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Editor's Note

Jim Martin • 5

An Expanding Public Sphere:

Women and Print in Colonial Virginia, 1736-1776

Roger P. Mellen • 7

Paul Lazarsfeld's *Radio and the Printed Page*:
A Critical Reappraisal

Michael Stamm • 37

“Snakes in Our Midst”:

The Media, the Military and American Policy
toward Vichy North Africa

Richard Fine • 59

Juggernaut in Kid Gloves:

Inez Callaway Robb, 1900-1979

Carolyn M. Edy • 83

“To the detriment of the institution”:

*The Missouri Student's Fight to Desegregate
the University of Missouri*

Aimee Edmondson and
Earnest L. Perry • 105

An Interview with Wallace Eberhard

AJHA Oral History Project • 133

Book Reviews

Dolores Flamiano, Editor • 143

“A Dozen Best”

Carol Sue Humphrey • 159

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American Journalism, a publication of the American Journalism Historians Association, publishes articles, book reviews and correspondence dealing with the history of journalism. Contributions may focus on social, economic, intellectual, political or legal issues. *American Journalism* also welcomes articles that treat the history of communication in general; the history of broadcasting, advertising and public relations; the history of media outside the United States; and theoretical issues in the literature or methods of media history.

EDITORIAL PURPOSE

For purposes of written research papers and publications, the term history shall be seen as a continuous and connected process emphasizing, but not necessarily confined to, subjects of American mass communications. It should be viewed NOT in the context of perception of the current decade, but as part of a unique, significant, and time-conditioned human past. Articles will be evaluated in terms of the author's systematic, critical, qualitative, and quantitative investigation of all relevant, available sources with a focus on written, primary documents but not excluding current literature and interviews. The narrative element (with a logical beginning, ending and thematic unity) should be the core of written historical submissions offered to create meaning in our lives.

DEFINITION OF HISTORY

Five copies of manuscripts should be sent to Jim Martin, Editor, *American Journalism*, Department of Communications, Box 5174, University of North Alabama, Florence, AL 35632. Phone (256) 765-4945; Fax (256) 765-4839; E-mail: jrmartin@una.edu

Manuscripts should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed., and should not exceed the recommended maximum length of 25 pages, not including tables and footnotes. Research manuscripts are blind refereed. *American Journalism* will accept only manuscripts that have not been published or scheduled for publication elsewhere. Manuscripts will not be returned to authors.

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By Jim Martin

A Fond Farewell



This issue of *American Journalism* is my last as editor. On December 31, I will pass the torch to a most capable AJHA colleague, Barbara Friedman at the University of North Carolina. Her address is listed below.

Ever the historian, I went to back issues to see what my predecessors had said in their last editorials. In Fall 1997, Wally Eberhard may well have shed a tear as he wrote, “Breaking up is hard to do, goes the song, and so it is with writing the final editor’s note.” But he pulled it together enough to say, “We have had a great four years in terms of job satisfaction.” Shirley Biagi agreed. In Fall 2000 she went out with, “It’s been a pleasure.” In Karla Gower’s last editor’s note, Fall 2004, she addressed the AJHA membership, “Although it was a lot of work, you all made it that much easier and more enjoyable.”

I’m with them. Editing *American Journalism* has been far more than a job, it has been a labor of love. I am honored to have been entrusted with the opportunity to serve these last six years.

I also want to follow the lead of my predecessors in thanking the many people who have had a hand in making the journal what it has come to be. As Karla said: “When I came into this position, I suspected that an editor was only as good as his or her reviewers and authors. I now know that to be true.” Wally and Shirley said much the same thing, mentioning in their goodbyes the privilege of working with both the well known and the beginners in our field, with those who didn’t get published as well as with those who did.

Now it’s my turn. I want to thank these three and another former editor, David Sloan, for the help and encouragement they gave me

as I tried to follow in their footsteps. I want to think the dedicated reviewers who spent countless hours preparing insightful evaluations of the manuscripts submitted to *American Journalism*. Many of them went far beyond my expectations in the depth and thoroughness of their critiques. Their suggestions to the authors nearly always improved the quality of the articles—and thereby of the journal itself. Authors, for the most part, have been a joy to work with, especially those who supplied invited manuscripts and the “A Dozen Best” essays.

In particular, I want to mention Dolores Flamiano, book review editor, for her excellent work. I can’t thank her enough. I am glad to report that she will be continuing in this role. And I owe a great debt to our talented typesetter, Justin Hall. His layout and design skills have been invaluable in bringing each issue to fruition. My thanks as well go to Carol Sue Humphrey in keeping up the subscription list.

Finally, thank you AJHA for your support of my efforts to make *American Journalism* a top-tier academic journal. It has been an honor.

—Jim Martin

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An Expanding Public Sphere: Women and Print in Colonial Virginia; 1736-1776

By Roger P. Mellen

Women in colonial Virginia had a greater role in the eighteenth-century world of print and the public sphere than previously recognized. This article focuses on less-elite printed matter: books for women, newspapers, and popular almanacs. Women went so far as to ask for equal treatment under the law and were indeed involved in public debates in print even before the Stamp Act controversy. This participation goes beyond the elites to the middling sort. The conclusion here is that colonial Virginia women were involved in the debates that prefaced the Revolution, a discovery that has implications for understanding how people of the separate colonies conceived and formed a new nation.

Introduction

The only newspaper operating in colonial Virginia in 1736 published a very remarkable poem. “The Lady’s Complaint” pointed out that men and women had quite unequal positions in society. It noted that custom was partial to men, and failed to give women equal measure. This unknown poet wrote that the laws were even more unfair, and the verse ended with a plea for equal treatment for women:

Then Equal Laws let Custom find,
And neither Sex oppress;
More Freedom give to Womankind,
Or give to Mankind less.¹

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An earlier version of this research was presented at “The Atlantic World of Print in the Age of Franklin,” Philadelphia, September, 2006. A revised form appears in a chapter in the forthcoming book, *The Origins of a Free Press in Prerevolutionary Virginia: Creating a Culture of Political Dissent*.

Such a plea for equality was quite remarkable in colonial America, where a woman hardly existed under the law. Under the practice of coverture, a woman typically had no separate standing at all, treated as part of either her husband or her father. For such a poem—allegedly written by a woman—to appear in a public forum such as this newspaper brings into question the ubiquitous acceptance of the notion that a woman’s appropriate place was quietly shuttered in the home, rather than exposed to the public eye. Publication of this verse is just one example of how women in colonial Virginia had a greater role in the eighteenth-century world of print, public discourse, and even the public discussions about politics than has generally been recognized. As women’s historian Sara Evans wrote, colonial men are thought to have developed a public arena of politics and kept it quite separate from the private realm of the home: “[E]veryone knew that politics was the province of men alone.”² Historian David Copeland described the restrictive, domestic role: “The sphere of women in colonial America was the family dwelling and the yard surrounding it . . .” Women were expected to defer to their husbands in all situations.³ Catherine Kerrison wrote that these earlier works found women absent from the intellectual life in the eighteenth-century South, but she raises doubts about such a conclusion.⁴

Others have questioned the complete separation of spheres and the cloistering of women within the home. In examining women in the southern colonies, Julia Cherry Spruill suggested some years ago, “Wifehood and motherhood . . . were held before the colonial women as the purpose of her being, and home as the sphere of all her actions.” She did note, however, that for a few elite women involvement in affairs beyond the home was common, but only for a special few.⁵ Kathleen Brown took a different approach in her more recent exploration of gender and power in colonial Virginia. While recognizing that women had more political involvement (at least up until Bacon’s Rebellion of 1676), she suggested that living in the harsh new world proved a challenge to the unstable gender values brought with the colonists from England. As life in America stabilized, she theorized, elite white males gained power and the private and public spheres developed greater separation in eighteenth-century Virginia. Women were increasingly relegated to the solely private space, according to Brown’s analysis.⁶ Cynthia Kierner recently reached a conclusion consistent with that of Spruill, that elite and middling women were not completely restricted to the domestic sphere, but actually did involve themselves in the public sphere. Kierner also

questioned the very distinction between the two spaces, challenging the traditional separation of the feminine domestic sphere and the masculine public sphere, noting that even politics can be part of a domestic role, and that some elite women in the South, even in the late colonial period, did take part in the public sphere.⁷ Maurine Beasley and Sheila Gibbons have noted that many women played important roles in printing in the British-American colonies, perhaps because labor shortages provided opportunities for women to fill roles that were typically restricted to men.⁸

This article builds upon that research by focusing on the numerous printed pages left to us from eighteenth-century Virginia. Much history of early American print focuses on books and political pamphlets, especially those of the colonies to the north. When the South is included, the emphasis tends to be on titles found on the bookshelves of the elite planters. This work instead examines less elite printed matter: books for women, the more numerous newspapers, and popular almanacs.⁹ Such exploration can help us to better understand the lives of a broader range of women and men.¹⁰ This research centers on the content, authors, printers, and contributing writers of newspapers, almanacs, and popular books aimed at a female audience. Statistical studies are useful, but such data does not typically explore causality or culture deeply enough, leaving an incomplete picture.¹¹ The main emphasis here is on discourse—the content of popular texts, their authors, and their readers in Virginia—beginning with the earliest printed matter up until the American Revolution. This colony is an important place to examine, as many of our early political leaders and ideas came from there, yet historians have studied Puritan New England more extensively. It has been argued that the Chesapeake area was more reflective of English society and may be closer to the source of national culture for America.¹² While we know a great deal about the male leaders in Virginia, the intellectual development and the history of colonial women in the world of print remains under-explored.¹³

The primary sources examined here reveal that some women were indeed taking part in public debates in the world of print and that their participation in public discourse may have begun earlier than historians generally acknowledge.¹⁴ This involvement may also have reached much deeper, beyond the planter elites, to at least some of the tradespeople, the medium-sized farmers, or the middling sort. It is evident that for Virginia, it was not only elite men involved in the debates and ideas that helped establish a new American nation. Elite women and perhaps even women of the lesser ranks were in-

volved in the public world of politics in print, and thus were part of an expanding public sphere. This has serious implications for understanding how people of separate colonies conceived and formed a new nation.

Women and Literacy

The ability to read and write is certainly a key to involvement in the world of print, but there is a quandary for researchers inherent in that fact: it is not possible to reach a precise estimate as to who could read and write in eighteenth-century Virginia. There is confusion as to what makes a person literate—the separate skills of reading and writing are often intertwined—and there are severe difficulties with estimating any type of historical literacy. Few artifacts remain to help determine who could read. The prevalent practice of measuring the ability to sign one's name (usually in wills and court documents) misses many women who could read but did not write. Reading was typically taught separately, before writing, and many women in colonial British America were taught only to read and never learned the more technical details of writing with a quill pen. Most girls were not taught to cut a pen from bird feathers, as were the boys, as such use of a penknife was not considered to be very feminine.¹⁵ It is likely that many who signed their name with only an X could actually read. In addition, most women were left out of such legal processes, so they might be vastly underrepresented in such analysis of legal documents. Reading literacy was likely to be much higher than writing literacy, especially for women. Literacy estimates are likely to underrepresent women and it is generally accepted that more colonial American women could read than earlier studies suggested.¹⁶ Probate records for the seventeenth century rarely mention anyone who could not read, and huge numbers of property transaction records led one researcher to the conclusion that most women and men, in the century prior to the one being examined here, were capable of reading. As David D. Hall suggested, even in seventeenth-century Virginia women participated in the world of reading, but literacy in the Chesapeake was relative to a specific situation: "Literacy was thus a two-sided situation, involving a hierarchy of skills but also open-ended in ways that sharply reduced the significance of gender and class."¹⁷

At least a substantial number of Virginia women were able to read by the mid-eighteenth century. The very first issue of a locally printed newspaper in 1736 recognized that women would be among

the readers, with the printer promising to include articles “which may tend to the Improvement of Mankind in general or the innocent Diversion or Entertainment of either Sex.”¹⁸ While women were expected to be among the newspaper’s readers, many scholars have suggested that women had only about half the literacy rate as men and that the South had much lower rates of literacy than New England.¹⁹ One early study estimated Virginia men’s literacy at sixty percent and women’s literacy at twenty five percent for the seventeenth century.²⁰ Newer statistical studies suggest higher literacy rates than earlier extrapolated. In closely examining just Middlesex County, Virginia, researchers found a higher literacy rate in women for the same period, but they also estimated that it actually declined from about thirty-three percent in the seventeenth century to twenty-nine percent in the mid-eighteenth century. They suggest this is an artifact of women retiring into the domestic sphere, no longer needing to sign names on legal documents.²¹ Notably, this does not necessarily suggest an actual decline in reading, not at a time when printed material was becoming more widely available and the novel was just gaining popularity among women. What it suggests is a very modest decline of women signing their names in public, which may—or may not—suggest a decline in writing. The conclusions from one examination of English readers contrasted with that theory of decline in women’s literacy, instead suggesting that about forty percent of English women could read in the 1750s.²² Most analysts believe that American numbers were higher than they were in England. While the accuracy and applicability of these numbers is not certain, these statistics do suggest that going into the early eighteenth century, approximately one-third of women in Virginia could write, and it is quite possible (although not statistically demonstrable) that even more women could read. That number is likely to have increased over time.

Historians often see the rise of a public sphere as crucial to the development of modern society, but women are not typically considered as part of this development. As Jürgen Habermas observed in Europe, literacy and the availability of printed matter prefaced the creation of an active public sphere, or what he termed “civic publicness.” Michael Warner suggested a transatlantic “Republic of Letters” developed in England, and in the British-American colonies by the mid-eighteenth century. Reading was an important enabler, and expressing oneself in print was even more important. These acts allowed anyone to become involved as a critical, thinking member of a public involved in a revolutionary political process, or in imagin-

ing a new nation where there had previously been only separate colonies.²³ In this civic forum of printed materials, public opinion grew to importance, and a large portion of the public became actively involved at least in thinking about civic affairs.²⁴ Warner viewed the public prints as enabling discourse by non-elites, but he specifically excluded involvement by women, as did Habermas and many historians.²⁵ In contrast, this study of colonial Virginia undermines that assumption, finding that women were indeed involved—as readers, writers, and even the editors of printed materials.

Exploring the difference between oral, written, and print-based cultures, anthropologists, psychologists, and historians have seen that only in literate societies can independent thinking and legitimate criticism of government be tolerated:

Literacy is for the most part an enabling rather than a causal factor, making possible the development of complex political structures, syllogistic reasoning, scientific enquiry, linear conceptions of reality, scholarly specialization, artistic elaboration, and perhaps certain kinds of individualism and alienation.²⁶

This is not to suggest causality on the part of print culture. It is rather a critical precursor and interdependent upon other factors within society. As Elizabeth Eisenstein puts it, print is an *agent* of change, one of many factors, but one with an apparently subversive nature.²⁷ As women in colonial Virginia became involved in the culture of printed materials, so too they became involved in the political changes ahead.

Books

Women were active participants in the world of print as readers and even authors almost as early as the printing press was permanently established in the colony of Virginia. William Parks primarily printed government documents, religious works, and business forms in the first years after he opened a printing office in Williamsburg in 1730.²⁸ He rarely printed full books, but rather sold imprints imported from England and often bound locally. In 1742, Parks' Virginia press printed the first cookbook in America—a book written by a woman, aimed at female readers. *The Compleat Housewife; or, Accomplish'd Gentlewoman's Companion ...* was written by Eliza or Elizabeth Smith in England and was first published there in 1727.

The author suggested, for example, “To make a Soop. Take a Leg of Beef, and boil it down with some Salt, a Bundle of sweet herbs, an Onion, a few Cloves, a bit of Nutmeg ...”²⁹ It was an extremely popular cookbook in both England and the colonies, and in addition to food, included recipes (or “receipts”) for medicines and salves.³⁰ For a cold, Smith suggested, “Make some Sack-Whey, with Rosemary boil’d in it ; mix a little of it in a Spoon, with twenty grains of *Gascoign’s powder* ...”³¹ The medical guide *Every Man his Own Doctor* was bound together with *The Compleat Housewife* and sold combined at one point. The fact that there were medical recipes in the cookbook and the combining of these two texts demonstrates that in many homes, medicine was the purview of the wife. *The Compleat Housewife* is rarely noted in the historical lists of personal libraries of this period, probably because it was not stored with the men’s books on the shelves in the library, but rather considered part of the kitchen.³² Its existence does suggest that enough women in colonial Virginia could read to support many printings of this book, and that their role extended from the kitchen into home medicine.



In the next decade, the Williamsburg printer’s office, now owned by Parks’ successor William Hunter, advertised something very new for sale—a novel aimed at both young male and female readers. Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* was first published in England in 1739 and was remarkably popular. It is likely that it was an import from England being sold in Williamsburg in 1756.³³ The advertisement for the sale of this book claimed that it was “published in Order to cultivate the Principles of Virtue and Religion in the Minds of the Youth of both Sexes,” suggesting that there were enough potential young female readers in Virginia to advertise for their patronage. Diaries and letters from both men and women reveal that this novel was commented on more often than any other book of the time.³⁴ The price was advertised to be a low five shillings, “that it may be afforded cheap,” suggesting that the printer was attempting to sell to a less elite readership.³⁵ While religious leaders and other prominent men often attacked such novels as unhealthy and a waste of time, many of these books were portrayed as acceptable morality tales. At least one section of *Pamela* can be

viewed as inviting the readers to develop their own critical thinking. The novel contains a lengthy analysis by the title character of John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. One female reader of *Pamela* followed the heroine's example by critiquing the novel.³⁶ Another popular English novel, *The History of Ophelia*, was advertised in the 1764 *Virginia Almanack* for sale at the printer's office. The author was a woman, Sarah Fielding, and many of the readers who sought after this new form of writing were women.³⁷

The rise of the novel has been seen as both a subversive influence and an empowering experience for women. Cathy Davidson credited exactly this type of sentimental novel with opening the world of letters to women, and she referred to it as a "reading revolution."³⁸ Another literary historian suggested that the very existence of novels provides evidence of a large female reading public: "When there were novels to be read in the middle of the eighteenth century, we can be sure—as were novelists themselves—that large numbers of women were ready for them."³⁹

Ephemeral Press

There is even greater evidence of women reading and contributing to newspapers and almanacs than there is of their involvement with the books of eighteenth-century Virginia. Women participated in what some historians label the more "ephemeral press" from the very beginning.⁴⁰ Before a newspaper was even printed in Virginia, the nearby *Maryland Gazette* featured regular contributions by "The Plain-Dealer," who expressed a desire "of improving the Fair-Sex," diverting "their Minds from useless Trifles" by offering them knowledge and setting women "upon the Level with Men in their boasted Superiority of Reason."⁴¹ Parks' first edition of the *Virginia Gazette* from Williamsburg in 1736 actually requested contributions only from gentlemen.⁴² Despite that omission, he did publish a poem by a woman later that year (the one quoted at the beginning of this article) which is quite surprising in its straightforward plea for women's rights. "The Lady's Complaint" begins by pointing out that men and women have unequal positions in society:

Custom, alas! doth partial prove,
Nor gives us equal Measure ;
A Pain for us it is to love,
But is to Men a Pleasure.

They plainly can their Thoughts disclose,
Whilst ours must burn within :
We have got Tongues, and Eyes, in Vain,
And Truth from us is Sin.

Men to new Joys and Conquests fly,
And yet no Hazard run :
Poor we are left, if we deny,
And if we yield, undone,

Then Equal Laws let Custom find,
And neither Sex oppress :
More Freedom give to Womankind,
Or give to Mankind less.⁴³

Women, she suggests, cannot communicate their thoughts. Their eyes and tongues exist but cannot be used. Their thoughts are burning inside, but they are not allowed to express them. The concluding plea for equal treatment under the law is remarkably modern in its outlook. The extraordinary nature of such an early complaint deserves more attention.⁴⁴ Coming to us from a time and place where women are generally thought to have been limited to a life in the private sphere, restricted to the home, here is an extremely public complaint. The unknown author not only criticizes the behavior of men, but she also notes the restrictions on women and pleads for a change in the laws that do not treat women the same as men. There is also a contradiction inherent in this poem. While writing that women are not allowed to publicly disclose their thoughts, the author—masked by anonymity—does exactly that. She steps boldly into the arena of public discourse at a time when such actions by women were not generally accepted.

The verse is unusual not only for what it contains, but also for the fact that in Virginia, it inspired no objections or responses by the readers that were printed in the following issues, something quite common for letters with any type of controversial content. When published seven years later in South Carolina, a “constant reader” replied in verse:

It seems to me you languish,
For some dear, simply homely Swain,
To ease you of some Anguish.⁴⁵

The solution to her problem, this writer suggests, was merely a man to love. In contrast to Williamsburg, the Charleston printing stirred up something of a controversy, with the newspaper publishing several additional responses to this plea for women's equality.

In 1737, a report that women had voted in an election in Jamaica, Queen's County, New York, and might even take public office was unusual enough to get published in Williamsburg: "Two Things were very remarkable at this Election : ... Two old Widows tendred, and were admitted to vote; and it is said, these Two old Ladies will be chosen Constables for the next Year."⁴⁶ This stands in stark contrast to the widely disseminated British ideals of female traits, such as published in the popular magazine, *The Spectator*: Participating in politics was "repugnant to the softness, the modesty, and those other endearing qualities ... natural to the fair sex ..." and women would do better as mothers than as partisans in politics.⁴⁷ Both the political participation by the women in New York, and the verse in Virginia can be viewed as surprisingly direct moves by women into the bright glare of the public spotlight, looking for more equal treatment under the law, inconsistent with the traditional roles assigned to "the fair sex."

The newspaper contained much more than politics and serious commentary. One early issue contained a satiric letter from "Helena Fidgett" chiding women for not reading nor writing but rather spending time "Eating, Drinking, Sleeping, Dressing, and going Abroad."⁴⁸ The front page of one *Virginia Gazette* from 1776 featured an advertisement from a woman requesting a response from the man who supposedly ogled her.⁴⁹ Following a description of his appearance (she also noted that "he has very pretty Teeth"), she writes that she has observed him looking very longingly at her, and "desires the Gentleman to take the first handsome Opportunity that offers, to explain himself on that Subject."⁵⁰ While this can be viewed as very similar to one of today's personal ads, it can alternatively be seen as a satiric take on affairs of the heart and women's public flirtations. Perhaps in response to that advertisement, a week later a woman signed "Sisely" posts a tongue-in-cheek attempt to return a found "bleeding heart" to its owner.⁵¹ The next year, "Helena Littewit" notes in a letter that women seem "out of their latitude" dealing with mathematics, but she sent the printer a poem that is a riddle: "it [the poem] has a meaning, and no meaning."⁵² While these and other letters *appear* to be written by women, there is no verification that in fact any of these articles were actually written by women. Publishing anonymously or with the use of pseudonyms,

often with a classical reference, was quite common at this time. Men claiming to be women could possibly have written some of these examples.⁵³

Whether the authors of such letteres were actually women or not, the publishing of such letters demonstrates an acceptance of women into this public world of print, in contrast to Warner's claim that women were left out of the broader access to the public arena. His "principle of negativity" suggests that pseudonymous writing removes the possibility of evaluating writing based on the legitimacy of the writer, allowing evaluation of it to be based entirely on the content, rather than the author's character. While opening up the public debate to wider economic classes, Warner suggests, the wider discourse did not include women. However, a closer look at women and print in the Chesapeake colonies suggests that civic discourse did sometimes include a wider group, including women.⁵⁴ Whether authors or not, their presence is plain. While writing as a woman, any author gave up the potentially liberating quality of total gender-free anonymity, allowing readers' appreciation to be colored by assumptions of feminine abilities. The fact that so many writers willingly did so is revealing. In contrast to the generally accepted concept that print combined with the gender literacy gap was a hurdle for women before the Revolution, the pseudonymous word of print may instead be viewed as empowering. In oral communication the gender difference is automatically conveyed, while the anonymous world of print can disguise that difference as needed.⁵⁵ It is quite possible that an even larger number of women contributed essays, even serious political discourse, while not revealing their gender.

The *Virginia Gazette* published a large number of letters apparently from women in the newspaper's first few years. While some were matters of the heart, a number of the letters dealt with public issues. The pseudonymous "Andromache" wrote criticizing the author of a letter published earlier, and with some wit, suggested that his writing exceeded that of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, demonstrating that the presumably female author was familiar with political writers in London. She deferentially noted her lack of writing skills and also suggested that most of her fellow women could not write at all: "since it so happens that most of us are illiterate, it is certainly the greatest Piece of Friendship to give us seasonable Instruction. At the same Time I cannot forbear thinking it hard we should be attacked with a Weapon we are unacquainted with. (I mean the Pen.)"⁵⁶ This writer may have lacked education, and belittled her own skills, but she wielded her quill as an effectively

sharp instrument.

Virginia women also took part in the public world of print through advertisements in the *Gazette*. Many ads were aimed at women and some actually featured women. Catherine Rathell ran several shops in Virginia and Maryland, and she became a visible public figure with her large and frequent ads for textiles, millinery, and jewelry in the newspaper. When Frances and John Person Webb ran advertisements for their dry goods store, the wife's name was listed first. When Edward and Jane Hunter Charlton advertised in 1775 that they were leaving the colony and calling in their debts, it broke with the tradition of only the man being listed, as Jane was independently in business as a milliner. While the tradespeople were usually men, widows and unmarried women often entered the public world of business. As these examples demonstrate, even married women occasionally remained in a public sphere traditionally considered exclusively male.⁵⁷

A few women in the colonial Chesapeake were directly involved in the public prints as publisher and printer. The wife of Virginia's first printer became the first female printer in the American colonies. Dinah Nuthead took over a press in Maryland in 1695 after the death of her husband, William Nuthead. He briefly operated a press in Virginia but the Royal Governor and his council did not welcome him there, and he was forced to move his press to Maryland.⁵⁸ By February 1695, Nuthead's widow Dinah began to carry on his printing work, first relocating from St. Mary's City to Annapolis, following the move of the state capitol. This is the first time a woman was in charge of a press anywhere in America, but she was probably not the actual typesetter, "for she was illiterate to the extent of being unable to sign her own name."⁵⁹ Whether she or a journeyman printer actually composed the type, there is no record of her press after 1696. Anne Catherine Green took over a print shop in Maryland in 1767, when her husband Jonas passed away, and Mary Katherine Goddard published a newspaper in Baltimore during the 1770s.⁶⁰

Printers in colonial America exercised an unusual combination of talents. They were craftspeople who got ink on their fingers and operated a hand press requiring hard physical labor. They needed to be literary experts, skilled at writing much of their own copy, and editing the same for mistakes. They also needed to be smart businesspeople, capable of determining what the market required and able to balance competing political interests to avoid generating trouble from the words and ideas that they printed.⁶¹ Print shops were sometimes located within the home, and it was common for

women to help in the shop, often with accounting, sometimes proof-reading copy, or even composing type.⁶²

Women's involvement with print—as authors, readers, and even printers—meant that they were part of a growing print culture, a culture that helped to spur new ways of thinking, including a growing assault on social deference and political authority. In Williamsburg, Clementina Rind took over husband William Rind's print shop when he died in 1773, publishing one version of the *Virginia Gazette* for two years. At least one researcher suggested that Mrs. Rind's personal interests influenced the content of her newspaper. A poem by “A Lady” celebrated the arrival in the colony of Lady Dunmore, the new governor's wife. As unrest regarding Parliament's actions towards the colonies intensified, Mrs. Rind reprinted two letters. One from the *South Carolina Gazette* written by “A Planter's Wife” exhorted women to not use tea, and another from Virginia women addressed to the ladies of Pennsylvania, urged them to avoid all imported luxuries.⁶³ This was “probably the greatest concentration of women's writing to date in an American periodical and certainly the greatest in any southern colonial newspaper.”⁶⁴

Mrs. Rind found herself in the middle of another political controversy, forcing her to define what freedom of the press meant, when she refused to print a contribution she thought libelous. Her competitors' newspaper printed a letter questioning Rind's principles of press liberty, suggesting that she suppressed a contributor's letter despite her newspaper's motto, “*Open to ALL PARTIES, but influenced by NONE*. It is a very properly descriptive of that *Freedom* which renders the Press beneficial to Mankind. But how does the fair Promise contained in this Motto consist with refusing to publish a Piece”⁶⁵ Rind reluctantly replied to that charge in her next issue. She wrote that the letter in question contained personal, rather than public, accusations, and that she felt its publication would injure several respectable people. She stated that she could not “publish, indiscriminately, every piece that may be offered. The one which I am accused of suppressing contains a detail of facts of a very interesting nature, which relate to individuals only. The affair is certainly cognizable in a court of law, where it must be more fully determined in the injured party's favour than by any publication in a newspaper...” Rind agreed to print the letter if the author would attach his name, instead of remaining anonymous.⁶⁶ This is consistent with printer Benjamin Franklin's well-known ideas that while printers often cannot avoid giving offense by printing opinions, he “refus'd to print such things as might do real Injury to any

Person.”⁶⁷ While Franklin wrote of the importance of press freedom, he noted that the one area where it should indeed be limited was that of personal libel. Published opinion should be allowed, “as far as by it, he [the author] does not hurt or control the Right of another.”⁶⁸ Mrs. Rind, by exercising editorial judgment and not printing what she thought was harmful and libelous, was doing exactly what the most prominent printer of her time (and publishers today) consider responsible editing.

As printer, a woman took an important and prominent place in the colony. At Clementina Rind’s death, both her successor as printer and the competitors’ *Virginia Gazette* wrote eulogies extolling her virtues and merit.⁶⁹ During a short two-year period as a printer, writer, and businesswoman, the widow Rind had apparently earned the respect of her customers and her peers. The fact that printing as a business and profession was not the exclusive province of men in eighteenth-century Virginia has important implications for the makeup of the public sphere there. The printer functioned as the gatekeeper of the only form of mass media available. He or she had a great deal of control over the flow of books and news information and was an intellectual leader and center of communication for the entire colony. This was a position with a great deal of inherent power for a woman to hold.

Almanacs were even more ubiquitous than newspapers in eighteenth-century colonial America. One estimate is that there was about one almanac for every twenty-six white people in the colonies.⁷⁰ These “... ‘almanacks,’ selling for a few pennies, found their way into practically every household” even those of the poor and illiterate.⁷¹ The price was low enough that virtually every white resident could afford an almanac: “Everyone had to have one.”⁷² Thousands circulated in the colony of Virginia by the mid-eighteenth century. One estimate is that between 1764 and 1766, just one of the two Williamsburg print shops sold more than 4,000 almanacs every year.⁷³ Almanacs were often used as a poor person’s diary. Blank pages were sometimes included, and many owners would write in and keep their almanacs as a diary for many years.⁷⁴ One historian has suggested that even people who could not really read could use almanacs, filled as they were with astrological signs and symbols.⁷⁵ It is evident that the almanac helped to spread the practice of reading well beyond the male elites, and this helped to expand the influence of the new print culture.

A philomath, the astrological expert who computed the signs of the zodiac and meteorological information, composed much of the

early Virginia almanacs, often with additions by the printer.⁷⁶ They originally offered little opportunity for the two-way communication such as that offered by letters printed in a newspaper, but it is obvious in small ways that almanacs were intended for women as well as men. One early almanac used astrology to suggest the best dates for certain gardening: “The most proper Time of gathering HERBS this Year ... Gather Penny-Royal, Plantain, Mint, Camamoil [sic], and Herbs of Venus, May 16, 20, 25.”⁷⁷ The next year’s almanac suggested to wives that May was the time to “sow and set those tender Summer herbs that would not endure the former Cold.”⁷⁸ Women were typically responsible for the herb gardens, and this was reflected in the almanacs addressing the “wives.”⁷⁹ One of the rare surviving almanacs adds further evidence to the theory that almanacs were written for men as well as women. This copy appears to have been owned by a woman named Sarah Carlyle, as she inscribed her name at the top of the front page, as many almanac owners did.⁸⁰ Another almanac was printed with the epigram, “To a Young Lady with an Almanack bound:”

How small the Volume! Yet in this you see
The Sun’s whole Labour in Epitome,
So if kind Venus aid the Poet’s Art,
And swell with soft Desire my Celia’s Heart.
Here she shall find one Epigram contain,
More than a thousand Folio’s can explain.⁸¹

These lines inflated the worth and substance of the almanacs, suggesting that within the slim volume, women could find more meaning than in an entire bookshelf.

While historians rarely tie almanac reading to female readers, some do suggest that almanacs spread further into the country and down the social ladder in ways that books, pamphlets, and newspapers never could. A few even suggest almanacs had a greater political influence than generally recognized, with political messages discretely sprinkled between predictions of weather and humorous stories. As the Stamp Act was being hotly contested, one *Virginia Almanack* included a short ode to liberty: “Oh Liberty ! thou Goddess, heav’nly bright, Profuse of Bliss, and pregnant with Delight”⁸² Not so hidden among the amusing stories and astrological signs was this celebration of just how important liberty was to the colonists, especially at a time when many argued that such freedom was being threatened by new taxes enacted by Parliament. By including

political messages while simultaneously making efforts to attract a female and socially wider readership, almanacs certainly spread literacy and interest in public affairs beyond the elite males.

When competition first came to printing in Virginia in 1766, it also brought additional attention to women as potential readers and contributors to almanacs. William Rind began printing a second, competitive *Virginia Almanack* in 1767. In the following year's issue, he apparently began to focus on women with the addition of a "Ladies Diary" section with brainteasers and opportunities for women to contribute and even communicate with each other.⁸³ The next year it was called, *The Virginia Almanack and Ladies Diary, for the year of our Lord, 1769* ... in which the publisher proclaimed that women "will have a certain Opportunity of carrying on a poetical Correspondence with their Friends and Acquaintance, tho' at a very great Distance, even when they know not where to direct to each other ..." This section included entertainment, diversions, enigmas, paradoxes, and "rebusses," or lines of verse inside of which was hidden a name or word. In answering one of the previous year's enigmas, what we might call a brainteaser, Miss Polly S. claimed in verse: "An honest Country Girl am I, Untaught to patch, or paint, or lie ..." This contribution suggests a young woman, not of the Tidewater elite, was not only reading but also contributing to the almanac. There is no way to be certain how many of these contributions were actually written by women, or by men using a pseudonym. Of course, there also is no way to estimate how many female contributions were hiding behind a male pseudonym. Whatever the reality, there was obviously an attempt being made in these almanacs to connect to a female readership. A majority of the contributions to the "Ladies Diary" appeared to be written by men, but a simple count shows that almost a third were signed with a woman's name, and at least one pushed for social equality in affairs of the heart: "A Lady" queried, "Why should the Man begin the Courtship rather than the women, setting aside Custom?"⁸⁴ This aspect of the experiment in bringing women into the world of the *Virginia Almanack* ended after just two years. In his 1770 almanac, Rind no longer included "Ladies Diary" in the title and left out the enigmas and rebuses, with no explanation printed.⁸⁵

Women and the Public Sphere

The pre-Revolutionary move to boycott British consumer products did perhaps the most to nudge women into the political

public sphere. The Stamp Act crisis increased the range of political involvement: “Everywhere the circle of politics was expanding.”⁸⁶ It was women who had to give up brewing and serving tea, and women who had to do the physical labor to replace manufactured cloth with homespun. The implications of this inclusion are better understood by reading what women wrote in the *Virginia Gazette*. Verses composed by women of Bedford, Massachusetts to support the non-consumption of tea were just one of many colonial actions by women republished in the Williamsburg newspaper:

The coarsest Food we choose to eat,
Before we'll lose our Liberty.
Don't cast Reflections on our Sex,
Because the weaker Sort we be ;
We'll work our Fingers to the Bone,
Before we'll lose our Liberty.⁸⁷

But the ladies of the South were not to be outdone by their counterparts of the North. The *Virginia Gazette* printed a letter “from Countrywomen of Virginia to Ladies of Philadelphia” urging them to ban India tea from their tables: “Much, very much, depends on the public virtue the ladies will exert at this critical juncture.”⁸⁸ Another letter, addressed to wives of the members of Britain’s Parliament, suggested they should convince their husbands to be just to the American colonists: “Now, ladies, how noble, how glorious would it be to the female character, if you would redeem your husbands from guilt, and your country from ruin!”⁸⁹ An “Essay on Women” published in 1773 demonstrates that at least for some Virginians, women were more than just “pretty figures,” but rather an important balancing factor on the predominant influence of men, even in the public arena. While not going so far as to suggest equality of the sexes, it did claim that “One Sex was not designed to be the Oppression of the other...”⁹⁰ In the letter from “A Planter’s Wife,” the presumed female author writing to a female audience, stepped beyond a purely domestic sphere and into the political arena when she boldly stated, “we no longer have any confidence in the British parliament,” and insisted that her “sisters” give up imported tea and all East India goods.⁹¹ The political crisis leading to the American Revolution made women highly visible in the pages of the *Virginia Gazette* and encouraged women further into public discourse and active involvement in the politics of non-consumption.

Through print, the act of writing could blur the lines between

the domestic and public spheres, allowing women access to political debate, which typically had been restricted. Writing a letter or a diary was a private practice, which could remain completely within the private or domestic sphere. When printing began in Virginia, the potential for such writing was amplified by the possibility of publication with an increased audience. Women could write anonymously, as did Mercy Otis Warren in Massachusetts, or pseudonymously, posing as a man to gain credibility.⁹² A woman could also publish a letter in a newspaper, a poem in an almanac, or even a political pamphlet without attaching her name. This was a major step into the sphere of public debate, especially when the topic was political. Thus printing helped women break down the gender restrictions of the public sphere. Print culture was emancipatory for women by allowing them access to civic debate.⁹³

There were changes in the composition of those who governed colonial Virginia that predated the Revolution, and these alterations can be seen reflected in the composition of the public sphere. In comparing the changes in colonial Virginia with Habermas' pre-modern Western Europe, we can view the royal governor and his counselors, the elite planters, as the colonial equivalent of the King and court, without any truly public discourse at all in the early years of the colony. A wider range of influential people that included a newly rising middling sort of lawyers and tradesmen, in addition to smaller farmers, eventually undermined the elite's political authority. The new group used the newly available print discourse to establish their social authority. Out of this burgeoning print culture emerged the first actual public sphere in Virginia. Its emergence and character diverge somewhat from the bourgeois transformation Habermas described in Western Europe.⁹⁴ His theory of a public sphere assumed—without presenting any solid evidence—that women and the more plebian members of society were not involved.⁹⁵ The findings here suggest there was indeed some involvement by women. Published accounts of politics within an emerging print culture are viewed as a crucial precondition of any such public sphere. To take part in Habermas' civic discourse, however, required taking part in discussions in taverns, coffeehouses, and other public spaces, activities that typically excluded women.⁹⁶ Women did form active, political groups that could be considered a female public sphere, while debating and taking action over non-consumption and non-importation in the years leading up to the Revolution. While no evidence of women's involvement in the physical spaces where men's public discussions took place has been noted, women did take part

in the public world of print, as both readers and contributors.

This involvement of women in the public prints and the public political sphere led to a few outright requests for political equality by the time of the Revolutionary War, and some consideration by at least one of Virginia's political elite. While Massachusetts' John Adams may have quickly rejected his wife's request to "Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them" in the new nation's "new Code of Laws,"⁹⁷ at least one political leader did not so casually reject women's involvement outright. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia suggested that he would support giving the vote to widows and unmarried women who owned property. He wrote this comment to his sister, in response to her complaint that widows in Virginia were taxed on their property yet had no right to vote for or against that tax. When he claimed that "it has never been the practice either here or in England" for women to vote, he was apparently unaware of some colonial exceptions.⁹⁸ While it was not usual or customary for women to vote, the previously noted 1737 *Virginia Gazette* reported on two women voting in New York. During the Revolution, women in New Jersey were also briefly allowed to vote.⁹⁹ However, Lee was correct in the larger sense; any direct involvement of American women in the political process at this time was an aberration and not the norm.

Conclusion

Women in eighteenth-century Virginia were involved as readers, writers, and even editors of the public prints—especially of the more ephemeral ones such as newspapers, almanacs, and inexpensive books. While most printed material was written by men and aimed at a male audience, the extent of this bias was not as extreme as was once theorized. While elite women certainly were involved, so too were some female members of an emerging trade class, or middling sort—an economic group between the planter elite and the poorer sorts. Printer Clementina Rind was an example of this trade class, while at least several of the female writers appear to have been from farming families below the economic level of the planter elite. There is no evidence that any slaves, servants, Native Americans, or women from the poorest strata were contributing to this world of print in the Chesapeake region.

Women in colonial Virginia and Maryland were also more involved in civic discourse than is typically theorized. At the very least, women participated through their involvement with printed

matter. Some of this material was directly political in nature, including pleas for political action, legal equality, and involvement in the boycott of British goods. This also led to women holding public meetings and discussing the political matter of non-importation. Some women, at least, did indeed take part as both readers and active contributors to that colony's literary world of print in the mid-eighteenth century, and occasionally in the political debates in the press.

Women sometimes transcended any purely private sphere of the home, if such a completely private realm actually did exist. The public prints of colonial Virginia display a relationship between the culture of print and the civic public. Civic discourse was stimulated by printed material and took place in the physical settings of taverns and coffeehouses.¹⁰⁰ In colonial Virginia, much of that discourse took place on the pages of the newspaper where women were involved. In addition, women took part in civic discourse at events such as public teas where matters of non-consumption were discussed. This raises questions about a theoretical solid wall between the totally feminine domestic space and the exclusively masculine public space of politics. Women of Virginia stepped occasionally into the civic public, as women in other colonies no doubt also did. The active involvement of women was greater than has been previously acknowledged, and that has implications for our understanding of the society in general and colonial politics in particular. At least a few women in late colonial Virginia were part of the world of participatory politics. By the time of the American Revolution, several women were publicly asking for greater legal and even political status. In the end—at the beginning of the new republic—women were left out of the formal political process for the time being. Nonetheless, women were a part of the growing print culture in Virginia, and did seek to become part of the body politic.

Connections among British-American colonies were made possible through commonality of language, increased trade connections, and emerging consumerism as reflected in print capitalism. Shared communication through newspapers was a crucial basis of a new national consciousness where once there had been only separate colonies. Inter-colonial communication—with revolutionary messages reprinted in local newspapers around the colonies—helped to create a new sense of a larger community for both men and women.¹⁰¹ This was an important part of a consumer revolution that prefaced the political revolution. Inexpensive almanacs and newspapers reached well down in the economic strata, broadening

involvement and allowing for the shared experience and popular mobilization that made the American Revolution possible.¹⁰² The decision to consume or boycott British products largely affected and was often made by women. As women were an important part of this new world of consumption, so too were they an important part of the movement toward the Revolution and the new republic.

Endnotes

¹ *Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg: Parks, October 22, 1736), 3. Each *Virginia Gazette* had two dates, as this issue was actually dated “From Friday, October 15, to Friday, October 22, 1736.” This article will follow the example of Lester Capon and Stella Duff’s *Virginia Gazette Index, 1736-1780* (Williamsburg: The Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1950) and use the later date, which was the actual date of publishing. The *Virginia Gazette* published most letters or articles either anonymously or pseudonymously. An anonymous letter writer contributed this poem, claiming the verses were presented to him or her by a lady. Several colonial newspapers published this same poem. Eighteenth-century spelling and punctuation has been retained here.

² This traditional view of the separate colonial spheres is expressed here by feminist historian Sara Evans, *Born to Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 43-46. Evans noted that beginning with the Stamp Act crisis of 1765, women were increasingly caught up in political discourse. Mary Beth Norton, in *Liberty’s Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), wrote that colonial women had an entirely subservient and domestic role. Not until the Revolution were the boundaries of this women’s sphere pushed. Nancy Cott, in *Bonds of Womenhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), referred to this as the “cult of domesticity.”

³ David A. Copeland, *Colonial American Newspapers: Character and Content* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997), 153-154.

⁴ Kerrison, *Claiming the Pen: Women and Intellectual Life in the Early American South* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 185.

⁵ Julia Cherry Spruill, *Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1938), 232.

⁶ Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 140, 283-318. Brown focused on race and its relationship with gender and power, but it is the gender aspects that are relevant here.

⁷ Cynthia Kierner, *Beyond the Household: Women’s Place in the Early South, 1700-1835* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), xi, 1-2.

⁸ Maurine Beasley and Sheila Gibbons, *Taking Their Place: A Document-*

tary History of Women and Journalism, 2nd ed. (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 1993), 5.

⁹ See for example, Richard Beal Davis, *A Colonial Southern Bookshelf: Reading in the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979).

¹⁰ In examining the involvement of women in the broad print culture of colonial Virginia, this article is deeply informed by colonial American interpretations of Jürgen Habermas' public sphere and the role of printed material as a driving force behind that. While Habermas, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)*, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989) focused on eighteenth-century Europe, his ideas of the public sphere have been adapted by Americanists, such as Michael Warner in *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 1-174, who suggested that printed material was an important aspect of a radical reconstruction of the public sphere in eighteenth century America. See also Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge: MIT, 1992), especially Michael Schudson's, "Was There Ever a Public Sphere? If So, When? Reflections on the American Case." Also see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), who theorized that print capitalism was partly responsible for the rise of nationalism in Colonial British America.

¹¹ Brown, *Good Wives*, 7.

¹² Jack Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

¹³ Kevin Hayes, *A Colonial Woman's Bookshelf* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), ix.

¹⁴ Cott, in *Bonds of Womenhood*, suggested that erosion of an exclusively domestic sphere for women did not come until after the late eighteenth century. Linda Kerber in *Women Of The Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1980), especially 8 and 283, claimed that "Republican Motherhood," an intersection of the public world of politics and the private sphere of the home, began during the Revolution, and saw the non-consumption movement before the Revolution giving—for the first time—American women an important role in public politics. Rosemarie Zagarrri, in *A Woman's Dilemma: Mercy Otis Warren and the American Revolution* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1995), 28, saw the roots of protopolitical involvement for women possibly running deeper, beginning during colonial times.

¹⁵ Kerrison, *Claiming the Pen*, 15.

¹⁶ For example, see Warner, *Letters of the Republic*, 14 or Hayes, *Colonial Woman's Bookshelf*, ix.

¹⁷ Richard Brown, *Knowledge is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 12. J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Context of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 65-85, and Jennifer Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 5, also supported the idea that use of legal signatures is inherently biased against women and likely deflates their literacy rate. On seventeenth-century, literacy see David D. Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 124-5.

¹⁸ Issue number 1, *Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg: Parks, August 6, 1736). Although this first issue is no longer extant, this “Printer’s Introduction” was quoted in William Maxwell, ed., *The Virginia Historical Register, and Literary Companion*, 6 (1853), 21-31.

¹⁹ See for example, William J. Gilmore, “Literacy, the Rise Of An Age Of Reading, and The Cultural Grammar Of Print Communications In America, 1735-1850,” *Communication* 11 no.1 (1988): 23-46. Puritan religious requirements for reading and interpreting the Bible for oneself is commonly cited for high literacy rates in largely Puritan New England.

²⁰ Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Putnam, 1910) 1: 450-459, quoted in David Andrew Rawson, “‘Guardians of their Own Liberty’: A Contextual History of Print Culture in Virginia Society, 1750 to 1820” (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1998), 54.

²¹ Darrett Rutman and Anita Rutman, *A Place in Time Explicitus*, (New York: Norton, 1984), 165-170.

²² J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels*, fn 19 and 20, page 364, also citing David Cressy, *Literature and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 176.

²³ Warner in *Letters of the Republic*, 1-174, noted that printed material was an important aspect of a radical reconstruction of the public sphere in eighteenth century America. Print, he said, became an important element of the “public discourse” of civic, republican virtue that led to a radical reconstruction of the public sphere to one that legitimized criticism of government. This was an extremely important part of the rise of revolutionary thought in America. See also Habermas *Transformation of the Public Sphere* and Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, as the latter suggested that print capitalism was partly responsible for the rise of nationalism in colonial British America. Stories published throughout the colonies in the same language helped to create a sense of commonality that helped bring about a new sense of nationhood.

²⁴ Ned Landsman, *From Colonials to Provincials: American Thought and Culture 1680-1760* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 31-56. To Landsman, the explosion of a reading public and an increase even in a writing public—those who put their words to paper or to print—was part of a larger cultural change.

²⁵ Warner, *Letters of the Republic*, 48. Kierner, *Beyond the Household*, 2, 37,

and 73, rejected what she called a “gender-biased definition,” and theorized greater involvement by women in the public sphere.

²⁶ Kathleen Gough (anthropologist), “Literacy in Kerala,” in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, Jack Goody, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 153, quoted in Rawson, 18. See also cultural historian Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 157 and J. C. Carothers, “Culture, Psychiatry, and the Written Word,” *Psychiatry* 22, no. 4 (November 1959): 308-312.

²⁷ Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent Of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) and Eisenstein, “On Revolution and the Printed Word” in *Revolution in History*, eds. Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 191-193. Others such as Warner, *Letters of the Republic*, 5-9, observed that print was part of a radical restructuring of the public sphere in eighteenth-century America, but challenged the “McLuhanite” tendency of Eisenstein and accused such a perspective as being overly “technodeterministic.”

²⁸ The first printing in Virginia was in 1682, but the royal governor did not allow it to continue. On early Virginia printing, see Lawrence Wroth, *The Colonial Printer*. (2nd ed. Portland, ME: Southworth-Anthoensen Press, 1938. Reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1994), Douglas McMurtree, *The Beginnings of Printing in Virginia* (Lexington, VA: Printed in the Journalism laboratory of Washington and Lee University, 1935), and Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America, With a Biography of Printers*, 2nd ed. (Albany: Munsell, 1874; reprint, New York: B. Franklin, 1967).

²⁹ E. Smith, *The Compleat Housewife: or, Accomplish'd Gentlewoman's Companion ...* (Williamsburg: William Parks, 1742), 1. Eighteenth-century punctuation has been retained here, including the common capitalization of all nouns. However, complete titles of texts, newspapers, and almanacs have been edited down. They are typically longer than our average twenty-first century sentence, sometimes filling an entire title page. Gascoign's powder was a well-known cold medicine containing Oriental bezoar, white amber, red coral, crab's eyes, powdered hartshorn, pearl and black crab's claws.

³⁰ Genevieve Yost, “The Compleat Housewife or Accomplish'd Gentlewoman's Companion: A Bibliographical Study,” *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine*, 2nd ser., vol. 18, no. 4. (Oct., 1938): 419-435.

³¹ Smith, *Compleat Housewife*, 215.

³² Susan Stromei Berg, compiler, *Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg Imprints* (New York: Clearwater Publishing Company, 1986) 26-40. Yost, “The Compleat Housewife ... Bibliographical Study,” 419-435.

³³ This title is not found in research of books published in Virginia. See Berg, *Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg Imprints*.

³⁴ Hayes, *Colonial Woman's Bookshelf*, 103.

³⁵ Theophilus Wreg [identified as Theophilus Grew by Evans], *The Virginia Almanack for the Year of our Lord God, 1756 ...* (Williamsburg: Hunter,

1755), 30. Almanac pages are not numbered, so page numbers listed here for almanacs are based on counting existing pages and may not be exact.

³⁶ Hayes, *Colonial Woman's Bookshelf*, 107.

³⁷ See Hunter, *Before Novels*, 272 and Susan Stromei Berg, in "Agent of Change of Trusted Servant: The Eighteenth Century Williamsburg Press," (Williamsburg: Master's Thesis, American Studies, The College of William and Mary, 1993), vi and 62, claimed that by the mid-sixties, book-buying taste had shifted from religious works to novels,

³⁸ Cathy Davidson, in *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), vii, wrote of this "revolution" as beginning in the "latter portion of the eighteenth century," despite evidence that such novels began selling in England and American colonies before the mid-century.

³⁹ Hunter, *Before Novels*, 73.

⁴⁰ Jeremy Popkin "The Prerevolutionary Origins of Political Journalism," in *The French Revolution and Intellectual History*, ed. Jack Censer (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989), 111-112, is just one of many print historians who referred to newspapers, almanacs, and periodicals as ephemeral, or written for a specific time and place, and thus studied by historians less often than books. This can be viewed as somewhat elitist, as books were more expensive and difficult to access by poorer folk than were newspapers and almanacs.

⁴¹ *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis: William Parks, Dec. 10, 1728), 1. There is a great deal of historical evidence that the Maryland newspaper was read widely in Virginia, especially in Northern Virginia. For example, there were many advertisements from Fairfax County, VA and Belle Haven (Alexandria), VA in the Annapolis paper. See Edith Moore Sprouse, *Along the Potomac River: Extracts from the Maryland Gazette, 1728-1799* (Westminster, MD: Willow Bend Books, 2001).

⁴² *Virginia Gazette* (August 6, 1736), quoted in Maxwell, *Virginia Historical Register*, 6: 21-31.

⁴³ Parks' *Virginia Gazette* (October 22, 1736), 3.

⁴⁴ *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, Vol. 33, No. 2. (April 1976), 331, reprinted the poem under "Trivia" and referred to it as "Women's Liberation: Early American Style," without further comment or analysis. Kerison, *Claiming the Pen*, 21-24, took note of this poem as it was published later elsewhere, and commented on it as an example of resistance to the accepted model of male superiority.

⁴⁵ *South Carolina Gazette* (August 15, 1743), quoted by Martha Joanne King, "Making an Impression: Women Printers in the Southern Colonies in the Revolutionary Era" (Ph.D. diss., The College of William and Mary, December, 1992), 182-3,

⁴⁶ Parks' *Virginia Gazette* (June 24, 1737), 3.

⁴⁷ Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, no. 57, 81, and 342, quoted in Spruill, *Women in Southern Colonies*, 244.

⁴⁸ Parks' *Virginia Gazette* (November 26, 1736), 1.

⁴⁹ Placement in colonial newspapers did not mean what it does today. The

“lead story” was not always placed on the front page, rather news was printed in the order in which it came in, as typesetting and printing was a time-consuming process. It was not possible to reorder a newspaper to set late-arriving stories in a more prominent place.

⁵⁰ Parks’ *Virginia Gazette* (October 29, 1736), 1.

⁵¹ Parks’ *Virginia Gazette* (November 5, 1736), 1.

⁵² Parks’ *Virginia Gazette* (July 22, 1737), 1.

⁵³ Benjamin Franklin writing as “Silence Dogood” is perhaps the most famous example of a man writing pseudonymously as a woman. See for example, *New England Courant* (Boston: James Franklin, April 2, 1722), 1.

⁵⁴ Warner, *Letters of the Republic*, 41-49.

⁵⁵ Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 191-196.

⁵⁶ *Virginia Gazette* (June 3, 1737), 1. For other contributions by women, see for example, July 15, 1737, November 12, 1776, November 26, 1776, June 3, 1737, 1, July 15, 1737, and July 22, 1737, 1 and 2. It does appear to this researcher that women appeared more often in the *Virginia Gazette* in the first decade and again during the political crises of the mid-sixties and seventies. Perhaps as some researchers have theorized, women were becoming more marginalized in the domestic sphere, until a political crisis required their participation once more. An alternative explanation is that more sources for news, especially journals from England, cut down on the contributions needed from local sources.

⁵⁷ Kierner, *Beyond the Household*, 20-23, Purdie and Dixon’s *Virginia Gazette* (Oct. 10, 1771), 3, Hunter’s *Virginia Gazette* (July 10, 1752), 3, Dixon and Hunter’s *Virginia Gazette* (May 13, 1775), 4.

⁵⁸ Wroth, 38-41. John Buckner brought printer William Nuthead to Jamestown in 1682, where he printed several things including Virginia laws recently passed. The Governor and the Council were not pleased with this unauthorized effort, and closed the press down.

⁵⁹ Douglas McMurtrie, *Pioneer Printing in Maryland* (Springfield, IL, 1932), 1-3. While McMurtrie noted Dinah Nuthead could not sign her name and was therefore “illiterate,” the more recent awareness that reading and writing were taught separately raises new possibilities. Warner in *Letters of the Republic*, 16, theorized that the widow Nuthead could read and set type, yet perhaps was not able to handle the different skills of quill and ink.

⁶⁰ The Maryland presses and Virginia presses were closely related in the eighteenth century. Nuthead moved from Virginia to Maryland. William Parks ran printing presses in both Annapolis and Williamsburg before moving full-time to Virginia. Jonas Green’s partner William Rind set up a competitive print shop in Williamsburg in 1766.

⁶¹ Of course, a printer may not do all the physical labor or all of the writing. There typically may have been one or two apprentices and journeymen employed, often to do the dirtiest labor. Stephen Botein, “‘Meer Mechanics’ and an Open Press: the Business and Political Strategies of Colonial American Printers,” vol. 9 of *Perspectives in American History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). Wroth, *Colonial Printer*.

⁶² King, “Women Printers,” 218.

⁶³ Jane Carson, *Clementina Rind* (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, research report series 47, {19--}, quoting Rind's *Virginia Gazette* (March 3, 1774), 3, and (September 15, 1774), 1.

⁶⁴ Kierner, *Beyond the Household*, 79.

⁶⁵ "An Attentive Observer," Purdie and Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* (Dec. 23, 1773), 1.

⁶⁶ Rind's *Virginia Gazette* (Dec. 30, 1773), 3. See also Spruill, *Women in Southern Colonies*, 265-6.

⁶⁷ Benjamin Franklin, "An Apology for Printers," first printed in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 10, 1731, accessed online on 12/10/04 at <http://www.uark.edu/depts/comminfo/cambridge/apology.html>.

⁶⁸ Silence Dogood, number 8 of his pseudonymous letters, in *The New England Courant*, (Boston: James Franklin, July 9, 1722), 1.

⁶⁹ John Pinkney's *Virginia Gazette* (Sept. 29, 1774), 3, and Alexander Purdie and John Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* (Sept. 29, 1774), 3.

⁷⁰ Hall, *Cultures of Print*, 60. It is estimated that very few Africans, African Americans, or Native Americans could read at this time.

⁷¹ Arthur Schlesinger, *Prelude to Independence: The Newspaper War on Britain, 1764-1776* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1957), 41. Regarding price, Berg, *Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg Imprints*, 58, puts the price of the *Virginia Almanac* at seven and a half pence in 1754.

⁷² Berg, "Agent of Change," 32-34.

⁷³ *Ibid.* Beginning in 1766, there were two printers in Williamsburg, and by 1776 there were actually three competing print shops, all issuing *Virginia Almanacs*, and newspapers with the same name: *Virginia Gazette*. Publications are footnoted here with the name of the printer to attempt to avoid confusion.

⁷⁴ James Adams Bear, and Mary Caperton Bear, *A Checklist of Virginia Almanacs, 1732-1850* (Charlottesville: Biographical Society of the University of Virginia, 1962), viii, ix.

⁷⁵ Geneviève Bollème, *Les Almanachs populaires xviii siecles* (Paris, 1969), 7-15, paraphrased in Hall, *Cultures of Print*, 46.

⁷⁶ Bear, *Checklist of Virginia Almanacs*, xii suggests that Theophilus Wreg [Grew] wrote the entire almanac, while many other philomaths composed only the astrology and weather.

⁷⁷ *The Virginia Almanack for the Year of our Lord God, 1751 ...* (Williamsburg: Hunter, 1750.)

⁷⁸ *The Virginia Almanack for the Year of our Lord God, 1752 ...* (Williamsburg: Hunter, 1751.)

⁷⁹ Spruill, *Women in Southern Colonies*, 65-70.

⁸⁰ Theophilus Wreg, *The Virginia Almanack for the Year of our Lord God, 1758 ...* (Williamsburg: Hunter, 1757), 1.

⁸¹ *Virginia Almanack ... 1771 ...* (Williamsburg: William Rind, 1770), 16.

⁸² See especially Marion Barber Stowell, "Revolutionary Almanac-Makers: Trumpeters of Sedition," *Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America*, vol. 73, no. 1. (Jan.-March, 1979), 41. She specifically footnoted Philip Davidson, Bernard Bailyn, and James Schlesinger as having largely ignored

the colonial almanac. See also Allan Raymond, "To Reach Men's Minds: Almanacs and the American Revolution, 1760-177," *New England Quarterly*, vol. 51, no. 3 (Sept. 1978), 370-395 for arguments on how almanacs were influential politically. *Virginia Almanack ... 1767 ...* (Williamsburg: William Rind, 1766), 36.

⁸³ A fragment of what appears to be Rind's 1768 *Virginia Almanack*, thought to be not extant, was discovered by this researcher in the Library Company of Philadelphia's archives. The exact title is not known as only four pages remain, but references to last year's "enigmas" in the 1769 almanac make it apparent this section began in his second year of publication. Rind apparently created this "Ladies Diary" aspect of the almanac in imitation of the popular *Ladies' Diary*; or, *Women's Almanack* first published in England sixty years earlier.

⁸⁴ *The Virginia Almanack And Ladies Diary, for the year of our Lord, 1769 ...* (Williamsburg: Rind, 1768.)

⁸⁵ *The Virginia Almanack for the Year of our Lord, 1770 ... Containing Several Interesting Pieces in Prose and Verse* (Williamsburg: Rind, 1769.)

⁸⁶ T. H. Breen, "'Baubles of Britain': The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present*, no. 119 (May, 1988), 93, and Breen, *Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 329.

⁸⁷ Purdie's *Virginia Gazette* (March 17, 1774), 2.

⁸⁸ Rind's *Virginia Gazette* (Sept. 15, 1774), 1.

⁸⁹ Pinkney's *Virginia Gazette* (Sept. 14, 1775), 1.

⁹⁰ Purdie's *Virginia Gazette* (March 4, 1773), 2.

⁹¹ *South Carolina Gazette*, reprinted in Rind's *Virginia Gazette* (September 15, 1774), 1.

⁹² Zagari, *Woman's Dilemma*.

⁹³ Warner, in *Letters of the Republic*, used the idea of print being emancipatory, but did not connect it specifically to women as does the research here.

⁹⁴ Rawson, in "Print Culture in Virginia Society," 79, fn 17, suggested that in colonial Virginia, rather than a public sphere, there was a tight elite he described as a closed socioeconomic oligarchy that thought of itself as "the public." He wrote that new economic, political, and cultural elites used print to establish a new authority and Virginia's first real public sphere. I argue that instead of a pseudo-public, the original elite structure relates more to a pre-modern monarchy, and a totally private sphere. We agree that out of the new print culture emerges a public sphere.

⁹⁵ Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge: MIT, 1992.)

⁹⁶ Sharon Salinger, in *Taverns and Drinking in Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), noted that women, especially the lower sort, took part in drinking and tavern discussions, but Salinger also suggested that gender and class differences were actually accentuated, and not broken down, by tavern custom.

⁹⁷ Abigail Adams to John Adams, 31 March - 5 April 1776 [electronic edition]. *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*. Massachusetts Histori-

cal Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>

⁹⁸ Richard Henry Lee to sister Mrs. Hannah Corbin, March 17, 1778, *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee*, ed. James Curtis Ballagh (New York: De Capo Press, 1970), 1:392-4. Hannah Corbin's letter to Lee is not extant.

⁹⁹ Parks' *Virginia Gazette* (June 23, 1737), 3. Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, see for example 50, xviii, and 297-299.

¹⁰⁰ Habermas, *Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

¹⁰¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

¹⁰² Breen, *Marketplace of Revolution*, especially xvi, 314, and 329.