**Classical Learning in Eighteenth-century America**

**Classics required by public grammar schoolmasters or private tutors:**

Cicero (1st c. B.C.) Roman

Virgil (1st c. B.C.) Roman

Isocrates (4th c. B.C.) Greek

Xenophon (4th c. B.C.) Greek

Homer (8th c. B.C.) Greek

Greek New Testament

Aristotle (4th c. B.C.) Greek

Euclid (3rd c. B.C.) Greek

Noah Webster: “The minds of youth are perpetually led to the history of Greece and Rome or to Great Britain; boys are constantly repeating the declamations of Demosthenes and Cicero or debates upon some political question in the British Parliament.”

**College entrance requirements:**

King’s College (now Columbia)—required a “rational account of the Greek and Latin grammars, read three orations of Cicero and three books of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and translate the first ten chapters of John into Latin.”

College of New Jersey (now Princeton)—required “the ability to write Latin prose, translate Virgil, Cicero, and the Greek gospels, and a commensurate knowledge of Latin and Greek grammar.”

**Commonly-studied & quoted Greeks & Romans:**

Sallust (1st c. B.C.) Roman

Polybius (2nd c. B.C.) Greek

Plato (4th c. B.C.) Greek

Tacitus (2nd c. A.D.) Roman

Plutarch (1st-2nd c. A.D.) Greek

Herodotus (5th c. B.C.) Greek

Thucydides (5th c. B.C.) Greek

Demosthenes (4th c. B.C.) Greek

Livy (1st c. A.D.) Roman

Horace (1st c. B.C.) Roman

Ovid (1st c. B.C.) Roman

Julius Caesar (1st c. B.C.) Roman

J**ohn Adams on John Quincy Adams’ studies (1785):** “He has translated Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Suetonius, the whole of Sallust, and Tacitus’s *Agricola*, his *Germany*, and several books of his *Annals*, a great part of Horace, some of Ovid, some of Caesar’s commentaries, in writing, besides a number of Tully’s orations… In Greek his progress has not been equal; yet he has studied morsels in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, in Plutarch’s *Lives*, and Lucian’s *Dialogues*, the choice of Hercules in Xenophon, and lately he has gone through several books of Homer’s *Iliad*.”

**Thomas Jefferson (1782):** “The learning [of] Greek and Latin, I am told, is going into disuse in Europe. I know not what their manners and occupations call for: but it would be very ill-judged in us to follow their example in this instance.”

**Delegates Attending the Constitutional Convention**

[**Connecticut**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marryconnect.html)   
Ellsworth (Elsworth), Oliver\* (College of New Jersey) Johnson, William S. (Yale, M. A. Harvard)   
Sherman, Roger

[**Delaware**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marrydelaware.html)   
Bassett (Basset), Richard (Philadelphia)   
Bedford, Gunning, Jr. (College of New Jersey)   
Broom, Jacob   
Dickinson, John (LLD College of New Jersey)  
Read, George

[**Georgia**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marrygeorgia.html)   
Baldwin, Abraham (Yale)   
Few, William   
Houstoun, William\* (Inner Temple, London)   
Pierce, William L.\* (William & Mary)

[**Maryland**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marrymaryland.html)   
Carroll, Daniel (College of St. Omer, Netherlands)   
Jenifer, Daniel of St. Thomas   
Martin, Luther\* (College of New Jersey)   
McHenry, James (Dublin, Newark Academy in DE)  
Mercer, John F.\* (William & Mary)

[**Massachusetts**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marrymass.html)   
Gerry, Elbridge\* (Harvard)  
Gorham, Nathaniel   
King, Rufus (Harvard)   
Strong, Caleb\* (Harvard)

[**New Hampshire**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marrynewhamp.html)   
Gilman, Nicholas   
Langdon, John

[**New Jersey**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marrynewjers.html)   
Brearly (Brearley), David (College of New Jersey)   
Dayton, Jonathan (College of New Jersey)   
Houston, William C.\* (College of New Jersey)  
Livingston, William (Yale)  
Paterson (Patterson), William (College of New Jersey)

[**New York**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marrynewyork.html)   
Hamilton, Alexander (King’s College)

Lansing, John, Jr.\*   
Yates, Robert \*

[**North Carolina**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marrynorthcar.html)   
Blount, William   
Davie, William R.\* (College of New Jersey)   
Martin, Alexander \* (College of New Jersey)   
Spaight, Richard D. (University Glasgow)  
Williamson, Hugh (College of Philadelphia)

[**Pennsylvania**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marrypenn.html)   
Clymer, George   
Fitzsimons, Thomas   
Franklin, Benjamin   
Ingersoll, Jared (Yale)   
Mifflin, Thomas (University of Pennsylvania)  
Morris, Gouverneur (King’s College)  
Morris, Robert   
Wilson, James (St. Andrews, Edinburgh, Glasgow)

[**South Carolina**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marrysouthcar.html)   
Butler, Pierce   
Pinckney, Charles   
Pinckney, Charles Cotesworth (Oxford, Middle Temple)  
Rutledge, John (Middle Temple)

**Rhode Island**   
Rhode Island did not send any delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

[**Virginia**](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/conlaw/marryvirginia.html)   
Blair, John (William & Mary, Middle Temple)   
Madison, James (College of New Jersey)  
Mason, George \*   
McClurg, James\* (William & Mary, Edinburgh)  
Randolph, Edmund J.\* (William & Mary)  
Washington, George   
Wythe, George\*

*\* indicates delegates who did not sign the Constitution*

**Source:** <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/convention/delegates/>