From Oxford to Williamsburg: The Evolution of Legal Education and Law Libraries Across the Pond

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Repository Citation
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From Oxford to Williamsburg

The Evolution of Legal Education and Law Libraries Across the Pond

James S. Heller
The Wolf Law Library
The College of William & Mary in Virginia
Oxford & Williamsburg linked
Maps of Early Virginia
William & Mary’s Presidential Students

1. George Washington 1789-1797
3. Thomas Jefferson 1801-1809
5. James Monroe 1817-1825
10. John Tyler 1841-1845
The Law Program at William & Mary

- Founding Stage (1779-1861)
- Stage of Decline (1861-1920’s)
- Struggling Revival Era (1920’s-1970’s)
- Modern Era (1980-present)
Inns of Court
George Wythe
1726-1806
George Wythe House
Williamsburg, Virginia
The Wren Building
College of William & Mary
IN CONGRESS. JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

[Text of the Declaration of Independence]

George Wythe
John Marshall
Commonwealth v. Caton & al. 1782

November.

The court of appeals had jurisdiction in criminal cases adjourned thither from the general court.
The treason law of 1776 was constitutional; and the house of delegates could not, without the concurrence of the senate, pardon three persons condemned under it by the general court.

This case came before the court* by adjournment from the general court; and was as follows:

John Caton, Joshua Hopkins and John Lamb were condemned for treason, by the general court, under the act of assembly concerning that offence, passed in 1776, which takes from the executive, the power of granting pardon in such cases.† The house of delegates by resolution of the 18th of June, 1782, granted them a pardon, and sent it to the senate for concurrence; which they refused. The men, however, were not executed, but continued in jail under the sentence; and, in October 1782, the attorney general, moved in the general court, that execution of the judgment might be awarded. The prisoners pleaded the pardon granted by the house of delegates: The attorney general denied the validity of the pardon, as the senate had not concurred in it; and the general court adjourned the case, for novelty and difficulty, to the court of appeals.

*Which at that time consisted of the judges of the high court of chancery; those of the general court; and those of the admiralty assembled together. Ch. Res. 109. And the sitting members, upon the present occasion, were Edward Pendleton, George Wythe and John Blair, judges of the high court of chancery: Paul Carrington, Bartholemaeus Dandridge, Peter Lymo and James Mercer, judges of the general court: and Richard Cary, one of the judges of the court of admiralty.

†The words of the act are, "The governor, or, in case of his death, inability, or necessary absence, the councillor who acts as president, shall in no wise have or exercise a right of granting pardon to any person or persons convicted in manner aforesaid, but may suspend the execution until the meeting of the general assembly, who shall determine whether such person or persons are proper objects of mercy or not, and order accordingly." Ch. Res. 40.
Pointing to the constitution, I will say to them, here is the limit of your authority; and hither shall you go, but no further.

Commonwealth v. Caton, 8 Va. 5 (1782)
Books Wythe Used in Teaching
The Colonial Capital
Books Tucker used in Teaching
Tucker’s Blackstone
Nathaniel Beverly Tucker
Wren Building during the American Civil War
Legal Education 1850 - 1921

- Many more law schools
  - 1850: 18
  - 1900: 96
  - 1920: 140

- Socratic Method of Teaching

- Accrediting Bodies
  - 1900: Association of American Law Schools
  - 1921: American Bar Association
James Blair Hall
Law Degree Discontinued At W. & M.

WILLIAMSBURG board of visitors voted to discontinue law school of William and Ma- 

1939

Plan to Drop Law School Protested

The board of visitors voted to discontinue the law school at the University of William and Mary after the 1939 academic year.

Saturday, June 3, 1939

Law School At W. & M. To Be Kept, Developed

Visitors Board Reverses Itself Under Pressure

The board of visitors at the University of William and Mary reversed its decision to discontinue the law school, which was faced with closing due to the drought of 1939.

Judge Arthur

Judge Roy William Arthur of Wytheville, Virginia, proposed to continue the law school, pointing out that it would serve the area and would not duplicate other law schools.

Judge Arthur, who is also a professor at the school, said the decision to close the law school was based on the drought and the need to save money rather than on the quality of the school.

Would Teach First Jurisprudence

The board proposed to continue the law school and offer courses in first-year, second-year, and third-year jurisprudence.

The board also proposed to offer courses in law school administration and law school administration and law school administration.

They are five or six law schools in the area and a number of law schools in the area and a number of law schools in the area.

The resolution adopted by the board on June 3, 1939, said that the law school should be kept open and that the board should be allowed to make all necessary appointments and develop the law school.
Dudley Warner Woodbridge
Bryan Hall
Davis Y. Paschall
Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

Proverbs 22:28
Marshall-Wythe Hall, Wren Building, James Blair Hall
William B. Spong
James S. Heller
Pool and Ping-Pong Lounge
Nicholas St. George Rare Book Room
Browse Research and Scholarship

- Browse all collections
- Archives and Law School History
- Conferences, Events, and Lectures
- Faculty Scholarship
- Law School Journals and Publications
- The Wolf Law Library

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Scholarship Repository Reaches 1,000,000 downloads (May 9, 2012).
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