

EDUCATION IN AMERICA'S HISTORY

DEUT 6:6-9; 18-25

The founding fathers certainly felt the need to follow the example of Israel in teaching their children about their heritage as well as the mighty works and holy laws of the Lord. Out of that felt need arose the educational system that exists in our world today. We should know the importance of Christianity in developing that system of education and what changes have taken place in education in America.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF COLONIAL EDUCATION.

The Old Satan Deluder Acts of 1647 was passed in Massachusetts and became the first law in America requiring public education.

It being one chief project of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times by keeping them in an unknown tongue, so in these latter times by persuading from the use of tongues, that so that at least the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded and corrupted with false glosses of saint-seeming deceivers; and to the end that learning may not be buried in the grave of our forefathers, in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors.

It is therefore ordered that every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to fifty households shall forthwith appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read, whose wages shall be paid either by the parents or masters of such children, or by the inhabitants in general, by way of supply, as the major part of those that order the prudentials of the town shall appoint; provided those that send their children be not oppressed by paying much more than they can have them taught for in other towns.

And it is further ordered, that when any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families or householders, they shall set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university, provided that if any town neglect the performance hereof above one year that every such town shall pay 5 pounds to the next school till they shall perform this order.

The First Book Printed in what is not the United States was the Bay Song Book which was the Book of Psalms. It was printed in 1640 just two years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock.

II. THE ASPECTS OF COLONIAL EDUCATION.

A. Elementary Education.

1. The importance of elementary education . (See Preceding).
2. Materials used in elementary education.
 - a. The Hornbook contained the alphabet, Lord's prayer and statements of Christian doctrine.
3. The New England Primer used rhymes to teach the alphabet and contained the common bedtime prayer that we know today.
Ex. – In Adam's fall we sinned all. Heaven to find the Bible mind.

B. Secondary Education.

1. Donald Tewksbury in *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War* wrote that 92 percent of the 182 colleges and universities were founded by Christian denominations.
2. Requirements for Harvard. See Gary DeMar, *America's Christian History*, p. 102-103.

III. THE IMPACT OF COLONIAL EDUCATION

A. The World View of the Founding and Early Fathers of our Nation.

* They believed in the Trinitarian God presented in the Bible and Biblical morality. *

B. The Example of Rev. John Witherspoon the first president of what is now Princeton University and one of the signors of the Declaration of Independence.

1. He taught and trained 1 president, 1 vice president, 21 senators, 29 representatives, 56 state legislators, and 33 judges of who 3 became Supreme Court Justices.
2. His best known student was James Madison who is known as the Father of the Constitution and became the fourth president of the United States.
 - a. Madison, as all college graduates of that day had a solid theological and Biblical education.
 - b. He remained an extra year at the university where he translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek to English.

The record is clear that Christianity played a major role in the development of education in the colonies and that education shaped the minds of our founding fathers.

