

Colonization and Education in the Americas: 1496-1693

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Introduction: From Settlement to Higher Education

The post-Renaissance colonization of the Western hemisphere, beginning with Christopher Columbus' erroneous arrival in the Caribbean in 1492, marks a severe turn in the tale of life in the classical antipode. Much of this turn is marred in violence that is important to name and continue to recognize to this day. By exploring the forces leading to the establishment of formal educational institutions, the focus of this paper, while seemingly outside of this violence, is not as far removed as it seems.

Education and colonization, both Enlightenment projects, share a common ideology of European supremacy that early settler-colonists used to justify the genocide of indigenous people, and the erasure of their knowledge, and their ways of being. These last forms of erasure were specific aims of colonial education, forced upon indigenous populations. For colonists, this forced education was most considered a gift meant to civilize and impart docility to so-called "savages." The economic benefit of this servile education is emphasized by profit-driven colonization efforts. Further, a focus on servility led to the establishment of indigenous education prior to the establishment of education for the colonizing people. This phenomenon is discussed in every section of the paper, with exception to 'New Netherland and New Sweden'— although it cannot be said to have not also occurred in those colonies.

Before proceeding further, it is important to define education. Much of the tension between historical accounts of education originates in divergent definitions of education (e.g., Chubberly, 1919/1934 vs. Bailyn, 1960, as described by McCulloch, 2011). This paper begins with Lawrence Cremin's (1970) definition: "...education as the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit or evoke knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and sensibilities..." (xiii), but amends a more specific conception of the term "deliberate." Deliberate, for the sake of

this paper, is equivalent to institutional structures, including colonial policy, public agreement, royal or ecclesiastical decree, bull, or charter. The existence of education outside of this amended definition is not argued and there are strong resources available that explore the history of these more inclusive definitions. However, this amended definition is chosen due to the ability to ascribe more definitive dates and locations to its application.

Additionally, this paper was written with the intention of illuminating moments beyond the expected – to highlight the struggle of educational institutionalism and the common-ness of its failure. The scope of this illumination may also be novel – at least when compared to Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither’s (2019) *American Education: A history*, which qualifies “American Education” as pertaining to “the territory that eventually became the United States of America” (p. 6). This definition by Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019) misses over a century of educational history within America, defined inclusively as the land between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. This expanded definition allows for a greater emergence of patterns related to the colonization efforts and educational institutionalism. In only one colonization effort within this more broad definition of ‘America’ was an educational institution introduced within what might be considered one generational period (~15 years in the colonial age) of the first permanent settlement’s establishment (see ‘New Netherland’, although efforts in ‘New England’ come very close). Attention will be taken within this paper to situate the journey to institutionalized education, in a context described by Magnuson (1992): “...education is ultimately a product of the social, political, and economic forces impinging upon it” (preface).

With these disclaimers, definitions, and desires outlined, the story begins...

New Spain: 1496-1551

Spain, acting as the dual kingdoms of Castile and Aragon following the marriage of Queen Isabella I and King Ferdinand V & II, was the first to send an explorer west across the Atlantic Ocean in search of a faster route to China and India, as compared to the eastern and much longer route around the southern cape of Africa. The story of how Christopher Columbus, a Genoan (Italian), became employed by Spain is tangential to the quest for education. However, it is important to mark his arrival in the Caribbean as late autumn 1492. The physical wreck, the remnants of the *Santa Maria*, one of the three ships on the first voyage, was used to construct to establish the first, temporary settlement of La Navidad on the northwest coast of Hispaniola (now present-day Haiti), just after Christmas Day, 1492. The following year, Columbus returned to La Navidad with 17 ships, intent on establishing a permanent settlement. But, La Navidad had been razed by the indigenous people. Instead of resettling the site, the expedition settled on the northeast coast, within present-day Dominican Republic, naming the new city, La Isabela, after the sponsoring Queen Isabella (Marley, 2005).

Santo Domingo, Hispaniola

At the time of its settlement, La Isabela had over 1500 residents, almost entirely male. Quickly, La Isabela fell into divisive factions and poor health, and in 1496, just three years after the settlement of La Isabela, Bartholomew Columbus, Christopher Columbus' brother, settled La Nueva Isabela, on the southern side of the island (Marley, 2005, 91). The arrival of Dominican monks, supported by the Catholicism of the Spanish Monarchy and the favorable relationship between the monarchs and the Papacy, eventually led to the renaming of La Nueva Isabela to Santo Domingo, sometime around 1508 (Convento Dominco, n.d., para. 2); as well as the creation of an apocryphal story of the city's founding on Saint Dominic's Day (August 4, 1496).

While it is possible to consider La Isabela the first permanent European settlement in the western hemisphere, it was abandoned by 1500, and the title of first “permanent” settlement is more aptly applied to Santo Domingo. By 1511, Santo Domingo became a Catholic Bishopric, and the local Dominican order grew in influence among the colonizing people (Marley, 2005, 91).

Studium Generale

The Dominican order’s role in Santo Domingo is significant to this paper. Sometime between 1518 and 1538 the ‘Church and Convent of the Dominicans,’ the oldest European Church in the Western hemisphere, began offering classes in a format they termed the Studium Generale or General Study. This date is disputed between non-academic webpages that appear to be run by present-day residents of Santo Domingo and extant academic materials, which cite the later conventical construction as evidence against early classes. It is known that “During the construction process, the [Dominican clerics] gave their sermons in different parts of the City” (Convento Dominico, n.d., para. 5). It is possible, given contemporary local claims, that these sermons included educational instruction, but credible assertions of this fact are difficult to verify. The construction “commenced as of 1520 and [was] completed twenty years later” (Marley, 2005, 92). Although church history, alluded to by the Convento Dominico (n.d.), asserts that the construction was completed by 1535 at the latest (para. 8). Whatever the exact date, there is little question that the Studium Generale in Santo Domingo was the first educational institution formed by Europeans in the Western hemisphere.

Education was often used to render the indigenous population servile and to socialize them into specific religious traditions. This practice in New Spain is less straightforward than it appears in other colonization projects. Broadly speaking, the goal of religious conversion can be confirmed by Catholic missionaries in New Spain, but a deeper sectarian interrogation demonstrates greater

nuance, "...there were two types of [Catholic] orders: Mendicant orders (such as the Franciscan, Dominican and Augustinian orders), which emphasized educating the native population, and the Jesuits, who focused on educating the colonial elite" (Feldmann, 2016, 43). Beyond this nuance, sources are ripe with further discussion on the nature of the Dominican-indigenous relationship which eventually yielded the *Sublimus Deus* Papal bull in 1537, forbidding mistreatment of the indigenous population in the pursuit of their conversion to Catholicism. Given this proselytizing purpose, along with a desire to promote social cohesion through cultural assimilation, Feldmann (2016) brings attention to the generally low academic standard within New Spain's educational endeavors. Instruction was largely in Spanish, with only rudimentary catechisms using Latin.

Universidad Santo Tomás de Aquino & The Royal and Pontifical Universities

In determining the completion date of construction on the Church and Convent of the Dominicans in Santo Domingo, disagreements continue to prove problematic. According to the Convento Dominicano (n.d.) the Studium Generale received recognition as a University in 1538. The 1944 book, *La bula In Apostolates Culmine del papa Paulo III: en virtud de la cual fué ergida y fundada la Universidad de Santo Domingo, primade de América* (Ortega Frier) provides significant support for this claim, asserting that a Papal bull in 1538, titled "In Apostolates Culmine" joined with a royal pase, sanctioned the creation of the University of Saint Thomas Aquinas from the existing Studium Generale of Santo Domingo.

The existence of this royal pase, and the date that the first degree was conferred, are open to question. Lanning raises these questions very specifically in his 1946 review of Ortega Frier's (1944) book. Marley (2005) makes a claim, aligned to Lanning (1946), with evidence outside the Papal bull or royal pase: "...the wealthy Hernando Gorjón gave an endowment five years later

[from 1532] toward the establishment of a university (which was not actually founded until 1551 and remained unrecognized by the Crown until seven years after that date)” (92).

Whereas the specific date of the Studium Generale was of less worry, the establishment of the Universidad Santo Tomás de Aquino does have competition, with the establishment of the Royal and Pontifical Universities in Mexico and Lima in 1551. These universities are not subject to the same questions raised by Lanning (1946) against the university in Santo Domingo, given that they received both a Papal bull and Royal cedula (decree/charter) at the same time, although Papal records indicate that the Royal and Pontifical University in the City of the Kings of Lima (present-day National University of San Marcos, Lima) predates the Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico (present-day National Autonomous University of Mexico) by a matter of months.

Within the understanding of New Spain, this debate of royal recognition and academic activity may be significant, however in the context of this paper, it can be accepted that the establishment of formal higher education in New Spain occurred between 1538 and 1551, either in Santo Domingo, Hispaniola (present-day Dominican Republic) OR jointly between Santo Domingo, Hispaniola (present-day Dominican Republic), Mexico City (present-day Mexico), and Lima (present-day Peru). The inclusion of the University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in this alternative conception timeline may be overdone, accepting Marley’s (2005) dating of the Santo Domingo cedula seven years later in 1558, but this remains balanced by Santo Domingo’s role in lower education and the disputed state of the University of Saint Thomas Aquinas as early as 1538.

Further, it has yet to be mentioned that the University of Saint Thomas Aquinas ceased operations from 1801-1815 and then closed permanently in 1823. The present-day Autonomous

University of Santo Domingo has remained open as a spiritual successor of the University of Saint Thomas Aquinas since 1924, gaining its current name in 1961. The turbulent history of the University in Santo Domingo, as compared to the Royal and Pontifical Universities of Mexico or Lima, appears a more representative example of the common struggle to establish and maintain formal education in the western hemisphere, as this paper will continue to demonstrate. Further, as will be discussed more later, it was the Royal and Pontifical Universities in Lima and Mexico that had first access to colonial printing presses (1581 and 1539, respectively) (Morison, 1956). The date of the arrival of the printing press in Santo Domingo is not known but may be as late as the seventeenth century (Serrata, n.d.).

New France: 1605-1635

The story leading to the settlement of New France involves a far greater number of individuals, exploratory voyages, and temporary settlements and outposts than the story of New Spain. In fact, the first French settlements, temporary as they were in the Western hemisphere, fall outside of the territory that would eventually become New France.

Following the Edict of Fontainbleau (c. 1685), which reversed the religious protections afforded to Huguenots (Calvinist Protestants) in France as established by the Edict of Nantes (c. 1598), as well as prior to the Edict of Nantes (c. 1598), Huguenots sought religious liberty in America. The first Huguenots, led by Jean Ribault, settled Charlesfort (present-day Parris Island, South Carolina) in 1562 and Fort Caroline (present-day Jacksonville, Florida) in 1564. The Spanish, arriving in 1565, settled St. Augustine (in-response to the Fort Caroline settlement) – “the oldest continuously occupied European city in the continental United States” (National Park Service (A), n.d., para. 4) – and “within a month after the settlement...rid the territory of the French Huguenots 40 miles to the north” (Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019, 7) in Fort Caroline.

By 1566, the French Charlesfort was razed and the Spanish settlement of Santa Elena was constructed nearby. Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019) describe these early interactions in the North American south as being too short for the French Huguenots to establish institutions such as education, although they do note that “A classical school for the children of Spanish settlers was in existence in St. Augustine at least as early as 1606” (p. 7).

Port-Royal, Acadia & Trois-Rivières, Quebec

Further north the French tale was significantly different. Following expeditions by Jacques Cartier (c. 1534-1543), the temporary establishment of Charlesbourg-Royal (present-day Quebec City, Quebec), and the initial efforts of Samuel de Champlain at Île Sainte Croix in 1604, a more concerted effort was undertaken by Catholic merchants to establish a settlement to capitalize on the growing fur trade. This concerted effort resulted in Samuel de Champlain’s settlement of Port Royal on the northern coast of Acadia (present-day Nova Scotia). To ensure success, following the bitter losses of Île Sainte Croix, Champlain established ‘L’Ordre de Bon Temps,’ a social club that founded the first French library in North America, produced the first European-traditional drama (‘*Neptune*’ written by Marc Lesbarscot in 1606), and hosted regular catechistic courses (Archives, 2021). While the settlement at Port Royal experienced some early success, it was quickly overtaken by the growing and more self-sustaining settlement of Quebec City at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. After an English raid in 1613, Port Royal was abandoned (Archives, 2021).

If the abandonment of Port Royal, Acadia and the short life of the L’Order de Bon Temps is not convincing as the first lower educational institution in New France, then the Franciscan Recollet school, founded by Pacifique Duplessis, in 1616 in the missionary outpost of what would later become Trois-Rivière (Audet, 1951, p. 5 as cited in Magnuson, 1985) – less than 100

miles up the St. Lawrence river from Quebec, and similarly distanced down-river from the future site of Fort Ville-Marie (present-day Montreal) – may be. Although, Magnuson (1992) cautions that there is little evidence to support the Trois-Rivière school’s existence, much less its claim as the first educational institution in the colony. Additionally, according to Magnuson (1992) many present-day Canadians ascribe the honor to a school established concurrently with the Collège des Jésuites (c. 1635) in Quebec City. The ‘lost’ history of the early Recollet schools in Trois-Rivières may be due to the French expulsion from Quebec and the surrounding area, including Trois-Rivières, in 1629 following an English attack and incursion. However, Magnuson (1992) describes this lack of evidence “circumstantial at best”. Upon the French return to the region, greater colonial attention was directed to Quebec. Trois-Rivières was not resettled until 1634. If the Recollet school at Trois-Rivière did exist, it is almost certain that its focus would have been on mediating intercultural contact between indigenous and colonizing populations by way of education.

Collège des Jésuites

With the return to Quebec in 1629, the sectarian balance favored the Jesuits, who were equally passionate about education as their Mendicant predecessors, but who supplemented indigenous education with a strong dedication to colonial youth education. Magnuson (1992) explains that the founding of a Jesuit elementary school (founded 1634) in Quebec was out of character for the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) at large. But such an effort could be understood as a necessary intermediary toward higher education, with which the Jesuits were more commonly associated. This elementary school co-educated French and indigenous boys. Education for girls did not emerge until the arrival of the Ursuline nuns in 1639. By 1650, a residential facility was added to the elementary school, and by 1664 the college was offering courses in the humanities,

appropriate to its collegiate name, Collège des Jésuites, that it had borne since its founding (Magnuson, 1992, 155).

A Worthy Sidenote

With the maturation of the Collège des Jésuites in Quebec progressing, one of its founders, Jean Brébeuf, traveled west to the southern coast of the Georgian Basin of Lake Huron, and was living with the Huron-Wendat tribe in a Jesuit mission (Ste. Marie Among the Hurons) by 1639. Different than a seminary, the mission was intended to allow Brébeuf and fellow Jesuits the ability to immerse themselves in tribal culture and to mediate a slower conversion to Catholicism.

Much of what is known of the late Huron-Wendat tribe is due to this approach by Jesuit missionaries (Feldmann, 2016). Unfortunately, in 1649, the mission, and many Huron settlements in the area, were attacked by Iroquois tribe members who were vying for greater control within the growing French and indigenous fur-trade (Sainte Marie Among the Hurons, n.d.). Jean Brébeuf and six other Jesuit missionaries were tortured and killed. They were later canonized as the Canadian Martyrs by the Catholic Church. Many Jesuit schools to this day feature Brébeuf's name in recognition of his dedication to education. The tale of indigenous education in New France, remains complicated, likely, in part, due to France's support of the *Sublimus Deus* Papal bull (c. 1537) as a majority Catholic kingdom, under the rule of a Catholic monarchy.

Virginia: 1607-1693

As Samuel de Champlain made his numerous (twenty-nine) Atlantic crossings between France and New France (Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019, 8), and as the Spanish Universities crossed their 50th year of operations, England was entering the second phase of its colonization

project, begun by John Cabot at the conclusion of the 15th century, but made notable by Walter Raleigh nearly 90 years later (c. 1580s). The dividing line between the first English push toward colonization and the second was – for the sake of this paper – the 1606 royal chartering of the Virginia Company by King James of England and Scotland. Cremin (1970) further attributes the division to a distinctive shift in the approach to colonization, caused by the two consecutive failures of the Roanoke Colony (c. 1585, 1587), which included households with women and children for the purpose of establishing a permanent settlement. The new approach, attributed to Richard Hakluyt, centered the economic opportunity available by focusing on colonial outpost labor, rather than permanent settlement sustainability, and was believed to increase the likelihood of profit available to investors (Cremin, 1970, p. 8) - over 1700 shareholders believed in the new approach quickly following the 1606 chartering.

To further cement the chances of success – as stated in the Royal Charter:

“and for the more speedy Accomplishment of their said intended Plantation and Habitation there, are desirous to divide themselves into two several Colonies and Companies” (Thorpe, 1909, para. 2)

The Virginia company was divided into two competing subordinate companies. The first was the Virginia Company *of London*, tasked with settling a southern colony. The second was the Virginia Company *of Bristol, Exeter, and Plymouth* (sometimes referred to as the Plymouth Company), tasked with settling a northern colony. While the United States mythos of today suggests that the first two English colonies were Plymouth and Jamestown- Plymouth being settled in 1620 and Jamestown in 1607- the Plymouth company had in fact settled the first English colony at Sagadahoc (present-day Maine) two months prior to the setting of Jamestown in 1607. The colony at Sagadahoc, also known as the Popham colony (after its leader, George

Popham) disbanded after 14 months and returned to England. Success was no more assured in Jamestown – settled by Christopher Newport. After the initial settlement, the Jamestown colony quickly descended into sickness and scarcity of supplies and food. The failure of the Hakluyt method of colonization was summarized, “the miracle...is not that Sagadahoc failed, but that Jamestown survived.” (Andrews, 1934-1938, 98 as cited in Cremin, 1970, 14).

Jamestown, Virginia

The early history of the Jamestown colony is told with reasonable effect by Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019), although a comment is worth adding. In a discussion regarding the starving times -the winter of 1609-1610 - Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019) state, “Sixty colonists somehow managed to survive the winter. With the arrival of Lord De la Warr in June 1610, much needed supplies and still more settlers brought new life and renewed hope to the fragile colony” (p. 16). Missed in this retelling is the entire ‘third supply mission,’ which departed England in May 1609 with nine ships, encountered a hurricane during the crossing, and arrived late, were separated from one another, and was presumed to have lost the heavy supplied flagship. Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019), do acknowledge “successive waves of new recruits” and an increase of 300 colonists between the Fall of 1608’s ‘second supply mission’ and the Fall of 1609, but no discussion is given to the precise origin and failures of these 300 new colonists, who -had they arrived prepared between fall 1608 and fall 1609 -should have ensured the vitality of the colony through the winter.

This “missing story” is the same story believed to have inspired William Shakespeare’s drama, *The Tempest* (RSC, 2021). Having set out from Plymouth in June, nine ships were bound for Jamestown. By August, six ships would arrive, another in October, and the last two (rebuilt from the remains of the “lost” flagship, would arrive just weeks after Lord De La Warr in June of

1610 (Bernhard, 1992, pp. 606-607). The extended voyage and the loss of the well supplied flagship landed 300 new colonists, hungry and with poor tempers, in Jamestown just as the Fall set-in as the colony prepared for winter. Bernard (1992) attributes much of ‘the starving time’ experience to the arrival of the ‘third supply mission’ – without supplies. As a unique aside to this comment on the ‘third supply mission’ one of the six ships which arrived in August of 1609, had in fact been built by Virginia Company of Plymouth in Sagahadoc, and had been used in the abandonment of that colony just over a year earlier.

College at Henrico & East India School

Coincidentally, the exclusion of the ‘third supply mission’ in Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither could not be done entirely, given the arrival of a passenger who also served as a main antagonist in the events that followed. Some additional detail may correct the misleading sentence “the Indians, after years of peace, apparently grew tired...” (p. 17), which is passed as motivation for the Good Friday massacre of 1622 – one of the bloodiest events in the Anglo-Powhatan wars, and the event that signaled the end of efforts to found a College at Henrico, a growing outpost 50 miles east of Jamestown and a free school, the East India School at Charles City, roughly between Henrico and Jamestown.

Unfortunately, there is little discussion of the Anglo-Powhatan Wars in the United States mythos, beyond the iconic Powhatan tribe member, Pocahontas. But it is Pocahontas (1595-1617) and her relationship to John Rolfe (1585-1622), who arrived in Jamestown in June 1610 and was one of the many stranded ‘third supply mission’ members aboard the downed flagship. Sadly, Rolfe’s wife and infant daughter died in Bermuda while stranded after the ship went down. In part, this may have created the uneasy conditions for eight years of peace and the massacre which ended the peace and not the “tired”-ness of the Powhatan tribe. After

Pocahontas' kidnapping in 1613 by English colonists, peace was negotiated between the colonists and Powhatan tribe and settled with Pocahontas' marriage to John Rolfe. The political nature of this relationship is unsettlingly captured by Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019),

“When in 1613 the Indian Maiden Pocahontas was taken as hostage, the lonely Rolfe fell in love. His marriage to Pocahontas precipitated a hostage exchange and a truce with the neighboring Indians that lasted for eight years” (p. 17).

While held hostage in Henrico, Pocahontas converted to Christianity (Hunt Land, 1938) before sailing to England with Rolfe, where she was heralded as being “civilized” and was had an audience with King James. Pocahontas' political intermarriage, religious conversion, and campaign in England generated interest in expanding the civilizing religious education, including those informally present in Henrico. This interest was encouraged by the King, who solicited funds from the reach of the Church of England for the purpose of building “some churches and schools for the education of the children of those barbarians” (Hunt Land, 1938, p. 474).

As the new funds were accrued, instructions for their use were drafted by the Company board. The instructions included the explicit direction to set aside “...ten thousand acres at Henrico for the endowment of a college to train up the children of the infidels ‘in true religion, moral virtue and civility and for other godly uses’” (Susan Myra Kingsbury, pp. 98-109, as cited in Cremin, 1970, p. 11). Notably, demonstrating the difference in colonial value, the instructions also alluded to the creation of the East India School. It was later (c. 1621) endowed by just one thousand acres, compared to Henrico's ten-thousand-acre endowment two years earlier (Cremin, 1970).

The Virginia Company board appointed William Weldon to lead the college and school. Weldon arrived in Virginia in November of 1619, however his choice to withhold building in the

winter, and to lend the college's tenant laborers to colonists upset the Company board. Weldon was replaced with George Thorpe as college and school deputy (Hunt Land, 1938). Thorpe, as described by Hunt Land (1938) sensed the tension growing between colonists and the Powhatan tribe as the plans for the college became more realized. This tension was likely heightened further when Rolfe returned to Virginia without Pocahontas, who had died in England and with a new wife.

By seeing the purpose of the College at Henrico as being sown out of the hostage capture and political marriage of Pocahontas, and by illuminating the many moments of impediment to a speedier establishment of the College – including the death of Pocahontas and the firing of William Weldon - the causes of the Good Friday massacre of 1622 come into greater focus. Henrico was a slow manifestation of the symbolic and physical violence of the colonists against the indigenous population. The death of Thorpe and many of the tenant laborers who were at work on the college foundations during the massacre, as well as the English prioritization of revenge over conversion and the economic hardships which subsequently befell the Virginia Company following the massacre, highlight why the failure of Henrico was not met with timely attempts to establish formal education in Virginia. The purpose of the earlier attempts was to indoctrinate and render servile the indigenous population. The purpose had not been to educate colonial children. The 10:1 ratio of initial endowment and the delayed interest in colonial schooling as compared to indigenous conversion support this point.

Academia Virginiensis et Oxoniensis & the Syms-Eaton Free School

Two important notes are worth noting at this juncture. First, additional attempts at establishing formal learning in the colonies did occur – although with less fervor than before, making them easy to overlook. Second, additional attempts towards colonization were set against

an increasingly tumultuous English political background. Adams (1887) states, “It was only two years after this terrible catastrophe that the idea of a university in Virginia was revived” (p. 11), and Hunt Land (1938) confirms, “Despite the great blow which the massacre had dealt the colony, the Virginia Company of London did not give up hope in its ultimate success or drop its plan for Henrico College” (p. 494).

Additionally, this revived collegiate interest was no longer for the primary purpose of indigenous servility, rather, it was largely for continuing the ideals of the East India School – and alleviating the cost of sending colonial children back to England for formal education (Hunt Land, 1938). Prior to the Virginia Company’s dissolution due to insolvency in 1624, land was granted to Edward Palmer, who left an estate upon his death in (also 1624), with the intention of founding the *Academia Virginiesis et Oxoniensis*. Adams (1887) demonstrates the caution contained in this plan while also suggesting its purpose solely for colonial children, “Experience with treacherous Indians suggested that the institution should be erected upon a secluded, sheltered site – an island in the Susquehanna River” (p. 11). The theme of educational misfortune in Virginia continued, as turmoil in Europe grew due to the 30-years’ war (1618-1648) and the untimely death of King James (c. 1625) which left the crown to King Charles I, an English Catholic, causing a degree of uncertainty around the *Academia Virginiesis et Oxoniensis* project sufficient to allow the estate funds to be spent in other areas (Adams, 1887).

The rising conflict in Europe and growing religious tension in England, which ultimately led to the English Civil War, the 20-year Interregnum, and the creation of the Commonwealth of England, provided the Virginian province agency enough to develop into a sustainable and permanent settlement, finally distanced from the resource and profit-driven Hakluyt approach, which had troubled the young colony. Cremin (1970) writes,

“By the 1620’s the English had moved farther than any other Western power toward conceiving of colonies, not as exploitative bands of transient men, but as permanent, self-sustaining communities...” (p. 22).

By 1635, Benjamin Syms had funded the first school in Elizabeth City, now present-day Hampton, VA, and in 1643, the school was officially recognized by the Virginia General Assembly. The Syms school, later supplemented in 1659 by the Eaton School and endowed by Dr. Thomas Eaton– continues to operate to this day as the Hampton Public High School (Jones Campbell, 1940). The recognition of the Syms-Eaton Free School within Virginia is less evident than its due recognition as the first successfully established educational institution in the province. Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019) note that the Governor of the region was unaware of the school’s existence nearly 30 years after its initial chartering, despite its continuous operations.

College of William & Mary

Colonial governing inattention to education would pass, as would much of the turmoil in Europe and England. Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019) and Cremin (1970) identify the dispersed plantation settlements and lack of an Anglican drive toward education as reasons these barriers were not overcome by the general citizenry in the case of higher education. Following the restoration of the English monarchy in 1660, , the Virginia General Assembly appealed to King Charles II for the founding of a college for the colonial youth (Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019). While the appeal was denied, the call was renewed after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which crowned King William and Queen Mary co-sovereigns, and in 1693 a royal charter was approved.

“The charter of the College of William and Mary shows that the objects of the foundation were much the same as those originally proposed in 1619, and again in 1660. The General Assembly in Virginia had asked for a royal endowment of the college, ‘to the end that the Church of Virginia may be furnished with a seminar of ministers of the gospel, and that the youth may be piously educated in good letters and manners, and that the Christian faith may be propagated amongst the Western Indians, to the glory of Almighty God.’” (Adams, 1887, 17).

The placement of the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg is perhaps the final detail necessary to demonstrate the significant influence of English politics to higher education in Virginia. A journey that had started nearly 90 years earlier and was promoted with the conversion of an indigenous teenage girl forced into a political marriage, did not end with the closure of Henrico, or even Jamestown, but with the settlement of a new capital city and college named for a new King and Queen, and still focused on proselytizing to and “civilizing” a native population.

New England: 1620-1636

The political turmoil in England and Europe and dissolution of the Virginia Company by 1624 provided the context to transition the Virginia colony to a permanent and sustainable settlement instead of a profit-driven commercial enterprise. By comparison, the founding of the Plymouth colony in 1620 was accomplished in an environment already close to this destination. In fact, much about the founding of Plymouth, and later the Massachusetts Bay Colony, differs considerably from the founding of Virginia. Morison (1956) put this sentiment plainly, “New England differed from the other English colonies in that it was founded largely for the purpose of trying an experiment in Christian living” (p. 7).

This founding was initially slow as the Puritanical founding of Plymouth by the Pilgrims – themselves Separatists ardently opposed to ecclesiastical organization and supra-congregational hierarchies – in 1620, struggled to materialize robust civil institutions. The founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630 tempered the separatist underpinnings of Plymouth with a desire “to demonstrate to the world at large the nature and practicability of a divinely ordered Christian commonwealth” (Cremin, 1970, p. 15).

As Cremin (1970), Morison (1956), and Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019) each explain, the social, economic, and political environments of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay – later including the Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, River (Connecticut), and New Haven colonies – differed widely, and in ways relevant to the emergence of formal education in each colony. To speak generally of education in “New England” is to miss these relevant social, economic, and political antecedents. For the sake of brevity, however, attention will be limited to Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay from 1620 to 1636.

Plymouth & Massachusetts Bay

The founding of the Plymouth colony was a far less direct endeavor than is captured in the common stories offered to children. Of the 102 colonists that settled Plymouth in November 1620, (a group including 20 women and 32 children (Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019), as many as 46 colonists, including up to 11 women and 19 children (Mayflower400, n.d.) had been living in the Netherlands for 12 years prior to departure to avoid religious persecution resulting from their opposition to the Church of England. Their famous *Mayflower* Atlantic crossing, succinctly described as beginning on “September 16, 1620” and lasting 67-days by (Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019) was also less direct. The journey began in Leiden, Netherlands on the *Speedwell* on July 22, 1620. The *Speedwell* then joined the *Mayflower*, which had departed

from London in Southampton, England a few days later. The two ships, fully stocked, departed Southampton on August 15, 1620. However, the *Speedwell* began taking on water and the ships stopped in Dartmouth, England for repairs. Both the *Speedwell* and *Mayflower* departed Dartmouth on September 2, 1620, bound for the mouth of the Hudson River.

However, the *Speedwell* continued to take on water, and the ships returned to England, stopping in Plymouth, where the *Speedwell* was disembarked.

“Some passengers abandoned the venture and returned to Holland, some stayed in Plymouth, and the remainder boarded the *Mayflower* to continue to America. It meant the *Mayflower* was overcrowded and cramped but the journey was to go ahead regardless” (Mayflower400, n.d.).

Later, a storm nearly sank the *Mayflower* off the coast of present-day Cape Cod, so the choice was made to land and settle north of the patented lands, as set by the Virginia Company.

The seemingly tangential nature of this narrative may have been perceived when Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019) when it was excluded or edited from *American Education: A History*. However, the mood on the overcrowded *Mayflower* between the co-voyaging of the Leiden Pilgrims and the London adventurers, was not good. “In fact, the Pilgrims themselves were in the minority and distrusted their fellow passengers who had been haphazardly recruited without regard to their religious convictions” (Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019, p. 25). This sentiment is then cited as motivation for the drafting of the *Mayflower Compact* described as “a seminal text in the history of [United States] American self-government” (p. 26). Cremin (1970) shares his perception of the Plymouth project’s initial composition:

“In effect, the Pilgrims came to America as a community seeking to preserve its religious and cultural integrity, and though they actually ended up only a minority of the

population at Plymouth, they set the dominant character and tone of the colony there” (p. 15);

And, Morison (1956) extends their religious minority rule beyond the local inter-relations of colonists, drawing attention to the larger colonial relationship with England, “in New England the puritans had it pretty much their own way [from England]” (p.3).

Independence, while favorable to the extent that it motivated colonies to establish civil institutions for their own self-sufficiency, had a point of diminishing returns, typified by the Plymouth project. Morgan (1966) describes “Puritan tribalism” as a social isolationist practice arising from institutional distrust inherent in the separatist ideology, carried to Plymouth by the Pilgrims. For Plymouth Colony, this attitude embodied a negative pressure to institutionalize such things as education, which “during the first years of settlement was conducted by family and church” (Cremin, 1970, p. 15).

Even the level of Puritanical church organization, including but not limited to education, was diminished compared to the Dutch Reformed neighbors who would come to settle in New Netherland to the south or the Catholic neighbors of New France in the north. And, as the Massachusetts Bay Colony to the immediate northwest of Plymouth took hold, even the organization of the Church of England would prove more sufficient to bring about formal education.

This lack of civil institutions and a dispersed population living in familial enclaves (Morgan, 1966; Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019), was based largely on the distrust of the non-Divine, resulted in what Morison (1956) described as a general intellectual decline in the first generation of Plymouth. These facts, along with an incredibly slow population growth rate, totaling “no more than 400 people after a decade” (Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019, p. 26) and

uneasy relationships with nearby indigenous tribes recalls the earlier cited reflection of Jamestown's success as compared to the failed colony of Sagadahoc – “the miracle...is not that Sagadahoc failed, but that Jamestown survived.” (Andrews, 1934-1938, 98 as cited in Cremin, 1970, 14). Here, a similar miracle might have been bestowed on Plymouth; That miracle might well have been the settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony at Salem some 60 miles north.

The institutionalism of the Massachusetts Bay project, begun five years after the dissolution of the Virginia Company, is typified in John Winthrop's famous “City on a Hill” sermon, given during the 1630 voyage from England – comprised of 11 ships and 700 passengers (Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither, 2019). The sermon includes several references to communal and shared work, ordered by faithful law, culminating in a Christian commonwealth intended to model the Holy power of God to the world. The hegemonic limits of individual-conscious expected of Puritanism, when coupled with the rapidly growing civic institutions and population movement into the Massachusetts Bay colony, required the emergence of formal church-led education. As put in Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019), “diversity of opinion on the essentials of Protestant Christianity could not be permitted” (p. 30).

It is worth noting, given the naming of both Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth as Puritanical colonies, that the complex position of the Massachusetts Bay Puritans compared to the Plymouth Puritans relative to social trust is nuanced and enmeshed in English religious and political history, including conflicts between the Anglican Church, the Church of Scotland, Irish Catholics, as well as Protestant Presbyterians and Protestant Congregationalists (Morison, 1956). All of these relations were tenuous at the time of the renewed New England colonization project at Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay. Largely, however, the Massachusetts Bay colonists were more amicable toward Presbyterian ideals which could be reconciled with the Anglican Church,

as compared to the Plymouth colonists who were strict Congregationalists, so called “separatists,” and sought a greater level of religious independence given their history of oppression by religious leaders outside the local church.

As the population grew and congregations spread across the Massachusetts Bay, the colonial leaders “organized [their] ecclesiastical polity so that each church would have, in addition to a pastor, a teacher, whose special concern was the systematic exegesis of Christian doctrine (Cremin, 1970, p. 16). The ‘systematic exegesis of Christian doctrine’ gives strong reason for the expeditious founding of a Latin school in Boston which had quickly emerged as the population center of the colony.

Boston Latin School

The founding of a Latin School in Boston predates the lay (non-clerical) policies leading to widespread education, namely, the education acts of 1642, 1647, and 1648, which clarified the school’s ministerial role in familiarizing students with the language of the Church. Its existence, as the first formal educational institution (c. 1635) in the contemporary United States is affirmed by Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019), as well as Cremin (1970) and Morison (1956), and others.

However, their affirmation remains offset by this paper’s assertion that the use of contemporary geopolitical borders should be avoided in historical analysis. Investments in the Latin School were clear, with multiple new buildings funded and built within the first 70 years of operation, and nearly 50 years of non-competition within the Boston educational market (Morison, 1956). While a formal relationship with the nearest college, Harvard College, was never established, Morison (1956) and Cremin (1970) outline the significant pipeline that existed for students for the 38 years of Ezekiel Cheever’s tenure as headmaster (1670-1708).

While Morison (1956) associates this matriculation trend explicitly with Cheever's position, Morison's own indication is that the first-generation colonial intellectual capacity had fallen due presumably to the influence of learned vocational placement – including the clergy, which could also be seen as inspiring a second-generation reaction and correction through the end of the 17th century. It is helpful to also acknowledge that by 1651 as many as 18 lower schools, e.g. elementary and grammar, were open and enrolling students throughout the Massachusetts Bay Colony (Morison, 1956).

New College (later Harvard University)

A near identical motivation to the founding of the Boston Latin School, resulted in the concerted efforts in 1636 to establish a college, just a few miles up the Charles River in Newtowne, Massachusetts. A group of Cambridge alumni, concentrated in Newtowne, endeavored to establish “a college ‘to advance learning, and perpetuate it to posterity’” (Cremin, 1970, p. 16). Of course, New College, as it was named until 1639 when it became Harvard College, was quickly met with the many competing colonial demands that have been outlined earlier. Brickman (1972) describes Harvard as being an exemplar of the colonial mission of clerical training, citing a 1643 pamphlet titled ‘New England's First Fruits’ that expressed colonial fears, “‘dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the Churches, when our present Ministers shall lie in the dust’” (Brickman, 1972, p. 39). But there is not enough difference between Massachusetts and Hunt Land's (1938) description ‘the cost of sending colonial children back to England for formal education’ to prevent the same from being present in the context of Harvard. This argument becomes more evident when considering the cost of importing printed literature from Europe. Harvard's response, by acquiring the third printing

press in the Western world, fits with this theory. Cremin (1970) elaborates, “the expectation that it would supply Puritan literature to interested Englishmen on both sides of the Atlantic” (p. 16).

In 2012, the *Harvard Gazette* ran a story about the 1638 arrival of the printing press to Harvard (then still New College): “That little press, made of pegged timber and iron, was destined to be the first in British North America, the first at Harvard, and the first printing press in the New World managed by a woman” (Ireland, 2012). Ireland is careful in noting, “British North America,” but the inattentive reader might miss that nuance. This paper has consistently challenged that inattention, and so it is also worth noting that beyond the British colonies, the printing press was introduced to Spanish controlled Mexico and Lima in 1539 and 1581 – homes to the two earliest institutions of education in New Spain (Morison, 1956). Colonial literature, first in libraries for studious consumption and then in printing press shops, provides a useful analog for measuring the institutionalization of education. The seventeenth-century cost for printed literature would have been beyond the means of most colonists – the printing process unimaginably so.

Beyond educating local colonial youth, and training new ministers, the founders of Harvard also faced cultural pressure to extend their teachings to the surrounding indigenous population. If the earlier pressures for education resulted in seminary/theological studies and a printing press, then it was a third pressure that resulted in the establishment of the ‘Indian College’ at Harvard. “The handful of Indians who were exposed to the higher learning in Cambridge, unfortunately ...died either before or [shortly] after graduation. The sole Indian alumnus of colonial Harvard was Caleb Cheeshahteumauk (1665)” (Brickman, 1972, p. 36).

Harvard’s Indian College is not dissimilar to the same later attempt at William & Mary, or the earlier attempts within the Collège des Jésuites, the Universidad de Santo Tomás Aquino,

the Royal and Pontifical Universities of Mexico and Lima, and the unmet goal of the College at Henrico. The consistency in this trend is notable in naming the violent relations between colonists and indigenous populations, as enacted through education. However, that same consistency otherwise renders its occurrence as insignificant in determining the forces leading to the different patterns of establishing education in the various colonies.

New Netherland, New Sweden: 1624-1674

While the New Netherland and New Sweden colonies existed in North America for less than a century, their influence can continue to be felt today. New Netherland grew in pace with the success of the Dutch West India company, first chartered in 1621, although initial exploration and temporary out-posting had begun in the area that would become New Netherland as early as 1609 (National Park Services (B), n.d.). Initial growth was slow, as the company employed a model similar to early Jamestown, focusing on unsustainable commercial settlements (Kilpatrick, 1912).

However, the arrival of the company ship, *New Netherland*, in 1624 and a reorganization of early population centers in 1626 (including the founding of New Amsterdam (present-day New York City)) set the colony on a new path of increased growth and self-sufficiency (Cremin, 1970). It is also contextually important to mention that during this period, Netherland was in an eighty-year period of on-and-off war for independence from Spain (c. 1568-1648), and by the turn of the 17th century, the Dutch Republic had been established and the first Dutch Golden Age had begun. Much of this conflict was also related to the Europe-wide Thirty Years War (1618-1648), which included significant conflicts between Catholic and Protestant religious groups.

Thus, the rise of the Dutch Republic – independent from Catholic Spain – was favorable for the Dutch Reformed church, founded in 1571.

Kilpatrick (1912), in discussing the establishment of education in New Netherland, highlights the historic relationship between the Dutch Reformed Church and education; “As a most important means of fixing and preserving the reformed faith, the parochial school had become an indispensable part of the organization of the new church” (p. 19). Schooling had existed in the Netherlands as early as 1461 (Haarlem), 1552 (Utrecht), and 1536 (The Hague). “It was this school which was reproduced almost identically in the Dutch villages of [sic] America” (Kilpatrick, 1912, p. 38).

New Amsterdam School

The certainty that Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019) utilize in their statement, “The Dutch West India Company established and initially financed a town school in New Amsterdam in 1638...” (p. 40) is challenged by Kilpatrick’s (1912) investigation into the travel and appointment of the acknowledged first school master in New Amsterdam, Adam Roelantsen. The culminating statement in Kilpatrick’s findings demonstrates the uncertainty around the establishment of the first school in New Amsterdam, “He (Adam Roelantsen) was licensed to teach August 4, 1637, and began his school in Manhattan probably not earlier than April 1, 1638” (Kilpatrick, 1912, p. 50).

Kilpatrick’s work (1912), as well as Cremin’s (1970) conflict with Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither’s (2019) related to the involvement of the Dutch Reformed Church in the New Netherland colony. Kilpatrick (1912) and Cremin (1970) both stress the role of Classis of Amsterdam (group of local churches) in administering colonial church matters, including education: “The Classis of Amsterdam... was given charge of the New Netherland churches and

this charge carried with it a certain oversight over the schools of New Amsterdam” (Kilpatrick, 1912, p. 15); “The schools of New Netherland were initially under the direct regulation of the Dutch West India Company and the Classis of Amsterdam...” (Cremin, 1970, p. 183). Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither (2019) state, “In 1642 the colony (New Netherland) had 17 taverns but not a single house of worship” (p. 8). But, given that the 1638 school was administered by and through the church, this cannot be true.

Disagreements between the texts continue with the claim that New Netherland growth consisted of “only a few settlements” (Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019, p. 39). More accurately, Kilpatrick (1912) lists the settlements prior to English occupation (c. 1664):

Breuckelen (Brooklyn) in 1646; Beverwyck (Albany) in 1652; New Amsterdam in 1653; Midwoud (Flatbush) and Amersfoort (Flatlands) in 1654; New Amstel (New Castle, Del.) in 1657; New Haerlem (Harlem) in 1660; and Bergen (now within Newark, N. J.), Boswyck (Bushwick), New Utrecht, and Wiltwyck (Kingston) each in 1661” (p. 13).

Further, the assertion that New Netherland remained commercially driven until immigration efforts within the first English period (Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019), conflicts with the understanding that “stable families were slowly replacing single adventurers interested only in quick profits” (National Park Service (B), n.d., para. 8). Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither’s (2019) own description of New Amsterdam as a “heterogenous urban center,” further cement the likely presence of institutions, otherwise not present in commercially driven outposts.

The New Amsterdam lower school, joined by a classical school between 1652 (Cremin, 1970) and 1659 (Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019), are far from unexpected institutions given the favorable relationship between the New Netherland colony and the Dutch Republic, as well as the increasingly strong Dutch institutions in Europe, despite concurrent external European

conflict (the eighty, thirty years, and Anglo-Dutch wars). This differs significantly from the similar transitory period, already discussed in Virginia and New England, given the internal English conflict that those colonies were connected to in their originating country.

While significantly less historic data exists, Cremin (1970) suggests that “there may have been schooling in New Sweden, too, given Queen Christina’s injunction regarding the maintenance of ministers and schoolmasters,” (c. 1650s) (p. 182).

King’s College

The emergence of higher education in New Netherland and New Sweden did not occur during the Dutch and Swedish colonial period that ended formally in 1674 (but were largely concluded at the start of the first English occupation in 1664), although initial seeds were planted during Dutch rule. Pine (1919) explains that even the earliest fruit of these seeds, however, were not seen until the turn of the 18th century:

“While the year 1754 is the date of the incorporation of King’s College, now known as Columbia University, it should not be supposed that the college established at that time came into being as the result of a sudden inspiration, for the annals of the preceding fifty years prove that an institution of higher learning had long been desired in the colony, and that the founding of King’s College was the culmination of protracted effort” (p. 109).

The seeds, already mentioned, were the cultural heterogeneity and permissive nature of differences within the institutions first established during the Dutch rule (Urban, Wagoner, & Gaither, 2019). The existence as a cultural crossroads served New Amsterdam (and later New York City) particularly well as it emerged as a major port and site of immigration into the middle colonies of Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Further discussion on the specifics leading to the founding of King's College are beyond the scope of this paper, given the late-ness of their occurrence within the colonial period. This paper's usage of the different colonization projects for comparative analysis – to determine the forces and patterns related to the emergence of formal education – breaks down as the historic cultural and colonial borders diminished in importance with new cultures immigrating and as cross-cultural contact gave way to a rising American culture, increasingly divorced from distinct European powers.

Conclusion

When Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019) begin their *American Education: A history*, they make a conscious effort to include the indigenous voice prior to embarking on a brief (less than 3 full pages) overview of early attempts at colonization, by Spain, France, and other northern European countries. The text then enters the colonial period at Jamestown in 1607, with a dedicated attention to the history of education within the boundaries of the eventual United States. This choice, to include voices based on their occurrence within contemporary borders, enables a critical reader to infer the authors' trepidation toward a more radical approach to decolonizing education in America (as unpossessed land beyond the nation-state).

America, as it is, is not the United States. America is a land mass, named after, but not by, the cartographer Amerigo Vespucci, who corrected the early explorers' misconception that the land was in fact the eastern reaches of Asia. To refuse the possession of land, to decolonize it, and to recognize the equality of the inhabitants, indigenous or immigrant, is to require an analysis of relations that extends beyond modern geopolitical borders.

The initial goal of this paper was to explore the forces leading to the establishment of formal educational institutions (as embodiments of social relations) in the Americas. Second to

this goal emerged a desire to identify patterns within those forces. The forces quickly became recognizable as the contextual underpinnings of education, as defined by Magnuson (1992): “...education is ultimately a product of the social, political, and economic forces impinging upon it” (preface). And plainly it was recognized that differences within colonial political economies and their social relations – beyond those captured by Lockridge (1974) as cited by Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019): “that ‘social concentration,’ along with an intense commitment to Protestantism, were the two most significant variables that account for differences in the various colonies” (p. 31) – greatly impacted the rate of emergence and the specific emergent forms of institutionalized education between colonial projects. The pattern of these forces is best summarized in two quotes: “Of all colonies, those founded from commercial considerations show most nearly the identical transfer of the institutional life of the parent country” (Cremin, 1970, p. 21) and,

“That learning in [the colony] bore a resemblance to that of the mother country should not surprise us. New [colony], as its name implies, was a political and cultural appendage of [country]. The colony looked to [country] for many of its educational ideas, practices, and resources, both human and material... [it is] not intended to suggest that education in New [colony] [was] a carbon copy of that in the mother country. It was not, for the exigencies of a frontier society would not allow it” (Magnuson, 1992, 3).

Together, these quotes demonstrate that those colonies who maintained favorable political economic ties with their originating country and that drove a replication of originating country social relations were quicker to adopt institutionalized education, which itself had a growing tradition in Europe following the Protestant Reformation, the advent of the printing press, and the onset of the Enlightenment. This is compared to those colonies for whom political

economic relations pushed a “divorce” from their home country, such as the case of French Huguenots and English Puritans who formed strong familial/“tribal” enclaves (Morgan, 1966) that resisted institutionalism and the emergence of formal education. The limiting factor to Cremin’s (1970) “commercial considerations,” might be the absence of family units, which despite social concentration in Hakluyt-styled colonial outposts prevented the need for education as a means of local social relation replication and colonial self-sufficiency.

There are two exceptions to this case – with one occurring on either side of the bounded claim. The institutionally *expedient* exception to this case is the later colonial project of Massachusetts Bay, which while divorced from England, replicated many institutional patterns in their pursuit of an independent Christian commonwealth. Massachusetts Bay established formal lower education in 15 years and higher education in 16 years, more similar to the rates experienced by Catholic New Spain’s colonization of the Caribbean.

The institutionally *inexpedient* exception to this case is the mid-colonial project of Virginia. Beyond the colony’s clear struggles with resources, disease, and poor relations with local indigenous groups, the rapid import of enslaved Africans to support the pseudo-feudal plantation system, which kept non-Black population centers smaller and further apart (once a permanent and self-sustaining settlement was desired – post 1618), prevented the social concentration, as expected by Lockridge. These dual exceptions prove antonymic to the development of a consistent theory if the scope is limited, as done by Urban, Wagoner, and Gaither (2019). Or, if a theory is attempted, then it must create opposition between Virginia and Massachusetts – a feature present in many United States educational histories. Morison (1966), siding with Massachusetts, states,

“...in a new country the natural alternative to intellectual puritanism is intellectual vacuity... that [sic] explains why in the non-Puritan colonies the humanist tradition...shriveled...and why those colonies had to wait a century or more before they had any intellectual life worthy of the name” (p. 16).

A broader examination of western colonization projects, beyond contemporary geopolitical borders, creates a dataset more permissive to this level of analysis and two exceptions.

Finally, this paper brought attention to the often-forgotten struggle that accompanies the establishment of educational institutions. Specifically for readers outside the field of educational history, it may seem that Harvard, William & Mary, and Yale have always existed. Their status in the United States mythos suggests this. However, missed by this mythical tale are lives and moments of significant history that explain contemporary experiences and challenge colonized ways of being and knowing. The stories of Jean Brébeuf and the Huron-Wendat tribe, Pocahontas and the Powhatan tribe, the indigenous relations between different religious groups that motivated education in Latin America, and the general timing of colonization projects across the Western hemisphere, each serve as examples of why legendary history bound by arbitrary and transient geopolitical borders, even in the specialized subfield of educational history, must be challenged in the process of decolonization.

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Instructor's Comment:

Very energetic and well-detailed arguments, David. I am sure Urban and Gaither would accept some, if not most, of your critique as legitimate or worth noting at the least. I think their primary effort was, as throughout their book, to give a solid "overview" of how various forms of education came to what is now America and even more specifically, the United States. In doing so, they would probably note that they were limited in the scope and detail they could cover in a limited number of chapters, especially in trying to give a short but useful history of the pre-colonial and colonial periods.

You have done a very nice job of re-framing some of the inaccuracies and/or assumptions made by previous scholars and borrowed by Urban, Wagoner and Gaither. At the very least, they have accomplished one thing in your case--- they have prompted you to "dig deeper" and where possible or necessary to correct the inaccuracies and false assumptions. In doing so, you become, as it were, a better historian of education yourself!

This essay more than meets the requirements for the course so well done.

-Dr. Robert Schwartz, June 2021