From Revolution to Rebellion:
George Washington as Seen by the Collegiate Literary Societies of the Greater Chesapeake, 1813-1868

Daniel F. Rendleman

Senior Honors Thesis in History
HIST-409-01
Georgetown University

Mentored by Professor Kyle Roberts

May 1, 2009
To Professor Paul Betz: Before you, 
Education was just an expensive thing standing in the way. 
Now I see angels in the trees. 

And to Katy
From Revolution to Rebellion:
George Washington as Seen by the Collegiate Literary Societies of the Greater Chesapeake, 1813-1868

Acknowledgments 3
Chapter 1: An Introduction 4
Chapter 2: The Schools and Their Societies 15
Chapter 3: First in Peace 36
Chapter 4: First in War? 58
Chapter 5: Conclusion 87
Bibliography 95
Acknowledgments:

This work has been a joy for me to produce, in part because of the historian’s pleasure of uncovering the lives, words, and cares of those who came before, and in part because of the people who joined in the project with me. Foremost among these has been Prof. Kyle Roberts. His selfless devotion was manifest in his ardent editing of my drafts and his constant advice, both of which consistently turned muddy formulations into clear ideas. He and I have both been greatly assisted in this struggle by the students and professors of the History Honors Seminar over the past year. The gritty research would have been impossible without the competence and care of the professionals at the invaluable Library of Congress, the University of Pennsylvania University Archives, the George Washington University Special Collections (GWUSC), the University of Virginia Special Collections (UVASC), and the Georgetown University Special Collections (GUSC), most importantly Ms. Lynn Conway, the archivist there. In addition, the contributions of the Philomathean Society, the Enosinian Society, and the Philodemic Society have been crucial to this lone researcher, and I thank them. Of course, without the care and support of my wife, who is somehow always willing to put up with me, or of He who gives breath, I could accomplish nothing.
Chapter 1: An Introduction

The United States of America was founded on a series of bold strokes. The Revolutionary War was a gamble, often closer to defeat than victory. The Declaration of Independence made claims about all men that were more daring than most of the signers realized or intended. When a boy supposedly asked Benjamin Franklin what type of government the Constitutional Convention had formed, he replied, “A Republic, if you can keep it,” and one gets the sense that he felt unsure if the American people could. For the United States’ first years, the grand experiment rested more on the shoulders of George Washington than on any other man, but he passed away in 1799. Left to forge its own identity, America did not fully decide what kind of nation it wanted to become until 1865. Questions about race, the strength of state governments, and the nature of the national union eventually were resolved upon the field of battle. In between these years, Americans tried to decide them in newspapers, in Congress, and in countless debates and conversations. In the meantime, they lived and worked, grew up, married, and died as the inheritors of the Revolutionary generation, knowing that the mantle had passed from “The Father of His Country” to his wary children. They lived between Washington and war.

The struggle over America’s identity can be seen in the collegiate literary societies of the greater Chesapeake region before, during, and immediately after the Civil War. Literary societies burst onto the collegiate scene as an American phenomenon in the early nineteenth century when college students sought education and simulation outside of the classroom. Students in these clubs met, usually on a weekly basis, for a variety of scholarly activities. They might publish a college magazine or sponsor a
Fourth of July oration, but the staple of the literary society was the weekly debate. Two to four speakers gave keynote addresses on a topic and then, in most instances, the rest of the room gave shorter prepared or extemporaneous remarks for one side or the other. At the end of the debate, the society voted on the merits of the question and rendered a decision. Debates ranged from the political (Should Utah be admitted to the Union?) to the historical (Was the reign of John beneficial to England?) to the philosophical (Does music or eloquence have a greater effect on a man’s soul?). In addition to these polemical contests, the societies often gathered to hear a single prepared oration by a selected member or an honored guest on an equally varied range of topics. The students’ thoughts and arguments remain in the records of these debates and published versions and remembrances of these speeches. The topics often revolved around the memory of the Revolution, particularly the memory of George Washington.

Members of these literary societies understood their own position as inheritors of the Revolution and constantly looked to their young history to seek advice, find role models, critique the past, and define the nation that they were helping to create. As they tried to reconcile their place in the changing nation they turned again and again to perhaps the most important symbol of the Revolution: George Washington. The founder was useful on both a personal and national level. Like the rest of their countrymen, college students were embroiled in the great civil debates of the day: slavery, westward expansion, state versus federal government. They had to decide what national unity meant, what price they were willing to pay for it, and how it might be preserved. None of them knew the Civil War lay ahead of them, but they did know they were taking part in a

---

1 Journal of the Enosinian Society Box 5 of the Enosinian Records at GWSC, 1857-1870. November 21, 1857
Philodemic Amanuensis Book., 1857-1870. April 22, 1865
debate with national proportions and implications. They knew that they were debating the future of the country George Washington fought to create and that Washington’s memory had something important to tell them.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, citizens of the United States were debating what George Washington meant to them and what their nation had become. Through the lens of this central figure of the founding, Americans sought an understanding of the Republic and of themselves. Students sought Washington out as an example for their own lives and as a guide in times of civil turmoil. Their memories of him and their understandings of the past were constantly shaped by their interpretations of the present. Examining the use of Washington’s image in literary societies over half a century reveals how that image was adapted to many different debates and contingencies in the formative period of the young nation; at different times, students interpreted Washington as an exemplar, a sage, a relic of a bygone age, a saint, a statesman, and a rallying flag. Washington proved a malleable figure, able to become many things to many people, but essentially across the entire region and the full time period, in the eyes of the literary societies, George Washington meant national unity.

These students’ memories and depictions of Washington are important for three reasons. First, because the students came of age in these societies, their opinions and orations represent some of their first thoughts expressed outside of the influence of parents and the restrictions of childhood. They did not live in a vacuum. Teachers and colleagues all influenced students’ thoughts, but their college years marked the beginning of their independent lives. Their words show what young, educated men thought about issues from slavery to states’ rights to Washington’s legacy. Second, few men and even
fewer women possessed college educations in the early nineteenth century and educated individuals held a disproportionately large impact on national affairs. Understanding how these institutions shaped young minds and how students responded gives a glimpse into a subset of society who disproportionately shaped the future course of the country.

Third, by their very nature, literary societies existed as places for the literary exchange of ideas, sometimes peacefully, sometimes chaotically. Debates playing out on the national stage over weeks and months recurred here on a smaller scale over the course of a few hours. The students were not a microcosm for the entire nation, but their arguments and opinions represented larger national themes.

The records of the literary societies at four schools—Columbian College (later the George Washington University), Georgetown College (later Georgetown University), The University of Virginia, and The University of Pennsylvania—show that regional, religious, and practical concerns influenced the way these students interpreted and expounded on issues of slavery, federal power, and the nature of the union. As a result, their interpretations of George Washington differed. Nor did they wholly distinguish between national issues and Washington in their minds or words. The way that they spoke about Washington was linked to the way that they interpreted the national crisis, and an examination of their opinions on one topic reveals their thoughts on the other. Their own debates existed as a part of the national context.

First in the Hearts of His Countrymen:

Across the young nation, from the Revolution to the Civil War, Americans debated Washington’s status in American society in many different ways. Upon his death, an outpouring of speeches, toasts, poems, and eulogies celebrated his life and
mourned his death. Fellow veterans, congressmen, poets, and friends praised his character, his courage especially, and paid special attention to his role in laying the foundation of the Republic. They particularly praised his willingness to resign from positions of power. Early biographers were mostly men born before he died. For example, Washington Irving, who wrote a multi-volume biography of Washington, “felt a special personal bond, from a moment in 1789, when his nurse took him to visit the president and he received the blessing of his namesake.”

Amongst other writers of Irving’s generation, Washington inspired an age of legend-creating and myth-making, some of it taken seriously, much of it dismissed by even the first readers as tall tales for children. The most famous example is Parson Weem’s *The Life of Washington*, first published in 1800, which contained the famous story of Washington confessing to his father after chopping down his favorite cherry tree. These stories frequently depict Washington as a superhuman figure, far above the level of the ordinary citizen, a theme that appealed to young college students figuring out what kinds of adults they would be.

These legends were widely read and play an important part of the historiography. Gary Willis in *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment* describes the duality of Washington, man and myth, saying, “We should not, even if we could, simply sweep all that rubbish away, to arrive at the ‘real man.’ More than most men, this man was what he meant to his contemporaries.” Willis also claims that early biographers, such as John Marshall and Irving, did a fine job, and maintained “high scholarly standards,” even as they contributed to the making of the myth. The national image of Washington, part fact, part myth, played an important part in the culture of the early

---


Republic and its influence resonated for generations. In 1856 the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association purchased Washington’s old estate, establishing a center and a sanctuary for his admirers. College students during this period felt the influence of two impulses: one effort sought to elevate Washington above his humanity and another, not necessarily contradictory, effort sought to record accurate accounts of his life. Neither of these impulses reduced Washington to a regional icon; both constantly related the man to a unified nation.

While some Americans put Washington’s life into words, others put his image in stone. Sculptures of Washington gained particular popularity throughout the nineteenth century. Historian H. Nichols Clark notes a marked consistency in Washington’s representation which he attributes to the influence of Jean-Antoine Houdon’s first statue and busts. Specifically, later statues appealed either to the classical Greek or Roman images or to a heroic ideal. As the legends of George Washington took hold, his statues took on an

---

element of hyperbole, such as in Horatio Greenough’s statue, *George Washington*.\(^5\) Greenough wanted a grandiose version of Washington and created a statue in the mold of a Greek deity. Washington had always been associated with classical themes, but instead of the, “restrained and virtuous Roman citizen,” Greenough created a Washington that towered far above the common man.\(^6\) But that impulse was quickly redirected and before the Civil War artists began creating equestrian statues of Washington, moving away from the image of a Roman god. By putting him on a horse, artists emphasized that Washington faced and overcame real hardship, thus, to an extent, revitalizing his humanity.

Representations of Washington also existed outside high art sculpture. Washington was everywhere: on prints, on money, on knobs and buttons, “plates, pitchers, bowls, and plaques.”\(^7\) Entrepreneurs turned Washington into a spokesman for their products, putting his face, specifically the image painted by Gilbert Stuart, on everything.\(^8\) Like the statues, there is a general consistency and similarity in representation. Many artists took likenesses of Washington

---


from life, but Stuarts’s representation was ubiquitous. During the Civil War, while both sides tried to appropriate use of Washington, the Union dominated use of his image, making him a symbol for stability and already comparing Abraham Lincoln to the great Founder.\textsuperscript{9} Washington’s image was claimed by anyone with a product to sell or a cause to support. Americans argued over the true meaning of his memory, and that contest played out in the literary societies as much as anywhere else.

Historian Sarah Purcell claims that Washington’s representation as hero created less controversy than Washington as politician. Since celebrations of Washington focused on the less partisan aspects of his life, they quickly became national in nature, even in his home state of Virginia.\textsuperscript{10} Despite the importance of state allegiance in the young Republic, Washington was considered more American than Virginian. In 1848, a group of common citizens funded the construction of the Washington Monument. When it was completed in 1885, Americans celebrated their founding father, a larger than life character, with the tallest man-made structure in the world. Washington was something high and unapproachable. The people constructed the myth as a writer like Weems or an artist like Greenough. Washington emerged as a national image, and students in literary societies almost always interpreted him in that light.

\textbf{The Union: Up for Debate:}

As writers, artists, and citizens constructed images of Washington, conflict darkened the American landscape. Historians sometimes portray the buildup to the American Civil War as an inevitably increasing force, growing constantly until Abraham

Lincoln’s election in 1860 triggered the explosion. However, people living in the first half of the 19th century certainly did not see it that way. Instead, three major periods of sectional strife surrounded the Missouri Compromise of 1820, the Nullification Crisis of 1832-33, and the Compromise of 1850. In between these flare-ups, both sides of the country—free and slave—hoped for and sought national unity. One might look back now and see these events as simply staving off the inevitable, but that interpretation cannot account for the free will and action of America’s citizens. The actors and individuals at the time believed that they were in fact either keeping Washington’s Union together or securing states’ rights or, oftentimes, both.

During the flashpoints of contention, Americans debated the fate of the Union. The Missouri Compromise resulted from a fight over how slavery would expand into the west. Southern senators felt that if all the western territories became free states, then Congress would be dominated by their opponents and slavery would be outlawed. Northerners feared the reverse. Eventually Congress decided to admit Maine as a free state, Missouri as a slave state, and that the rest of the west would be divided by the 36°30’ line of latitude, free to the north and slave to the south. The Nullification Crisis dealt primarily with the authority of a state to nullify acts of the federal government. The point of contention was the protective Tariff of 1828 which found little support throughout the South. When Congress passed a second Tariff of 1832, South Carolina’s state Legislature declared them both non-binding. The Legislature even took actions to prepare for military conflict over the issue. Congress passed a lower tariff instead and Andrew Jackson threatened to march on South Carolina. The state legislature gave in. The Compromise of 1850 was the culmination of many proposed bills involving the fate
of new territory acquired from Mexico in the Mexican War. Senators debated and finally passed a bill that admitted California into the Union as a free state, banned the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which said that citizens of all states must assist in returning runaway slaves to their owners.

Because of the democratic nature of the Republic, Americans debated the issues of these three crises in public—in taverns, at dinners, at the ballot box, and dramatically on the floor of the Senate. Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun became celebrities for their oratorical abilities, emulated by countless young Americans, including students at American colleges. Often, arguments in a literary society reflected arguments on the national scene. Students in the Greater Chesapeake, so near to the Federal government, were especially immersed in a political culture that put a great deal of stock in debate and the power of individual opinion. They participated in this larger culture while at the same time adding their own contributions.

In each of these three crises, the threat of civil conflict lingered but then subsided. Americans in 1842, for example, considered themselves safer from the threat of possible civil war than they had in 1833. Therefore when examining the orations and debates of America’s literary societies, speeches should not be judged by their proximity to the Civil War but must be contextualized within the specific timeframe that the speaker delivered it. The stance students took when debating these issues and their use of Washington’s image within these debates came out of the particular contexts in which they lived. They had teachers, friends, and parents that all left their imprints on young minds. What they argued, however, was ultimately their own opinion.
This essay explores the ways in which students in literary societies approached the main issues of American political life through the lens of Washington. Chapter 2 describes the background of the students, their societies, and their institutions. Chapter 3 examines the ways in which students responded to the image of George Washington directly, primarily up through the 1840s, during which time differences in religion, region, and purpose resulted in students interpreting Washington’s image in very different manners. Yet, they never deviated from his symbolic connection with national unity. The rest of this paper shows the changes brought on by an escalation of sectional strife in the 1850s and then the Civil War, after which college and societies struggle to recover. In this period, use of Washington as a rhetorical symbol grew until the outbreak of war and then dropped off everywhere except at the University of Virginia. Wherever speakers evoked Washington’s image, they always considered him a national symbol, inseparable from the Union and, oftentimes, even from the federal government itself.
Chapter 2: The Schools and Their Societies

The rise of the collegiate literary society in the nineteenth century owed much to student invention. The impetus for a group’s creation almost always came from the collegians and these societies were often the first student-run organizations on campus. Any study that examines the impact of the literary society on a social, political, or individual level must begin with its members, and a profile of these students must include their background before entering college, their position within the institutional community, the education they received, and their aspirations for life after college. A full picture of what a college education meant in the first half of the nineteenth century is necessary to understand who these young men were and what life was like for a disproportionately powerful segment of the population.

Students were young by today’s standards. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a college graduate was only eighteen or nineteen years old. A student was still developing physically and emotionally and was naturally more dependent and therefore more impressionable than his modern counterpart.¹ The college environment had a substantial impact on the student’s worldview. The modern American education system did not exist; instead, the closest thing to a high school education was found in the first years of college. Students learned many high school subjects, such as algebra, geometry, physics, and literature. The comparison is not perfect, however, as college students in the early nineteenth century possessed a mastery of many subjects, such as philosophy and classical literature, that are uncommon in a modern American high school graduate.

The establishment of American colleges for these young students almost always came about because of the efforts of one Christian denomination or another. Thus, out of the 182 permanent colleges founded in the United States before 1861, 180 of them had direct connections to a denomination. They were founded by all faiths, but Presbyterians were most active, followed by Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Catholics, and Lutherans. Altogether these denominations created 154 permanent colleges.

Presbyterians and Congregationalists founded schools at a far greater proportional rate than the other denominations, exerting a disproportionate impact on the shape of the education system.² Georgetown University was not founded until 1789 when John Carroll, Jesuit Archbishop of Baltimore, sought to establish a center for higher learning particularly for Catholic students at George Town, near the new federal capital. Nearby in the Federal City, the Baptist minister Luther Rice founded Columbian College in 1821 to educate Baptist clergy. Each school answered to religious authority.

These schools began, naturally, with the church’s interests in mind, and usually purposed to raise up ministers for preaching and teaching.³ They welcomed students from different denominations but sometimes subjected them to special rules. Thus, for example, in 1798 Georgetown tried boarding its non-Catholic students in a separate house. After this apparently failed, the school only asked that they “respectfully assist at the public duties of Religion with their companions,” claiming that without this it would be impossible to enforce, “proper order.” This clause was included in University

² Tewksbury, Donald George. The Founding of American Colleges and Universities before the Civil War,. [Hamden, Conn.]: Archon Books, 1965. p 69
³ Tewskbury p55
Catalogues until 1868. Columbian was similarly receptive to students outside of the Baptist denomination.

Two notable exceptions to the religious impulse were the University of Virginia (UVA), founded specifically without any religious affiliation in 1819 and the University of Pennsylvania (Penn), founded in 1749 with secular goals and no official sectarian connection but “an Anglican tinge.” While not directed by a specific denomination as many institutions were, Penn was influenced by a variety of sects. For example, its original building doubled as a stage for George Whitefield. At UVA, Thomas Jefferson, the most important founder of the school, believed that a secular state university better represented the principle of religious freedom. Formed in 1816 as Central College, the institution was rechartered just three years later under an ambitious plan, becoming UVA with Jefferson as its first president. However, even UVA, though it never held formal religious observances, came to include some religious teaching in its curriculum. Thus, for the majority of students in this period, a college education meant a religious education.

**Literary Societies:**

The literary society was a distinctly American phenomenon that grew out of a desire for intellectual stimulation outside of the classroom. The rising popularity of the literary societies coincided with the founding of three out of four of the schools under study. Often, these organizations were among the first student groups on campus. In

---

7 Tewksbury p181
many ways, these literary societies grew up with the schools. A member of the Georgetown College faculty founded the Philodemic Society in 1830 and it was the only secular extracurricular activity available at the time. In later years, several societies for younger students sprang up, but all of them proved short-lived; of these the longest lasting was the Philonomosian Society, formed in 1839. At Columbian College, a group of eager students formed the Enosinian Society in 1822, just one year after the founding of the school itself. At Penn, the Philomathean Society has been in existence since 1813. Beginning in 1829 it competed with the Zelosophic Society until the two groups merged after World War II. At UVA, the Jefferson Literary and Debating Society was created out of an even older group in 1825 and six years later, its rival, the Washington Literary and Debating Union began full operation. All of these literary societies shared a similar basic structure but branched off in different directions. They had certain hallmarks in common but developed distinct reputations.

At the University of Virginia the literary societies tended to be a bit rowdy. The Patrick Henry Society had to shut down because its meetings were open to the public and visitors tended to, “shout, throw books, and start fights.” Consequently, some of its members formed the more private Jefferson Society with meetings closed to the public and, originally, with members sworn to secrecy. They continued the boisterous tradition in other ways. After the society grew into the most popular student group on campus, the faculty expressed concerns that “the Jeff’s” officer elections distracted the students from

---


learning and caused “turbulence” and “personal feuds.” They may have been indirectly referring to the Jeffersonian tradition that newly elected presidents were carried a mile and a half to the closest tavern and then expected to pay for all the liquor the group could hold (or try to hold) before hiring transportation back to campus. As the Jeffersonians held elections every six weeks, it is not hard to empathize with the professors.

Not all of the literary society rowdiness was friendly or celebratory. In addition to officer elections, the literary societies at UVA held an annual ballot for student commencement orator, a distinguished privilege. The winner was often the subject of envy. In fact, the chosen speaker for 1858 received four challenges personal duels the night of his election and two more the next day. Temple Bodley, a student at UVA in 1871, had similar things to say about “Old Mac” McCulloni, the president of the Washington Society. Bodley described him as, “one of the most popular - in fact plainly the most popular student at the University, the most charming talker I almost ever heard, a very accomplished, lovable, indolent fellow and decidedly given to drink.” According to Bodley, McCulloni drank himself to death on a trip back home to Louisiana.

Georgetown’s Philodemic Society was not entirely peaceable either. In January of 1850, the Philodemic directly disobeyed the College Prefect’s orders not to meet during a certain study period. When the administration kicked out three students in response, one of them gave a speech in the refectory riling up his fellow students to a state of revolt. When their demands were not met, they knocked out street lamps and

---

raised havoc before storming off campus to a nearby hotel. The whole affair finally ended when Georgetown threatened to tell their parents.\textsuperscript{11}

Despite this incident, the Philodemic’s reputation had little to do with rebellion or destruction. One commentator expressed this opinion when he wrote that, “the weekly debates of the Philodemic Society…improve the manner and produce a readiness for elegant action in the after life of the young republicans.”\textsuperscript{12} His last word, “republicans,” is of particular note. One of the society’s early officers wrote that he believed the organization was established with “a wish at some future time to assist our countrymen in watching over and defending the government which guaranteed to all the inestimable blessings of liberty.”\textsuperscript{13} Philodemecians displayed this patriotic theme at their two annual celebrations, the 4\textsuperscript{th} of July and George Washington’s birthday. The general agenda was the same in each case: A selected orator, either a member or an honorable guest, often an alumnus, gave an address lasting between thirty minutes and an hour. A banquet of some kind followed with various patriotic toasts throughout the evening—to Washington, to the founders, to the flag, the army, the navy, etc. Such events often warranted a small notice in the newspapers, which tended to describe them, as one did in 1839, as “excellent and patriotic.”\textsuperscript{14} In fact, many observers shared this attitude towards Georgetown College as a whole. “The character of their national celebrations, the institute of their Philodemic society, the spirit breathed through the speeches at their commencements,” one writer recorded, “attest their patriotism, and ardent devotion to our

\begin{footnotes}
\item[13] Durkin, Daughter p 104
\item[14] Newspaper Clipping in Philodemic Archives, Box III Folder 6, Georgetown University Special Collections.
\end{footnotes}
national institutions, and that care that is taken to implant in the youthful breast a lofty love of independence, and a generous patriotism.”

While patriotic themes were particularly strong at Georgetown, they were found in some measure everywhere. The Enosinian Society at Columbian College also celebrated Washington’s birthday. At UVA, the Jefferson Society celebrated Commencement and Thomas Jefferson’s birthday, which they adopted as their honorary anniversary; the Washington Society predictably celebrated Washington’s birthday. These festivals never seemed to take off at the University of Pennsylvania. Their largest events focused more heavily on debating and commemorating oratorical skill than expressing patriotism. In general, literary societies were marked by patriotism and rowdiness, two traits that went hand in hand as these students debated the national political issues of the nineteenth century.

**Standing in the College:**

It is hard to grasp who the young men in these literary societies were as individuals. Their time on this particular stage was brief, rarely more than three years. Sometimes their individual identities appear in their speeches and writings, but in general, a better understanding of the parts is best recovered through an examination of the whole. In general, these societies were relatively conservative institutions as a result of their relationship with the college itself.

While some historians have noted the high level of formal education in America during the nineteenth century relative to international standards, it is still clear that for

---

most Americans, a college education lay out of reach. The most obvious reason was cost. The cost of attending Georgetown went from about $150 in 1798 (only $26.67 of which went towards tuition) to around $250 from 1835. Measured in terms of relative purchasing power, that comes to almost $5500 in 2007 currency, the equivalent of a state school tuition. Four years of schooling would cost a parent in the realm of $22,000 in present-day dollars. Still, these students cannot be classified as simply elite, as some less affluent families found ways to send their children off to these colleges. Nonetheless, the average student’s parents enjoyed a well above average income.

Another factor to consider is how members of literary societies related to the larger university population as a whole. Literary societies almost always drew from the most senior classes. While the University of Pennsylvania accepted boys as young as thirteen, the Philomathean Society required that members be at least fifteen and the society’s founders were all about seventeen years old. By the Civil War, perhaps because of competition with other literary societies, the Philomathean took students from all classes. The societies at UVA and Columbian accepted students from all years of study and had similar ages to the Philomathean. Georgetown University offered a seven-year program that included a modern primary education. Therefore, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Georgetown admitted students as young as eight years old, but no

18 Georgetown University Prospectus 1798., 1798. , Mulledy, Thomas. Georgetown University Prospectus 1835., 1835.
one over fourteen could join. The standard age of acceptance eventually drifted upward, but remained similar through the Civil War. However, the Philodemic Society only drew from the three most senior classes, perhaps because Georgetown often had alternative societies for younger students. Philodemic membership thus consisted almost entirely of older students. Since literary societies were generally geared towards older students, most of their members experienced one or more years of their college’s influence before they participated.

Relations with the faculty were sometimes warm, but, as shown by the Philodemic Rebellion and UVA’s faculty disapproval of Jeffersonian elections, occasionally turned sour. The Jeff’s situation worsened in 1832 when their chosen speaker for Jefferson’s birthday, Merritt Robinson, selected slavery as his topic. The young orator proceeded to explain that slavery was morally wrong, building his argument around quotations from southern Revolutionary War leaders. The faculty howled. Throughout the next few decades the Jefferson Society was either banned from speaking in public or had to submit all speeches in writing for faculty approval. Thus the faculty gained an important control over literary society speech and opinion, helping to ensure that the Washington and Jefferson Societies remained bastions of conservatism on campus.

The situation was not nearly so restrictive at other colleges. The Enosinian Society seemed to receive widespread support from their faculty and consequently

---

22 Georgetown University Prospectus 1798., 1798.
enjoyed free use of campus facilities. The Enosinian, however, played it safe and avoided controversial topics. They concerned themselves more with exercising their creative energies through student publications of poems, or plays, or historical essays. The Philodemic also enjoyed a generally favorable relationship with their faculty, but they never made serious efforts to refrain from controversy. They owed their favored status to direct faculty involvement in the organization. Unlike most literary societies, the Philodemic was founded by a professor, Father James Ryder, S.J., who eventually became president of Georgetown. Throughout the Philodemic’s early years, the position of society president belonged to a faculty member, with a good number of these individuals going on to administrative occupations within the college. Thus, the Philodemic counted not only friends, but members and alumni, in key positions among the faculty. Evidence of their high standing in the university is seen by Philodemecians winning the Valedictory award for every year of the 1850s, despite never making up more than a third to a half of the graduating class. The Philodemic’s close relationship with the faculty reinforced an environment of conservatism.

The Philomathean Society did not have any official arrangement with the Penn faculty, but they often invited professors to take part in their events. The members of the Society, after all, dedicated themselves to, “promote the learning of its members and to increase the academic prestige of the University.” The Philomathean and her rival society, the Zelosophic, were keenly interested in learning outside of the classroom.

---

These were hardly goals that a professor could complain about, especially when the students’ accomplishments reflected highly on the university, such as when three Philomatheans completed the first full translation of the Rosetta Stone into English in 1858.

Various schools demonstrated their favor on literary societies by granting them meeting space. When the University of Pennsylvania moved its campus to its current home in 1872, the administration gave several rooms of College Hall, a prominent campus building, to its literary societies as a space to hold their meetings and house their library collections. UVA provided permanent homes for its societies that they still use today. The Enosinian secured from Columbian College Enosinian Hall which included a reading room. When Georgetown College built Healy Hall in 1881, it set aside a highly decorated room right next to the president’s office reserved for debate by the literary societies. These select spaces reflect not only support for these groups but the expectation that they would form a permanent aspect of college life. They also show that the societies were indebted to and reliant on their college administrations. The close relationships that existed between the academic institutions and their literary societies created an environment of conservatism where the students did not stray far from their patrons.

Curriculum:

The education the students at these colleges received played an influential role in shaping their development. During this period, a college education was founded on the classics. At the University of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson designed the original curriculum with two foci: languages on the one hand, including Ancient Greek, Latin, modern French and “Anglo-Saxon,” and on the other a combination of Mathematics and “Physico-Mathematics,” a category ranging from Geography and Astronomy to Mechanics. Advanced classes included Government, “History, being interwoven with Politics and Law,” and “Rhetoric.” Except for students entering the clergy, this education was more practical than the curriculum found at the denominational

---

universities. It featured little formal study of religion and focused on learning by observing the natural world. As shall be seen later, this profoundly impacted the type of imagery and reasoning used by the Jefferson and Washington Societies throughout their speeches. It is also interesting that History was here considered an advanced course instead of one of the foundations of the curriculum.

Georgetown College emphasized History at even the lowest levels of the curriculum, and students in different years of study focused on different regions or periods. As students advanced through their college career, they went from Biblical to Greek and finally to Roman history. In this way, Roman texts, particularly Cicero’s speeches, were placed at the pinnacle of a young man’s career. In fact, students studied oratory in all three of the senior classes at Georgetown, and the sixth year of study was even called the “Class of Rhetoric.”\textsuperscript{34} Beginning in 1839, students performed a mandatory weekly exercise in public speaking.\textsuperscript{35} When Georgetown first introduced American History, students learned it after Roman History, that is, on the very top of the pyramid. However, it was very moved to the first years of study. Rather than a demotion in importance, this move attempted to provide younger students with the rudimentary basics of their own history as a foundation for future study.\textsuperscript{36} Simple pragmatism was also at play: younger students could learn American History much easier as it required no mastery of foreign or ancient languages.

At the University of Pennsylvania, the Philomathean Society blurred the line between extracurricular and classroom study. The first course in American History grew

\textsuperscript{34} Fenwick, Enoch. Georgetown University Prospectus 1820., 1820.
\textsuperscript{35} Mulledy, Thomas. Georgetown University Prospectus 1839., 1839.
out of a lecture series sponsored by that society. By 1830, the school required incoming students to be suitably educated in Latin, Greek (including the New Testament), and arithmetic. By 1851, they no longer tested students on the New Testament but added qualifications for Geography, Ancient and Modern. Only students in their Junior and Senior years took classes on Christianity. Students studied History in each year, and the most advanced courses included Constitutional Law, Geology, Astronomy, Philosophy, and Calculus. In each of these schools, students read a wealth of Greek and Latin and worked towards more modern subjects, including a good dose of hard science. The largest differences came in whether religion was simply included or made a major focus of study. As a result, religion and the classics became two of the lenses they used to examine both the legacy of George Washington and the political issues of their own day.

**Rivalries:**

Our understanding of these literary societies would be incomplete without recognizing that they faced constant competition for membership and prestige from other societies at the school. Literary societies became popular before intercollegiate athletics or fraternities but were challenged by each other. Most schools had two literary societies. The University of Virginia had the Jefferson and Washington Societies. A number of smaller competitors, such as the Patrick Henry Society, tended to fall by the wayside after just a few seasons as a result of the quarrels and split-ups that plagued literary society culture. At Georgetown, the Philodemic sometimes competed with the Philonomosian, a

---


society intended for younger students which, after over half a century, eventually died off. The Philhistorian was just one of a number of their short-lived rivals. At Penn, the Philomatheans constantly competed with (and debated against) the Zelosophic Society until the two merged after World War II.

In each of these schools, the beginning of any academic year was a time of “bitterest hostility” in the competition to boost numbers. Sometimes rival groups worked together to fund a speaker’s award or publish a magazine, but these cooperative periods did not last long. Most groups had clauses in their constitutions which prohibited any member from belonging to more than one society at a time. Indeed, many of the competing groups were splinters formed out of quarreling amongst the members of some original society. The Enosinians seem to have been able to largely avoid such competition, perhaps because of their consistently less controversial focus on literature over debate. While students sometimes created other groups, none managed to last for very long. Thus, in general, whenever the students delivered or received a speech or held

a celebration or elected officers, they often had a good reason to focus their efforts in a way that attracted the average undergraduate student at their respective institutions: their group’s survival depended upon it.

**Becoming Men:**

In the twenty-first century, college is often seen as a formative period in a young person’s life. This was no less true in the early nineteenth century. However, the younger ages of entering students compounded the complications of puberty and adolescence. The boys who entered these institutions changed dramatically over the four to seven years they attended college. Yet these students had a say in how they turned out; they transformed themselves as much as they were transformed by others. Thus, as all young people do, they sought heroes to emulate.

Lorri Glover, a historian of the early South who focuses on masculinity, believes that, “the institutions southern students attended, the parental directives they received, and the peer culture they created,” were three major factors in a southern boy’s vision of ideal manhood. Further, Glover states that this masculine ideal lay the foundation for southern sectionalism. As southern parents grew wary of educating their children in northern schools, the push to become “good Americans” became a drive to become good “southern men.” Thus, students found themselves surrounded by a peer group whose very purpose, in some ways, was to foster a sense of sectional over national identity.

The world after college differed greatly for southern as opposed to northern graduates. The plantation lifestyle emphasized independence—from others, from government, and from work—but this was a freedom grounded in dependence on slaves,

---

children, and wives. The concept of independence in the North was, of course, important as well, but had more to do with being self-sufficient, not having to rely on anyone else as opposed to not having to work. As we will see, this had a profound impact on the kind of role models the students chose to admire. When we examine the masculine ideal to which these young men subscribed, it is important to recognize that the students, though almost always from a wealthy background, came from different regions with different norms of proper manhood. When students with such differing ideals reflected on George Washington or on national politics, they came to conflicting conclusions.

**Region:**

Variations among the regions of the young Republic extended beyond their distinct conceptions of the masculine ideal. Many of the nation’s political divides—slavery, states’ rights—also divided the country geographically between the North and the South. Though the four schools in this study were all within a few hundred miles of each other, they sat on different sides of the regional divide, and regional considerations played a large role in how members of the literary societies approached political debates.

The University of Virginia, at least in its earliest years, almost exclusively taught Virginians. This is no surprise, but its importance cannot be overlooked. Eventually, UVA attracted students from a broader geography but never drew a large contingent from outside the South. In 1851, 374 students attended UVA, 271 of which came from Virginia while another 99 came from below the Mason-Dixon Line. Only ten students came from states or territories without slavery. The literary societies largely reflected

---

44 Catalogue of the University of Virginia. Richmond, VA: E. K. Ellyson, 1851.
this proportion and at no time throughout the period did non-slave states have a sizable representation in any of them. Membership in the Jeffersonian Society in 1858 was typical: of 129 members, one was from Peru, one from Maryland, and the remainder from the future Confederacy.\textsuperscript{45}

The District of Columbia schools were more mixed. A majority of the students at both Columbian and Georgetown colleges came from the South. However, perhaps because of its Catholic identity, Georgetown drew a larger proportion of students from Maryland and free states to the north. In the first three years after its 1822 founding, the Enosinian Society was fairly representative, with over fifty percent of its membership coming from somewhere north of the City of Washington, though this includes a number of students from the slave state of Maryland. After 1825, however, new southern members outnumbered new northern members by four to one, a ratio that only grew more skewed in the period leading up to the Civil War.\textsuperscript{46} This was true for both the Society and the University when, despite the administration’s best efforts, potential northern students opted to take advantage of the many colleges opening up closer to home and Columbian College took on a southern tone.\textsuperscript{47} This also happened at Georgetown, but to a lesser extent. By the end of the Civil War, Philodemic members from Confederate states only outnumbered those from Union states by a ratio of approximately three to two. However, almost a quarter of all these students came from Maryland and another large group came from the District of Columbia. As a result, in the Philodemic questions of slavery and questions of secession rarely found the Society divided along the same lines.

Further, high representation from Maryland and Louisiana suggests that Georgetown’s Catholic identity held more of an influence on its student body than regionalism did, something decidedly not true for the southern schools or even Columbian College.

At the University of Pennsylvania, regional ties played an important role but did not receive as much acknowledgement. While the records of other societies carefully recorded the home states of all their members, the Philomatheans at Penn rarely did. For example, in a catalogue of their alumni, they recorded job descriptions and various accomplishments, but they did not generally see place of origin as noteworthy enough to write down. A Philomathean historian looking back on this period from the twentieth century observed that:

> There were in those days still many members from the South and feeling ran high. The election of prominent personages to honorary membership was made the means of carrying on political quarrels. Major Anderson President Lincoln, General McClellan, and General Rosencrans were at various times nominated and, according to the changes of majorities elected, blackballed, or had the record of previous action upon them expunged from the minutes.⁴⁸

Correlating membership lists with the University of Pennsylvania catalogues suggest that the actual count was much more favorable to the North than the South. Out of 81 undergraduates in 1852, only four came from slave states.⁴⁹ The numbers are similar for 1829 and 1865, though in the 1850s the University began to attract some students from throughout the Union.⁵⁰ It is hard to see how the Philomathean would have had a sizable

---

representation from southern states. Only the Philodemic at Georgetown really boasted the regional distribution necessary to even attempt a sectional debate about issues like slavery and secession.

**Legacy:**

The common factor throughout all sectors of the young nation was the legacy of the Revolution. Americans, especially the younger generations, embraced the Democratic ideal, which led one Pennsylvania college president to cry that, “Americans seem much more desirous that their affairs be managed by themselves than that they should be well managed.”

The names of the literary societies bear this out, revealing that, in addition to obviously patriotic names like the Patrick Henry Society or the Washingtonian Society, names like Enosinian from the Greek “Enosis” or “Union” and Philodemic meaning “Of Love of the People” represent democratic ideals. Exceptions include both of Penn’s societies, Philomathean—“Of Love of Knowledge”—and Zelosophic—“Endowed with a Zeal for Learning”—which have the common theme of promoting education. That is not to say that patriotic zeal ended at the Mason Dixon Line. For example, King’s College renamed itself Columbia College in 1784. Nor can we say that the students at Penn had no patriotic spirit. Even their fascination with oratory was often, as we shall see, tied up with connections to Daniel Webster or Patrick Henry or any number of important American speakers.

---


They were also democratic in structure. Societies used various methods to choose the chief debaters on a given topic, but in general, everybody had their say. Officers were elected from amongst the membership. The topics themselves were chosen either by an elected committee, the society at large, or by the elected president selecting one of several options presented to him. Once a student became a member, he commanded as much official influence in the business of the group as any of the senior members. Leaders relied on the voice of the majority as the source of their authority and the group at large overturned unpopular decisions.

The members of these literary societies occupied a unique position in American society. On the one hand, they were not fully formed themselves. Their regional childhoods and upbringing had already made permanent marks on their futures; their education would influence what types of men they became. As the educated elite about to enter the public life of a country still figuring itself out, they stood poised to wield tremendous influence on the conflicts that gripped and tore at this nation. Some became military leaders or members of Congress. It is in that vein that a young man at the University of Virginia, addressing his fellows as they prepared for their final days as students, urged them to live their lives for America’s glory in such a way as to “merit the proud epithet—...noblest of her sons.”

---

52 “Great Men Produce Great Eras, Not Eras by Men” p 22
Chapter 3: First in Peace

The Washington Monument in Washington, DC is a fitting eulogy to the man in a number of ways. As Washington stood at the center of the Revolution, his monument stands in the center of the city geographically, dominating the landscape and the layout of the District.¹ It is solitary, standing apart from any other buildings. Everything else in Washington—the White House, the Capitol, the statues of Jefferson and Lincoln—faces the obelisk. Just like the man, it towers from a distance but, up close, seems even bigger. No matter what vantage point it is viewed from, the monument always looks the same, giving the misleading impression that the nation’s memory of the first president is always the same. The literary societies of the first half of the nineteenth century, on the other hand, looked back on Washington and saw him in very different lights. At Georgetown, Washington became a divine figure, God’s blessing of America personified. At the University of Virginia, Washington’s memory was almost bittersweet as he symbolized a Union that the students did not always fully embrace. At Columbian College, Washington earned respect, but did not fit the model the students wanted to emulate. And at the University of Pennsylvania, students saw Washington as a man of character, an important part of the nation’s founding, but just one part among many and not such a dominant force. Aspects of Washington’s memory are consistent no matter who is doing the remembering. Unlike the monument, however, he is not a solid, immovable rock, congruent on all sides, but a complex symbol who meant many things to many different people throughout the period leading up the Civil War. Like the monument,

¹ It is a common mistake that the United States Capitol sits at the geographic center of Washington, DC. This is perhaps because of the city’s street numbering system which does, in fact, revolve around the Capitol.
Washington’s memory remained at the heart of the Union and no speaker separated his image from the nation as a whole, no matter how hard he tried.

**Liberty’s Apostle:**

Since the Philodemic Society at Georgetown was most obsessed with Washington, an in-depth examination should begin there. In the first two years following its inception in 1830, the Philodemic often resorted to a favorite debate formula which pitted two great men of history against each other. For example, they asked, “Who was the greater general, Caesar or Pompey?” and “Who was the greater Orator, Cicero or Demosthenes?”

These sorts of questions and the ability to hold two hours of debate on these subjects came from their classically-oriented education. Even the Philodemic Seal was immersed in classical imagery, featuring a caduceus, a Phrygian cap, and the Philodemic’s name and motto written in Latin all contained on a shield.

However, the one man the Philodemic loved to debate most lived much closer to their own time period: George Washington. In the two years after the society’s founding, they selected Washington as more worthy of praise than Napoléon Bonaparte, Julius Caesar, Simón Bolivar, and Christopher Columbus. In fact, Washington always won. If the Philodemic had chosen second and third place favorites, the results of their debates suggest they may have chosen Caesar and Napoleon. The trend illustrates a general fascination with men

---

2 They voted for Caesar and Demosthenes, respectively.
3 The caduceus was a staff used by Hermes, the Greek god of messengers and eloquence. The Phrygian cap was used by Romans and by Philodemecians as a symbol for liberty. The shield symbolized defense. Thus, the seal as a whole reads like the Philodemic motto, “Eloquence in Defense of Liberty.”
4 Philodemic Amanuensis Records Folder 5 Box 1 of Philodemic Records at GUSC
of action, military figures in particular. The Philodemic thought highly of the soldiering profession, but in terms of military brilliance, the American general was no match for Napoleon and the Philodemic admired Washington for more than his martial skill.

Consider a speech by Hugh Caperton, Jr, a member of the society, on a 4th of July celebration in 1840. He explains that Americans owe their thanks to all the heroes of the Revolution, “But in that struggle there was one, to pass over whom in silence, were a sacrilegious insult upon the memory of departed worth.” Thus, even failing to pass homage to this man, Washington, is considered a sin. He describes Washington as a man, “possessing merit so transcendent” who “saw the star of liberty and came to worship her…casting himself before her altars.” The religious symbolism is obvious at this point, but grows even stronger as Caperton continues, saying that from the grave, this man, “whispers to [his countrymen’s] hearts, purifies their motives, warns them against error, inculcates the spirit of union and brotherly affection, and tells them that virtue is true liberty.” Washington is more than just a good example; he takes on the roles usually reserved for a man’s conscience or, in terms that these young Catholics might have used, the Holy Spirit. The former president even received the special favor of having his name written in all capital letters, “GEORGE WASHINGTON”, unlike any other name Caperton mentions, but not unlike how many versions of the Bible capitalize the word Lord when they refer specifically to the Hebrew word Yahweh. 5 Not an isolated use of hyperbolic language, this way of speaking about George Washington became a leitmotif in the canon of Philodemic oratory.

---

Just a few months earlier, on Washington’s birthday, another member spoke of how Washington was, “like the ‘fiery-armed angel’ upon the battlements of paradise.” The next year’s speaker made him even more divine, as William S. Walker of Mississippi proclaimed Washington to be, “Him who, after his Creator, the lisping babe of America is first taught to love and venerate…whose life forms the most perfect model.” Walker continued the theme of Washington as second only to God and introduced a second theme into the Philodemic’s discourse, that is, Washington as examplar. He makes this latter point explicit later in his speech when he declares, “I allude not to his skill…nor to his wisdom…I mean that spirit which sways by the force of example.” Walker combined the two themes when he said that, “like the Israelites of old, we are a chosen people,” only this particular tribe has George Washington for its Moses. The following year, in what appears to be an escalating contest of praise, John Heard of Maryland paid homage to, “America’s saviour, freedom’s apostle, the world’s greatest man—WASHINGTON.” His description of Washington was an explicit reference to Christ.

In just a few years, the Philodemic had presented Washington as an angel, a prophet, a spirit, and a savior. Georgetown students were used to this imagery from their Catholic identity, and this language was employed at the same time that Catholicism was growing in America, fueled by heavy Irish immigration from around 1820 to 1860. Such a large migration drew the scorn of many Americans, and, as they were mostly Catholic immigrants to a mostly Protestant nation, anti-Catholicism was on the rise. Some of


8 Walker p 8

9 Heard, John M, and Joseph Johnson. *Address Delivered before the Philodemic Society of Georgetown College, DC, on the 22d February, 1842*. Washington: Printed by Gales and Seaton, 1842. p 6
these immigrants ended up at Georgetown and other students felt solidarity with their religious brothers. For example, at the Society’s very first Fourth of July celebration in 1831, a member offered a toast to the, “Success of the brave and patriotic Irish!—may their enemies be covered with confusion and disgrace; may the attempts to gain liberty be crowned with success, and may they rise pre-eminent among the nations of the world.” Another student, J. Hollahan, toasted, “The Shamrock!—may the American eagle, if necessary, like the dove of old, bear it over the waters of oppression.” During these years of expansion, Catholicism commanded an increasing impact on Philodemic Society events and religious language played a greater role in their speeches.

The language chosen by these students elevates Washington above the pantheon of great men of action into something essentially higher. Washington was not their god—that would be blasphemous for good Catholics—but they certainly associated him with many godlike features. That is, Washington, his memory, and his advice, became their help in times of trouble. He stood as a role model for a boy to pattern his life after.

In a way, none of this is very surprising. This was the language that Georgetown’s students found themselves studying in their classes. Their speeches also

---


11 Further evidence of growing Catholic influence came in 1842 when the Philodemic Society first celebrated the landing of the Maryland Catholic pilgrims, the founders of St. Mary’s City. It was a huge event, lasting several days and was repeated every few years. Eventually it involved multiple steamboats, large processions, and the Archbishop of Baltimore. Important Catholic political figures, such as Chief Justice Roger Taney, received invitations to attend. It was, in essence, a celebration of the Catholic element of America’s founding, the melding together of Georgetown’s patriotism and Catholic faith.


Taney Letter, GUSC, Philodemic Records Box 1

abounded with classical comparisons. Yet where a modern reader might expect to see a trend of comparisons between Washington and Cincinnatus, the Roman farmer who took up the position of dictator to defend the empire but willingly relinquished that power once he finished his job, the Philodemic focused more on an ancient leader named Epanimondas, a Greek farmer who rallied his small democratic city to throw off Spartan oppression. The comparison is more apt than the one with Cincinnatus because Washington is here leading the democratic underdog against the power of the day instead of taking dictatorial powers over an established city like Rome. The focus on Epanimondas may also represent a wider shift in American politics with the coming of Jacksonian Democracy. Now, every white male, regardless of whether or not he possessed property, possessed a right to vote. National party conventions allowed for greater voter interaction. Cincinnatus was an aristocrat and a member of the elite; Epanimondas represented the common man. Notably, the Philodemic Society wore black armbands and gave a eulogy address upon Andrew Jackson’s death in 1845.12

In these comparisons, Washington was made to appear more virtuous and selfless in motivation than his classical predecessors. John Heard declared that Washington, “did not say, as Epaminondas, the purest and most irreproachable character that adorns the pages of ancient history, ‘give me the fame, and you may have the advantage;’ but, in the language of entire devotedness, ‘to thee, my country, all is due.’”13 The implication is that Washington’s character trumped that of the Epanimondas, the most virtuous of the ancients. In a speech the following year, George Columbus Morgan made the same comparison, but gave Washington the edge over Epanimondas because he “had the

12 “Philodemic Amanuensis Book”, Box 2 Folder 7 Philodemic Archives, Georgetown University Archives. (1845). June 25, 1845
13 Heard p 12
happiness of bequeathing a continent to freedom, and his fame to eternity.” Morgan saw Washington’s efforts as more lasting, which is ironic since not seventy years had passed since the Revolution and it seems premature to claim all of North America for the banner of freedom.

One thing to keep in mind with these Epaminondas comparisons (and with all of these speeches) is that the speaker one year may have been in the audience the year prior. That is, George Morgan probably listened when John Heard gave his speech. This does not mean he tried to imitate his classmate’s allusions, but it does imply that he knew what he was doing when he used the same comparisons. The Society as a whole selected speakers for Washington’s birthday and the position held high honor. Each year’s orator came under pressure to perform at least as well as his predecessor and certainly hoped to be remembered by those who came after him. Escalations in the strength of metaphor and image strung together and represent this competition among the speakers. The language in general—the ancient references and allusions—remained constant throughout the period and speakers made specific references to Epaminondas as early as 1837. The recurring language and common methods of approaching Washington suggest that a collective consciousness about Washington’s memory developed in the Philodemic Society. Before a member of the society graduated, he heard at least three major orations and countless smaller speeches connecting Washington to the same classical and religious motifs.

---


The difference between the use of classical and religious imagery is that the only
the latter were exclusive to Washington. One student called Virginia the “Lacedemon of
America” and declared Patrick Henry, “the forest-born Demosthenes.” Bunker Hill was
“the Thermopylae of America.” Such comparisons of past and present littered
Philodemic speeches, but they reserved the religious language for Washington. No other
historical figure was called “transcendent” or compared to an angel, showing that
Washington’s image commanded a unique level of veneration.

Philodemecians liked to weigh America as a whole against ancient Greek and
Roman states. In general, these comparisons favored the moderns. Heard began his
speech saying, “We have assembled today, not like the Romans of old, to indulge in
excesses of a Saturnalia—not like the voluptuous and degenerate Greek, to revel in the
delights of games and plays.” Instead, they were there to pay homage to men who went
before them and celebrate their accomplishments. An introductory speaker one year
claimed that while, “the carrels of the victorious Greek have faded…the victor himself is
forgotten, but here are men [the heroes of the Revolution] whose names will be
remembered…whilst man is man, until the world shall pass away.” Thus, even though
these students obsessed over Greek and Roman history and culture, in some sense they
saw both civilizations as ultimately failed and temporary. At the same time,
Philodemecians hinted that America’s glory, and thus Washington’s glory, is eternal.
These two ways of representing Washington, religiously and classically, represent the

---

16 Lacedemon, or Laconia, was a region in southern Greece and home of Sparta. Luckett, Oliver A. An Oration Delivered before the Philodemec Society of Georgetown University on the 4th July, 1839. Georgetown, DC: John L. Smith, 1839. p 7
17 Caperton p 14
18 Heard p 3
19 Caperton p 5
two ways that Philodemecians viewed the man, as an example to follow in one’s personal life and as the leader of the national union.

**George Washington’s Old Dominion:**

While the students at Georgetown had no hesitation about calling Washington immortal, the situation at the University of Virginia was more complex. Like the Philodemic, the Jefferson and Washington Societies possessed a certain affinity for the founder. However, the students there did not focus their praises on George Washington or even on the republic itself. As many in the southern states did, the students there stressed the importance of the state over the federal government. As a result, they sometimes attempted to draw Washington’s image over to their side. For instance, one alumnus speaking at that university in 1853 complained about how, “Efforts have not been wanting to rob us of our interest in the great fame of Washington by representing him as a man of northern character.” Instead of celebrating Washington as a figure who appealed to all Americans, this orator resented the idea that northerners might consider Washington one of their own. At the same time, this speaker and others failed to perform the reverse; that is, they could not depict Washington as merely a southern man.

In 1855, the Washington and Jefferson Literary Societies cosponsored a speech given by Lieutenant M. F. Maury of the United States Navy in which he summarized the southern position, urging the students to seek Virginia’s commendation or “well-done” and to reject any pursuit of federal honors. His argument was twofold: First, Virginia had already given her bit to the federal cause. In Maury’s mind, Virginians gave their best and brightest men to command the Continental Army, draft the Declaration of

---

20 Holcombe, James P. "Address before the Society of Alumni." (1853).
21 Maury, Matthew Fontaine. Address before the Literary Societies of UVA 28 June, 1855. Richmond, VA: Ellyson's Steam Presses, 1855. p 15
Independence, create the Constitution, and head up the Supreme Court, all projects that benefited the nation as a whole. When New York was worrying about internal improvements, Virginia sought the national good and, “Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Marshall…were engaged upon the great cause.” In a sense, the rest of the Union owed Virginia for what the state had provided. Washington was an honor to Virginia but, importantly, only because he represented Virginia at a time when the state concerned itself with issues of the entire country. It is also worth noting that Washington appears as first in a list of heroes, instead of standing alone above his peers. Second, Maury went on to argue that, “To meet the emergencies which Virginia considered the most important, she produced her Washington, her Madison, and her Marshall; she now wants a De Witt Clinton and Jeremiah Thompson.”

This implied both that Virginia’s interests were no longer the same as federal ones and that the time for men like Washington was past. Virginia now needed someone who would develop a strong infrastructure for the state. This was a stark contrast to the Philodemic model of Washington as national exemplar, but something more subtle was also at play here. Maury rejected Washington because, despite his insistence on Washington’s Virginian-ness, he could not turn him into an image for southern or state pride. Washington was, even in the minds of this sectionalist, a federal figure and Maury therefore rejected him as a model for the future.23

22 Maury p 19. De Witt Clinton served two terms as governor of New York and Jeremiah Thompson was a ship owner and abolitionist in New York City. Maury was referencing the Eerie Canal, constructed by Clinton and used by Thompson.

Other speakers were not quite as antagonistic, but they were, in general, sectionalists. Fifteen years earlier, Richard Gooch, another alumnus, addressed the Jefferson Society on Jefferson’s birthday. Gooch warned that inciting resentment against northerners would create, “broken fragments of our...glorious Union.” And yet Gooch dedicated his speech to Virginia. In praising his alma mater, he said, “Let us cherish the memory of its father [Jefferson]” for the creation of such an institution, “[a] temple of light and liberty for the South, let us never be backward in serving the blessed mother of us all—the good Old Dominion.”

Gooch had nothing bad to say about the North; in fact he emphasized unity at several points in his speech. But when calling on his audience to act, he recognized a regional pride that held more sway than national patriotism. He did so partially through the use of Thomas Jefferson, who, though himself a federal figure, was localized through his connection to the University. Unlike Washington, he quickly turned into a local hero because of his contributions to the school.

Not all of the language at UVA was sectional. The Constitution of the Washington Society held the founder up as a model to follow when the preamble claims that the society’s name, “recalling the deeds of the illustrious ‘Father of American Liberty,’ may animate us with the desire of using the power here attained, for the good of our country, and the weal of our countrymen.”

---


25 Constitution of the Washington Society of the University of Virginia
Lieutenant Maury thought that Virginia needed no more men like Washington, the founder remained a respected figure. However, this kind of adoring language stands out amongst the archives at the University of Virginia because it is the exception instead of the rule. Further, the only copy of the Washington Constitution that still exists dates from 1867 and this language may represent a change over time.

Thus the difference in how George Washington was viewed is twofold. First, the language used to describe him changed. Students at UVA did not use the religious imagery found in the Philodemic speeches. The cause for this might be the Catholic environment at Georgetown, but the effect deserves consideration also. By associating Washington with their faith, the students at Georgetown brought their religious and patriotic goals together; they considered America’s interests as, in a way, God’s interests. That made religion a tie between the students at Georgetown and the Union as well as an unlikely rift between them and their neighbors to the south. Second, Washington occupied a different position in the UVA students’ minds. On the one hand, he seems less important since in several speeches from the period, the students preferred to focus on someone more easily associated with Virginia. However, George Washington still stood for the same themes at UVA that he did at Georgetown; that is, Washington embodied the idea of America as a whole. The speakers simply gave different weight to America itself. The Jefferson and Washington Societies shifted their attention to the southern cause. They approved of the words of alumnus James Holcombe when he told them, “It is for you in part, as it is the duty of every Virginian, who links his own
personal honor with the credit of the state,” to ensure that Virginia is the foremost of the United States.\textsuperscript{26}

\textbf{Washington in the Background:}

While the differences between Georgetown and the University of Virginia may seem obvious, there are also striking similarities between Georgetown and Columbian colleges. The Enosinian Society, so close to Capitol Hill and the White House, rarely concerned itself with the divisive issues that surrounded it on all sides. Instead of talking about the proper role of government or the virtues and vices of slavery, this group constantly discussed issues of education. Whereas at the Philodemic it was “sacrilegious” to overlook George Washington in a speech, one Enosinian in 1837 said that, “It would be unpardonable to overlook or omit to mention the General Diffusion of Education.”\textsuperscript{27} What is fascinating about this speech is that it does not take place on commencement or on any academic occasion, but on the 4\textsuperscript{th} of July, 1837. The speaker, Edgar Snowden, an early alumnus of the society, began with some customary praise for the “settlers of the country and the original founders of the States”, which is itself almost a compromise phrasing, and then goes on to exclaim how, “it is, after all, the Education of the People which is to preserve their morals—guide their judgments—give weight and dignity to their opinions—and cloth their decisions with impartiality and wisdom.” The capitalization might seem to make clear that education is standing in for Washington as the students’ exemplar, especially since this speech is directed to students who will soon, “commence the duties of active life at an important period of your country’s

\textsuperscript{26} Holcombe, James P. "Address before the Society of Alumni." (1853). p 11
\textsuperscript{27} Snowden, Edgar. An Address Delivered before the Enosinian Society of the Columbian College, DC July 4, 1837. Washington: Printed by P. Force, 1837. p 15
history. You are, at once, to take your stations among those who are to control and direct the temporal destinies of this great nation.”

Freeman Brown, a member of the society, made that point even more clearly two years earlier at 1835’s Fourth of July oration, where he suggested that his listeners, “Go, visit [Mt.] Vernon, and ask the shades of the illustrious dead, why no gorgeous marble presses his sleeping remains?” The answer that would come, apparently, was that the thinker, not the warrior, is the hero of this and all following ages, that, “the spirit of the Alexanders has passed away, and a reign of brotherly affection is ensuing.”

Georgetown embraced Washington as a great man of action. The Enosinians had no need of such a symbol and therefore, as Brown saw it, did not need to venerate Washington as their model.

Even among men of action, when they did discuss them, Washington did not hold the pre-eminent place of honor. At one debate early in the Enosinian’s history, the students voted Christopher Columbus as more “worthy of admiration and esteem” than George Washington. That same year the Enosinian voted that the nation should not erect a monument to Washington’s memory. These results are less surprising when one considers both Christopher Columbus’s high reputation during the time period and that he was the namesake of the Enosinians’ school, but it is still a jarring contrast with what Georgetown students would say in ten years or even with UVA speeches twenty years later. Speakers at several schools stated that the country needed no monument for Washington because his memory lived in their hearts. This seeming nonchalance about

---

28 Snowden p 16, 19
30 Journal of the Enosinian Society Box 5 of the Enosinian Records at GWSC. 1824, Oct. 13
Washington is not evidence that they esteemed him less, but needs to be put in the context of their society as a whole. Since Georgetown’s love of Washington stemmed directly from their national patriotism and UVA’s reluctance to praise him can be attributed to their regional or southern pride, the Enosinian’s opinion had more to do with their position in society than with the actual legacy of George Washington.

Since Washington-as-the-nation was an accepted theme in most literary society discourse, perhaps some of this unwillingness to embrace him came from the Enosinians’ desire to avoid confrontation at all. At UVA and Georgetown, a speech about Washington often meant a speech about politics. By avoiding one, the Enosinians ignored the other. Many societies passed laws about controversial topics. “No subject shall be discussed in this society regarding religious opinions, nor any involving the Politics of our own country, of a latter date than the year 1820,” agreed the Philodemic. In most places, societies quietly ignored or repealed these laws, but the Enosinians held fast to that ideal. For example, in 1857 they decided to debate, “Is slavery in the abstract right?” but then deemed the question unconstitutional and never held the contest. The Enosinians had more interest in purely intellectual pursuits and seemed to spend the majority of their meetings preparing and reading their biweekly student publication, The Enosinian Bee. If the humor of early-nineteenth-century boys has little effect on the average modern reader, he or she may be excused, but this literary society’s devotion to literature deserves some attention. The Society chose editors and writers for each edition, and they always read the product of their labors aloud before the society. At UVA and

31 Rules and Regulations, Box 3 Folder I section V.6 of Philodemic Records at GUSC
32 Enosinian Journal 1852-57 25 April 1857 at GWSC
Georgetown, the prominence of debate placed an emphasis on persuasiveness. At Columbia, the Enosinians’ literary endeavors placed an emphasis on creativity.

While the Philodemic dedicated itself to defending liberty and the Washington Society pursued the “weal of their countrymen”, the Enosinian Constitution only mentions self-improvement in “knowledge, eloquence, and every accomplishment” as its primary goals. A lack of enthusiasm does not imply a lack of admiration, but in the spring of 1857, while debating “Which is the greater country, England or America?” the Enosinians actually sided against their own country. Results such as these, or even debates such as these, never occurred in the Philodemic, Jefferson, or Washington societies. Something about this college created a decidedly different tone than at neighboring institutions. A hint can be found in the Enosinian seal. It featured the classical image of a snake that represented wisdom biting its own tail, creating a circle that symbolized perpetuity. A lamp in the center stood for knowledge. The Philodemic sought improvement as a means to America’s glory, and their seal featured symbols of liberty. The Jefferson and Washington cultivated eloquence for use in the service of Virginia. The Enosinian sought knowledge for its own sake, not for the sake of the federal union or regional pride and therefore not for the sake of Washington.

Washington’s image was malleable, but it had limits, and no one claimed him as an intellectual.

---

33 Enosinian Constitution at GWSC
34 Enosinian Journal: 1852-57, 2 May 1857 at GWSC
35 Picture by permission of the Enosinian Society, Jacqueline Posada
Even though the student population hailed heavily from the south, Columbian College had a decidedly different atmosphere than the University of Virginia. The faculty at UVA possessed the express purpose of raising southern boys into southern men, but the faculty at Columbian found themselves recruiting from the South out of a need for students. While the student body came predominantly from the South, the faculty hailed from towns throughout the Union, many from New England. A natural environment of cooperation and, perhaps, a willingness to put differences aside, meant that the institution had to focus on what was common amongst its entire population—a respect for and pursuit of education. However, this refusal to focus on politics also meant an inability to discuss the nation at large in certain meaningful ways. The topics that caused students at Georgetown and UVA to evoke Washington’s memory were not debated at Columbian, and he was therefore not an appropriate symbol for their discussions. 

The Ensonians needed a purpose for all their exertions and education, knowledge, and wisdom made worthy goals for a college student. George Washington, as a barely-educated military man wrapped up in national symbolism, was not the hero they were looking for.

---

36 In 1849, the Washington News commented on the geographic distribution of the student body at Columbian College, which was rapidly becoming more southern in nature: “we should like to see more young gentlemen from the northern states coming among us...as this is common ground, belonging to the whole country...We regard this College as one of the strong links in the chain that will bind the Union together.” Its founder came from New England. Its president that academic year was born in Massachusetts. The Board of Trustees consisted predominantly of northerners. Still, the college became dependant on the South for students and funds. In 1841, the Board admitted, “That entertaining a deep sense of the generous liberality of the South, in contributing funds for the payment of the debts and support of the College in years that are past, we do now look to them with high hopes that they will give their wealth for its much needed endowment.”

Northern Considerations:

At the University of Pennsylvania a similar focus on education over politics dominated literary society life and influenced their use of Washington. The seal of the Zelosophic Society gets the message across plainly with a scroll saying “Literae sine-Moribus Vanae” or “Letters without morals are useless” surrounding a pile of books marked, from bottom to top, Grammatica, Rhetorica, Logica, Mathematica, Philos.-nat. [Natural Philosophy or Science], Astronomia, and Theologia. Their cross-campus rivals, the Philomathean Society boasted a similar theme with their seal which features a picture of a boy reading beside a brook and the words Sic Itur Ad Astra, or “Thus you shall go to the stars,” a phrase from Virgil, across the top.

All literary societies celebrated the anniversary of their founding, but the Penn societies followed a different pattern than those at UVA and Georgetown and reduced the number of opportunities to reflect on Washington. The Philodemic changed the date of its “founding” to February 22, as did the Washington Society. The Jefferson Society held its anniversary on April 14, Thomas Jefferson’s birthday. In contrast, the Philomathean Society always celebrated Oct. 2, a factual date with no significance beyond the fact that it was the actual day they ratified their first constitution. Similarly, the Zelosophic

37 The first one hundred years of the Zelosophic Literary Society.
Society’s birthday was always October 29. As a result, anniversary celebrations did not take on the theme of tribute to heroes of the past. So, while any given Washington Society annual festivity had something to say about the man as well as the Society, the birthday orations at Penn had titles like, “The Reciprocal Influences of the Physical and Intellectual World” and focused heavily on scientists, poets, and ancient literary figures. That speech only mentioned one Revolutionary figure, Benjamin Franklin, in his role as an inventor. Franklin, as a founder of the university, made an obvious choice for praise, but even he only received a passing mention.

And yet the claim that Philomatheans and Zelophiles had no interest in politics and could not engage the debate about Washington as a regional or national figure is unsupportable. For one thing, many of them went on to become federal congressmen. Nor did they avoid controversial issues as a rule. An early debate, for example revolved around the subject of “whether or not women should preach.” Nor can it be said that these societies avoided sectional debate. At one point, in an intra-collegiate contest between the two societies, they debated the topic, “Is it probable that the abolition of slavery will be attended to by the dissolution of the union?” The moderator began the evening by taking two pistols and displaying them on his table. He understood that the debate might turn ugly and wanted to make sure that discussion remained civil. Thus, politics undoubtedly provoked interest at Penn. As a matter of fact, both literary societies delved into a wide range of activities and interests. In addition to the scholarly pursuits

39 The Enosinians celebrated their anniversary on April 12, a date with no additional historical significance.  
and the debates, they also published various student magazines, performed full scale
teatrical productions, and even fielded athletic teams against each other.\textsuperscript{43} At
Columbian, students pursued creative activities in lieu of political debate. At Penn,
students pursued all sorts of activities in addition to political debate. Thus, politics was
important, but not more so than the theatre. Whereas the Philodemic and Jefferson
Societies concentrated primarily on debating and the Enosinians focused on both
debating and writing, the Zelosophic and Philomathean Societies were catch-all student
organizations that provided politics and oratory as one portion of a wide range of
activities.\textsuperscript{44}

However, even though politics and history did not dominate in the same way as at
other colleges, the students at Penn still held Washington in high esteem. When student
and future judge William B. Reed gave an historical address before the Philomathean in
1838 (which he said was “rather an historical essay than an oration”), his subject was the
uniting of the American colonies before the outbreak of war. He spoke extensively about
Washington. When he spoke about the character of John and Edward Rutledge, the
highest praise he offered was that George Washington counted them as friends. When he
spoke about the Revolution creating feelings of religious toleration amongst different
sects, he referenced the attendance of Washington, an Anglican, at a Catholic mass.\textsuperscript{45}

Like speakers at other schools, Reed linked Washington to ideas of national unity across

\textsuperscript{43} Reiss, Jennifer. “Guide to the
Zelosophic Society of the University of Pennsylvania
Records, 1829 - 1942.” University Archives and Record Center: University of Pennsylvania, July,

\textsuperscript{44} Picture : Wallace, James. "Anti-Philomathean Society Poem." University Archives Digital Image
Collection, University of Pennsylvania University Archives.
<http://sysls01.library.upenn.edu/cocoon/dla/archives/image.html?q=zelosophic&id=ARCHIVES_20
050801011>.

\textsuperscript{45} Reed, William B. Historical Address at the University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, PA: T.K. & P.G.
Collins, 1838. p3, p41, p 60
geographical and religious boundaries. He focused on Washington’s character, which students spoke highly of everywhere.

That said, the Philomathean was more likely to celebrate a man like John Quincy Adams, a man specifically singled out by Joseph Ingersoll, a lawyer and later congressman invited to speak before the Society. He praised Adams as a man with true “love of science” and “diversified attainments” who with “untiring industry…has mastered them, and continues their application to useful ends.” He went on to say that Adams was rightfully at the head of the republic which he described as a sort of confederation of friendly competition or “generous rivalship.” Ingersoll claimed that the intellectual contest that naturally arose out of the states’ feuding would raise up the level of literature and science throughout the country. Thus, sectional pride represented no threat, but was instead a boon to the young republic. He ended his commencement speech with a call to the students to be “committed to the preservation of [America’s] science…Preserve it, I beseech you, with the sacred and successful devotion of the flaming-sworded Cherubim.”\footnote{Ingersoll, Joseph R. *Annual Discourse before the Philomathean Society of the University of Pennsylvania Pronounced on the 25th July, 1827.* Philadelphia, PA: Carey, Lea, and Carey, 1827. p 29-31} So where the Philodemic used the image of Eden’s guardian to describe Washington keeping watch over the country, the Philomatheans saw science, not America, as the object of defense, and themselves, or John Quincy Adams, not Washington, as the defender. Like the Enosinians, the students at Penn had an ambiguous relationship with Washington. They considered him worthy of respect, but never made him the primary object of their devotion. The difference between Penn and Columbian is that while students at Columbian avoided Washington out of a need for
compromise and a desire to avoid political contention, his memory was merely left alone at Penn as students were not interested in a military man of action.

**Conclusion:**

At Penn, Washington was a bit lower than “second only to God”, but he never became detached from his association with America or national unity. Nowhere was Washington seen as a regional or a southern figure. He was always seen as inherently national and inherently uniting, even when the speaker would rather sing the praises of sectionalism and local pride. The differences came in how that association was expressed. At Georgetown, it was cherished. Washington was their link to America and a sure guide for their future. At UVA, it was more subdued, but still very much praised by the students. Washington was a great American, but could not be constrained to just the great Virginian they desired. At Columbian College and Penn, Washington was brushed aside, though for different reasons at each institution. Columbian removed the focus from Washington as it tried to stave off controversy and avoid the issues that might rip the school and did tear the country apart. At Penn, Washington was praised for high moral character but did not occupy center stage of literary society discourse. At both institutions, students emphasized scholarly pursuits, and Washington was not the role model they needed. Each of these four institutions faced dramatic change brought on by the Civil War, and as the Union transformed around them, the students’ perceptions of George Washington changed too. In Pennsylvania, war was very real but remote. In Virginia and the District, war raged near at hand, physical and concrete.
Chapter 4: First in War?

After the Compromise of 1850, the major flash points of contention across the American political landscape—slavery, abolition, and sectionalism—began to intensify. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) sold hundreds of thousands of copies and caused many Americans to confront the issues of slavery directly. In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act declared that popular sovereignty in the territories would determine whether each one would be free or slave. The Republican Party was created in response and came to power in the North. Violence erupted in Kansas and Missouri between factions trying to influence Kansas’s vote on slavery. The year 1859 saw John Brown raid Harper’s Ferry, Virginia, in an attempt to raise a rebellion of slaves there. Even though he failed and was hanged for treason, many in the North celebrated his efforts while many in the south saw Brown as an example of the dangers of radical abolitionism. The Republicans elected Abraham Lincoln to the presidency in 1860 and as a result, South Carolina seceded from the Union on December 20. In 1861, war erupted in earnest. For the next four years in battlefields all across the South and in parts of the North, the Civil War raged, resulting in Union victory and over 600,000 American deaths, roughly 2% of the population of the entire country.¹ After the smoke cleared and John Wilkes Booth assassinated Lincoln, the long and painful process of Reconstruction began. The new President Andrew Johnson took on a policy of reconciliation, opposed by other Republicans in Congress. Restoring the South to the Union and allowing freed blacks to enter society as citizens caused debates, arguments, and fights until at least 1877, and many historians argue that it left wounds in the Republic that lasted well into

¹ By comparison, WWII saw over 400,000 American deaths, about .3% of the population at that time.
the twentieth century or further. Literary society students saw their lives and their colleges transformed by the realities of war and the peace that followed.

The threat and then the actuality of armed civil conflict caused men across the spectrum of American society to take actions they would otherwise not have considered. After fighting began at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, Robert E. Lee resigned his commission in the United States Army and took a commission from the state of Virginia. Young men left family farms on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line and rushed off to join the war. Many male slaves, seeing an opportunity, rushed north to freedom.

But not all actions were quite as sudden or decisive. Colleges adjusted as well. At the University of Virginia, enrollments plummeted and activity came to a standstill as students returned home or headed off to war. The school, which boasted the second largest enrollment before the war, barely kept its doors open. Georgetown, despite its constant stress on unity, sided dramatically with the South. Eighteen Philodemecians died in the war, three under the Union banner and fifteen for the Confederacy.

Columbian College saw its surroundings transformed into a wartime capital. Student enrollment dropped and the schools’ buildings became barracks and hospitals. The University of Pennsylvania was least affected physically by the war, primarily because it sat much farther away from most of the battlefields. Their classes and literary society meetings continued as usual.

The differing attitudes and actions taken by the students in literary societies mirrored the diversity of their approaches to George Washington and their reasoning.

---

3 Curran, Emmet, and Anna Sam. Members of the Philodemic Debate Society 1830-1991. Section III
remained consistent with earlier periods. Students at UVA saw Washington as a symbol of national unity up until the outbreak of war, but did not agree on when to support that unity. After 1865, as Reconstruction forced the students to redefine what America meant, hardliners used Washington as a symbol of Virginia for the first time, and others evoked his image in support of the Union. At Georgetown, students used Washington’s image almost always in conjunction with unity until after the war ended. Then, a spirit of reconciliation pervaded and Washington faded into the background. Columbian speeches remained ambiguous on the major issues surrounding the conflict and they left Washington’s image glaringly absent from their discourse. Penn was the most united of the four schools. While Penn students did not evoke Washington as often as their counterparts, they drew on him more than the Enosinians. Instead of ambiguity, a greater uniformity of opinion on issues like slavery and union pervaded. In each region, Washington remained inextricably linked to the issues surrounding national unity and his standing in the societies depended on the outcome of national events.

**Virginia Alone, Washington Alone:**

In UVA’s literary societies, while the rhetoric had always been regional, emphasis on Virginia in particular escalated after the Compromise of 1850. Consider a speech from July, 1850, at a time when congressmen and everyday Americans debated the compromise. The societies invited a speaker to give an address on the founding of Virginia during commencement exercises. He opened by saying that, “It is because the theme you have given me is exclusively Virginian that I am here this day.” He then proceeded through the history of the state beginning with Jamestown and ending with the Constitution, for which he said Virginia deserved extra credit as it provided the chief
author, James Madison, and the President of the Convention, George Washington. Here, just like in past speeches, the speaker held up Washington as a reason for Virginia’s glory. Still, the speaker explicitly connected Washington with a national endeavor, the federal constitution. Thus, even though the speaker gave high praise to Washington, calling him, “the patriot-sage of Mt. Vernon,” his symbol could not be divorced from the national cause. Washington stood as a symbol for the whole of America and speakers at UVA had to confront that fact. The speaker ended his remarks by exhorting members of the Jefferson and Washington societies to strive for the best, as “Virginia…expects each of you to do his duty.”

Amidst the growing sectionalist clamor of the 1850s, Virginia became the dominant theme in the discourse of UVA’s literary societies.

Sometimes this gap between Washington and Virginia became more pronounced, as it did in a speech by Oscar Stevenson, a member of the Jefferson Society at its anniversary celebration in 1856. Stevenson began by rejecting not only George Washington, but even Thomas Jefferson, declaring the phrase “'All men are created equal’” to be, “the embodiment of the error of Sydney and Locke.” While such speech against the seminal work of UVA’s founder was uncharacteristic in that society, it was approved of by the group at large as they voted to draft a letter praising the speaker and requesting a copy of the speech to publish. Many Northerners at this time saw the Declaration as inconsistent with the institution of slavery, and, rather than arguing that no contradiction existed, Stevenson rejected the document. He went even further, however, calling out, “Let southern men, irrespective of party, gather around the states’ rights

---

4Tyler, John. Address before the Literary Societies of UVA on the Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Charlottesville, VA: James Alexander, 1850. p 16, 26
5 Algernon Sidney and John Locke were British political theorists who advocated equality and are considered to be sources of inspiration for the Declaration of Independence.
banner. Civil war and disunion may be averted; God in his providence grant it; but if it must come, let it come.”

In this particular speech, the language is so virulently anti-Union that Stevenson left out any praise for the founding fathers, Virginian or otherwise.

Not all Virginians agreed with Stevenson. Oliver P. Baldwin came to the College of William and Mary from Richmond in 1852 to speak about “Virginia: Her Past and Her Future” before the Phoenix Society. Though he did not speak at UVA, Baldwin’s address was representative of one side of the debate that was raging there and at all Virginia colleges. His words summarized the whole of that argument more clearly than any single speech at UVA. Baldwin tried to recruit Washington’s memory to the states’ rights cause, but to do so he associated himself with a push for national unity. He began with some of the strongest praise offered to Washington in any of the Virginia speeches, saying, “And if we would seek a character which combines in itself the Soldier, the Statesman, the Sage, and the Christian; which presents a picture of greatness unmarred by ambition… to whom shall we look but to the world’s one WASHINGTON?”

But Baldwin’s call for unity was a unique one. He argued that the only true path to a strong Union lay in upholding the rights of the states as supreme. As abolitionists made their case to the American public, Baldwin railed against them and said, “Gentlemen, we hold in the hollow of our own hands the shield and safeguard of Southern Rights, and with it the preservation and the perpetuity of the American Union.” That is, if Americans abandoned the states’ rights cause, the foundation of the nation would be destroyed and naturally the Union itself would collapse. Baldwin evokes Washington’s image in the states’ rights cause only by linking the entire nation’s welfare to that cause.

---

6 Stevenson, Oscar. *An Address before the Jefferson Society 14 April 1856*. Richmond, VA: Wm. F. Clemmmt, 1856. p 11, 18
In his closing comments, Baldwin tied his support of states’ rights back to George Washington with religious undertones, declaring, “It is for us to say whether George Washington shall have been raised up in vain, whether, not the great leader only, but all the children of our political Israel are to ‘die on the banks of Jordan in sight of the promised land.’” Baldwin compared Washington to Moses who, after guiding Israel to the Promised Land, died on the far side of the Jordan, not allowed to enter himself. For Baldwin, if the Union did not survive, then the American experiment would fail before the full blessings of democracy were truly enjoyed. Baldwin spent much of his life in Baltimore and his obituary described him as an Old Line Whig, one of the parties that eventually formed the Republican Party. This may explain his interest in unity, but his emphasis was still on Virginia’s cause. Rather than just playing to his audience, Baldwin’s speech typified an important idea in many Virginians’ minds: the Union, though imperfect, was a blessing and should be preserved if at all possible.

This speech and others given during this period continued to include references to George Washington. Yet none of the speakers divorced the man from the nation as a whole, despite the diversity of approaches to the issue of states’ rights. Even though each speaker was in favor of a strong Virginia, one endorsed war over capitulation, another made a personal appeal for loyalty to the state, and the third tried to equate state sovereignty with national unity itself. Thus, even in relatively similar environments, the response to the political situation was not monolithic; different Virginians voiced different ideas throughout the 1850s as they responded to abolitionist arguments and conflicts in the new western states.

---

Nonetheless, opinion in UVA’s foremost literary societies clearly favored secession when secession finally came. Before the election of 1860, the Washington Society debated, “Should the southern states secede if Lincoln is elected” and voted yes.¹⁰  The Washington Society emptied its treasury in a donation to the Governor and the Jefferson Society gave its cash to the Confederacy itself.¹¹  Enrollments dropped and the societies had to combine to meet at all, which they managed to do, but without the usual pomp and circumstance of years now gone by.¹²  Discussion of Washington, like discussion of other topics, dropped off completely during these years and neither society debated his role in relation to the new Confederacy. The societies had always seen Washington as linked to the national Union and did not employ him in the new state of politics.

**God and Country:**

Episodes of sectional conflict at UVA led to an escalation—of language, of tone, of intensity. A similar escalation occurred at Georgetown, but to a different end. The students, sensing the danger that could befall their Union, in their eyes the greatest earthly blessing God had bestowed upon them, urgently called for a return to the principles of Washington. But their appeals failed. George Washington was a powerful image, but rhetoric and oratory could not hold the Union together. Just like many Southerners who were on the fence throughout the 1850s, when Lincoln was elected, the society cast its lot with secession.

---


¹² Also included in their contribution to the war effort were the services of alumni like John Singleton Mosby of the Washington Society, who, acting as a Confederate cavalry battalion commander, did much to develop guerrilla tactics.
Apprehension over the divisiveness of political struggle can be found throughout the Philodemic Society’s existence. Toasts at various periods provide one example of this. Members offered these toasts at banquets held by the society, for instance on Washington’s Birthday or at a commencement celebration. They ranged in number from thirteen to almost thirty and were either volunteered by those present or were prepared in advance by a committee. Both reveal what Philodemecians thought about national unity, whether during a time of particular sectional strife or not. In 1844, for example, one member toasted to, “The approaching political contest—we are brothers, let our language be brotherly; we are citizens of the same Union, let our conduct brighten the glory of that Union.”

This sort of language applied especially to the Philodemic Society whose membership came from more states than any other literary society in the region. Friendly toasts like these were almost a pragmatic necessity for the diverse group of friends.

The topics chosen to be toasted show an impressive consistency in their focus on Washington and national unity. In 1844, Philodemecians also toasted George Washington, George Washington’s Tomb, the Union itself, and “Party Spirit—it is identical with that spirit of popular emulation which is the surest index of national patriotism.” Even seemingly off-topic toasts found their way back to either Washington or unity, which the Philodemic always closely linked together. For example George Marshall, a student from Tennessee, toasted, “Andrew Jackson—the bravest warrior yet found among the children of Washington.”

The next year, 1845, the speaker of the day, one of the officers of the society, toasted, “The North and the South: May the only

---

contest between them be, which will do most for the Union.” His speech said nothing about union or disunion, but the toast reveals that it was not far from his mind. Whenever any member brought up the Union, it came not as a simply laudatory toast, but always was connected with a call against sectionalism, such as when Albert Erskine, an Alabaman, offered up, “The Union: May we ever cling to it, as the palladium of our liberty, mindful of the maxim, ‘United we stand, divided we fall.’” It appears that more than standard patriotism, the Philodemic members felt an active apprehension of civil strife and invoked Washington as a safeguard for the Union.

When tensions escalated in the late 1850s, the Philodemic rallied behind Washington. At each celebration of his birthday, an introductory speaker made a few remarks and then read Washington’s Farewell Address. Then a second speaker delivered an original oration. During the 1856 celebration, before the reading of the Farewell Address, the introductory speaker claimed that, looking down on them from heaven, Washington surely grieved at the division of his countrymen and that, “if there by anything likely to smooth the billows of agitated passion; if there be anything likely to recall to pleasing memory the days of yore, when Northerner and Southerner fought and fell, side by side, for their country’s weal, it is the farewell Address of Washington.” The bitter fighting that emerged among brothers over section, was “in diametrical opposition to the hallowed advice, transmitted to us by the father of us all.” The speaker referred especially to the paragraph of Washington’s address that urges unity as, “the

---

main pillar in the edifice of your real independence.” Sectionalism was wrong, in part, because Washington warned against it. Unity was to be found in him.

This attitude existed not solely within Philodemic meetings. Records of the Philonomosian Society show similar concern. At the Philonomosian’s 1845 celebration of Washington’s birthday, its chosen speaker, Edmond R. Smith of New York, spoke about the importance of union to George Washington. He argued that, in Washington’s eyes, all Americans were the same. Washington foresaw the rise of sectionalists who, “would endeavor to persuade us that there was a real difference existing in character and interests between the various section[s] of our country; and…[would] array…one portion of the Union against the other.” Smith went on to make the claim that Washington himself was key in holding the country together. On Washington’s birthday, he explained, “The North, the South, the East, and the West, forgetful of their little quarrels, have again assembled around the common threshold of liberty, to strengthen once more the chains of love, and consult again for the welfare of all.” This speaker came from the North, but the Society as a whole, which contained more southern members than the older Philodemic, approved and published it.\(^{18}\) Georgetown students stood on constant guard against disunity.

This did not mean Georgetown students spared harsh words for their countrymen. Whereas the students at UVA often expressed their low opinion of northerners, Georgetown students held in low regard any, “who attempts…to subvert a portion of

---

\(^{18}\) Smith, Edmond. Address Delivered before the Philonomosian Society of Georgetown College, District of Columbia by Edmond Relllel Smith to which are Prefixed the Remarks of J. Cooke Longstreh of Pennsylvania. Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1845. p 6, 10

those laws, the preservation of which WASHINGTON so emphatically urges us.”19 This referred to southern sectionalism but their condemnation also extended to, “abolitionism, nativism, and all the other isms which have spring up among us, producing strife and contention, where once peace and harmony reigned supreme.”20 Thus, even though they called for unity in the memory of Washington, they held no qualms about singling out groups that sought to disrupt it.

As the Civil War drew near, Philodemic concerns grew more pointed. In 1860 they debated topics such as “Should Southern Democrats vote for Douglas for President if he be nominated by the Charleston Convention?” and, “Whether the Union will be dissolved in the case of the election of Lincoln as President of the U.S.?” On this latter topic, they voted that it would not be, but apparently they felt a little unsure. Two months later they debated, “Ought the Southern States to oppose the coercion of any States of the union, should any secede in the event of a Black Republican President?” This time, the affirmative held the day.21 On both occasions, the vote was close and a few good speeches in the course of debate had enough power to sway opinion in either direction.

In December 1860, right before South Carolina seceded, the Philodemic began debating the question, “Should the South now Secede?” Passions ran high. Like other Americans, Philodemecians found their loyalty to home and family conflicted with loyalty to the federal union. When the vote finally came, a strong decision for the affirmation, a melee broke out. James McLaughlin, a student from Virginia, wrote later

---

19 Smith, Edmond. Address Delivered before the Philonomosian Society of Georgetown College, District of Columbia by Edmond Rellel Smith to which are Prefixed the Remarks of J. Cooke Longstreh of Pennsylvania. Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1845. p 5

20 Cumming, Julien. Address Delivered before the Philonomosian Society of Georgetown College, District of Columbia on the 4th of July, 1846 by Julien Cumming of Georgia., 1846.p 12

21 Black Republican refers not to skin color but political persuasion.
that, “Bill Hodges, of Mississippi…sprang at the Vice-President…Jack Gardiner, of Maryland, rushed at me…and many other Philodemics, were mixed up in the melee.”

The President of the Society finally put a stop to things by turning off the lights and suspending meetings for the rest of the year. While up until this point, the Philodemic’s regional diversity appeared as one of its greater strengths, allowing more balanced discussion on important issues, now it only served to reveal the limits of unity.

As the Civil War turned brother against brother, it had already turned friends against each other in a Society devoted to the nation’s well-being. Years of calling for unity in Washington’s name had apparently not done enough, and the election of America’s sixteenth president convinced some Philodemecians that some things mattered more than unity. This surprising result exposes the limits of oratory and of the literary societies in general. The weekly speeches and debates significantly impacted the opinions of Philodemecians, but regional concerns proved more consequential. Their decision to abandon the Union also belies the strength of Washington’s memory.

Philodemecians had used that image to speak out against division, but they ultimately forsook the country Washington founded.23

---

22 Gillis, Herbert Russell. Rhetoric and Speech Education at the Jesuit College of Georgetown in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. p 33

23 Because such a large portion of the Georgetown student population sided with the Confederacy, the enrollment dropped precipitously from several hundred to less than seventy-five in 1861. As students left campus, about four-fifths headed south. The Jesuit faculty remained, though many held southern sympathies. The grounds themselves were used to house Union soldiers. The school that held onto national unity most tenaciously was torn apart. In 1865, on February 22, one student wrote, “Things very quiet at the College. A great change since the war began. Even the old flag (‘Long may it wave!’ seemed unwilling to move on the old tower. It hung drooping and sluggish, as if mourning the woes over the land of Washington.” In years past, Washington’s Birthday meant large celebrations. Now it served as a sad reminder of the harshness of war.
Columbian:

The records of the Enosinian Society are incomplete and very little material survives from the era just before the Civil War. As a result, their opinions on the great conflict can best be traced beginning in the heady days of Spring 1861. George Samson, pastor of the E Street Baptist Church and president of Columbian College, announced to the Board of Trustees on April 24, 1861 that twenty students had gone home and that he expected several more to follow. They decided that until the students abandoned the school completely, the doors would remain open. Columbian had required a recess of two years for financial reasons in 1827 and the Board trusted that, come what may, operations would resume as they had before. When it came to the actual issues that divided the nation—slavery, state sovereignty, and, eventually, secession—Columbian College and the Enosinian Society were ambiguous. They did not make any strong calls for unity or against abolition. Instead, they avoided most of the issues. As they had been doing all along, they avoided George Washington.

The city of Washington was in a state of upheaval in April, 1861. The action at Fort Sumter occurred just two weeks earlier. The First Battle of Bull Run, the first major conflict of the Civil War, did not come until July. The president-elect arrived in town secretly and the inaugural precession was not like, “a civilian demonstration but…like a military expedition.” Construction on the Washington Monument, which had reached a height of 170 feet, halted and did not resume until 1876. Most of Columbian’s campus was occupied as a hospital throughout the war. Despite all of this, instruction continued,
though registrations for the College fell from 82 in 1861 to 22 in 1862, before rising gradually to 36 in 1865.24

Despite all of this, the Enosinian Society remained in existence. Though it failed to meet regularly, it still managed some gatherings and a couple of orations. In the years leading up to the war, the Society continued its tradition of avoiding controversy and, instead of publishing divisive speeches on either side, focused its efforts on poetry. In 1858, the Society published *Poesy: An Essay in Rhyme* by a member, John R. Thompson. Its theme is that literature lasts longer than the glory of political figures like Caesar or Napoleon. Though Washington is comparable to those figures, he is left out of the critique.25 In 1860, the Society celebrated the anniversary of Henry Clay’s birth at the Smithsonian. The society’s guest, Rev. B Sunderland, read his work, *Mistakes: A Poem*. This thirty-page piece moved from classical allusion to classical allusion and might be summarized as a warning against ambition and praise for the late Senator who would be “rather right than President.”26 These literary works touch on political themes, but deal more heavily with questions of personal virtue. The Enosinian chose to shy away from that political sphere of argument.

During the war itself, there was an opportunity to turn the Society into a mouthpiece for the Union, as all the Southern students had left the college. But this did not happen. In 1863, just weeks before the battle of Gettysburg, Otis T. Mason, a graduate from 1861, gave an address before the Society, again in poem form. As Lee’s

---

army moved north and the Union prospects looked as dim as they ever would, Mason issued a call for battle in Liberty’s name. He exhorted his listeners to, “Strike for the civil bond, lay down your souls/ For God, for right, to wrong deal a death dole.” And yet the poem was oddly ambiguous. It did not mention the conflict in particular or any given side. Nor did it evoke George Washington. Subtle clues led a listener to believe he supported the Union, but the language was not as bombastic as was found at other schools and the exact same work, if read in Richmond, might have found favor with a southern audience. In fact, his overall theme was not even a defense of liberty but that Christ stands above the terrors of war and that God’s work was more important than even the most serious of earthly pursuits. The title of his work, *The Spirit of the Beautiful*, hardly evokes any sort of battle cry.27

The Enosinian Society, though just as affected by sectional strife as any other literary society, said the least about it—whether by commenting on civil strife, the war itself, or, notably, George Washington. Columbian College became a sort of neutral ground where compromise was hailed and controversy avoided, and George Washington may have been largely eschewed precisely because his image was inextricably connected with issues of national unity and the Union itself. At UVA, students could not separate Washington from the nation as a whole, but the Enosinians did not associate Washington with anything. At no point during the war did the Enosinian Society resolve partisan motions and, though they never showed support for the Confederacy, neither were they strong supporters of the Union cause. The only real resolution they produced on the war came in late 1864 saying that the federal government, “should compromise with the

---

Rebellious States.”28 Even then, one member refused to debate, perhaps taking umbrage with the word “rebellious.” This non-committal stance throughout the war was consistent with the Enosinian Society of the 1840s. Without speeches strongly supporting the Union, Enosinians found no reason to call upon George Washington.

Northerners:

By the 1840s, the University of Pennsylvania’s two major literary societies, the Zelosophic Society and the Philomathean Society, were well established. They began as part of a concerted effort on the part of school administrators to raise the academic standing of the university. Like the Enosinian Society, they said little about Washington, but for different reasons. Greater physical distance from the flashpoints of Union meant that the students in Philadelphia were not as immersed in the national debates as the students at Columbian. Also, the topics and the results of their debates show that the societies were much less internally conflicted on the issues like the students at Georgetown or UVA. In general, the societies at Penn disapproved of slavery, thought abolition would be a good thing in theory, and wanted to preserve the Union over states’ issues. At Georgetown and UVA, students evoked Washington’s image in their calls for unity. In a way, the students at Penn had already united and did not need to evoke Washington in the same way.

The Zelosophic Society did not spend a lot of time talking about the buildup to the war. In the two years before the conflict came to a head, its members did not debate the issues of slavery, sectionalism, or national union on any occasion. Instead, they tackled a variety of topics, some that seem remarkably trivial in light of the times. On the one hand, they discussed the usual philosophical, historical, and political debates, such as

“Do the Tories deserve the opprobrium heaped upon them?” which apparently they did. On the other hand, they talked about topics related to daily and campus life: “Should beards be worn or shorn?” and, “What is the most affectual means for causing a more regular attendance at the meetings of our society?”

In a way, these debates were more practical than the high-minded topics, but the Zelosophic’s concern was not just pragmatism. For example, February 24, 1858 they debated, “Which is most correct, Spoonsfull or Spoonfulls?” The modern historian might be tempted to think that either the Zelosophic Society was a group of either very silly boys or very serious grammarians, but neither interpretation fully understands the purpose of the society.

In the context of the rest of their particular society, these debates make more sense. Not only is the individual membership of each literary society distinct, but oftentimes its purpose is as well. The Philodemic was founded with the stated purpose of defending liberty, and that commitment became more than words on paper as the members, over the years, sought what they saw as the good of the country. The Zelosophic’s purpose had nothing to do with producing grammarians, but rather, “the improvement of its members in forensic debating, elocution, composition, reading, and translation from ancient authors.” Each of these first four elements had an allotted space of time in a regular meeting of the Society. Members gave a speech or two, presented a couple of original essays, maybe read some other essays, and then the night’s topic was debated by anywhere between six members and the entire society. Like it often was for the Philomathean Society, the purpose of the debate portion for the Zelosophic Society

---

30 Journal of the Enosinian Society Box 5 of the Enosinian Records at GWSC., 1857-1870. Feb 24, 1858
was not to uncover some important truth, though on some occasions they sought that goal also, but primarily to increase the student’s ability to argue a case and to speak in public. That motivation existed in all literary societies to some extent, but it was the primary purpose of the Zelosophic’s existence. A topic about spoonfulls makes sense. In fact, a seemingly silly and miniscule argument was perfect for creating a lawyerly ability to make a case in court or to present the unpopular side of an argument. Debates in that vein, however, are not well suited to the memory of dead patriots, and Washington was not essential to their discussion.

The debates were not necessarily small scale, however, and the Zelosophic still voiced its opinion on slavery and sometimes on the Civil War directly, albeit rarely. In 1854, amidst the clamor over the Kansas-Nebraska Act, they asked, “Should states or Congress decide if a state should be free or slave?” A student objected to the topic and the society postponed it twice, but finally debated it. They decided it was Congress’s responsibility and should not be left to popular sovereignty. At the beginning of the war, the Zelosophic did not seem to consider secession or the growing conflict worth debating. Rather than a lack of interest in national affairs, it is more likely that students did not debate these topics on the floor because they did not consider these topics up for debate. With almost all Zelosophs coming from Pennsylvania, the Southern cause probably found few adherents amongst their ranks.

The first topic that relates directly to the war is found in late 1862. President Lincoln removed General McClellan from command after he failed to capitalize on a victory at Antietam. The society debated, “Ought Gen. McClellan have been removed?” They voted no. Regardless of the result, this question exposes a couple of things about
the Zelosophic. First, they were united about the war itself. A question about
generalship presupposes that the members all desired victory for the Union and that they
were actually debating whether or not removing the general from that position was the
best course of action to achieve that end. It also means that the Zelosophic Society had
some interest in critiquing the actions of the Lincoln administration. They did not live
near the center of action, but they analyzed the war from a distance. This question shows
that the Zelosophic was not completely disinterested. They may also have been
concerned about this particular topic because General McClellan attended the University
about twenty years prior before he left for West Point and the McClellan family was still
prominent in Philadelphia itself.32

The University did not have to make the same sacrifices that Columbian and
Georgetown did, but many of the school’s alumni served. Of the 431 Penn men to take
up arms in the conflict, 399 of them fought for the Union.33 Nineteen died. In addition to
sending off their friends and brothers and in accordance with state law, the University
also established a voluntary cadet corps in accordance with state law which became more
or less inactive after the only professor with real military experience left to take the
presidency at another college in 1865.34 Students did not have to join and many of the
cadets did not go on to join the war. The war certainly had an impact on campus, but not
enough of one to disrupt the school-year rhythm.

32 Cheyney, Edward Potts. History of the University of Pennsylvania 1740-1940. Philadelphia, PA:
University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940. p 252
33 Cheyney, Edward Potts. History of the University of Pennsylvania 1740-1940. Philadelphia, PA:
University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940. p 252
34 Cheyney, Edward Potts. History of the University of Pennsylvania 1740-1940. Philadelphia, PA:
University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940. p 250
The Philomathean Society at the University of Pennsylvania found itself in an unusual position in 1863. While many colleges closer to the front lines had to shut down, Penn continued holding classes and meetings, and the Philomatheans celebrated their semi-centennial anniversary. In fact, they filled the Hall of the University and held a full ceremony complete with two orations and multiple musical interludes. Still, the speeches were somber and focused on the national conflict. Philadelphia, though to a lesser extent than the City of Washington, still felt the effects of war, and with Lee’s recent invasion of Pennsylvania, the government even erected fortifications on Penn’s campus.

Speakers still used George Washington’s image at this celebration, if only in small ways. The main speaker that day lamented that, “A terrible and dark cloud has indeed come over us…[I]n our country we have been compelled to pause in our conclusions, by the long-dreaded calamities of a civil war.” He did not spare the feelings of potential southern sympathizers as the speaker had at Columbian a couple months earlier. Instead he proclaimed that their republic was “only consistent with principles of universal emancipation” and, though the war filled their hearts with sorrow, it marked an attempt, “to cast out the evil spirit that has brought about this national calamity.” It may be that they find in this war, “under God…a perfect cure of the evil.” Much of his speech recounted happier times and, when discussing the pleasantness of his time at the University and the high hopes of the early Republic, he included remembrances of Washington and, “the structure reared by Pennsylvania as a residence for the President of

---

the United States, and intending especially for the first President.”37 The speech was not about him at all, but it is telling that the alumnus associated more peaceful times with Washington.

As time went on, the society began debating the more philosophical grounds of the war, asking, “Is slavery right?” in 1863 and “Ought suffrage to be extended to the negro?” in 1864. They voted no and yes.38 Unfortunately, no one recorded the speeches given during these debates, but taken as a whole, the evidence from the Civil War, these actions and words, the debates, the speeches, the military training, the makeup of the membership, all work towards the same conclusion: The difference between how the war affected the Philomathean and Zelosophic Societies and how it affected groups at the other schools is that it did not divide them as a body. Some students went south, but the society remained intact. At Georgetown, fights erupted. At Columbian, most students quietly left and the remainder struggled to cope with the conflict while soldiers slept in their classrooms. At UVA, the school broke dramatically for the south, but only after years of debate and conflicting opinions about what America represented. Philadelphia was different, and while at UVA and Georgetown, students evoked George Washington’s image whenever they debated the issues of secession and unity, at Penn they did not use his image because they did not debate these issues. They tacitly agreed upon them. The philosophical questions behind the conflict did not hinge on the issues of unity versus sectionalism and speakers needed different tools than the metaphorical national banner of Washington.

---

38 Minute Books of the Philomathean Society. Sep 22, 1863, June 7, 1864
After The War:

After the war closed, students and teachers in each of these institutions tried to get back to normal or, at the very least, rebuild what they had lost. At UVA, the literary societies had to decide how to go forward. On the one hand, they wanted to remember their dead friends and their lost cause. In fact, the “Lost Cause” is a term that historians use to refer to the movement that tried to reconcile Southern society with the idea of ultimate defeat. Lost Cause supporters argued that slavery was not a great evil, secession was constitutional, defeat was inevitable because of Northern advantages in men and materiel, and, most importantly, that the Southern cause was virtuous.39 In that vein, the Washington and Jeffersonian Societies jointly raised a memorial to Confederate dead which still stands on campus.40 But they had to reconcile themselves with the fact that the Union had emerged victorious and attachment strictly to Virginia was no longer justifiable.

The UVA societies asked General John Preston of the fallen Confederacy to speak in 1868 after he returned home from a trip to England. He railed against the idea that the old Virginia had died, claiming that the state must remain a land of “Virginians” and not Americans. Notably, he was one of the first speakers to refashion Washington as a solely regional figure, bemoaning that, “It is a crime now—it is treason for us to speak aloud of the greatness and virtue of our dead, who died for that Virginia Washington gave—the Virginia from 1776 to 1865” and claiming that 4th of July ceremonies had become a

“blasphemy.” For General Preston, the old ways had to be revived. He ended the speech with a bit of drama that is best reproduced in whole:

-and then—no—my old eyes will not live to see it—but blessed be the God of my fathers—then—even now—here—standing on the sacred places of Liberty, I do see—as in a holy vision, along the untravelled waste of a fast coming future—I see the sacred image of regenerate Virginia, and cry aloud, in the hearing of a God of Right, and in the hearing of all the nations of the earth—All Hail Our Mother.

Preston urged the young men in the audience to carry on the Confederate cause that he could not. While speakers before the war had been unable to use Washington as a regional figure before of his close link with national unity, Preston ignored that connection and painted Washington as chiefly concerned with his home state.

Other speakers agreed with J.N. Dunlop, a member of the Washington Society in 1866, who called on the image of Washington, “that colossal man” to inspire his listeners and “quicken them with renewed vigour and life.” Instead of working simply for their state, they should hope that, “any cause, that would have justly claimed the work of his hands, find in yours that they would be co-workers.” Perhaps most important is his reference to Washington as “Father of his country.” It was, of course, a common epithet, but Dunlop urged his listeners to be children of Washington’s country rather than children of Virginia. Just months after the Civil War ended, Dunlop pleaded with the society to take up the name “American” once again. A call for unity in Washington’s name meant repairing the Union instead of simply holding it together. Dunlop disagreed with Preston about the future of Virginia and about the meaning of Washington’s memory. Whereas General Preston tried to claim Washington’s actions as well as the

41 Preston, John. Virginia. Lynchburg, VA: Schaffter & Bryant, 1868. p 6, 9
43 Dunlop, J. N. Great Eras Produce Great Men, Not Eras by Men. Richmond, VA: Richmond Enquirer, 1867. p 22
whole federal constitution, which he believed was created by “the state of Virginia,” as reasons that the state could stand on her own, Dunlop pressed for Washington as a humble figure willing to do whatever work was necessary and honorable.\textsuperscript{44} The two speeches typify much about the identity struggle that the Jefferson and Washington Societies, UVA, and all of Virginia would have to overcome throughout Reconstruction. The strength of the Lost Cause mythology allowed many Southerners to find inspiration in Confederate and Revolutionary leaders rather than in the heroes of the Union; but some Virginians wanted to embrace the United States again, and they used George Washington’s memory as a common link with their northern countrymen. The struggle for the South’s place in the post-Civil War world would continue well into the next century.

At Georgetown, the Philodemic and the College stressed reconciliation. One speaker in 1866 revived the idea that America’s glory might never end, a return to the optimism of earlier days. When describing the Republic’s founding however, unlike his predecessors, he gave credit to a regionally diverse cast, praising, “the thunder tones of Patrick Henry, the statesmanship of Benjamin Franklin, and the heroic deeds of George Washington.”\textsuperscript{45} Rather than focusing on one man, he consciously chose examples associated with different regions of the nation, Franklin and Henry. On the one hand, the mention of Henry was directed at Southerners as a nod to their role in the nation, but the example of Franklin was probably also aimed at the former Confederates of the audience. Not only did Virginia have a place in the Union, but Pennsylvania did too, and the pre-war attitude that Virginia was more responsible for the Union than any other state could

\textsuperscript{44} Preston, John. \textit{Virginia}. Lynchburg, VA: Schaffler & Bryant, 1868. p 6
\textsuperscript{45} Magruder, C. C. \textit{Address and Poem Delivered before the Philodemic Society at Georgetown College at the Grand Annual Celebration}. Georgetown, DC: Georgetown Courier Print, 1866. p 15
no longer be tolerated. Washington was neutral ground, a symbol that all could rally behind.

The College changed their official colors to blue and gray in 1866 as a sign of reconciliation for a divided campus. These efforts at reconciliation were best exemplified on July 2, 1867 when Georgetown held its first alumni reunion in concert with the Philodemic’s Grand Annual Celebration. It was above all else a chance for friends to get together and, “to go forth as in other years, a united band of brothers.” Just like what might be found at an Enosinian celebration, one student read a poem about peace and another gave a speech on the value of education.\(^46\) This was not an event about national policy or even a chance at fundraising, as alumni reunions often are (and shortly became at Georgetown). Instead, it celebrated the ties that bound people together on a personal level. While those in attendance surely hoped for a return to glory for “the land of Washington,” the reunion offered a chance for men who suffered through war to remember the peace they enjoyed as boys and what it was they loved about Georgetown.

Columbian College faced a similar situation. The administration and faculty seized the opportunity of the war’s end to push the college forward. After having been pushed out of its older buildings by the needs of the war, the school relocated to downtown and began looking for new opportunities, focusing on their medical school and building up enrollment again. The Enosinian Society wanted to get back to the way things were before the war. Their membership had shrunk and their meeting place had been occupied by federal troops since 1863. In May of 1865, the society appointed a committee to make sure it was, “in the same condition it was when they [the soldiers]

found it.”\textsuperscript{47} Apparently it was worse for the wear as several other meetings dealt with refitting the room and resupplying it with furniture.

Instead of focusing on reconciliation like the Philodemic and Georgetown, the Enosinians tried to get along without addressing the conflict at all, just as they had before the war. Still, some debates clearly stemmed from dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs, such as “Has the state of West Virginia a legal and constitutional existence?” (they voted no), “Is a written constitution efficacious in securing civil liberty?” (also no), and “Is monarchy the stronger and more stable form of government [as opposed to a government like the United States, apparently]?" (yes).\textsuperscript{48} Still, these reprimands of the national system were light. Other motions, such as electing Andrew Johnson as an honorary member, show that the Enosinian did not hold the same bitterness that General Preston did when he spoke at UVA.\textsuperscript{49} Enosinian speakers in the post-war period did not evoke Washington’s image. At UVA, students used Washington to make both regional and national arguments. At Columbian, students made neither type of argument and consequently did not use Washington.

After the war, the University of Pennsylvania and its literary societies were again in a unique position. They did not need to re-evaluate their identity like the students at UVA, nor did they face reconciliation as a practical necessity in the way that Georgetown and Columbian did. The student body remained relatively intact. Though Penn did not take a more active role in the war than any the average citizens of the Union, it was on the winning side. As a result, they did not have to adapt to a new way of life like UVA or

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Journal of the Enosinian Society Box 5 of the Enosinian Records at GWSC.}, 1857-1870. May 13 1865
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Journal of the Enosinian Society Box 5 of the Enosinian Records at GWSC.}, 1857-1870. Dec 15, 1867; Mar 9, 1867; Dec 16, 1866
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Journal of the Enosinian Society Box 5 of the Enosinian Records at GWSC.}, 1857-1870. Mar 25, 1866
even Georgetown. Their adjustments to life after the war were smaller and internal. The Philomathean changed the topic of conversation away from the issues that divided the nation for the past four years. This meant, on the one hand, a continuation of the more traditional and timeless topics that had still been discussed throughout the War, such as, “Are the virtues of the Puritans overestimated” (which they affirmed in 1862 but negated in 1866) and “Does education increase happiness?” (interestingly, apparently not).

The Philomathean did keep up with the times and turned its attention to Reconstruction as well, as they voted that suffrage should not be limited, that President Johnson was not justified in vetoing the Freedman’s Bureau Bill, and that it would not be “dangerous” to impeach him. These decisions were consistent with their understanding of the war that developed over the last few years. They affirmed both the moral wrongness of slavery and the constitutional rightness of union, but still held conflicting views about race, voting as late as February 11, 1865 that colored persons should not ride the town’s streetcars. Like the students at Columbian, Penn’s literary societies did not have debates about regional and national identities nor did they focus their attention or oratory on Washington. His memory was a powerful image but it did not fit the context of the questions about philosophy and race that the Philomathean discussed after the war.

**Moving Forward:**

By 1867, three of the schools, Columbian, Georgetown, and Penn, all began the process of putting the war behind them and pushing on to something new. At Columbian and Penn, this meant returning to what they had focused on before the war without too

---

50 The Freedman’s Bureau was an agency set up to provide food, labor and shelter for Blacks in the south. *Minute Books of the Philomathean Society.* Jan 10, 1862; May 18, 1866 Mar 2, 1866; Nov 30, 1866; Jan 25, 1867

51 *Minute Books of the Philomathean Society.* Feb 11, 1865
much partisanship or controversy. Georgetown felt it could not move on without actively putting the past away. The reunion of 1867 brought together friends from across the battlefield who returned to a peaceful life and the pleasures of their childhood companions. Georgetown did not spend any time making long tributes to the fallen cause that most of her sons (as they often called themselves) had fought to uphold. The war was over and they moved on.

The University of Virginia, however, did not have it so easy. It was the most conflicted of the four schools. Students there reached no consensus in those early years after the war. They felt that they owed at least a tribute to their friends that had died in far off places like Mobile or Shiloh, or closer to home at Seven Pines. But students wondered whether or not they owed more than that. Could they now lay the Southern cause aside? Some thundered that it could not be, that liberty required all good Virginians to simply bide their time and take up the banner again. But others were tired of war, tired of fighting, and urged the societies to accept as their primary cause the role of the American citizen. These two camps fought over the use of George Washington and each tried to wield his memory in support of their own arguments.

Remarkably absent in much of the post-war discussion outside of UVA was the symbol of George Washington. Before the war, students used his image as representative of a strong, united nation, whether they wanted that or not. Now that the sectionalists were soundly defeated, the students did not evoke Washington, neither to inspire young men to emulation nor to draw diverse groups together. But they did not replace him with another figure, at least not yet. Lincoln had taken his turn on the national stage, but had not entered the discourse of the literary societies which, apart from his election and a few
wartime decisions, did not seem to discuss him directly very much at all. One might expect students at Penn to have drawn on some other Revolutionary figure (Benjamin Franklin’s curiosity and role as a founder of Penn would make him a perfect fit for the Philomathean and Zelosophic Societies), but no hero emerged. There was a general approval of a few figures like Napoleon, and several speakers allude to a list of notables, but no one individual held dominance comparable to what George Washington’s image had commanded throughout the antebellum period.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

A favorite pastime of American pollsters is asking the question, “Who was America’s greatest president?” The results vary and several presidents float up and down the middle of the pack with the passage of time, but by 1867, America had already finished the terms of the perennial top two: George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Washington now had competition. He had stood pre-eminent among the men of his generation—the founders—and nobody since had been able to claim a comparable level of respect. Now that a new generation had saved the Union, a feat arguably as important as founding it, Americans possessed a new leader, a martyr in the cause of liberty. The Union had more heroes to turn to than just George Washington. Lincoln would not rise to the same divine level of praise that George Washington enjoyed in the Philodemic Society of the 1840s, but Lincoln would receive a share of the praise and therefore lower Washington’s standing to a more human status.

Not only had Lincoln’s Presidency displayed an equal dedication to the United States as a whole, but the whole argument of state versus federal power passed a milestone. In 1860, many Southerners supported the supremacy of states’ rights with the understanding that they possessed the strength to throw off any government they deemed tyrannical. By 1865, the South’s power to wage war, and therefore the South’s ability to control its political fate, had been demolished. The federal government would have authority over the states, especially after the passing of the Fourteenth Amendment. The debate henceforth focused on making sure that the states retained some level of power rather than supreme authority. In the South, the Lost Cause turned to a new generation of heroes, the generals and leaders of the Civil War. In Confederate leaders like Jefferson
Davis and Robert E. Lee, Southerners, “expected, or at least hoped, to find their George Washington.” But it was time to look forward. For many in the South and the North, the end of the Civil War created a whole new world. It was a transformative event; many touchstones of the past were either thrown out or completely redefined.

Before the Civil War, each school adapted the idea of Washington to its individual needs and beliefs. However, none of them separated Washington from the idea of a strong union. They used his image repeatedly in the sectionalist struggle. Since Washington’s symbol was so intimately connected with the idea of national unity, the end of the Civil War meant it would have to be used less.

For many Americans, George Washington could be used to celebrate the national unity that the Civil War had secured. However, literary society debate and oratory were never about celebration. Rather, they emphasized persuasion. Each speaker wanted to rally the audience to whatever cause he espoused. At Penn, Columbian, and Georgetown, national unity was not up for debate after 1865. Students either had no interest in the political controversy or were too tired of war to struggle against the Union any longer. With no need to persuade their audiences about issues of national unity, they had no need of George Washington.

In the years after the War, students in most of the debate societies simply referenced and argued over Washington less than they had before. At Penn, Washington’s presence went from minimal to almost negligible. Georgetown saw a dramatic decrease from its pre-war fascination and even the annual birthday celebrations eventually dropped off. America and the fate of her republic were still very popular subjects, but the debate moved away from secession versus union. At the 1867

---

commencement celebration for Georgetown University, students gave speeches with the titles “America,” “Cradles of Liberty,” and “The American Citizen.” None of them made significant reference to Washington. All of them expressed buoyant optimism for the nation’s future.² They also shared a common questioning about what made America successful, what made American unique, and how America thrived. It is ironic that, while Philodemecians before the war upheld Washington as the perfect example of America’s exceptionalism, he was absent from that same discussion after the war.

At UVA students had to redefine, rather than reinforce, their idea of what it meant to be an American, and they still evoked Washington’s image. Speakers like J.N. Dunlop, who argued that they must put aside regional grievances, and others like General John Preston, who wanted to simply bide the time until another strike for independence seemed possible, both evoked Washington’s image. The uniqueness of America was still up for debate at UVA. At Georgetown and Penn, the speakers did not argue about America’s greatness so much as they proclaimed and celebrated it. In essence, UVA now saw the same divides that had torn at the Philodemic right before the outbreak of war and therefore still needed Washington’s image as a national symbol. They were now forced to argue either for union and reconciliation, or for sectionalism and continued bitterness. They used Washington’s image to hearken back to simpler, more unified, times or to represent a defiant independence that would not go away.

**Deeds and Words:**

In light of Washington’s disappearance from the literary society scene after the Civil War, his role before the war takes on new meaning. At Georgetown, he had been

² Georgetown University Archives: 1867 Commencement File.
American society in general. Praise for his memory took on religious overtones. His disappearance after the war suggests that in the minds of the speakers who lauded him, his character and courage, while certainly praiseworthy characteristics, were amplified by his association with the federal system. Certainly he stood as a model for aspiring young men, but his stance against secession made him particularly important before 1861. This reinforces the implication that students linked Washington with the national cause. His image had been a tool used to obtain unity, and, since the Civil War had achieved that end, the tool was no longer necessary.

At Columbian, Enosinians largely left Washington aside out of a continued desire to avoid conflict within its student body. After the war, the school still relied on the same southern base for their students. UVA had a similar situation. Why then, do the Virginia students rely more heavily on Washington while the students in the capital continue to put him aside? In a sense, the Jefferson and Washington Societies forced themselves into this position before the war when they defined so strongly what they saw as the national ideal. When that was crushed, they had to rebuild. The Enosinian Society never made such a strong statement and was content to live and let live. They found a different kind of unity in compromise: not everyone had to agree on the issues, they simply had to refrain from fighting about them. This sort of compromise was unspoken, tacitly agreed upon, instead of openly argued about. The Enosinians never debated national unity before the war, and they did not need to after the war, either. Since George Washington had become the symbol of national unity, Enosinians did not evoke his image.

In a way, this is natural. The preacher does not give a sermon on greed if his entire congregation consists of great philanthropists. The attorney general only goes on a
crusade against corruption if corruption is an issue. The Philodemecian only gives speech after speech about unity and constantly evokes George Washington’s example if he is worried that unity is weak and that failure is an option. At Penn, the campus was more or less united for the Union and did not need to debate it. At Columbian, the campus was divided, and students either willingly or pragmatically had to look past their disagreements. George Washington is referenced far more often at Georgetown and UVA, where the Philodemic, Washington, and Jefferson Societies faced deep splits amongst their members about the nature of the Constitution and the lasting structure of American democracy. The Civil War changed that.

During the war, a lot of ambiguity died away as Northern and Southern camps solidified. Many southerners who had been on the fence or even wary of secessionists were motivated to take a stronger stand against northern aggression. Northerners were not constantly in lockstep with everything that the war meant or even with the Lincoln administration, but the Union in 1863 was, simply because of secession, far more uniform on federal-state relations than the Union of 1859. On a micro level, this was mimicked in the schools. Populations shifted dramatically as southern students “seceded” from the institutions north of the Potomac. They were slow to return after the fighting ended. Not only did the war force many individuals to choose sides, it separated out those that did, and thus the situation that existed at Penn before the war, where almost all of the societies’ memberships were in agreement, now existed at each of the schools. Merritt Robinson’s speech against slavery at UVA in 1832 would have been more than simply controversial in 1862; it would have almost been treason. While personal dissent may
have existed, no society nor any student at these schools spoke out in a shocking speech or an unexpected vote.

**Societies:**

Against the light cast by their varying speeches, debates, poems, and resolutions on George Washington, an image of the literary societies themselves becomes clearer. Throughout the changing times, these various organizations remained true to their stated purposes. The Philodemic Society declared itself dedicated to the goal of eloquence in defense of liberty and throughout the period they fought for just that. They sometimes disagreed as to how liberty might best be defended, but the preponderance of their debates and their celebrations show that generations of students were ultimately concerned with that one topic. Similarly, the Jefferson and Washington Societies at the University of Virginia consistently struggled to serve the Southern cause. The intensity of their debates show that the students cared about the outcome of their society. It mattered to them whether or not they declared Washington to be greater than Caesar or Democracy superior to Monarchy. But this dedication only becomes clear when contrasting these societies with the Zelosophic and Philomathean Societies at Penn or the Enosinian Society at Columbian. They always had academic rather than civic goals. Debates were important and sometimes contentious, but it was more important that the societies existed as places for minds to meet, to present their work, to discuss national issues, not in a contentious manner that sought a decisive result, but in a conversational way that sought the enlightenment of all their members. For these societies, the rhetorical strength of Washington’s image was unnecessary and generally unused. This
sort of consistency is remarkable for institutions that lasted decades or longer but whose members rarely played an active role for more than a few years.

The societies themselves have to be taken into account for the influence that they held on their members. Certainly, this went both ways. The Jefferson Society showed concern about states’ rights because individual members showed concerned about states’ rights. In addition, however, the students lived, conversed, and debated in a college that put a heavy emphasis on Mother Virginia over America. The ideals of the group therefore lived on and were passed down through the period through a sort of institutional indoctrination. A similar process occurred at each of the other schools. Students shaped the societies, but were shaped themselves in turn. The shifts that occurred with the Civil War, therefore, represent drastic change. Forty years of Jeffersonians and Washingtonians used Virginia as an almost unquestioned rallying cry, but because of the war, they questioned that allegiance in 1865.

Of course, this story played out all across America. Every region felt the rigors of war. The story of these literary societies is the story of a conflict that played out, not between distant countrymen in places like Sharpsburg and Chancellorsville, but between neighbors and friends in provosts’ offices, classrooms, and places like Jefferson Hall, anywhere a literary society might meet. Many of those who traded words and arguments on campus also traded lead and steel on the battlefield. The debate continued, especially in the South, long after the war ended, but the land of Washington fundamentally resolved its identity by affirming the importance of the Union and the evil of slavery. The literary societies survived the national crisis. Of the six major societies discussed in this study: the Philodemic, the Enosinian, the Zelosophic, the Philomathean, the
Washington, and the Jefferson, all exist today except for the Zelosophic. In 1867, at the grand Philodemic Reunion, those gathered sang a song written for the occasion to the tune of Auld Lang Syne. The final verse is as follows:

Here the sons of the Philodemic renew
The friendships young life to its confidence drew;
Here they pledge their old love to the cherishing mother;
To be true to her teaching and true to each other;
Thus may mother and children, in unison still,
For God and our country their mission fulfill,
And long may his love, in true brotherhood, save
The land of the free and the home of the brave!

It is a testament to the strength of these institutions and to the American experiment that after such loss of life and idealism, those left picked up the pieces and tried to rebuild. It is a testament to the strength of those individuals that they succeeded. For many of them, George Washington was the banner of America and, though that banner could not prevent war, in the end, Washington’s land possessed the strength to preserve a single nation of these United States.

---

3 The Zelosophic Society sputtered throughout periods of the late nineteenth century, but held on until the middle of the twentieth.

Bibliography

**Primary Sources:**

The Southern Argus Jan. 30, 1858 1858.


Bevans, James H. *Address Delivered before the Philodemic Society*. Washington: Printed by Gales and Seaton, 1842.

Bodley, Temple. *Papers of Temple Bodley*, UVASC


Catalogue of the University of Virginia. Richmond, VA: E. K. Ellyson, 1851.


Constitution of the Washington Society of the University of Virginia. Lynchburg, VA: Johnson & Shaffter, 1867.

Cumming, Julien. Address Delivered before the Philonomosian Society of Georgetown College, District of Columbia on the 4th of July, 1846 by Julien Cumming of Georgia., 1846.


Enosinian Constitution at GWSC.

Enosinian Journal 1852-57 25 April 1857 at GWSC.

Enosinian Minute Book.


Fenwick, Enoch. Georgetown University Prospectus 1820., 1820.

Georgetown University Archives: 1867 Commencement File.

Georgetown University Prospectus 1798., 1798.


Green, Ben E. Address before the Philodemic Society. Washington: J. and G. S. Gideon, printers, 1848.


Holcombe, James P. "Address before the Society of Alumni." (1853).


Journal of the Enosinian Society Box 5 of the Enosinian Records at GWSC., Oct 13, 1824.

Journal of the Enosinian Society Box 5 of the Enosinian Records at GWSC., 1832-1837.

Journal of the Enosinian Society Box 5 of the Enosinian Records at GWSC., 1857-1870

Lambert, Tallmadge A. *Poem Delivered at the Grand Triennial Meeting of the Philodemic Society of Georgetown College, DC*. Georgetown, D.C: Courier Print, 1872.


Magruder, C. C. *Address and Poem Delivered before the Philodemic Society at Georgetown College at the Grand Annual Celebration*. Georgetown, DC: Georgetown Courier Print, 1866.


Mayer, Frederick W. *Constitution of the Zelosophic Society*, 1829.

Merrick, William Matthews. Address Delivered before the Philodemic Society of
Georgetown College, DC, July 7, 1857. Washington, DC, W. H. Moore, printer,
1857.

Minute Books of the Philomathean Society.

Morgan, George Columbus. Address before the Philodemic Society. Washington: Printed
by J. T. Towers, 1850.

---. Oration Delivered before the Philodemic Society, of Georgetown College, District of

Morris, Phineas Pemberton. Address Delivered before the Philodemic Society.
Washington: Printed by Gales and Seaton, 1842.

Mulledy, Thomas. Georgetown University Prospectus 1835., 1835.

---. Georgetown University Prospectus 1839., 1839.

"Newspaper Clipping in Philodemic Archives, Box III Folder 6, Georgetown University
Special Collections.".


Philanthropic Society. Catalogue of the Members of the Philanthropic Society of
Hampden Sydney College. Richmond, Va: Printed by Ritchie & Dunnivant, 1850.

"Philodemic Amanuensis Book, Box 2 Folder 7 Philodemic Archives, Georgetown
University Archives." (1845).

Philodemic Amanuensis Records Folder 5 Box 1 of Philodemic Records at GUSC., 1831.

Philodemic Society. Grand Annual Celebration of the Philodemic Society of Georgetown
establishment, 1868.

---. Philodemic Society Journal October 1, 1854-February 7, 1856.

Philomathean Society. Philomathean Society Semi-Centennial Celebration. Philadelphia,
PA: King & Baird, 1864.


Read, William George. **Oration, Delivered at the First Commemoration of the Landing of the Pilgrims of Maryland: Celebrated May 10th, 1842, Under the Auspices Of the Philodemic Society of Georgetown College.** Baltimore: Printed and published by John Murphy ..., 1842?.


Rules and Regulations, Box 3 Folder I Section V.6 of Philodemic Records at GUSC.


Semmes, Thomas J. **Address Delivered before the Philodemic Society, at the Annual Commencement of Georgetown College, DC, July 27, 1847: To which is Appended a Catalogue of the Members of the Philodemic Society.** Washington: Printed at the office of the Saturday News, 1847.

Smith, Edmond. **Address Delivered before the Philonomosian Society of Georgetown College, District of Columbia by Edmond Rellel Smith to which are Prefixed the Remarks of J. Cooke Longstreth of Pennsylvania.** Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1845.


Stevenson, Oscar. **An Address before the Jefferson Society 14 April 1856.** Richmond, VA: Wm. F. Clemmitt, 1856.


Thompson, John Reuben. **Poesy: An Essay in Rhyme. Delivered before the Enosinian and Philophrenian Societies of Columbian College, Washington, DC, at the
Smithsonian Institution, on the Evening of the 28th of June, 1859. Washington: Published by the societies, 1859.


Secondary Works:


Hanson, Teddy. Resolution from Expelled Georgetown Students, 1-16-1850.


Stack, Michael. *Father George Fenwick: Scholar, Poet, Tenor, Jesuit*.


