secular life as opposites.⁶³

According to one detailed analysis, during the eighteenth century there were in North Carolina at least eleven private libraries holding over one hundred titles each and eighteen smaller but still significant collections, including the SPG libraries. Three of the larger collections belonged to governors, and almost all libraries were near the coast. The only exceptions were James Milner of Halifax and Alexander McLeod or MacLeod, a former Highlander and son-in-law of Flora MacDonald. McLeod lived near the Upper Cape Fear River and owned 324 books but lost them while fighting for the British early in the Revolution. Milner had collected perhaps a thousand books, including a number of belles lettres, political philosophy, astronomy, and music books. "This was a sophisticated library of a sophisticated gentleman." "Especially in the New Bern and Cape Fear regions," continues historian Richard Beale Davis, "an inquisitive mind in search of historical information, theological doctrine, voyages and travels, and many other

preserving what some might consider ephemeral, *The Racing Calendar Abridged, 1709-1750* (London: Charles Weatherby, 1829) in Nathaniel Macon Papers, both in Private Collections, State Archives. It must be admitted that Carolinians admired their horses more than their libraries, as almost any issue of the *Raleigh Register*—edited by literate and liberal Joseph Gales—would show in the next century.

61. Anna [Jones] Pritchard diary, 1849-1857 (quotation, 67), Private Collections, State Archives. Jefferson's *Notes* appears in many inventories and bookseller advertisements, indicating a wide readership in North Carolina. See also Lewis P. Simpson, *Mind and the American Civil War: A Meditation on Lost Causes* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 22-27.

62. Watson, "Books They Left," 245-257; Joseph Brevard diary, box 2, folder 26, Brevard and McDowell Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library; Rose Simon, "Saved: The Gambold Collection of Moravian Devotional Books," *North Carolina Libraries* 56 (spring 1998): 4-10.

63. *A Concise History of the Rise of Camp-Meetings* (n.p., n.d.), and Burkitt and Read, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association*, both in Michaux-Randolph Papers. Nye, *Cultural Life of the New Nation*, 29-69, 150-170, 195-234; May, *The Enlightenment in America*, 3-25; Wright, *Cultural Life of the American Colonies*, 91-95; Reilly and Hall, "Customers and the Market for Books," 399.

subjects might find answers on his own shelves or those of his neighbors."⁶⁴ Yet library shelves or "Book Stands" only occasionally appear in colonial inventories.⁶⁵

Gabriel Johnston (governor, 1734-1752) and his nephew Samuel Johnston (governor, 1787-1789) amassed the largest private library in North Carolina, which grew to perhaps 4,500 books early in the nineteenth century. Professor Weeks called it "a library for profit and use, not the collection of a mere bibliomaniac," and it clearly was unusual in size and scope. Secular works far overshadowed religious titles. Gabriel Johnston had been a professor of Greek and Hebrew languages at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland before coming to the colonies and so was a man of considerable culture. A close examination of South Carolina private libraries, even in the backcountry, also shows more books and a wider range than might be expected.⁶⁶ There were obviously more books and newspapers, whether homegrown or imported, than in earlier times. The possibilities for creating libraries and engaging in print culture were much greater in 1775 than in 1675.

Probably almost all private libraries of any size contained some medical books, although most people depended more on folklore and herbs than "scientific" medicine. Doctors and others practicing medicine relied on such books and training as they could obtain. Dr. William Ussher of Windsor, whose library is considered representative of the times, owned almost twenty medical books when he died in 1780, while in 1769, John Eustace, a Wilmington physician, possessed 118 medical books (out of 292 volumes). Dr. Calvin Jones is especially noteworthy for not only practicing medicine in the immediate post-Revolutionary period, but

64. "Considering North Carolina's small population and relatively small agricultural or industrial production before 1764, the books and libraries in private hands . . . are really quite impressive." Davis, *Intellectual Life in the Colonial South*, 2:561-568 (quotations, 567, 568). *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Milner, James"; *Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution*, s.v. "McLeod, Alexander"; Elizabeth Gray Vining, *Flora: A Biography* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1966), 143-145; J. Bryan Grimes, *North Carolina Wills and Inventories . . .* (1912; reprint, Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing, 1967). See, however, Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 434-435, for the library of James McRee, another Presbyterian minister, and below for Samuel Young.

65. John Bivins Jr., *The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina 1700-1820* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 1988), 50-54; and Watson, "Books They Left," 254. Dr. Hugh Jones left his "Book Case" and "all my Books not on professional subjects" to his eldest daughter Eliza. His professional books were to be sold or exchanged for historical works. Will of Hugh Jones, transcribed in Robert G. McLean, "A Yankee Tutor in the Old South," *North Carolina Historical Review* 47 (January 1970): 81-83 (quotation, 83). See also William Nelson to Robert Saunders, August 30, 1792, Ernest Haywood Collection of the Haywood Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, concerning a bookcase at Westover, Virginia.

66. Weeks, "Libraries and Literature," 198-211 (quotation, 198); *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Johnston, Gabriel"; "Johnston, Samuel"; Edgar, "Libraries of Colonial South Carolina," 95-170, esp. 100, 148, 168-170. See also "Catalogue of the Private Library of James C. Johnston . . .," handwritten copy, 1893, North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library; and R. Alan Spearman, "The Johnston Library at Hayes Plantation . . ." (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1988).



In the eighteenth century, two North Carolina governors, Gabriel Johnston (1734-1752) and his nephew, Samuel Johnston (1787-1789), amassed the largest private library in the state. The collection numbered about 4,500 volumes by the early nineteenth century. This bookplate is from Gov. Gabriel Johnston's copy of George Stanhope's *A Paraphrase and Comment upon the Epistles and Gospels . . .*, courtesy of the North Carolina Collection.

also for writing about his professional experience and being among the first in the South to inoculate against smallpox.⁶⁷

Persons who had private libraries were probably willing to loan books, as did the merchant and politician William Little. In his 1734 will, he stipulated "that my books lent out, be got in, & all my books sold." The money obtained was to buy two slaves. The surviving records do not indicate whether all the books that he lent were returned. In a similar fashion, the Reverend James Hall let members of his Bethany congregation and perhaps others borrow his books. Sarah Allen of

67. Connor, *History of North Carolina*, 1:192-195; Dorothy Long, ed., *Medicine in North Carolina: Essays in the History of Medical Science and Medical Service, 1524-1960* (Raleigh: North Carolina Medical Society, 1972), 22-23, 30-31, 63, 173, 190; Thomas B. Jones, "Calvin Jones, M.D.: A Case Study in the Practice of Early American Medicine," *North Carolina Historical Review* 49 (January 1972): 56-71; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Jones, Calvin." See also Wetmore, "Literary and Cultural Development of Ante-Bellum Wilmington," 33; and Crittenden, *North Carolina Newspapers*, 45-46 n. 33, which quotes "a Medical Store" in New Bern, 1788. Compare the different attitudes toward medicine expressed in the earlier (1685-1818) and later (1819-1843) volumes of Lemmon, *Pettigrew Papers*; and similarly, J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Ruffin*, 4 vols. (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards and Broughton, 1918-1920), vol. 1 (esp. Victor M. Murphey, March 17, 1828, "The Study of Medicine is generally considered the dernier resort of all Blackheads") and vols. 3 and 4 (1850s-1860s).

Wilmington warned her grandnieces not to lend books, as some were always lost. And a judge complained that his wife had stolen some of his "valuable collection" of law books and that a book "lent D. Brown 1799 [was] never returned."⁶⁸ Samuel Young of Rowan County was particularly cautious with his collection of about a hundred books. Young stipulated in his will, in 1793, that his five sons were to share the books with each other, "but no book . . . was to be loaned, hired, or otherwise disposed of, under the penalty of forfeiture of all claim to the library." The books would then be sold and "the proceeds paid over to the two daughters."⁶⁹

Private library owners might well be cautious. The primary problem with regarding private libraries as potential public libraries is that borrowers had to have good relations with the owner, while the public had little or no influence over what books were purchased, how they were organized, or who had access. While there are numerous stories of gentlemen allowing a visitor or a promising young neighbor to use their libraries, the relationship required generosity and charity on the owner's part and probably subservience from the borrower.⁷⁰ Attorney and reformer Archibald D. Murphey, for one, complained of the lack of books in 1795. For two years after leaving David Caldwell's prewar log cabin school—itsself now possessing no library beyond a few textbooks and Greek and Latin classics—Murphey had no access to any books "except some old works on theological subjects. . . . There were indeed very few [books] in the State, except in the libraries of lawyers who lived in the commercial towns."⁷¹ In addition, many of the personal libraries in the backcountry were ill suited to serve the public.⁷² Bray's premature donation to Bath exemplifies this problem.

Most book owners were male, although there is some evidence that women read and owned books as well. In addition to Sarah Allen, mentioned above, one Frederick Jones, a wealthy merchant and landowner originally from Virginia, in 1772 willed "all my Library of Books, Except those books commonly used by my wife, which I have ordered to be put into her Closets: which books I give to my

68. Grimes, *North Carolina Wills*, 289 (Little), 9 (Allen); Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 330, 335; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Little, William"; "Hall, James"; Smiley, "Library Development in North Carolina," 9; Brevard diary (D. Brown quotation).

69. Jethro Rumble, *History of Rowan County, North Carolina . . .* (1881; reprint, Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1999), 121. Note that it was assumed that the daughters would not be interested in having the books.

70. See, for example, A. Meilan to Thomas Ruffin, October 1814, in Hamilton, *Papers of Thomas Ruffin*, 1:149. Cf. also Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 129.

71. Hoyt, *Papers of Archibald D. Murphey*, 2:356; Charles L. Coon, *The Beginnings of Public Education in North Carolina: A Documentary History, 1790-1840* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards and Broughton, 1908), 16-17, 22. See also Aubrey Lee Brooks, "David Caldwell and His Log College," *North Carolina Historical Review* 28 (October 1951): 399-407.

72. For the distinction between types of libraries, see Carlton Bruns Joeckel, *The Government of the American Public Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), x; Thompson, *Evolution of the American Public Library*, 1-2, 28, 74-79; and McMullen, *American Libraries before 1876*, 168, 170. McMullen excludes private libraries from his survey.

Daughter Jane." Among many other offices, Jones had served as commissioner of the SPG library at Bath. In 1755, the merchant and royal councilor James Craven gave his wife Penelope the right to select fifty books from his library as part of her legacy, while twenty years later, Jean Corbin, the widow of Judge Francis Corbin, died owning seventy-one books and ninety-seven slaves.⁷³

The poet-dramatist Thomas Godfrey praised a Wilmington literary circle in which he participated for several years. This was probably the Cape Fear Library Society, founded in 1760, the first secular subscription library in North Carolina before the Revolution. It is tempting to assume that Godfrey had some hand in starting the library. He was from Philadelphia, home of America's first subscription library, the Library Company of Philadelphia. Benjamin Franklin and a group of young tradesmen, the *junto* of which Godfrey's father had been a member, had started pooling their money for a library in 1731. Any "civil gentleman" could read the books on the premises, but only members could take them home. While membership was therefore essentially private and restrictive, this type of social or proprietary-subscription library may be considered public in the context of the times. Only men were members, but presumably they brought books home for their family and friends. Similar types of libraries soon spread from Philadelphia to Connecticut and other northern states.⁷⁴

Wilmington planters were also aware of the founding of the Charleston Library Society in 1748, which became a significant cultural influence on coastal South Carolina. That books were both valued in themselves and expensive to purchase is indicated in the Charleston selection process: titles were proposed, voted on, and accepted at one meeting but not ordered until approved at the next quarterly meeting. The result was a balanced collection, rather than a selection skewed to one person's tastes. The books the Society bought did not generally duplicate those in private collections. The Cape Fear Library probably emulated the

73. Grimes, *North Carolina Wills*, 275 (Jones), 140 (Craven); Smiley, "Library Development in North Carolina," 4, 9, 12; Edgar, "Libraries of Colonial South Carolina," 80-81; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Jones, Frederick"; "Craven, James"; "Corbin, Francis." See also inscriptions in Isaac Watts, *Logick: or, the Right Use of Reason . . .* (London: J. Buckland and T. Longman, 1768), copy in Michaux-Randolph Papers.

74. Wetmore, "Literary and Cultural Development of Ante-Bellum Wilmington," esp., 12ff, 30, 38-39; E. Lawrence Lee, *New Hanover County: A Brief History* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1984), 22; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Godfrey, Thomas, Jr." Donald R. Lennon and Ida Brooks Kellam, eds., *The Wilmington Town Book, 1743-1778* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1973), makes no mention of libraries or book collections. Benjamin Franklin, *Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1963), 67, 77-78; *Public Libraries in the United States*, 1:12-13; Edwin Wolf, "At the Instance of Benjamin Franklin": *A Brief History of the Library Company of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Library Company of Philadelphia, 1995), esp. 5-10, 19; Thompson, *Evolution of the American Public Library*, 33-40; Hayes, *Colonial Woman's Bookshelf*, 11-15; Ross W. Beales and James N. Green, "Libraries and Their Users," in Amory and Hall, *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, 399-404.

Charleston Library Society in allowing membership and borrowing privileges to those living outside of town. One provision not generally followed today permitted a member an extra day to retain a book for every six miles he lived from the city; nor do present-day libraries generally loan money to the government, as the Charleston Library Society did to support the American Revolution. Visitors of social standing from North Carolina, like John Gray Blount's son William in 1814, were "politely offered . . . the use of any books in their library."⁷⁵

Presumably several individuals together started the Cape Fear Library Society. They would pay dues and then purchase books that could be borrowed and read by any member. When the British occupied Wilmington in 1781, Archibald Maclaine took charge of the library. Maclaine was a prominent, if irascible, Scots-Irish attorney and conservative Patriot who had married into the local gentry. No doubt Society members believed that the collection would be safe from the British under his care, and indeed it was, as he turned it over to his Tory son-in-law, George Hooper. But the library was dismantled when the Patriot state militia regained control of Wilmington and took the books from Hooper. This marked the end of North Carolina's first indigenous public library.⁷⁶ A few books stamped "Cape Fear Library" in large gold lettering and inscribed "loaned to the Library of St. James Church by A. M. Hooper" still survive in the North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.⁷⁷

The concept of a circulating free library, with books provided by the government and open to all, had been tried in Scotland early in the eighteenth century, and the idea was carried to North Carolina. The Reverend James Hall of Rowan County, for instance, lent books from his home starting in the late 1770s. The nineteenth-century historian William Henry Foote called this a "circulating library," although it would seem more the generosity of a high-minded and well-educated Presbyterian divine who operated a classical school. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle also founded an academy in 1785 near Salisbury. He and some of his

75. Wright, *Cultural Life of the American Colonies*, 148-149; Edgar, "Libraries of Colonial South Carolina," 86-92, 196; Fraser, *Charleston!*, 157; David T. Morgan, ed., *The John Gray Blount Papers*, 4 vols. (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1982), 4:242 (quotation); Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers*, 53-55, 60. Raven's book supercedes and extends all previous accounts.

76. Saunders, *Colonial Records*, 16:249; Lee, *New Hanover County*, 22; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Maclaine, Archibald"; Clyde Wilson, "Griffith John McRee: An Unromantic Historian of the Old South," *North Carolina Historical Review* 47 (January 1970): 19. Animosity between Loyalists and Patriots is described in Gregory De Van Massey, "The British Expedition to Wilmington, January-November, 1781," *North Carolina Historical Review* 66 (October 1989): 387-411; but also see Patrick M. Valentine, *The Rise of a Southern Town: Wilson, North Carolina, 1849-1920* (Baltimore, Md.: Gateway Press, 2002), 6.

77. Wetmore, "Literary and Cultural Development of Ante-Bellum Wilmington," 32, 39. See also Rehder, "Development of Libraries in the Lower Cape Fear"; and "Dedication Wilmington Light Infantry Memorial Library," pamphlet, July 16, 1956, New Hanover Public Library, file DB: PL 2.

Thyatira parishioners kept what has been called a circulating library.⁷⁸ Karl Storch, an experienced and highly respected Lutheran minister and schoolmaster, wrote a friend in 1796 about a subscription "Library Society here in Salisbury consisting of about fifteen members. . . . Their collection of books is good and during the years has become rather large. Every month the members meet to discuss the books they have read."⁷⁹

Near Charlotte, the Providence congregation of Presbyterians also operated a library in conjunction with the debating societies so popular with the Scots-Irish. The main contributor to this library was evidently Ezekiel Polk. When the more evangelical New Side Presbyterianism grew in influence and attacked the practice of providing a collection containing "deist" and Enlightenment writings, Polk responded by leaving for Tennessee.⁸⁰ In a similar fashion, a nineteenth-century Lutheran pastor, A. L. Gräbner, castigated early donations of German books as "a miserable, worthless collection of rationalist or near-rationalist literature . . . better had they been dumped in the ocean."⁸¹

Possibly other collections, similar to those established by Hall and McCorkle, also declined as Evangelicalism spread. Hall ended by giving much of his collection to the new university in Chapel Hill. Whatever the exact nature and extent of these libraries, their existence was a testimonial to the Scots-Irish regard for education and literate culture and an example for the future. Poor boys growing up in the Presbyterian Piedmont, like Andrew Jackson, were more likely to be taught reading and writing than poor boys like Andrew Johnson in Raleigh.⁸²

78. Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 330; Rumble, *History of Rowan County*, 263-264; Bordsen, "Scottish Attitudes," 132-134. Alternative explanations to high-minded altruism may be found in Wiebe, *The Opening of American Society*, esp. chapter 14; and Theodore R. Mitchell and Robert Lowe, "To Sow Contentment: Philanthropy, Scientific Agriculture, and the Making of the New South, 1906-1920," *Journal of Social History* 24 (winter 1990): 217-240. Hall, a fighting parson, raised his own company during the Revolution and later donated sixty books to the University of North Carolina library. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "McCorkle, Samuel Eusebius."

79. Joseph Stewart, trans. and ed., "Extract from a Letter by Pastor Storch in North Carolina, Dated Salisbury, January 20-February 25, 1796," *North Carolina Historical Review* 20 (October 1943): 339; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Storch, Carl August Gottlieb." Storch, who emigrated to America in 1788, could speak five or six languages and actively promoted ecumenical relations.

80. Bordsen, "Scottish Attitudes," 134-135; Heyrman, *Southern Cross*, provides insight into the views and influence of Evangelicalism in the South.

81. Robert E. Cazden, *A Social History of the German Book Trade in America to the Civil War* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1984), 7. Many of the books sent by such luminaries as Goethe were highly academic and hardly seem appropriate for the social conditions in North Carolina. This example illustrates the difficulties of relying upon donated materials rather than thoughtful selection and market forces to procure suitable books.

82. Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767-1821* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 6-8; Hans L. Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson: A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 17-24. See also David L. Swain to Thomas Ruffin, November 13, 1865, in Hamilton, *Papers of Thomas Ruffin*, 4:39.

Only after the turn of the nineteenth century is there evidence of a renewed and spreading interest in libraries.⁸³

Does the description of print culture in early North Carolina provide any theoretical guidelines about libraries and book collections? The scarcity of examples and the lack of historical documentation make such prescriptive demonstration unconvincing. Where a particular individual assembled and organized a substantial collection of books, then there was a "library." The size needed for a "library" as opposed to a mere assemblage of books varied with time, economic and social conditions, and purpose. A school collection, for instance, could be quite small but still considered a library. If an individual opened a personal, church, or school library to public reading or circulation beyond the immediate bounds of his family, then in a very limited sense, a "community" library was established.⁸⁴ If arrangements were made for the library to have an institutional life of its own, then it was beginning to operate as a true community library. Such libraries usually circulated books. Other factors certainly affected the establishment and development of community libraries, perhaps most importantly, the availability of books and the example of similar libraries in Scotland and other American colonies.

There could not be large book collections without sufficient funds to buy books or easy transportation to places where one could read books. But people and communities in one area established libraries, while men in another area of comparable size, wealth, and status did not. Women at this time had little influence in creating libraries, although, as the Edenton Tea Party indicates, they did participate in and influence the cultural and political climate to a limited degree. The isolated nature and small size of North Carolina communities certainly retarded the growth of schools, discouraged the spread of literacy, and dampened the growth of public forums for intellectual and print culture. Geographic isolation discouraged individuals and social groups from forming or maintaining viable community libraries. Geography affected transportation and economics, while the poverty of commerce slowed the development of transportation, the growth of population, and the quantity and quality of schools. The provision—or rather, lack of provision—for education obviously affected the cultural level and limited the potential audience for books, which then affected the supply and cost of books. Some religious attitudes promoted education, but, as noted earlier, the rise of Evangelicalism may have curtailed the choice and circulation of books.

83. Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina*, 166; Patrick M. Valentine, "Colonial and Ante-Bellum Libraries in North Carolina," paper read at North Carolina Library Association Conference, September 25, 2003.

84. Although the term "circulating" library was widely used in North Carolina, or at least by the early historians who made some mention of them, modern historians restrict its use to bookstores that loaned books for profit. See, for example, Kaser, *A Book for a Sixpence*; and Paul Kaufman, *Libraries and Their Users: Collected Papers in Library History* (London: Library Association, 1969).



The SPG libraries became the prototype for the first public libraries in North Carolina. Books circulated among members of the community, but little effort was made to preserve or augment the collections or to involve the community in the selection of books. Photograph of the SPG seal from the State Archives.

Gender, ethnic origin, and degree of servitude obviously influenced levels of literacy and access to print.

Economics, geography, social and ethnic demographics, population density, gender, cultural attitudes, education, and politics, therefore, all played roles in the creation of libraries but do not appear to have been determining factors for these early community and private libraries. These factors obviously interacted in a variety of ways, which would be difficult to quantify, while their relative importance varied with time and location.⁸⁵

The SPG libraries may be considered the first community or public libraries, as they circulated books among what was considered the public community, but little provision was made for responding to public desires and no provision for augmenting the collections. Other than a state law without teeth, preservation and governance were left to chance. The later Cape Fear Library apparently did make provisions for selecting and increasing its collection and was probably available to any adult white male of local standing. It may be considered the first secular public library in North Carolina, but it disappeared during the Revolution.

85. Gilmore-Lehne, "Between Boeotia and Athens," attempts to quantify but only for the mid-nineteenth century. See esp. David D. Hall and Elizabeth Carroll Reilly, "Introduction, Practices of Reading," in Amory and Hall, *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, 377-379.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, political developments promoted independent printing presses; they in turn probably encouraged the growth of a wider literate culture, but the American Revolution destroyed a number of libraries and set back education. Neither political leaders nor the common people believed in government aid for libraries. At the end of this period, for example, the legislature explicitly refused public funding for schools in Raleigh and New Bern.⁸⁶ And although the legislature authorized library societies in Fayetteville and Williamsboro (Granville County) in 1794 and 1799, nothing apparently came of these efforts—a far cry from the successful launching of the community libraries in Alexandria, Virginia, in 1794, and in distant Lexington, Kentucky, the following year.⁸⁷

Print culture was not developed enough in North Carolina during colonial and Revolutionary times to encourage the permanent establishment of either private or community libraries. Despite the wide prevalence of print culture, its roots were shallow. Still, North Carolina, like other southern states from Maryland to Georgia, was much more immersed in print culture and accustomed to printing, buying, storing, and using books and newspapers at the end of the colonial period than at the beginning.

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86. Coon, *Beginnings of Public Education in North Carolina*, 25-29, 113.

87. David Scott Turk, "For the Love of Fine Books: Antebellum Library Companies in Virginia," *Virginia Cavalcade* 49 (winter 2000): 30-39; Timothy M. Harris, "A Source of Useful Information: The Lexington Library, 1795-1810," *Kentucky Libraries* 61 (summer 2001): 14-19. See also Patrick M. Valentine, "The Place of Useful Books: Community Libraries in North Carolina from 1800 to the Civil War"; "Small Select Library or Miserable Excuse: Antebellum College Libraries in the American Southeast"; and "Books in Tolerable Supply: Culture and Academics in North Carolina from 1800 to the Civil War," all forthcoming.

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