

*The Harvard College Library
and Its Users, 1762–1764:
Reassessing the Relevance of Colonial
American College Libraries*

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COLLEGE LIBRARIES HAVE LONG SERVED as convenient symbols of learned culture in the British North American colonies. The libraries of the nine colleges founded before the American Revolution—Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, Princeton, Columbia (King’s), Pennsylvania, Brown (College of Rhode Island), Rutgers, and Dartmouth—share similar early histories of slow and uncertain growth; generous, committed donors offsetting the virtual absence of institutional resources; small, uneven, and only partly relevant collections heavily freighted with

A preliminary version of this essay was presented on September 30, 2006, at ‘The Atlantic World of Print in the Age of Franklin,’ a symposium organized by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, the University of Pennsylvania; I am indebted to David D. Hall for his perceptive comments. Professor Gerhard F. Strasser and Dr. Thomas Stäcker kindly invited me to present a revised version on September 7, 2007, at the symposium ‘Bibliotheken und ihre Nutzer: der Zugang zu Buchbeständen von 1650–1850,’ convened at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel. I am deeply grateful to the symposium participants and to the Herzog August Bibliothek for their support and comments. I owe a particular debt to the Harvard University Archives for granting me extended access to the Harvard College Library loan register for 1762–1764. Other Harvard libraries, especially the Harvard College Library, have generously supported my research in various ways, as have the American Antiquarian Society, Roger E. Stoddard, Kenneth E. Carpenter, and the late William H. Bond. All errors are exclusively my own.

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theology and outdated works; strict regulations imperfectly enforced; and limited access granted only to the few, with undergraduates barred from the tattered treasures throughout much of their college residency.¹

In one sense their contemporary significance is clear: college libraries were accorded a central, if largely symbolic place in the institutions envisioned by their founders, though the full realization of their mission was long delayed by inadequate resources. Hence historians for the most part have been skeptical that colonial college libraries played a significant role either in instruction or in students' personal reading. Louis Shores defined the field with his 1935 study, *Origins of the American College Library 1638-1800*. Using printed and manuscript catalogues, library regulations, and anecdotal evidence in the absence of borrowing records, he concluded that libraries served the colleges' primary mission—'training for the ministry'—well enough, though the rise of independent student literary society libraries after the American Revolution dramatically exposed the inadequacy of college library collections.² Concurrently Samuel Eliot Morison was mining records for his history of seventeenth-century Harvard. He concluded that when seen within the larger institutional context, the early Harvard College Library 'played very little part in the undergraduate's course' as it 'was used mostly by graduate students.' In Morison's view, the library did not have a significant impact on undergraduate education until well into the nineteenth century.³

1. For the literature on colonial American college libraries, see Donald G. Davis, Jr., and John Mark Tucker, *American Library History: A Comprehensive Guide to the Literature* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 1989), 127-63, and David S. Zubatsky, *The History of American Colleges and Their Libraries in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Bibliographical Essay* ([Urbana, Ill.]: University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science, 1979). Standard syntheses include Louis Shores, *Origins of the American College Library 1638-1800* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1935), and Joe Walker Kraus, 'Book Collections of Five Colonial College Libraries: A Subject Analysis,' Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, Urbana, 1960.

2. Shores, *Origins of the American College Library*, 230-32.

3. Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard 1636-1936* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), 32; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 270.

Later scholarship on colonial college libraries focused more intently on their printed catalogues—the most revealing witnesses among a pitifully small corpus of primary sources. Hence Louis B. Wright, in assuming that library relevance sprang directly from collection content, with little regard for such factors as access restrictions, took a positive view. If some colleges had weak collections, '[b]y the middle of the eighteenth century, the libraries of Harvard and Yale were sufficiently large and varied to play a significant part in the cultural development of their students, faculties, and such others who were fortunate enough to have access.'⁴ Wright's view was seconded by Joe W. Kraus, whose 1960 doctoral dissertation analyzed in considerable detail the pre-1800 library collections of Harvard, Yale, William & Mary, Princeton, and Brown. Kraus assessed these collections favorably: 'library resources were neither as impoverished nor as narrow as one might suspect, and . . . the more important works of the time were available.' He found library use more difficult to judge, but by the mid-eighteenth century Yale's access policies were liberal, and seniors were borrowing frequently from Harvard's library at the time of the 1764 fire.⁵

More recently historians have redirected their attention to the libraries' place within their respective colleges and the wider world of colonial American book culture. Arthur Hamlin found evidence 'that few if any students, whether preparing for the ministry or with interests in other subjects, really had to use the library.'⁶ In an important review essay, James Gilreath summarized scholarly opinion as of the early 1980s: 'Unless further research

4. Louis B. Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies, 1607–1763* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 151.

5. Kraus, 'Book Collections of Five Colonial College Libraries,' 292–93; excerpted in Joe W. Kraus, 'The Book Collections of Early American College Libraries,' *Library Quarterly* 43 (1973): 142–59, quotation from 143. Another excerpt appeared in Joe W. Kraus, 'The Harvard Undergraduate Library of 1773,' *College and Research Libraries* 22 (1961): 247–52.

6. Arthur T. Hamlin, *The University Library in the United States: Its Origins and Development* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 21.

produces new evidence or insights, it may be that the irresistible conclusion in this matter is that colonial institutional libraries were unused warehouses of the discarded books of previous generations, rather than active agents in the promotion and circulation of ideas, at best reliquaries in those generations' reverence for the memory of their ancestors.' That judgment as to what Gilreath terms 'the passive role of institutional libraries' has since been ratified in the survey volume, *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, where college libraries recede almost to insignificance within a much broader and livelier eighteenth-century American book culture.⁷ James N. Green concurs, claiming that '[n]ot until the Revolutionary era [i.e. 1773 and after] did students regularly borrow books from Harvard's library.'⁸ Hugh Amory also agreed. If the mid-eighteenth century Harvard library 'resembl[ed] a rare-book library that is somehow assuming the airs of a core collection,' it was not without value, especially as a window on 'the books of an earlier generation and its interests.' 'Perhaps,' he mused in a playful riff on Archibald MacLeish, 'it took total [*sic*] destruction to awake Harvard's awareness of [the Library's] value, but before the 1764 fire, like a poem, the Library did not mean, but be.'⁹

Did colonial college libraries, in fact, 'be' and not 'mean,' that is, were they little used and largely irrelevant to the colleges' educational mission? Previous discussions of library use have been based almost exclusively upon indirect evidence, such as which books were available for borrowing, library regulations, anecdotal accounts, and records of private libraries owned by faculty and

7. James Gilreath, 'American Book Distribution,' in *Needs and Opportunities in the History of the Book: America, 1639-1876*, ed. David D. Hall and John B. Hench (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1987), 126-27; *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, ed. Hugh Amory and David D. Hall, vol. 1 of *A History of the Book in America* (2000; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), esp. 411-33.

8. James N. Green, 'Subscription Libraries and Commercial Circulating Libraries in Colonial Philadelphia and New York,' in *Institutions of Reading: the Social Life of Libraries in the United States*, ed. Thomas Augst and Kenneth Carpenter (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 57.

9. *The Printed Catalogues of the Harvard College Library 1723-1790*, ed. W. H. Bond and Hugh Amory (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1996), xxxvi-xxxvii.

students, which presumably provided what college libraries did not. Surprisingly, the one extant set of pre-Revolutionary college library loan records—those for the Harvard College Library covering the period from August 1762 to January 1764 and continuing largely unbroken from 1766 to 1897—have remained virtually unnoticed and unstudied.¹⁰ This essay analyzes a small subset—for the academic years 1762-63 and 1763-64, immediately preceding the devastating fire that destroyed more than 80 percent of the library—recording 1,164 loans to students, faculty, and outside borrowers. The data paint an exceptionally detailed picture of library use, affording us a much deeper understanding of what the Harvard College Library meant to its clientele.¹¹

II.

Historians have yet to study eighteenth-century American library loan records in much depth. In his seminal work on New England public libraries, Jesse Shera stated that '[a] considerable number of [loan] ledgers have been preserved, and they are a rich source for investigation of contemporary reading.' Yet he said little else about them, and few scholars have taken up Shera's invitation.¹² One must probe deeply in the literature for even a mention, let alone an analysis, of the extant eighteenth-century loan records. The Redwood Library in Newport (R.I.), for example, possesses five registers dating from the mid-1750s until at least 1789, though the earlier ones are less informative because the

10. The Harvard College Library Charging Records are preserved in the Harvard University Archives under the call number UA III.50.60.

11. This essay is part of a larger project to document the Harvard College Library as it was at the time of the 1764 fire. Its major component is a catalogue of all volumes known to have survived the fire, with full descriptions of those volumes still extant at Harvard and elsewhere; other components include a list of titles added to the library subsequent to the 1735 library catalogue supplement, and an analysis of what the physical and documentary evidence reveals about the library's operation and use.

12. Jesse H. Shera, *Foundations of the Public Library: The Origins of the Public Library Movement in New England 1629-1855* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 114-15, 291-93. Shera's bibliography implies that he consulted ledgers primarily from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

borrower's signature was excised upon a volume's return. Two registers for the period 1762 to 1787 survive for the Union Library of Hatboro (Pa.), portions of which have been published with only the briefest analysis.¹³ Some loan records exist for the early years of the Library Company of Burlington (N.J.), and the New York Society Library preserves charging ledgers for 1789-1907.¹⁴ James N. Green has published a brief analysis of the loan register maintained by Thomas Bradford's Philadelphia circulating library for December 1771-December 1772.¹⁵

For colonial college libraries, the documentary trail is even weaker. Most suffered extensive losses of books and records through various combinations of fire, pillaging, and neglect. Hence historians have had to rely on what can be gleaned from the few printed catalogues, archival sources, and anecdotal evidence, which are far more extensive for Yale and Harvard than for the other libraries.

The Yale College Library, founded in 1701, had grown to approximately 2,500 volumes by the time its first catalogue was published in 1743.¹⁶ At first access was tightly restricted, though in 1740 new regulations opened the library two evenings a week and permitted juniors and seniors to borrow three volumes at a time for up to two months. By the 1750s freshmen and sophomores also could borrow selected works, as marked in the revised 1755 library catalogue, making Yale's lending policy the most inclusive

13. *Redwood Papers: A Bicentennial Collection*, ed. Lorraine Dexter and Alan Pryce-Jones (Newport, R.I.: Redwood Library and Athenaeum, 1976), 48-49, 117-18; Chester T. Hallenbeck, 'A Colonial Reading List,' *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 56 (1932): 289-340, which Kevin J. Hayes has analyzed for evidence of books borrowed by women (see Hayes, *A Colonial Woman's Bookshelf* [Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996], 12).

14. Howard L. Hughes, *Public Libraries in New Jersey, 1750-1850* ([Trenton, N. J.: New Jersey Library Association], 1965), 19; see Austin Baxter Keep, *History of the New York Society Library: With an Introductory Chapter on Libraries in Colonial New York* (New York: De Vinne Press, 1908), 191-92 for a brief memorandum noting some eighteenth-century loans, and <http://www.nysoclib.org/history1.html> for the charging ledgers, which Keep neglected to mention.

15. *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, 403.

16. Many of these volumes are extant and on public display at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

among its peers. Access came at a price, however, as students were charged a fee per volume borrowed in order to fund the librarian's salary. A distinctive feature was the number of works available in multiple copies—up to twelve in some instances. According to Richard Warch, the pre-1740 Yale library ‘... had both its serious and frivolous users. A few students obviously used the library to complement their studies and a few more to expand their intellectual horizons. Others borrowed books for extracurricular reasons. On the whole, however, the library was not an integral part of the college course of study.’ The post-1740 liberalization of library policies, however, probably altered the situation somewhat.¹⁷

Despite heavy losses in the 1764 fire, extant documentation for the early Harvard College Library is richer and much more revealing. Founded in 1638 with the bequest of John Harvard's books, the library grew rapidly during the 1670s and 1680s through several large donations. In 1667 the part-time position of librarian was established and formal regulations codified, and in 1676 the collection was moved to a central second-floor room in the newly constructed Harvard Hall. A new phase in the library's history began in 1719 with the first generous gifts from Thomas Hollis III, a wealthy London ironmonger and Baptist, who prevailed upon Harvard to issue a printed library catalogue in 1723, more as a way to inform potential English donors about what was lacking than to assist library users.¹⁸ Two printed supplements followed in 1725 and 1735. Copies could be obtained

17. Kraus, ‘Book Collections of Five Colonial College Libraries,’ 82–86, 238; Anne S. Pratt and Andrew Keogh, ‘The Yale Library of 1742,’ *Yale University Library Gazette* 15 (1940): 29–40; Richard Warch, *School of the Prophets: Yale College 1701–1740* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 31. The Yale Library printed catalogues of 1743, 1755, and 1791 have been reproduced in facsimile in *Eighteenth-Century Catalogues of the Yale College Library*, ed. James E. Mooney ([New Haven]: Yale University, Beinecke Library, 2001).

18. There is as yet no satisfactory history of the early Harvard College Library, as all accounts contain significant errors. The more useful general studies include Morison, *Founding of Harvard College*, 263–70; Samuel Eliot Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), 1: 285–97; *The Printed Catalogues of the Harvard College Library 1723–1790*, xi–xxxvii; and the relevant sections of Shores, *Origins of the American College Library*, and Kraus, ‘Book Collections of Five Colonial College Libraries.’

locally from the Boston publisher and, after 1740 students could purchase them from the college. The catalogue's unique arrangement—by bibliographical format, and within each format alphabetically by first letter of the author or title and then numerically by shelf mark—was well suited neither for locating library materials nor for analyzing the library's content.¹⁹ Morison provided an approximate volume count of 3,516 and a subject breakdown for the 1723 catalogue. Kraus made a more detailed analysis and added useful statistics for the 1725 and 1735 supplements. Per Kraus's count, by 1735 the Harvard library contained 3,340 titles in approximately 4,100 volumes, having grown 15 percent in size since 1723.²⁰ My own analysis of the catalogues has uncovered some duplicate entries which lower the volume counts to 3,455 (1723), 3,701 (1725), and 4,068 (1735). However, the catalogues—especially the poorly prepared 1735 supplement—can be shown to be incomplete on the basis of missing shelf marks. If one simply notes the highest recorded number on each shelf in all 26 bookcases, the total implied number of volumes in 1735 would be 4,389, though the actual total would have been slightly lower due to volumes lost and not replaced.

The next complete Harvard library catalogue was not published until 1790. In the absence of other evidence, historians have tended to view the 1764 library collection as essentially static, little changed from 1735, despite contemporary accounts that the fire destroyed a library of 'above five thousand volumes.'²¹ One can test this claim by taking from the shelf marks of books listed in the 1762–1764 loan register the highest recorded number on each shelf in what were by then twenty-nine book-

19. The 1723 catalogue and its supplements, together with the catalogues of 1773 and 1790, are reproduced in facsimile and indexed in *The Printed Catalogues of the Harvard College Library 1723–1790*; for Hugh Amory's detailed printing and publishing history of the catalogue, see xxv–xxxviii.

20. Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, 1: 295; Kraus, 'Book Collections of Five Colonial College Libraries,' 8, 112–43.

21. *An Account of the Fire at Harvard-College, in Cambridge; With the Loss Sustained Thereby* (Boston: R. and S. Draper, 1764).

cases. To this total—4,881 volumes—should be added another 200 volumes known to have been donated or purchased before the fire, but not yet added to the shelves and available for loan. At approximately 5,100 volumes, then, the Harvard College Library was by 1764 the largest in the North American colonies, having grown by a rather modest 15 percent since 1735.

Historians have used a variety of evidence to shed light on how the early Harvard library was used. The Harvard Corporation records, for instance, note the occasional extraordinary loan, such as its approval on March 26, 1754, '[t]hat the Revd. Mr. Clap, Presdt. of Yale-College be allow'd to have the Loan of Dr. Ayliff's History of the University of Oxford & Millar's History of the University of Cambridge; He having by Letters desired that Favour.'²² Another fascinating glimpse is offered by newspaper and pamphlet responses to George Whitefield's charge that Harvard officials acquiesced in students' reading of 'Bad Books' by liberal divines such as 'Tillotson and Clark[e] . . . instead of Shepherd [and] Stoddard.' Harvard Professor Edward Wigglesworth wrote:

Now the surest Way to find this, is to examine what Books were then borrowed by the Scholars out of the [College] *Library*: For other Books they may easily conceal . . . from their *Tutors*. Now upon a particular Enquiry into the *Library Records* . . . it was found . . . that 'from the 28th Nov. 1732. to [June 1741] *Tillotson* had not been so much as once taken out of the *Library* by any *Undergraduate*; nor any of Dr. *Clark's* Works for above two Years: whereas *Owen, Baxter, Flavel, Bates, Howe, Doolittle, Willard, Watts, and Guyse* . . . have . . . been borrowed by *Undergraduates* during this whole Time; and that they are scarcely ever in the *Library*; and that these Books have been more commonly borrowed by the *Graduates*, than *Tillotson* and *Clark*. This Account . . . I have before me, attested by the *Library Keeper*.'²³

22. College Book VII, Harvard University Archives, UA I.5.15VT, 30. The actual copies borrowed (and returned) by Clap are still at Harvard.

23. Edward Wigglesworth, *A Letter to the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield, by Way of Reply to His Answer to the College Testimony Against Him and His Conduct* (Boston: T. Fleet, 1745), 30-31. Wigglesworth quotes imperfectly from an earlier defense by Thomas Bratle published in the *Boston Gazette*, June 22, 1741, 1.

As of 1741, loan registers for at least nine years would have been conveniently available, and an even more extensive series probably was lost in the 1764 fire.

Faculty and student diaries and notebooks also furnish useful evidence. The diary of Henry Flynt, who served as a Harvard tutor for a remarkable fifty-five years, notes his occasional borrowing of library volumes on behalf of students and friends, in addition to numerous loans from his personal collection of several hundred volumes. Flynt also loaned students his copy of the 1723 library catalogue, perhaps marked with recommended readings. The diary reveals that the college's textbook supply was stored in the library 'Scrutore' (writing desk) when not parceled out to students. These books, however, were neither under the librarian's control nor officially part of the library—useful evidence that the Harvard library was not linked to instruction as closely as Yale's, with its multiple copies, may have been.²⁴ Student notebooks and diaries frequently contain references to, or passages copied from, works known to have been in the Harvard library, though it is usually unclear whether students used the library copy or another.²⁵

Also of use are faculty and student library inventories. These records of private ownership are suggestive of which works the Harvard library did not offer, though their value lies more in delineating the potential universe of books available to students and their options for gaining access. In the mid-eighteenth century, books were ubiquitous among Harvard faculty and students: President Edward Holyoke possessed a large library, for example, and by 1766 tutor Ebenezer Thayer owned more than

24. Henry Flynt, *The Diary of Tutor Henry Flynt of Harvard College, 1675-1760*, ed. Edward T. Dunn (Buffalo, N.Y.: [Edward T. Dunn], 1978), 2(1): 542-49, 876, 1005, and 2(2): 1218-25; Thomas Jay Siegel, 'Governance and Curriculum at Harvard College in the 18th Century,' Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1990, 294.

25. See, for example Frederick C. Kilgour, 'The First Century of Scientific Books in the Harvard College Library,' *Harvard Library Notes* 3 (1939): 217-25; Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, 1: 296.

500 volumes and pamphlets.²⁶ That Harvard students were significant consumers of books is clear from the account book kept by Boston bookseller Jeremiah Condy from 1758 to 1770, which lists no fewer than 151 Harvard students as credit customers; Condy also maintained a one-shelf circulating library for local borrowers.²⁷ The 1764 fire that destroyed Harvard Hall and much of the library also consumed the belongings of those students living on the upper floors; their compensation claims include detailed inventories of at least fifteen student libraries, ranging from approximately ten to some seventy-five volumes. There were no student societies, with or without circulating library collections, at Harvard in 1764.²⁸

Library regulations reveal much about the intended use, and occasional abuse, of the Harvard library. Library laws were first codified in 1667, rewritten in 1736, and revised again in 1767 in light of the fire. The 1667 laws extended borrowing privileges to college

26. Siegel, 'Governance and Curriculum at Harvard College,' 300-15. Ebenezer Thayer, 'A Catalogue of Books Belonging to Ebenezer Thayer, Dec. 11th, 1755,' mss., American Antiquarian Society. Thayer updated his manuscript list until 1766, when he left Harvard to take up the pulpit at Hampton, N. H. Included are Thayer's memoranda on approximately forty loans made to individuals in and outside of Harvard, such as a 1756 loan to 'Mr John Adams of Braintree (Lawyer).'

27. Elizabeth Carroll Reilly, 'The Wages of Piety: The Boston Book Trade of Jeremy Condy,' in *Printing and Society in Early America*, ed. William L. Joyce, David D. Hall, Richard D. Brown, and John B. Hench (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1983), 83-131, esp. 108, 112, 117-20. Reilly's findings are restated and slightly revised in her 'Common and Learned Reader: Shared and Separate Spheres in Mid-Eighteenth-Century New England,' Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1994, 43-111. The Condy account book, at the American Antiquarian Society, records transactions with eight and thirteen members respectively of the Harvard classes of 1763 and 1764; other student purchases may be hidden under their father's name. Purchases ranged from two to nearly thirty volumes per student and were about evenly divided between textbooks (including eight sets of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*) and essays and belles lettres (four sets of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, three sets of Edward Young's works and *The Rambler*; two sets of the *Spectator*; one set of Shakespeare, and six subscriptions to the leading London periodicals).

28. Student library inventories are transcribed in F. Apthorp Foster, 'The Burning of Harvard Hall, 1764, and Its Consequences,' *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 14 (1913): 2-43, especially 26-43; their contents are partly summarized in Robert F. Seybolt, 'Student Libraries at Harvard, 1763-1764,' *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 28 (1935): 449-61.

officers, resident graduates, and seniors, though student loans were subject to presidential approval. The librarian was to be in attendance from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. to lend and receive books, maintaining written records in a loan register. The loan term was for one month, with all books called in every six months. The 1736 laws dropped the final provision, limited loans to three weeks and a maximum of three volumes at a time, and gave the president and faculty only a symbolic advisory role over seniors' borrowing. Seniors could request and return books only on specified Fridays, scheduled three weeks apart, between 11 and 2; they were not permitted to enter the library or browse, but had to transact their business at the door. For this privilege they were assessed a quarterly fee '[t]o repair damages done by borrowing Books,' rather than the per-volume fee charged at Yale. Cambridge residents unaffiliated with Harvard could apply for loan privileges.²⁹

Stipulations regarding mutilation and theft, as amended during the 1740s to forbid seniors the loan of books with plates, indicate much concern over library losses and student defacement. These fears were genuine, as a number of extant pre-fire volumes are missing plates or are adorned with early student juvenilia, often signed and dated. Volumes so annotated provide another rough measure of library use, though it is not clear whether these markings were added by students in the privacy of their studies or under other circumstances. Many annotations were the work of underclassmen, suggesting that they also had some kind of library access, or that seniors either knowingly or unknowingly made their loans available to others. Indeed, by the mid-1750s students were permitted to study occasionally in the library and perhaps to consult books.³⁰

29. Harvard College Records, pt. 1, *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 15 (1925): 129-34, 194-96.

30. Harvard College Records, pt. 2, *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 16 (1925): 789; Clifford K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society), 14 (1968): 146.

Libri crediti		Cap. No. Libr.
1763		
Tuller		
Sept. 3	Boyle's Works	16. 4. 26
Do	Do	18. 4. 29
Sept. 25	Dele's Description of Man.	16. 2. 15
Sept. 25	Boerhaave's Med. Method.	6. 2. 17
Sept. 25	Boerhaave's admodum sanctorum.	18. 6. 36
Nov. 3	Boerhaave's de Morb. Cat. Caus.	18. 2. 45
Sept.	Tuller's de Arte Med. Practic.	18. 1. 6
	Tuller's de Arte Med. Practic.	27. 1. 0

Libri redditi		Cap. No. Libr.
1763		
Tuller		
Oct. 11	Boyle's Works	16. 4. 26
Do	Do	18. 4. 29
Sept. 25	Dele's Description of Man.	16. 2. 15
Nov. 3	Boerhaave's admodum sanctorum.	18. 6. 36
Nov. 3	Boerhaave's de Morb. Cat. Caus.	18. 2. 45
Sept.	Tuller's de Arte Med. Practic.	18. 1. 6
Sept.	Tuller's de Arte Med. Practic.	27. 1. 0
	returned	

Scatch		No. 99 7 2
1763		
Sept. 12	Boerhaave's de Morb. Cat. Caus.	18. 2. 15
Sept. 12	Boerhaave's de Arte Med. Practic.	27. 1. 0
Sept. 12	Boerhaave's admodum sanctorum.	18. 6. 36
Nov. 3	Boerhaave's de Morb. Cat. Caus.	18. 2. 45
Sept. 12	Boerhaave's de Arte Med. Practic.	27. 1. 0
Sept. 12	Boerhaave's admodum sanctorum.	18. 6. 36
	returned	

Scatch		No. 99 7 2
1763		
Sept. 25	Boerhaave's de Morb. Cat. Caus.	18. 2. 15
Sept. 25	Boerhaave's de Arte Med. Practic.	27. 1. 0
Sept. 25	Boerhaave's admodum sanctorum.	18. 6. 36
Nov. 3	Boerhaave's de Morb. Cat. Caus.	18. 2. 45
Sept. 25	Boerhaave's de Arte Med. Practic.	27. 1. 0
Sept. 25	Boerhaave's admodum sanctorum.	18. 6. 36
	returned	

Kriegg		No. 99 7 2
1763		
Sept. 3	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
Sept. 3	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
Sept. 25	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
Sept. 25	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
Nov. 3	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
	returned	

Kriegg		No. 99 7 2
1763		
Sept. 3	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
Sept. 25	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
Oct. 28	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
Nov. 3	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
	returned	

Kriegg		No. 99 7 2
1763		
Sept. 25	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
Sept. 25	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
	returned	

Kriegg		No. 99 7 2
1763		
Nov. 3	Watts' de Arte Med. Practic.	25. 4. 27
	returned	

This opening from the Harvard College Library loan register lists volumes borrowed and returned during 1763-1764 by three seniors from the class of 1764. Harvard University Archives, UAIII 50.15.60 VT, 1762-1763, fol. 41v-42r

Another concern was the persistent disinclination of non-student borrowers to return library volumes.³¹ The 1723 library catalogue, for example, indicated missing works—seventy-four titles in all—with an asterisk, yet another rough indication of library use.³² When a librarian resigned, it became customary for a committee appointed by the Harvard Corporation to review the loan register and inventory the collection, advertising in Boston newspapers if necessary for the return of books.³³ In 1759 the Corporation amended the library laws so that no person, regardless of rank, could keep any book longer than three months.³⁴

The library laws were thoroughly revised in 1767 and in general expanded access for all patrons. Faculty could borrow six volumes at a time and keep them for three months. Juniors could now borrow—three volumes at a time for six weeks—though access was still limited to every third Friday during term, and both juniors and seniors had to select from a newly formed ‘common use’ collection instead of from the main collection.³⁵ In sum, even after the 1764 fire student access to the Harvard library remained closely regulated and sharply limited with browsing forbidden and borrowing restricted to specific days.

Two documents either preserved or prepared because of the fire have made it possible to reconstruct library use in great detail. The first document, ‘A List of the Books belonging to the late Library of Harvard College that were in the Hands of the Overseers, Governors & Students of the College & escap’d the

31. This was far less of a problem for students, who had to settle all college accounts before receiving their degrees.

32. Kraus, ‘Book Collections of Five Colonial College Libraries,’ 239. Interestingly, at least ten of these titles were subsequently recovered, for the 1762–64 loan register notes their having been borrowed at that time.

33. In 1753 a young John Adams assisted in one such effort. John Adams, *The Earliest Diary of John Adams*, ed. L. H. Butterfield (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 47.

34. College Book VII, Harvard University Archives, 75.

35. Harvard College Records, pt. 3, *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 31 (1935): 369–75. Juniors and seniors could borrow selected titles from the main collection with the written permission of ‘the President, one Professor & one Tutor.’

flames,' went unnoticed by historians until the early 1930s. It is a fair copy, prepared in 1764 by Librarian Andrew Eliot from intermediate drafts, of all volumes on loan at the time of the fire. The document lists 404 volumes arranged by bibliographical format, and within each format by the social position of the borrower, its principal source being the loan register. Each entry provides the date of borrowing, a brief author and title, volume number if part of a multivolume set, and the borrower's surname; there is no indication of which volumes were eventually returned.³⁶ Kraus recognized the list's value, and his unpublished analysis is by far the most detailed snapshot of colonial college library borrowing we have had to date. The 404 volumes (approximately 260 titles) then on loan to faculty, members of Harvard's governing bodies, three students studying for their M.A. degrees, and 44 of 46 seniors constituted no less than 8 percent of library holdings. Nearly half of the student loans were theological works representing a diverse range of views; other subjects were much less in evidence, only two being works of English literature.³⁷

The second document, the 'Library Account Book,' is of much greater value, for it contains the official record of loans for the 1762-1763 and 1763-1764 academic years and of all previous outstanding loans.³⁸ Measuring 37 by 15 cm. and bound in stiffened marbled paper wrappers, the ledger contains 46 ruled

36. Harvard University Library, Lists of Books Charged Out at the Time of the Fire in 1764, Harvard University Archives, UA III.50.27.64VT. There are 409 entries (including five added by Harvard President Edward Holyoke), of which one is a duplicate and four are for books borrowed but burned in the fire because they were in student rooms in Harvard Hall; the corrected total of volumes which 'escap'd the flames' remains 404. Although commonly cited today, I have not seen the '404' figure in print prior to Alfred Claghorn Potter, *The Library of Harvard University: Descriptive and Historical Notes*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), 14. The document was first described and illustrated in C. E. Walton, *An Historical Prospect of Harvard College 1636-1936* (Boston: Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1936), 32-33, and plate facing p. 17. Portions of Eliot's intermediate drafts also survive in the Harvard University Archives under the same call number.

37. Kraus, 'Book Collections of Five Colonial College Libraries,' 254-59, 292-93.

38. The volume is the first in the series: Harvard University Library, Harvard College Library Charging Records, Harvard University Archives, UA III.50.60VT.

leaves. Librarian Stephen Sewall signed and dated it on December 18, 1762, shortly after succeeding Samuel Deane in the post.³⁹ It was customary for a retiring librarian to close his accounts, so Sewall presumably began a new register in order to record only those loans for which he was now responsible; and since the academic year was well advanced, Sewall would have had to recopy many entries from Deane's register. Beginning on fol. iv, Sewall arranged the entries in two-page openings. On the left-hand versos are recorded 'Libri crediti' (volumes loaned), for which a loan date, brief author and title,⁴⁰ and shelf mark are entered; each volume of a multivolume set is entered separately. The facing right-hand rectos contain records of 'Libri redditii' (volumes returned), together with the return date and the brief author/title and shelf mark repeated. Facing pages note loans and returns for the same borrower, listed in the order borrowed and returned, which were not necessarily the same.

The first six openings (fols. 1v-7r) were reserved for borrowers active before August 1762, hence they mostly record loans (none to undergraduates) made before that time and not yet returned; some date to 1742. Each borrower was allotted a certain amount of space in the register—more for the active borrowers—their placement determined by social standing. First were the Massachusetts governor and council members, followed by the Harvard president, members of the Harvard Corporation and Board of Overseers, professors, tutors, and graduates in residence for independent study toward the M.A. degree. Borrowers are identified only by surname and sometimes a Latin title of rank, though they can be fully identified through other records. The next nineteen openings (fols. 7v-26r) were reserved for new borrowers active

39. Sewall was appointed on November 16, 1762. See College Book VII, Harvard University Archives, 101. The ledger is likely the 'Blank Book ruled marble d[elivere]d Steph. Sewall for the Library' sold to Harvard by Boston bookseller Jeremiah Condy on August 21, 1762, for 1s. 9½d. .; see Condy's account book for 1759-1770, American Antiquarian Society, fol. 127v.

40. Although the author and title information sometimes matched that provided in the printed catalogue or stamped on the spine, it was usually the librarian's ad hoc description.

during the 1762-1763 academic year with entries again arranged by social rank. Seniors are listed three to an opening, per the official class standing determined during the freshman year; at the end come three rusticated students from the class of 1762 who were allowed to complete their studies with the class of 1763. When extra space was needed, a borrower's record was continued on another page and cross-referenced.

Andrew Eliot signed the register on September 9, 1763, three days before the Harvard Corporation formally approved his appointment as librarian.⁴¹ Probably because it had sufficient space for another year's loans, Eliot simply continued Sewall's register rather than begin a new one, and all subsequent entries are in Eliot's hand. Sixteen openings (fols. 26v-42r, including a blank opening for overflow) were reserved for the 1763-1764 academic year; all of the new borrowers were seniors, again arranged by class standing. The few remaining pages contain miscellaneous post-fire memoranda, with Eliot's notations of returned books extending into 1766.

Apart from occasional shelf mark errors, the loan register is generally accurate. Information tends to be fuller and more carefully entered on the 'crediti' than on the 'redditi' side. Eliot's entries are decidedly less careful than Sewall's, especially for the period between November 1763 and January 1764, during which time loan dates are sometimes absent and other data not fully entered. Return dates are also problematic, especially for loans made to borrowers other than seniors, as Eliot often lumped many volumes under a single return date. Internal evidence, such as entries for volumes loaned again, apparently before having been returned by the previous borrower, reveals that many stated return dates cannot be correct. Sometimes Eliot provided a different return date in the 'List of the Books belonging to the late Library of Harvard College' than he had in the register. Clearly Eliot (and perhaps to some extent Sewall) did not update the register at the

41. College Book VII, Harvard University Archives, 110.

er of the Ci-	William Scables of Con-
	fract, Yorkshire.
Westminster	John Spencer
as <i>Westey</i>	David Spencer
London.	Robert Sedgewick
Mr	John Scott Senior.
ters of Bow-	Thomas Staples of London.
Gent.	Richard Smith of London.
is of London.	Simpson
Gent.	Scowen
	Edward Speight
	Abraham Swaine
f London.	Charles Stewart
	Edward Siffon
r vel Minor	Christopher Spicer
	Edward Spencer of Chil-
ent. of En-	ham in the County of
sex.	Kent, Gent.
r, Stationer.	Thomas Sedgewick of Lon-
n	don.
	Francis Sherwood, Gent.
	Ralph Smith
Mr	John <i>Scolley</i>
	Samuel Smith
	Styles, Merchant.
	Stephen Smith
of London.	Anthony Smith of Chance-
f London.	ry Lane, London.
auls Chain.	Madam Ann Sergifon
Surveyer of	Madam Ann Sergifon
Dock Yard	Moses Shank
	Richard Smith
	Mr John Sparrish
	Samuel Saunders
	Abraham Sperin of Bristol.
of London.	Serjeant Snape
	Mr. Edward Salesbury
of Sol:	The Reverend Dr. Clement San-
	key of Whitchurch, Shrop-
	shire.

Knave Junr. Sophister 1763
February 20
He is a son
of the ministers
Sons in the
Class

During the 1750s and 1760s, many Harvard students added marginalia to the library copy of Nicolas Fontaine's *History of the Old and New Testament* (London, 1700-1701). The subscribers' list has been heavily glossed, especially where names match or approximate those of students from the classes of 1763-1765. One name has been modified to John "Scolley" [i.e. Scollay, class of 1764], and annotated "Knave Junr. Sophister 1763 February 20 He is above the ministers Sons in the Class." Courtesy of Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, *fFC6.F7347.Eg690hc

time volumes were borrowed and returned; rather, entries were made later from notes or, for the two months preceding the fire, possibly in part from memory. As the loan register reveals, the concentrated periods during which seniors were permitted library access would have made it difficult for the librarian to fill out the register concurrently, and both Sewall and Eliot also served as college butler for more than 150 students and faculty—a far more demanding job than the part-time librarian position. Still, the register was updated more or less as books were borrowed and returned and not, as Thomas J. Siegel suggests, prepared from notes after the fire.⁴²

That the loan register has survived at all is somewhat of a mystery. Clearly it was not in the library when the fire started, three weeks into the winter vacation, nor could it have been in Eliot's Harvard Hall chamber, the contents of which burned along with his butler's accounts. Probably Eliot was away at that time, in which case he would have deposited the library key with the president or a tutor; perhaps he handed over the register for safekeeping as well.⁴³

III.

For this study the loan register entries have been entered into a database. Each of the 1,345 records represents the loan of a single volume.⁴⁴ Corrections to the information were made as necessary based upon internal and external evidence. Each volume was also

42. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates* 15 (1970): 108, 224-25; Siegel, 'Governance and Curriculum at Harvard College,' 316.

43. Harvard College Records, pt. 1, 130; Foster, 21-24. So far Thomas J. Siegel is the only historian to have examined the register, though his unpublished analysis (discussed below) is disappointingly brief. See 'Governance and Curriculum at Harvard College,' 317-20. The post-fire series of loan registers has received more attention; see Mark Olsen and Louis-Georges Harvey, 'Reading in Revolutionary Times: Book Borrowing from the Harvard College Library, 1773-1782,' *Harvard Library Bulletin*, n.s., 4 (1993): 57-72; also the brief mention in Albert Goodhue, Jr., 'The Reading of Harvard Students, 1770-1781, as Shown by the Records of the Speaking Club,' *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 73 (1937): 107-29, especially 112.

44. Included are fifteen loans omitted from the register but recorded in the 'List of the Books belonging to the late Library of Harvard College.'

identified by author, title, publication date, and edition to the extent possible per the 1723–1735 printed catalogue, the evidence of extant volumes still at Harvard, and other records. All told, at least 681 different editions⁴⁵ are represented in the loan register, a few in multiple copies; of these, only 13 works cannot be clearly identified, and in 118 instances the exact edition or issue is not certain.⁴⁶ The following analysis will focus almost exclusively on the 1,164 loans, of 585 separate editions, made during the 1762–1763 and 1763–1764 academic years.⁴⁷

The 181 loans made to borrowers other than seniors and still outstanding as of August 1762—some for as long as twenty years—constitute an unrepresentative subset, hence they have been separated out so as not to distort the data for each academic year. Of these volumes, approximately 140 still had not been returned by the time of the fire. In other words, nearly 3 percent of the entire collection was effectively unavailable for use by anyone else during the 1762–1763 and 1763–1764 academic years. Clearly the 1759 regulation limiting loans to a three-month maximum was necessary, though equally clearly it was not enforced. Non-student borrowers considered the Harvard library to some extent as a convenient source for books they wished to possess for the long term without purchasing. This practice significantly weakened the library's relevance for other users, especially students. Tutor Belcher Hancock, for instance, kept volumes one

45. The number of different works is somewhat lower, as some titles were present in multiple editions.

46. Works Recorded in the Harvard College Library Loan Register for 1762–1764, www.americanantiquarian.org/Publications/WhitesellHCL1764.pdf.

47. One significant caveat should be raised here. I have found at Harvard approximately seventy-five pre-fire volumes not recorded in the register as being on loan in 1764. The likeliest explanation for their survival is that most had been borrowed, as no volumes are said to have been salvaged from Harvard Hall itself. Some may have been borrowed by seniors, though more likely many were borrowed by non-seniors, who had readier library access; perhaps faculty had library keys and could remove books without the librarian's knowledge. Many could have been old loans, perhaps considered unrecoverable and therefore deleted from the loan register, which were eventually returned due to post-fire appeals by Harvard authorities. Their existence potentially undercounts the 1762–64 loan data by as much as 6 percent.

through six and eight of Pierre Bayle's ten-volume *Dictionary* from 1753 until August 1763; despite being mostly unavailable during the 1762-1763 academic year, the *Dictionary* was still the second most frequently borrowed title from 1762-1764. Likewise, the library's only set of John Locke's works was warehoused by tutor Ebenezer Thayer in 1759, and George Whitefield would no doubt have been pleased that most of Samuel Clarke's writings were safely removed from students' eyes in the early 1760s. Professor John Winthrop kept on long-term loan several of the best scientific works, including volumes of the *Philosophical Transactions* and Newton's *Opticks*. Possibly professors and tutors made some of these books available to students.

The academic years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764 are here defined as running from late August through commencement the following July.⁴⁸ The 1763-1764 year was shortened by half due to the January 1764 fire, following which the college remained closed into the summer and the library until April 1766. Hence any comparison between the two academic years must be made cautiously as, had not the fire intervened, the borrowing statistics for the latter would have been much higher and the trends perhaps different.

Each borrower was classified into one of five groups. 'Faculty and Tutors' is defined as the president, professors, tutors and librarian of Harvard.⁴⁹ 'Overseers' consists of members of Harvard's two governing bodies, the Corporation and Board of Overseers, except that faculty who also served on the Corporation are classed as 'Faculty.' The Board of Overseers counted among its members the Massachusetts governor, council, and Boston-area Congregational ministers. Non-Harvard individuals granted special borrowing privileges are classed as 'Other.' Only one person exercised this privilege during the early 1760s: the Reverend East Apthorp, sent from England in 1759 by the Society for the Propagation of the

48. A few loans made in late July 1762 to resident graduates have been added to the 1762-63 data.

49. Harvard's chief non-instructional employee, the steward, did not borrow library books.

Table 1. Number of Borrowers, By Borrower Status*Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764*

	Faculty & Tutors	Overseers	Other	Resident Graduates	Seniors	TOTAL
1762-1763	6	6	1	7	39	59
1763-1764	8	5	1	3	45	62
Number of Unique Borrowers	9	6	1	8	84	108

Gospel to establish an Anglican mission literally in plain view of Harvard College.⁵⁰ Harvard graduates who remained in residence while studying for the M.A. degree are classed as 'Resident Graduates.' Fourth-year undergraduates who had thereby earned borrowing privileges are classed as 'Seniors.'

The loan register reveals that the Harvard College Library was the domain of a select few (Table 1): 108 individuals (all male) borrowed from the library, 59 during 1762-1763 and 62 the following year. Each faculty member and resident graduate borrowed books, as did all but one eligible senior. Only a small minority of overseers borrowed, generally when they met in Cambridge rather than Boston, or when the Council or General Court met at Harvard.⁵¹ Few outsiders were granted loan privileges: apart from East Apthorp, the 'List of the Books belonging to the late Library of Harvard College' notes several undated loans to the prominent Boston lawyer Jeremiah Gridley. Hence the library's influence was very circumscribed, extending almost exclusively to Harvard faculty and students, and to a few prominent men of Cambridge and Boston. Its clientele, however, was steadily growing with the size of each entering class: the class of

50. Siegel, 'Governance and Curriculum at Harvard College,' 15, 125-26. On Apthorp, see Wendell Garrett, *Apthorp House 1760-1960* (Cambridge: Adams House, Harvard University, 1960), 3-21.

51. The General Court was meeting at Harvard Hall when it caught fire; Overseer James Bowdoin borrowed three books that very day.

Table 2. Volumes Loaned, By Borrower Status*Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764*

	1762-1763		1763-1764		TOTAL	
		%		%		%
Faculty	38	6.1	43	8.0	81	7.0
Overseers	43	6.9	28	5.2	71	6.1
Other	36	5.8	17	3.1	53	4.5
Resident						
Graduates	58	9.3	37	6.8	95	8.2
Seniors	448	71.9	416	76.9	864	74.2
TOTAL	623		541		1,164	

1764 was the second largest to matriculate by that time. A total of 1,164 volumes were loaned during the two years (Table 2): 623 in 1762-1763⁵² and 541 in 1763-1764. Faculty accounted for 81 loans (7.0 percent of the total), overseers for 71 (6.1 percent), Apthorp for 53 (4.5 percent, by far the largest single borrower), resident graduates for 95 (8.2 percent), and seniors for 864 (74.2 percent). Apart from Apthorp's singular borrowing, faculty and overseers made significantly less use of the library—five to six volumes per year on average—than did seniors and resident graduates, whose annual borrowing was similar in extent at approximately ten volumes apiece (Table 3).

Each loan was coded in the database per the volume's primary language, e.g., a Hebrew grammar with Latin text was coded 'Hebrew.' Polyglot volumes pose obvious problems which cannot be resolved here, other than to warn that exotic languages are slightly under-represented in Tables 4-5. Library loans during 1762-1763 and 1763-1764 were overwhelmingly of books in English (1,013 volumes, or 87.0 percent of the total), with Latin—

52. These include five volumes loaned during 1761 to three seniors who were punished by having their graduation delayed until 1763. In most of the following tables, these loans are silently added to the '1762-1763' row.

Table 3. Average Number of Volumes Loaned, By Borrower Status*Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764*

	Faculty & Tutors	Overseers	Other	Resident Graduates	Seniors	All Borrowers
1762-1763	6.3	6.1	36.0	8.3	11.5	10.4
1763-1764	5.4	5.1	17.0	12.3	9.2	8.7

then the universal language of scholarship—a distant second at 109 volumes (9.4 percent); all other languages constituted less than 4 percent. Approximately half of the Hebrew books were borrowed by Stephen Sewall who, in addition to his librarian and butler duties, was preparing a new Hebrew textbook for Harvard use.⁵³ While faculty and overseers borrowed Latin works with some frequency, students displayed a decided reluctance to do so despite their years of Latin instruction. Greek was all but ignored except by Apthorp, whose reading focused on the Church Fathers, even though most Harvard borrowers presumably had basic Greek competency. The tendency of borrowers to read (or not read) certain languages remained basically steady from one year to the next. What is striking is that more than 90 percent of student loans were of books in English, reaching a high of 95.7 percent among the class of 1764.

Given the predominance of English, the distribution of loans by the volumes' place of publication (Tables 6-7) is unsurprising. London, at 945 volumes (81.2 percent), was by far the most common town, with Boston and Oxford a very distant second, and other towns barely represented. Local imprints were not only scarce in the Harvard library—approximately sixty Boston titles appear in the 1723-1735 printed catalogue—but they were lightly used. Of the twenty-three different Boston imprints

53. Stephen Sewall, *An Hebrew Grammar* (Boston: R. and S. Draper, for the President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1763).

Table 4. Language of Volumes Loaned, By Borrower Status

Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764

	Faculty & Tutors		Overseers		Other		Resident Graduates		Seniors		TOTAL	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
Arabic	2	2.5									2	0.2
English	56	69.1	46	64.8	14	26.4	87	91.6	810	93.8	1013	87.0
French									4	0.5	4	0.3
Greek	2	2.5	1	1.4	9	17.0			3	0.3	15	1.3
Hebrew	11	13.6	1	1.4			4	4.2	3	0.3	19	1.6
Latin	9	11.1	23	32.4	29	54.7	4	4.2	44	5.1	109	9.4
Spanish					1	1.9					1	0.1
Syriac	1	1.2									1	0.1
TOTAL	81		71		53		95		864		1,164	

Table 5. Language of Volumes Loaned, By Year

Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764

	1762-1763		1763-1764		TOTAL	
		%		%		%
Arabic	2	0.3			2	0.2
English	532	85.4	481	88.9	1013	87.0
French	1	0.2	3	0.6	4	0.3
Greek	9	1.4	6	1.1	15	1.3
Hebrew	9	1.4	10	1.8	19	1.6
Latin	68	10.9	41	7.6	109	9.4
Spanish	1	0.2			1	0.1
Syriac	1	0.2			1	0.1
TOTAL	623		541		1,164	

loaned during 1762-64, primarily to seniors, most were sermons and such works as the *Massachusetts Acts and Laws* and Samuel Willard's *Compleat Body of Divinity*. Oxford imprints, again borrowed almost exclusively by seniors, tended to be mathematical and scientific texts or volumes of Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*.

When arranged by publication date of volumes borrowed (Tables 8-10),⁵⁴ the data display another clear trend: approximately 59 percent of volumes loaned were published after 1700, and 40 percent after 1720.⁵⁵ The tendency to borrow eighteenth-century imprints is even more apparent when viewed by borrower status (Table 9). Approximately 90 percent of loans to overseers and resident graduates were of books published after 1700;

54. Volumes for which the publication date is uncertain have been assigned to the likeliest chronological division whenever possible.

55. One can express this trend in another way. It has already been shown that the Harvard library contained at least 3,701 volumes in 1725 and approximately 4,900 available for borrowing in 1764; that is, at least 75 percent of the 1764 collection (and probably closer to 80 percent) was published before 1726, while only 66 percent of the volumes loaned in 1762-1764 were pre-1726 imprints.

Table 6. Place of Publication of Volumes Loaned, By Year*Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764*

	1762-1763		1763-1764		TOTAL	
		%		%		%
London	493	79.1	452	83.5	945	81.2
Boston	17	2.7	19	3.5	36	3.1
Oxford	21	3.4	13	2.4	34	2.9
Paris	9	1.5	8	1.5	17	1.5
Venice	7	1.1	8	1.5	15	1.3
Amsterdam	9	1.5	5	0.9	14	1.2
Basel	7	1.1	5	0.9	12	1.0
Other	60	9.6	31	5.8	91	7.8
TOTAL	623		541		1,164	

in the case of graduates, these were mainly recent editions of English divines, acquired through the offices of Thomas Hollis and his friends. Sixteenth-century editions were little used by any group, though Apthorp's perusal of the Church Fathers led him to borrow mostly pre-1701 works. Loans made to faculty and seniors display a more balanced distribution of publication dates, though again the trend is clearly toward the modern. Interestingly, the class of 1764 was somewhat more likely to borrow recent works than was the class of 1763 (Table 10). Though by no means enough evidence on which to posit an upward trend, it does underscore an important point echoed elsewhere in this essay: borrowing varied significantly among members of the two senior classes and was by no means uniform. Siegel concludes that as students were borrowing a fair number of seventeenth-century editions the library collection was out-of-date, that is, older works were requested because newer ones were not available.⁵⁶ Rather it might be noted, in an environment of relative

56. Siegel, 'Governance and Curriculum at Harvard College,' 317.

Table 7. Place of Publication of Volumes Loaned, By Borrower Status

Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764

	Faculty & Tutors		Overseers		Other		Resident Graduates		Seniors		TOTAL	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
London	58	71.6	49	69.0	12	22.7	86	90.5	740	85.6	945	81.2
Boston	1	1.2	2	2.8	2	3.8	4	4.2	27	3.1	36	3.1
Oxford			1	1.4	2	3.8	1	1.1	30	3.5	34	2.9
Paris	1	1.2	2	2.8	5	9.4			9	1.0	17	1.5
Venice	1	1.2	13	18.3					1	0.1	15	1.3
Amsterdam	2	2.5	2	2.8	5	9.4			5	0.6	14	1.2
Basel	5	6.2			1	1.9	1	1.1	5	0.6	12	1.0
Other	13	16.1	2	2.8	26	49.0	3	3.1	47	5.5	91	7.8
TOTAL	81		71		53		95		864		1,164	

Table 8. Publication Date of Volumes Loaned, By Year

Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764

	1762-1763		1763-1764		TOTAL	
		%		%		%
1518-1600	19	3.1	22	4.1	41	3.5
1601-1625	40	6.4	31	5.7	71	6.1
1626-1650	69	11.1	39	7.2	108	9.3
1651-1675	85	13.6	58	10.7	143	12.3
1676-1700	54	8.7	49	9.1	103	8.9
1701-1710	76	12.2	64	11.8	140	12.0
1711-1720	45	7.2	44	8.1	89	7.7
1721-1730	88	14.1	101	18.7	189	16.2
1731-1740	70	11.2	63	11.6	133	11.4
1741-1750	33	5.3	32	5.9	65	5.6
1751-1763	34	5.5	35	6.5	69	5.9
Unknown	10	1.6	3	0.6	13	1.1
TOTAL	623		541		1,164	

book scarcity, library users had to make do with what was available. There is some truth to this, in that undergraduates' interests in particular were perhaps not as well served as were those of other borrowers. But even if students may have found the collections inadequate, it is noteworthy that they were systematically scouring the library for any relevant volumes.

Each loan was coded in the database according to its primary subject matter. To facilitate comparison of my data with that collected by Kraus, Siegel, Mark Olsen, and Louis-Georges Harvey, I adopted their practice of using subject categories from the 1790 Harvard library catalogue, which arranged books under fifty-four subject headings.⁵⁷ I have condensed these down to twenty-four subjects, with the theological subjects separated and subtotaled in

57. The 1790 catalogue subjects headings (in Latin) are reproduced in *The Printed Catalogues of the Harvard College Library 1723-1790*, 167-69; for English translations and a statistical breakdown, see Olsen and Harvey, 'Reading in Revolutionary Times,' 61.

Table 9. Publication Date of Volumes Loaned, By Borrower Status

Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764

	Faculty & Tutors		Overseers		Other		Resident Graduates		Seniors		TOTAL	
		%		%		%		%		%		%
1518-1600	4	4.9			4	7.5	2	2.1	31	3.6	41	3.5
1601-1625	4	4.9			14	26.4	1	1.1	52	6.0	71	6.1
1626-1650	6	7.4			12	22.6			90	10.4	108	9.3
1651-1675	8	9.9	3	4.2	12	22.6	3	3.2	117	13.5	143	12.3
1676-1700	5	6.2	4	5.6	6	11.3	2	2.1	86	10.0	103	8.9
1701-1710	5	6.2	14	19.7	1	1.9	12	12.6	108	12.5	140	12.0
1711-1720	12	14.8	21	29.6			10	10.5	46	5.3	89	7.7
1721-1730	19	23.5	6	8.5	3	5.7	25	26.3	136	15.8	189	16.2
1731-1740	9	11.1	8	11.3			12	12.6	104	12.0	133	11.4
1741-1750	4	4.9	10	14.1			14	14.7	37	4.3	65	5.6
1751-1763	3	3.7	5	7.0			12	12.6	49	5.7	69	5.9
Unknown	2	2.5			1	1.9	2	2.1	8	0.9	13	1.1
TOTAL	81		71		53		95		864		1,164	

Table 10. Publication Date of Volumes Loaned to Seniors

Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764

	1762-1763		1763-1764		TOTAL	
		%		%		%
1518-1600	17	3.8	14	3.4	31	3.6
1601-1625	28	6.3	24	5.8	52	6.0
1626-1650	54	12.1	36	8.7	90	10.4
1651-1675	70	15.6	47	11.3	117	13.5
1676-1700	46	10.3	40	9.6	86	10.0
1701-1710	58	12.9	50	12.0	108	12.5
1711-1720	23	5.1	23	5.5	46	5.3
1721-1730	56	12.5	80	19.2	136	15.8
1731-1740	54	12.1	50	12.0	104	12.0
1741-1750	16	3.6	21	5.0	37	4.3
1751-1763	21	4.7	28	6.7	49	5.7
Unknown	5	1.1	3	0.7	8	0.9
TOTAL	448		416		864	

a general 'Religion' category (Tables 11-12).⁵⁸ Then each loan was assigned a subject based on that provided in the 1790 catalogue for the same edition (if that volume survived the fire, or if the library subsequently acquired another copy) or for another edition. If the work is absent from the 1790 catalogue, then I assigned the appropriate subject. Employing the 1790 classifications has the possible virtue of categorizing the books as contemporaries did, though many works classed as 'Miscellaneous' could easily have been assigned to other categories; hence some subjects are slightly under-represented in Tables 11-12.

As for borrowers' subject interests, Apthorp's loans are the most easily classified. He used the Harvard library almost exclusively as a theological reference collection, with nearly 87 percent of his fifty-three loans falling into the religion category. Overseers' use

58. Kraus and Siegel have combined the subjects in a somewhat different way.

Table 11. Subjects of Volumes Loaned, By Borrower Status

Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764

	Faculty & Tutors		Overseers		Other		Resident Graduates		Seniors		TOTAL	
	%		%		%		%		%		%	
Antiquities									6	0.7	6	0.5
Arts									7	0.8	7	0.6
Biography			1	1.4	1	1.9	5	5.2	46	5.3	53	4.6
Classical												
Authors	5	6.2	16	22.6	1	1.9			24	2.8	46	3.9
Economics									2	0.2	2	0.2
Geography & Travel												
History	7	8.6			2	3.8			17	1.9	17	1.5
Language	9	11.1			1	1.9	3	3.2	112	13.0	121	10.4
Law	1	1.2	2	2.8					10	1.1	23	2.0
Literature	2	2.5	2	2.8					10	1.1	13	1.1
Mathematics							2	2.1	39	4.6	43	3.7
Medicine	7	8.6	20	28.2			2	2.1	18	2.1	20	1.7
Miscellaneous	5	6.2	3	4.2	2	3.8	5	5.2	72	8.4	101	8.7
									46	5.3	61	5.2

Table 12. Subjects of Volumes Loaned to Seniors*Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764*

	1762-1763		1763-1764		TOTAL	
		%		%		%
Antiquities	6	1.3			6	0.7
Arts	6	1.3	1	0.2	7	0.8
Biography	19	4.3	27	6.5	46	5.3
Classical Authors	18	4.0	6	1.4	24	2.8
Economics	1	0.2	1	0.2	2	0.2
Geography & Travel	7	1.6	10	2.4	17	1.9
History	53	11.8	59	14.2	112	13.0
Language	3	0.7	7	1.7	10	1.1
Law	8	1.8	2	0.5	10	1.1
Literature	29	6.5	10	2.4	39	4.6
Mathematics	4	0.9	14	3.4	18	2.1
Medicine	44	9.8	28	6.7	72	8.4
Miscellaneous	25	5.6	21	5.0	46	5.3
Natural Science	3	0.7	9	2.2	12	1.4
Philosophy	19	4.3	18	4.3	37	4.3
Political Science	6	1.3			6	0.7
Rhetoric	1	0.2	2	0.5	3	0.3
Science	26	5.8	26	6.3	52	6.0
Bible	6	1.3	6	1.4	12	1.4
Critica Sacra	2	0.4	6	1.4	8	0.9
Church Fathers			4	1.0	4	0.5
Biblical History	8	1.8	11	2.7	19	2.2
Church History	7	1.6	11	2.7	18	2.1
Theology	147	32.8	137	32.9	284	32.9
RELIGION						
SUBTOTAL	170	37.9	175	42.1	345	40.0
TOTAL	448		416		864	

was more varied. Since most were ministers, the twenty-three volumes of religion (32.4 percent) borrowed is unsurprising, though their heavy borrowing of classical authors (22.6 percent) and especially medicine (28.2 percent) reveals that they relied on the library more for personal than professional reading. Faculty use was even more varied, though there is clear evidence of frequent loans related to the curriculum and few for personal reading. Stephen Sewall's use of the library in preparing a Hebrew textbook has already been noted; and despite having his own professorial and personal collections, Hollis Professor of Divinity Edward Wigglesworth frequently drew upon the library for theology and Biblical history. In other words, faculty tended to view, and use, the Harvard library as a purely academic, professional collection. Likewise, resident graduates borrowed mostly theological works (seventy-three volumes, 76.9 percent) appropriate for their independent reading toward the M.A. degree, while many of their remaining loans reflected other areas of the curriculum rather than personal interests.

Borrowing by Harvard seniors (Table 12) was notably diverse, with at least a few loans in each subject. Religion was by far the predominant category, accounting for 345 (40 percent) of all volumes loaned. Interestingly, however, seniors were far more likely than others to borrow works in history (112 volumes, 13.0 percent), science (52, 6.0 percent), biography and 'miscellaneous' (both 46, 5.3 percent), literature (39, 4.6 percent), philosophy (37, 4.3 percent), and mathematics (18, 2.1 percent); medicine was also heavily represented (72, 8.4 percent). Also of note are the significant differences in subject borrowing between the two senior classes: the class of 1763 showed more interest in belles-lettres, political science, law, and medicine, while the class of 1764 tended to favor theology, science, mathematics, and history.

That these variations are meaningful can be tested by comparing Table 12 with Table 13, which notes the primary future occupations

Table 13. Primary Occupation of Seniors After Graduation*Classes of 1763 and 1764*

	1763		1764		TOTAL	
		%		%		%
Minister	11	29.7	17	37.0	28	33.7
Merchant or Businessman	4	10.8	11	23.9	15	18.1
Teacher	3	5.1	3	6.5	6	7.2
Lawyer or Justice	7	18.9	5	10.9	12	14.4
Military	3	8.1	1	2.2	4	4.8
Physician	7	18.9	7	15.2	14	16.7
Government Official	2	5.4	1	2.2	3	3.6
Farmer			1	2.2	1	1.2
TOTAL	37		46		83	

Source: *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, v. 14-15.

of the seniors in each class.⁵⁹ Borrowing interests were roughly paralleled by future occupation, as members of the class of 1763 tended to enter professions other than the ministry or business. To approach the question in a different way, slightly more than half (38 of 72) of the medical volumes loaned to seniors were borrowed by future physicians, while slightly fewer than half (167 of 345) of the theological volumes were borrowed by future ministers. However, undergraduate reading was more eclectic than narrowly focused: of the 14 students in both classes who became physicians, only 38 of the 128 volumes they borrowed (30 percent) were medical; and of the 28 students entering the ministry, 167 of their 338 loans (49 percent) were theological. In sum, here is solid evidence that Harvard seniors directed their borrowing primarily toward diverse personal interests, and secondarily toward career preparation.

59. Occupations have been derived from the biographies in *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, v. 15-16.

The relation between seniors' library use and the Harvard curriculum is less clear. The general outlines of Harvard's early curriculum are well known: Morison described the seventeenth-century curriculum in detail, to which he added briefer notes on eighteenth-century reforms, which Siegel's unpublished dissertation covers in greater depth.⁶⁰ What we still lack for the mid-eighteenth century, however, is a clear understanding of which subjects were taught and their sequence during the four-year course, and of students' weekly schedules. As of 1726, President Wadsworth of Harvard noted that '[t]he Senior Sophisters, besides Arithmetick, recite Allsted's Geometry, Gassendus's Astronomy in ye mornings; go over the arts towards ye latter end of ye year; Ames Medulla on Saturdays; dispute once a week.'⁶¹ But substantial curricular and textbook changes were introduced in the 1740s and 1750s. By 1764 each class still received instruction in most subjects from a single tutor, supplemented by lectures from professors of divinity and natural philosophy. Seniors heard divinity lectures on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings as well as on Thursday afternoons, attended natural philosophy lectures in the spring, were instructed in belles-lettres and history on Saturday mornings, and also studied ethics and mathematics; in addition they prepared monthly disputations to enhance their oratorical skills.⁶² One can tease out some potential links between the curriculum and seniors' library use: students maintained an abiding interest in theology, they accounted for most loans in the areas of science, mathematics, and belles-lettres, and they evinced a strong regard for historical works. Seniors' reading, however, seemed driven much more by personal interests than by their

60. Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, 1: 139-284; Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard*, 29-31, 57-59, 89-90.

61. Quoted in Louis Franklin Snow, *The College Curriculum in the United States* ([New York?]: L.F. Snow, 1907), 33; Siegel ('Governance and Curriculum at Harvard College,' 280) believes that this statement describes the curriculum as it was well before 1726.

62. Siegel, 'Governance and Curriculum at Harvard College,' 238, 249, 266, 282, 437-38.

Table 14. Harvard College Senior Class 1762-1763

	Volumes Borrowed	Class Rank	Primary Occupation
Hooper	26	1	Merchant
Waterman	26	32	Teacher
A. Putnam	24	26	Physician
C. Gannett	21	31	Minister
Dana	20	25	Minister
Ward	20	24	Minister
Marrett	19	35	Minister
Quincy	19	4	Lawyer
Cooper	18	36	Teacher
Scales	16	12	Lawyer
Angier	15	8	Minister
Coggin	15	39	Teacher
T. Gannett	14	30	Physician
Noyes	14	7	Physician
Bowen	13	34	Physician
Cary	13	18	Military
J. Parker	12	38	Physician
Pickering	12	23	Government
Eaton	11	10	Minister
N. Parker	11	37	Minister
Porter	10	29	Lawyer
Chandler	9	3	Lawyer/Justice
Cushing	9	9	Lawyer/Justice
Dolbeare	9	15	Merchant
Perley	9	33	Minister
Brown	8	28	Minister
Stoddard	8	5	Merchant
Balch	7	11	Minister
Cabot	6	22	Merchant
Blowers	5	21	Lawyer/Justice
Fisher	5	17	Minister
T. Putnam	5	27	Military
Huntington	4	2	Military
Bliss	3	21	Lawyer/Justice
Henshaw	3	6	Government
Upham	3	19	Lawyer

	Volumes Borrowed	Class Rank	Primary Occupation
Hunt	2	21	Minister
Jeffries	2	13	Physician
White	2	14	Physician
TOTAL	448		

Average number of volumes borrowed: 11.5

Class rank and primary occupation taken from *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, v. 14

course of study. Not only did some students borrow to prepare for post-college careers, but others did so mainly to transcend the curriculum, reading in areas such as medicine, literature, arts, history, and biography not well covered therein.

The use which individual students made of the Harvard library varied widely. The thirty-nine and forty-six seniors respectively in the classes of 1763 and 1764 are listed in Tables 14-15, with the number of volumes each borrowed and their class standing, that is, the social rank assigned during the freshman year. This rank governed many aspects of college life, such as the order in which students recited and were served in commons, even the order in which they visited the library.⁶³ Also provided is each student's future primary occupation.⁶⁴ During the 1762-1763 academic year, senior borrowing ranged from 2 to 26 volumes, averaging 11.5 books per student. In approximately half the time, seniors in the class of 1764 borrowed from 2 to 19 volumes apiece (none in one case), averaging 9.0 books per student; had not the fire intervened, their borrowing probably would have been significantly higher than that of the previous class. The maximum number of volumes

63. Class ranks have been taken from *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, vols. 15 and 16.

64. A few students achieved special prominence. The class of 1763 included Josiah Quincy the 'Patriot' and future Secretary of State Timothy Pickering, while Caleb Strong, a member of the 1787 Constitutional Convention and later Massachusetts senator and governor, belonged to the class of 1764. Quincy's library use is described in David R. Whitesell, 'Harvard College Library Books Borrowed by Josiah Quincy Jr. 1762-1763,' in *Portrait of a Patriot: The Major Political and Legal Papers of Josiah Quincy Junior*, ed. Daniel R. Coquillette and Neil L. York (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2007), 2: 439-44.

Table 15. Harvard College Senior Class 1763-1764

	Volumes Borrowed	Class Rank	Primary Occupation
J. Hunt	19	23	Minister
Parker	16	10	Minister
Payson	16	15	Minister
Cushing	15	12	Minister
Goodridge	15	32	Minister
Bridge	14	18	Merchant
E. Hunt	14	22	Physician
Rice	14	39	Teacher
Strong	14	28	Lawyer
Brigden	12	27	Merchant
Ordway	12	30	Minister
Brigham	11	40	Minister
Porter	11	17	Teacher
Wells	11	33	Minister
Angier	10	14	Lawyer
Bowman	10	8	Lawyer
Emerson	10	13	Minister
Fogg	10	44	Minister
Hilyard	10	43	Minister
Goodhue	9	38	Merchant
Hill	9	35	Merchant
Searle	9	46	Minister
Ames	8	21	Physician
Briggs	8	47	Minister
Chase	8	16	Merchant
Drowne	8	31	Physician
Fuller	8	45	Minister
Wilkins	8	19	Merchant
Abbot	7	7	Minister
Barnes	7	41	Government
B. Bourne	7	24	Physician
Goddard	7	42	Minister
Scollay	7	11	Merchant
Williams	7	5	Lawyer
Winchester	7	37	Military
S. Bourne	6	25	Lawyer

	Volumes Borrowed	Class Rank	Primary Occupation
Dyer	6	3	Merchant
Lancaster	6	26	Minister
Aspinwall	5	36	Physician
Banister	5	9	Merchant
Man	5	48	Teacher
Orne	5	6	Merchant
Richmond	5	4	Farmer
Foxcroft	3	1	Physician
Langdon	2	34	Physician
Smith	0	29	Merchant
TOTAL	416		

Average number of volumes borrowed: 9.0

Class rank and primary occupation taken from *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, v. 15.

a student could potentially borrow was limited to the number he could have at a time (three), times the number of days the library was open to seniors during the academic year (twelve in 1762–1763), or a total of thirty-six volumes if each was promptly returned. Hence student loans were not overly restricted by library regulations—save in the case of those wishing to read multi-volume sets—and many seniors managed to borrow well more than the ten to twelve titles Siegel considered the maximum.⁶⁵ In neither class was there any correlation between class rank and number of volumes borrowed. As for future occupation, seniors who went into the ministry or filled teaching positions tended to borrow more books, although students displayed a wide range of borrowing patterns regardless of future occupation. One should treat individual student data with caution, however, as other factors may have affected their borrowing. Ensign Man, for instance, was ranked last in the class of 1764 and borrowed only five library

65. Siegel, 'Governance and Curriculum at Harvard College,' 316. Two of the three rusticated students from the class of 1762 who eventually graduated in 1763 borrowed no library books after their readmission. Although the faculty records are silent on this, these students' punishment possibly included a ban on library use.

volumes, yet in the 1764 fire he lost a personal collection of some seventy-five books valued at nearly £33. Faculty records note many instances of students being excused from college for extended periods, which could have limited their borrowing.⁶⁶

Tabulating the loan data by senior visiting days, that is, the specified days on which seniors were permitted to borrow and return books, provides a clear picture of how student library use varied during the academic year. During 1762-1763, the library was open to seniors on twelve days, scheduled three weeks apart in term (Table 16). Harvard remained in session until early January, when a five-week vacation commenced; the next visiting day took place in late February, three weeks after the term resumed. The final visiting day fell in mid-June, at which time seniors began 'sitting solstice' or undergoing oral examination by all who wished to test their learning.⁶⁷ All library loans were due by commencement in late July. The same schedule was followed in 1763-1764 (Table 17), except that the fire during winter vacation limited seniors to a total of six visiting days. Harvard remained closed until the summer, and many seniors were not able to return their loans until July 1764.

Library regulations called for seniors to present themselves in class rank order, on Friday visiting days between the hours of 11 and 2 at the library door, where they returned borrowed books to the librarian and requested the loan of others, up to a maximum of three at one time. Students could neither browse nor even enter the library. In actual practice, most visiting days were scheduled on Saturdays—perhaps for the librarian's convenience or because Saturday fitted better into the crowded academic schedule—although on two occasions visiting days extended from Friday to Saturday. In making their selections, students presumably had access to copies of the 1723-1735 printed library catalogue. They may also have had available one or more of the manuscript catalogues the librarian was mandated to maintain: a

66. Foster, 'The Burning of Harvard Hall,' 42-43. Student absences for 1762-1763 and 1763-1764 are recorded in Faculty Records II (1752-1766), Harvard University Archives, UA III.5.5.2, 170-201.

67. Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard*, 32-33.

Table 16. Volumes Loaned and Returned, By Senior Visiting Days

Academic Year 1762-1763

Senior Visiting Days 1762-1763	Week Day	Seniors				Other Borrowers			TOTAL			
		Visitors		Paired Loans		Visitors Returned*	Loans	Returns*				
		% of Class	% of Total	% for Day	% of Total							
September 10	Friday	27	69.2	75	16.9	1	1.3	2	10	1	85	1
October 2	Saturday	22	56.4	55	12.4	6	10.9	31	7.0		55	31
October 21-22	Fri.-Sat.	23	59.0	49	11.1	6	12.2	48	10.8	1	50	48
November 12-13	Fri.-Sat.	15	38.5	30	6.8	2	6.7	21	4.7		30	21
December 4	Saturday	15	38.5	35	7.9	9	25.7	36	8.1	1	35	37
December 25	Saturday	8	20.5	14	3.2	3	21.4	15	3.4		14	15
February 26	Saturday	20	51.3	40	9.0	6	15.0	45	10.2		40	45
March 19	Saturday	14	35.9	32	7.2	7	21.9	29	6.5	1	32	30
April 9	Saturday	20	51.3	40	9.0	10	25.0	42	9.5	1	67	42
May 7	Saturday	10	25.6	21	4.7	3	14.3	20	4.5	3	25	20
May 28	Saturday	13	33.3	26	5.9	7	26.9	29	6.5	1	29	29
June 18	Saturday	11	28.2	12	2.7	4	33.3	22	5.0		12	22
Other Days				14	3.2			12	2.7		140	184
July								93	21.0	4	4	93
TOTAL				443		64	14.4	443		175	618	618

*In some instances the return dates are approximate.

Table 17. Volumes Loaned and Returned, By Senior Visiting Days

Academic Year 1763-1764

Senior Visiting Days 1763-1764	Week Day	Seniors						Other Borrowers				TOTAL			
		Visitors		Paired Loan		Volumes Returned*		Visitors	Loans	Returns*	Loans		Returns*		
		% of Class	% of Total	% for Day	% of Total	% of Total									
September 3	Saturday	36	78.3	103	24.8			2				2			105
September 23	Friday	38	82.6	92	22.1	14	15.2	74	17.9			1			93
October 14	Friday	32	69.6	72	17.3	18	25.0	75	18.1						72
November 5	Saturday	26	56.5	48	11.5	10	20.8	49	11.9			1			48
November 26	Saturday	31	67.4	66	15.9	19	28.8	65	15.7						66
December 17	Saturday	19	41.3	35	8.4	13	37.1	32	7.8			3		10	45
Other Days														112	42
After July 5, 1764								118	28.6					82	
TOTAL				416		74	17.8	413				125	125	541	538

*In many instances the return dates are approximate.

catalogue in shelf mark order (possibly lists placed in each alcove), another arranged alphabetically by author, and one arranged by donor.⁶⁸

On the first visiting day of the 1762-1763 year (September 10), 27 of 39 seniors (69.2 percent) visited the library, borrowing a total of 75 volumes (six shy of the maximum permitted); two other patrons borrowed ten additional volumes, bringing the day's total to 85. Undergraduate visits fell off gradually on subsequent days, reaching 28.2 percent of seniors in June, with significant declines in late December and early May. The number of volumes loaned also fell, averaging closer to two per student visit, primarily because seniors were not returning all of their loans on the next visiting day. Other borrowers rarely intruded on visiting days, with the notable exception of Apthorp who, on April 9, 1763, took away twenty-seven volumes, by far the highest one-time figure recorded in the loan register. Student visiting days were hectic times for Librarians Deane and Sewall, who had to process from 34 to 109 volumes (loans + returns) within a three-hour span.⁶⁹

The 1763-1764 academic year was even busier for Librarian Andrew Eliot. Not only did he serve a larger senior class, but they used the library more heavily. On the first visiting day (September 3), 36 of 46 seniors (78.3 percent) borrowed 103 volumes, five short of the maximum. Three weeks later even more seniors lined up before the library door, borrowing 92 volumes and returning 74. On subsequent visiting days library use again declined gradually, but significantly less so than during the previous year: by late November two-thirds of the senior class were still regular library users. Eliot handled from 77 to 167 transactions on any given day, which perhaps explains his careless record-keeping.

Borrowers other than seniors, however, visited the library on a seemingly random schedule. Library regulations stipulated that

68. Harvard College Records, pt. 1, 133.

69. Although return dates, as noted above, are somewhat problematic and the librarian's actual daily workload cannot be precisely measured, clearly it was substantial.

Table 18. Volumes Loaned to Borrowers Other Than Seniors, By Month*Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764*

	Faculty & Tutors	Overseers	Other	Resident Graduates	TOTAL	%
July 1762				4	4	2.3
August	3				3	1.7
September	13	13		14	40	22.9
October	1	4		4	9	5.1
November	3	3		4	10	5.7
December	1		3	10	14	8.0
January 1763	4	4		2	10	5.7
February	5	2			7	4.0
March	4		3	5	12	6.9
April	3	3	27	2	35	20.0
May	1	10		10	21	12.0
June			3	3	6	3.4
July 1762-1763	38	43	36	58	175	
August 1763	4			1	5	4.0
September	7	4	8	6	25	20.0
October	11	14		8	33	26.4
November	7	6		7	20	16.0
December	14		7	1	22	17.6
January 1764		4	2	14	20	16.0
1763-1764	43	28	17	37	125	
TOTAL	81	71	53	95	300	

resident graduates visit the library on specified Fridays, three weeks apart, but clearly this rule was ignored. It is more likely that the librarian simply waited on non-senior borrowers as the need arose, or perhaps some were permitted to borrow the library key and help themselves. A monthly breakdown of their library use is given in Table 18. These borrowers made only occasional library visits, and their use was much less heavy. Resident graduates borrowed at a fairly steady rate, and faculty use increased during the 1763-1764 year.

An intriguing finding is the prevalence of what I shall term 'paired loans': instances when a volume was immediately borrowed again by another user on the day it was returned. During the 1762-1763 academic year, 64 of 443 loans to seniors (14.4 percent) were paired loans (Table 16), as were 74 of 416 (17.8 percent) the following year (Table 17). In both years the percentage of paired loans per senior visiting day tended to increase over time, reaching its highest frequency (more than one third of all loans) at year's end. Non-senior borrowers also engaged in paired loans, but to a much lesser extent, probably because their borrowing schedules were not as tightly regimented. Paired loans are strong evidence that seniors' selection of what to borrow was being guided in part by something other than personal preference, but the nature of that mechanism is unclear. Perhaps some students preferred not to choose books from the catalogue and, unable to consult the shelves, simply browsed the stack of volumes returned that day. Or perhaps the harried librarian, when asked for advice on what to borrow, tended to recommend what was readily at hand. Students may have acted upon the advice or example of their peers, borrowing what they had and thereby engaging in an intellectual dialogue about the books. Or students could have followed their tutor's recommendations, with the same volumes promptly re-borrowed by similarly motivated students. Professor Edward Wigglesworth, in fact, noted in 1764 that he 'had made it my constant practice to direct my students what books to borrow and read, as soon as they have access to the [college] library and before they are admitted to their first degree.'⁷⁰ In some instances the paired loans may simply have been coincidental. The most likely scenario is that several of these mechanisms were at work.⁷¹

70. Quoted in Kraus, 'Book Collections of Five Colonial College Libraries,' 280.

71. One way of testing the possibility that students based their borrowing on what their peers read is to look for paired loans among roommates. A card index in the Harvard University Archives provides room assignments for students who lived in college (some did not), but I found no correlation in the borrowing of seniors who shared rooms. If one could reconstruct Harvard students' social networks, some links might be found.

Table 19. Length of Loans Made to Seniors*Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764*

Number of Loan Periods*	1762-1763		1763-1764		TOTAL	
		%		%		%
<1 ⁺	7	1.6	1	0.2	8	0.9
1	181	40.9	217	52.2	398	46.3
2	109	24.6	45	10.8	154	17.9
3	43	9.7	27	6.5	70	8.1
4	35	7.9	4	1.0	39	4.6
5	13	2.9	1	0.2	14	1.6
6	21	4.7			21	2.4
7	5	1.1			5	0.6
8	6	1.4			6	0.7
9	3	0.7			3	0.3
10	9	2.0			9	1.0
11	6	1.4			6	0.7
12	5	1.1			5	0.6
Other			121	29.1	121	14.1
TOTAL	443		416		859	

A loan period is the time between student visiting days (usually three weeks); therefore, a book retained for 7 loan periods was not returned until the seventh visiting day after it was borrowed.

Omits the 5 loans made during 1761-1762 to seniors held back one class.

*Because exact return dates are in many instances uncertain, these data should be considered approximate.

⁺Less than the standard 3 weeks

Although the loan register's return dates are not always reliable, especially for borrowers other than seniors, we can still measure with some confidence how long seniors kept their loans (Table 19). Clearly the rule that seniors had to return volumes within three weeks was widely ignored. During the 1762-1763 academic year, only 188 (42.5 percent) of 443 senior loans were returned after one loan period (i.e. on the next visiting day, usually three

weeks). Librarian Eliot may have been a more conscientious enforcer, as 218 (52.3 percent) of senior loans were returned on time during 1763-1764. Still, many seniors retained books for extended periods, sometimes for an entire academic year. Hence seniors were as capable as faculty of curtailing access to works in particular demand. Samuel Porter, for instance, kept one of the library's two copies of Henry Pemberton's *View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy* for an entire year; likewise, John Cabot kept the three volumes of Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* for a year and Joshua Upham two volumes of Rapin-Thoyras's heavily used *History of England*. But non-senior borrowers, despite the 1759 Corporation directive limiting loans to a three-month maximum, felt free to retain books indefinitely: only 10 of their 300 loans during the two academic years were returned within three weeks.⁷²

The loan data also reveal which works were borrowed most frequently. At least one volume from a total of 585 different titles (a few present in multiple copies) circulated during academic years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764 (Table 20). Of these, a single title was responsible for no fewer than 55 separate loans (4.7 percent of the total), one each for 29, 26, 17, 14, and 10 loans respectively, four each for eight loans, and so on down to 360 works of which only a single volume was borrowed. Hence a significant percentage of the entire library collection was in active use. Upwards of 4,000 works in some 4,900 volumes were available for loan by 1764, of which approximately 15 percent circulated in the seventeen months preceding the fire. Despite access restrictions and reliance upon imperfect manuscript and printed catalogues, library patrons were nonetheless identifying a wide range of works as being of sufficient interest to borrow, even if we cannot assess the extent to which these works satisfied their interests. This would suggest that James Gilreath's depiction of the Harvard College Library as a warehouse of discarded books is far too severe, for borrowers were exploring the

72. This may reflect in part the librarian's junior position within the Harvard hierarchy.

Table 20. Loan Frequency*Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764*

Volumes Loaned	Number of Titles	Total Volumes	% of Volumes	% of Titles
55	1	55	4.7	0.2
29	1	29	2.5	0.2
26	1	26	2.2	0.2
17	1	17	1.5	0.2
14	1	14	1.2	0.2
10	1	10	0.9	0.2
8	4	32	2.7	0.7
7	4	28	2.4	0.7
6	7	42	3.6	1.2
5	11	55	4.7	1.9
4	34	136	11.7	5.8
3	42	126	10.8	7.2
2	117	234	20.1	20.0
1	360	360	30.9	61.5
TOTAL	585	1,164		

collection in some depth and consulting a significant portion of its contents.

The most frequently borrowed titles—those for which five or more volumes circulated—are listed in Appendix 1. Thirty-two titles (5.5 percent) were responsible for 308 (26.5 percent) of all loans. As for loans in general, the popular works tended to be more recent publications (Table 21): none were published earlier than 1667, with nearly 90 percent dating after 1700 and 62 percent after 1720. The language distribution is even more pronounced: fully 95.5 percent were in English and the remainder in Latin. History and theology were the most popular subjects (Table 22), with each constituting nearly 23 percent of loans, though theology would take precedence if church history were factored in. The distribution is markedly different from that for all borrowing (Table 11), as loans for works of history, biography, science,

Table 21. Publication Date and Language of Most Frequently Borrowed Titles*Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764*

	Number of Titles	Volumes Loaned	% of Volumes
1651-1700	2	13	4.2
1676-1700	4	22	7.1
1701-1710	9	60	19.5
1711-1720	2	22	7.1
1721-1730	5	79	25.7
1731-1740	5	51	16.6
1741-1750	2	13	4.2
1751-1763	3	48	15.6
TOTAL	32	308	
English	31	294	95.8
Latin	1	14	4.5

and philosophy were more heavily concentrated among a few popular titles than were borrowings in such categories as theology, medicine, and 'miscellaneous.' The only borrower seemingly immune to popular tastes was Apthorp (Table 23). Otherwise the popular works tended to be borrowed more by seniors and overseers, while faculty and resident graduates showed less interest. Of the two senior classes, whose varied reading tastes have already been noted, the class of 1764 displayed somewhat greater interest in the more popular titles than did the class of 1763.

Appendix 1 is potentially misleading, however, for it favors multivolume sets over single-volume works. Hence Rapin-Thoyras's fifteen-volume *History of England* ranks as the most heavily circulated title. The problem is best illustrated by the edition of Livy, whose fourteen loans were due entirely to two overseers borrowing, in turn, each volume in the seven-volume set. Another interpretive difficulty is revealed by Shakespeare's *Works*: only volumes three and four of the six-volume set circulated, almost certainly

Table 22. Subjects of Most Frequently Borrowed Titles*Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764*

	Number of Titles	Volumes Loaned	% of Volumes
Antiquities	1	5	1.6
Arts	1	7	2.3
Biography	1	29	9.4
Classical Authors	1	14	4.5
Geography & Travel	1	6	2.0
History	3	69	22.4
Literature	2	15	4.9
Medicine	3	21	6.8
Miscellaneous	1	5	1.6
Natural Science	1	5	1.6
Philosophy	4	24	7.8
Science	4	26	8.5
Biblical History	2	12	3.9
Theology	7	70	22.7
TOTAL	32	308	

because the other volumes were by then lost.⁷³ If the set had been complete, no doubt Shakespeare would have ranked higher. It must be stressed, therefore, that the apparent popularity of a work depended upon its actual availability at the time, and careful analysis is necessary to reveal which titles may thereby be undercounted due to losses or extended loans.

A somewhat more accurate list of popular titles may be obtained by ranking the most frequently circulated volumes (Appendix 2). The works noted therein—now reduced to eighteen titles—will for the most part be familiar to students of mid-eighteenth century American reading tastes.⁷⁴ English history was very

73. In 1743, for instance, a student was fined for not returning 'a Volume of Shakespeare's Plays'; see Faculty Records I (1725-1752), Harvard University Archives, UA III.5.5.2, 182.

74. Or at least the tastes of New England readers. Interestingly, only a handful of these works are mentioned in Edwin Wolf II, *The Book Culture of a Colonial American City: Philadelphia Books, Bookmen, and Booksellers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

Table 23. Most Frequently Borrowed Titles, By Borrower Status

Academic Years 1762-1763 and 1763-1764

	Faculty & Tutors		Overseers		Other	Resident Graduates		Seniors		TOTAL	
	%		%		%	%		%		%	
1762-1763	8	57.1	16	66.7		10	83.3	122	47.3	156	50.6
1763-1764	6	42.9	8	33.3		2	16.7	136	52.7	152	49.4
TOTAL	14		24		0	12		258		308	

popular—especially the English translation of Rapin-Thoyras—as was Pierre Bayle's *Dictionary*. Science and medicine were also well represented, with Pemberton's *View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy*, Franklin's *Experiments and Observations on Electricity* (the author's gift to Harvard), and James Drake's *New System of Anatomy* frequently borrowed. Equally well represented were works of natural theology by Derham, Ray, and Wollaston which attempted to reconcile Protestant theology with scientific reasoning. As for belles lettres, Harvard readers preferred Shakespeare and the poems of the now-forgotten Stephen Duck. *The Young-Students-Library*, a perennial favorite well known for anthologizing important late-seventeenth century periodical contributions, still remained popular at this time.⁷⁵ The theological works favored by Harvard borrowers tended to reflect moderate rather than orthodox positions. Indeed, several titles appear on Lundberg and May's list of representative Enlightenment works.⁷⁶

The two most popular works—John Leland's *View of the Principal Deistical Writers* and Thomas Sherlock's *Several Discourses Preached at the Temple Church*—are unexpected and require explanation. In

75. Norman S. Fiering, 'The Transatlantic Republic of Letters: A Note on the Circulation of Learned Periodicals to Early Eighteenth-Century America,' *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 33 (1976): 642-60, especially 650.

76. David Lundberg and Henry F. May, 'The Enlightened Reader in America,' *American Quarterly* 28 (1976): 262-93. Titles in Appendixes 1 and 2 which appear on the Lundberg and May list are marked with an asterisk.

both instances the Harvard College Library had only recently added multiple copies of each to its shelves: at least fifteen sets of Leland and eight of Sherlock were available for borrowing. The Sherlock sets were likely the author's personal gift in 1756. The Leland sets were part of a shipment of 101 copies (plus smaller quantities of two other works) received from London in late 1758 as the gift of Stephen Hales and Thomas Wilson. These heavy-handed attempts to influence the religious thinking of colonial elites succeeded admirably, as both Harvard and Yale privileged the gifts by stocking their libraries with multiple copies—a common practice at Yale but exceptional at Harvard, where duplicates were typically sold to fund new acquisitions. Leland's antideist stance would have been welcome at Harvard, which distributed the remaining gift copies over the next two decades to each new faculty member and tutor.⁷⁷ That Sherlock and Leland were so widely read at Harvard indicates that they were much discussed, and that students were perhaps encouraged to read them by college authorities.⁷⁸

IV.

By focusing public attention on the library's needs, the 1764 fire might be considered in some ways a blessing for Harvard. The library shelves were quickly restocked, surpassing the 1764 collection in size within five or six years and reaching 12,000 volumes in 1790, far more than any other American college library. The library augmented donations of older, perhaps less useful titles with

77. College Book VII, Harvard University Archives, 72–73, 77–78, 80, 86, 93, 135, 172, 202, 210, 224, 259; Harvard Corporation Records v. 3 [manuscript transcription of College Book VIII, 1778–1795], Harvard University Archives, UA I.5.30.2, 124. The Harvard Corporation decided to split the donation equally with Yale. In 1762 Yale recorded the gift by Hales and Wilson of 60 sets of Leland's *View*—presumably these were the sets forwarded, after some delay, by Harvard; see Thomas Clap, *The Annals or History of Yale-College, in New-Haven . . .* (New Haven: John Hotchkiss and B. Mecom, 1766), 102. In 1791 the Yale Library still possessed ten sets of Leland's *View*; see *Eighteenth-Century Catalogues of the Yale College Library*, C17.

78. The loan records perhaps belie Fiering's belief that 'the deist controversy in England from Toland to Leland . . . caused hardly a ripple in Massachusetts'; see Norman S. Fiering, 'The First American Enlightenment: Tillotson, Leverett, and Philosophical Anglicanism,' *New England Quarterly* 54 (1981): 307–44, quote from 332.

substantial purchases of contemporary works, so that the collection was not only more current but significantly different in nature.⁷⁹

Three researchers have analyzed data from the post-fire Harvard charging records,⁸⁰ and their findings offer a useful perspective on pre-fire trends. Thomas J. Siegel's unpublished dissertation includes a very brief analysis of loan data for the 1763, 1768, and 1773 Harvard classes.⁸¹ Siegel created a simple database incorporating data for 1762-64 and 1766-73, coding each loan by class year, author and title, and subject. For the latter he compressed the 1790 Harvard library catalogue subjects into five general categories. Siegel's figures are given in Table 24, together with my data for the 1762-1763 and 1763-1764 academic years reworked into his subject categories. Siegel's findings convincingly show that student borrowing changed markedly post-fire: the percentage of loans representing works of divinity declined precipitously, while loans of historical and philosophical works surged, with little overlap between the titles used by undergraduates pre- and post-fire. In Siegel's view, the library had been replenished with contemporary works more in keeping with students' interests. While this is essentially correct, Siegel fails to consider the extent to which undergraduate reading tastes could naturally shift within even a single decade, for my findings show significant variation in borrowing among members of two consecutive classes. Also, post-fire undergraduate borrowing was mostly limited to a new 'common use' collection, which in and of itself would have dramatically altered student reading.⁸² Siegel notes that students employed the post-fire library not only for personal reading but for career preparation, although I have shown that this trend existed pre-fire.

79. *The Printed Catalogues of the Harvard College Library 1723-1790*, xvi-xix; Kraus, 'Book Collections of Five Colonial College Libraries,' 194-224.

80. See note 43.

81. The latter two presumably reflect loans made by juniors as well as seniors.

82. The printed catalogue of the 'common use' collection, issued in 1773, lists 827 titles in approximately 1,700 volumes; the main library collection was three times as large. For the catalogue, see *The Printed Catalogues of the Harvard College Library 1723-1790*, 133-59; for a content analysis, see Kraus, 'The Harvard Undergraduate Library of 1773.'

Table 24. Subjects of Volumes Loaned to Undergraduates*Comparison of Siegel's Results With This Study*

	Class of				
	1763	1768	1776	1762-1763	1763-1764
	%	%	%	%	%
Divinity	34	18	<10	38	42
General History	19	25	40	19	23
Philosophical Works	5	15	<15	4	4
Science and Medicine	19	17	[>15?]	17	19
General Belles-Lettres	23	25	20	22	12

Sources: Classes of 1763, 1768, 1776 data from Thomas Jay Siegel, 'Governance and Curriculum at Harvard College in the 18th Century,' Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1990, 315-20; 1762-1763 and 1763-1764 academic year data from Table 12 of this study. Siegel's data for 1768 and 1776 presumably include loans made to juniors as well as seniors over a two-year period.

Mark Olsen and Louis-Georges Harvey have examined Harvard library loan data for the Revolutionary decade, 1773-82, although their analysis omits undergraduate borrowing.⁸³ Their findings parallel Siegel's in that works borrowed by non-undergraduates also show little overlap with their pre-fire reading. Direct comparison of their findings with mine is difficult, though there was surprisingly little shift in the subject breakdown of non-undergraduate loans: the percentage of theological works declined somewhat, as did medicine, while a few categories such as law and 'miscellaneous' showed solid gains. The rate at which non-undergraduate borrowers drew books from the library also remained relatively unchanged, with most still making rather light use of the collection.⁸⁴

83. Olsen and Harvey's ambitious plans to extend their analysis of the Harvard charging records to 1800 and eventually through the nineteenth century have unfortunately been stymied by lack of funding, per e-mail communication from Louis-Georges Harvey, June 8, 2006.

84. Resident graduate data cannot be compared, as Olsen and Harvey have misinterpreted the relevant honorific 'Sir' to signify 'local notables'; see Olsen and Harvey, 'Reading in Revolutionary Times,' 65.

V.

In conclusion, the 1762-1764 loan register data sketch a view of the mid-eighteenth century Harvard College Library somewhat at variance with prevailing scholarly opinion. Despite its commanding size and depth, the library was not the primary book source for much of its clientele, save for many members of the senior class. In 1764 it was frequented by sixty-two borrowers, virtually all having a direct Harvard association: faculty, members of the governing boards (many of whom were alumni), resident graduates, and seniors. Hence the library's impact barely extended beyond Harvard Yard. Each class of borrower likely had access to other collections, such as the extensive personal libraries maintained by faculty and many local ministers. Harvard students, too, generally possessed at least small collections of school texts, and in principle they had access to their tutors' libraries in addition to that of the college.

By no means was the library viewed as a purely academic collection. Rather, each borrower group tended to define, and use, the library in somewhat different ways. Faculty treated it primarily as a professional resource. For them the Harvard library was merely an extension of their personal collections, and they drew upon it for the occasional long-term loan of books which were inconvenient to purchase. Only a minority of Harvard overseers were borrowers, and their infrequent loans tended more toward personal reading. Resident graduates made steady use of the library, mostly to borrow texts closely linked to their theological studies, though overall their loans were no more extensive than those of the typical senior.

Harvard tightly regulated undergraduates' library use, and the terms under which they were occasionally allowed to study in the library and perhaps even consult the collection remain unclear. But when finally granted borrowing privileges in their fourth college year, the majority of seniors drew upon the library heavily. Regulations limiting student visits to set times perhaps tended to imbue this privilege with the trappings of academic ritual, but students for the most part quickly turned their visits

into opportunities for self-exploration. There is some evidence of student loans closely linked to the curriculum, and Professor Edward Wigglesworth among others directed student reading as best he could, but most students borrowed primarily to indulge personal interests and secondarily to explore future careers. College officials tacitly acknowledged this post-fire by forming a 'common use' collection for undergraduates. Student reading showed much independence and not a little inclination toward liberal perspectives, though the evidence of 'paired loans' reveals that students were also subject to outside influences: faculty recommendations, the advice or example of their peers, or perhaps simply the ease of selecting among the returns because shelf browsing was forbidden. Hence the library was at least partly integrated into the academic community. Indeed, the two most popular works from 1762-1764 were exceptional in that Harvard officials facilitated their borrowing, not only by placing multiple copies in the library, but probably by recommending they be read.

Although much remains unknown about the library's daily operations, most of the time it was a somnolent place, a treasury whose doors were infrequently unlocked. But the academic year saw brief, regular periods of intense activity when seniors gained access. Though seniors' library use declined as the year wore on, the librarian's workload remained heavy. Library regulations were only imperfectly enforced—more successfully in the case of seniors, save for returning loans promptly; much less so for non-senior borrowers, who generally borrowed and returned books whenever they pleased. Indeed, the library's utility was significantly weakened by borrowers' tendency not to return loans on time, thereby withholding many popular works from general use.

An impressive 15 percent of the library collection circulated in less than two years, hence borrowers were generally able to locate what the library held in spite of imperfect printed and manuscript catalogues. Still, borrowers tended to favor more recent works and editions, especially those in English; early imprints

and works in other languages, even Latin to some extent, saw little use. Subject interests varied significantly among the borrowing classes. Seniors' reading was notably eclectic, with works of history, science, biography, literature, philosophy, mathematics, and medicine all well represented in addition to the perennial mainstay, theology. Hence characterizations of the Harvard library as either a warehouse of unused, irrelevant books or a rare book collection are well off the mark, though no doubt large segments of the collection sat idle for lengthy periods. Of the books that did circulate, borrowers probably had too little access to what they really wanted to read. This is dramatically illustrated by the post-fire borrowing trends uncovered by Siegel and Olsen and Harvey: as the library was restocked with recent English imprints, borrowers in all categories preferred these over what they had read pre-fire. The shift reflects in part the new 'common use' collection mandated for undergraduates as well as readers' changing interests, but it also reveals how the fire swept away the inherent inertia of an older collection built haphazardly and with less purpose.⁸⁵

Projecting the Harvard College Library's experience onto other colonial American college libraries is problematic. Most college library collections remained so small and uneven that similar quantitative (but perhaps not qualitative) use by students and faculty could not have been achieved until well after the American Revolution. Library use at Yale may have varied significantly from Harvard's and perhaps was even heavier, given its generous access terms and a collection better fitted to an undergraduate clientele. Yet even if the Yale and Harvard libraries had little bearing upon the college curriculum, by the mid-eighteenth century Harvard's certainly witnessed heavy undergraduate use,

85. The precise nature and causes of these pre- and post-fire variations in library use are by no means clear. Some answers would be forthcoming from further analysis of Revolutionary-era charging records. It would be even more desirable, albeit highly labor intensive, to carry the analysis forward through 1897, as there are few comparable library data sets in existence.

and there is no evidence to suggest that use was substantially lower in preceding decades. Not only did these libraries 'be,' but they clearly meant a great deal to undergraduates; and as historians probe more deeply, a distinctive poetry of reading should emerge, for poetry there surely is.

Appendix I

MOST FREQUENTLY BORROWED TITLES 1762-1764

Number of
Volumes
Borrowed

- 55 *Rapin-Thoyras, Paul de, 1661-1725.
The History of England, as Well Ecclesiastical as Civil. London: James and John Knapton, 1726-1731. 15 v.
- 29 *Bayle, Pierre, 1647-1706.
A General Dictionary, Historical and Critical. London: James Bettenham, for G. Strahan, J. Clarke, T. Hatchet, J. Gray [and 10 others], 1734-1741. 10 v.
- 26 Leland, John, 1691-1766.
A View of the Principal Deistical Writers, That Have Appeared in England . . . 3rd ed. London: Benj. Dod, 1757. 2 v.
- 17 Sherlock, Thomas, 1678-1761.
Several Discourses Preached at the Temple Church. London: J. Whiston and B. White, W. Owen, and E. Baker, 1756-1759. 2 v.
- 14 Livy.
Titi Livii Patavini Historiarum Libri qui Extant . . . Venetiis: Apud Carolum Bonarrigum, 1714. 6 v. (in 7?)
- 10 Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616.
The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare. London: Jacob Tonson, 1709. 6 v.

- 8 Crousaz, Jean-Pierre de, 1663-1750.
A New Treatise of the Art of Thinking . . . London: Tho. Woodward, 1724. 2 v.
- 8 Derham, William, 1657-1735.
Astro-Theology: or a Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, from a Survey of the Heavens. London: W. Innys, 1715.
- 8 Drake, James, 1667-1707.
Anthropologia Nova: or, a New System of Anatomy. London, [1 of 4 editions, 1707-1750]. 2 v.
- 8 Swieten, Gerard, Freiherr van, 1700-1772.
The Commentaries Upon the Aphorisms of Dr. Herman Boerhaave . . . Concerning the Knowledge and Cure of the Several Diseases Incident to Human Bodies. London: John and Paul Knapton, 1744-1747. 8 v.
- 7 Clarendon, Edward Hyde, Earl of, 1609-1674.
The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, Begun in the Year 1641 . . . [octavo ed.] Oxford: Printed at the Theater, 1707. 3 v. in 6
- 7 *A Complete History of England: With the Lives of All the Kings and Queens Thereof . . .* London: Brab. Aylmer, Reb. Bonwick, Sam. Smith, Benj. Walford, Will. Freeman [and 9 others], 1706. 3 v.
- 7 Harris, John, 1667?-1719.
Lexicon Technicum: or, an Universal English Dictionary of Arts and Sciences. 2nd ed. [v.1] London: Dan. Brown, Tim. Goodwin, John Walthoe, Tho. Newborough, John Nicholson, Dan. Midwinter, and Francis Coggan, 1708-1710. 2 v.
- 7 Royal Society (Great Britain)
Philosophical Transactions. v. 1-2. London: John Martyn, 1667-[1673?]
- 6 Bates, William, 1625-1699.
The Harmony of the Divine Attributes, in the Contrivance and Accomplishment of Man's Redemption by the Lord Jesus

- Christ . . . 2nd ed. London: Printed by J.M. for Nathaniel Ranew, Jonathan Robinson, and Brabazon Aylmer, 1675.
- 6 Cudworth, Ralph, 1617-1688.
A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality.
London: James and John Knapton, 1731.
- 6 Fontaine, Nicolas, 1625-1709.
The History of the Old and New Testament, Extracted Out of Sacred Scripture, and Writings of the Fathers. 2nd ed.
London: R. Blome, S. and J. Sprint, John Nicholson, and John Pero, 1700-1701. 2 v. in 1
- 6 Harris, John, 1667?-1719.
Navigantium Atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca, or, a Compleat Collection of Voyages and Travels. London: Printed for Thomas Bennet, John Nicholson, and Daniel Midwinter, 1705. 2 v.
- 6 Lightfoot, John, 1602-1675.
The Works of the Reverend and Learned John Lightfoot D.D. London: Printed by W. R., for Robert Scot, Thomas Basset, Richard Chiswell, and John Wright, 1684. 2 v.
- 6 Pemberton, Henry, 1694-1771.
A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy. London: S. Palmer, 1728.
- 6 Shuckford, Samuel, d. 1754.
The Sacred and Prophane History of the World Connected, From the Creation of the World to the Dissolution of the Assyrian Empire . . . 2nd ed. London: R. Knaplock, and J. Tonson, 1731. 2 v.
- 5 Baxter, Richard, 1615-1691.
The Practical Works of the Late Reverend and Pious Mr. Richard Baxter. London: Thomas Parkhurst, Jonathan Robinson, and John Lawrence, 1707. 4 v.
- 5 *Berkeley, George, 1685-1753.
Alciphron: or, the Minute Philosopher. In Seven Dialogues . . . London: J. Tonson, 1732. 2 v.

- 5 Clark, Samuel, 1626-1701.
A Survey of the Bible: or, an Analytical Account of the Holy Scriptures . . . London: Printed by J.D. for Jonathan Robinson, 1693.
- 5 Duck, Stephen, 1705-1756.
Poems on Several Occasions. London: Printed for the author, 1736.
- 5 Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790.
Experiments and Observations on Electricity, Made at Philadelphia in America. London: E. Cave, 1751.
- 5 Montfaucon, Bernard de, 1655-1741.
Antiquity Explained, and Represented in Sculptures. London: J. Tonson and J. Watts, 1721. 2 v.
- 5 Ray, John, 1627-1705.
The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of the Creation. 5th ed. London: Printed by J.B. for Benj. Walford, 1709.
- 5 Royal Society (Great Britain)
Medical Essays and Observations Relating to the Practice of Physic and Surgery. London: S. Birt, and J. Newbery, 1745. 2 v.
- 5 Whitby, Daniel, 1638-1726.
A Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament. London, [1 of 8 editions, 1703-1761]. 2 v.
- 5 *Wollaston, William, 1660-1724.
The Religion of Nature Delineated. London: Re-printed by Sam. Palmer, and sold by Bernard Lintott, J. Osborn, and W. and J. Innys, 1724.
- 5 *The Young-Students-Library. Containing, Extracts and Abridgments of the Most Valuable Books Printed in England.* London: John Dunton, 1692.

* This title appears on the Lundberg and May list of representative Enlightenment works. See David Lundberg and Henry F. May, 'The Enlightened Reader in America,' *American Quarterly* 28 (1976): 262-93.

Appendix 2

MOST FREQUENTLY BORROWED VOLUMES 1762-1764

Number
of Loans

- 14 Leland, John, 1691-1766.
A View of the Principal Deistical Writers, That Have Appeared in England . . . 3rd ed. London: Benj. Dod, 1757. v. 1
- 12 Leland, John, 1691-1766.
A View of the Principal Deistical Writers . . . v. 2
- 10 Sherlock, Thomas, 1678-1761.
Several Discourses Preached at the Temple Church. London: J. Whiston and B. White, W. Owen, and E. Baker, 1756-1759. v. 2
- 8 Derham, William, 1657-1735.
Astro-Theology: or a Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, From a Survey of the Heavens. London: W. Innys, 1715.
- 7 *Bayle, Pierre, 1647-1706.
A General Dictionary, Historical and Critical. London: James Bettenham, for G. Strahan, J. Clarke, T. Hatchet, J. Gray [and 10 others], 1734-1741. v. 7
- 7 Sherlock, Thomas, 1678-1761.
Several Discourses Preached at the Temple Church . . . v. 1
- 6 Bates, William, 1625-1699.
The Harmony of the Divine Attributes, in the Contrivance and Accomplishment of Man's Redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ . . . 2nd ed. London: Printed by J.M. for Nathaniel Ranew, Jonathan Robinson, and Brabazon Aylmer, 1675.

- 6 *Bayle, Pierre, 1647-1706.
A General Dictionary, Historical and Critical. . . . v. 4
- 6 Cudworth, Ralph, 1617-1688.
A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality.
London: James and John Knapton, 1731.
- 6 Drake, James, 1667-1707.
Anthropologia Nova: or, a New System of Anatomy. London,
[1 of 4 editions, 1707-1750]. v. 1
- 6 Fontaine, Nicolas, 1625-1709.
*The History of the Old and New Testament, Extracted Out
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* This title appears on the Lundberg and May list of representative Enlightenment works. See David Lundberg and Henry F. May, 'The Enlightened Reader in America,' *American Quarterly* 28 (1976): 262-93.

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