

of the Black liberation movement. The author also astutely sidesteps the typical trappings of examining the struggle for civil rights through a traditional lens that foregrounds the US South. Chapters highlighting the struggle over segregated housing that surrounded the University of Chicago, the clash over free speech at Princeton, and the emerging battlefront over affirmative action at the University of Wisconsin in the early 1960s are among the book's most engrossing and eye-opening episodes. Cole's ambitious collection of intimate and masterfully researched institutional histories make *The Campus Color Line* a must-read for upper-level undergraduate courses or graduate students examining the legacy of student activism and social movements, or the history of education.

Among the university presidents that Cole chooses to highlight, a common theme emerges. Jenkins tacitly prodded his students at Morgan State to directly confront the hypocrisies of American democracy. Jenkins proactively addressed the legacy of White supremacy in his own research and through the space he crafted that empowered his students to act. Conversely, the college presidents at the nation's predominantly white institutions only reacted to the legacy of systemic racism when it slammed against the front doors of their respective institutions, and even then, many only seemed pre-occupied with transformation at a glacial pace while steering their respective institutions through the public relations crises resulting from confrontations with the color line. While this stance may have carved out space for a handful of Black scholars and students to integrate and endure at those respective institutions, it has failed in rooting out the legacy of White supremacy in higher education and generating a public discourse that courageously and honestly addresses the dilemma that Du Bois once declared would be "the problem of the twentieth century." To be certain, college presidents by and large are not activists in the traditional sense. Most often they assume a position like that of Du Bois's character Mansart by either "quietly or persistently" addressing and erasing the color line, or they become complicit in maintaining the long legacy of racism in higher education. As Cole boldly and astutely concludes, "Campus initiatives geared toward racial equality are only as effective as the college president's clearly articulated acknowledgment that racism is a problem" (p. 317).

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Mark Boonshoft. *Aristocratic Education and the Making of the American Republic*

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This study can best be described as a political history of academies from the Revolutionary era to the early Republic. The existing literature on academies describes

them as highly variable and difficult to define. They were privately organized, but charters often gave them a quasi-public status (like coeval colleges). They taught both modern subjects and the classical languages needed for admission to college. Since they depended on income from fees, their offerings aimed to attract a wide clientele, including women. They provided a kind of intermediate education, above basic literacy, taught in common schools (where they existed) and below but sometimes overlapping with college subjects. The age of their students tended to be mixed, mostly between ten and sixteen, but sometimes younger or older. There is little of the conventional view in this volume. The author treats academies as monolithic, devoted to aristocratic education: “Civil and elite formation became the primary and avowed purpose of academies” (p. 50); “they were a powerful tool of elite formation in a world premised on equality” (p. 44).

The last phrase is particularly misleading and exemplifies how Boonshoft judges his subject through abstract ideals rather than historical realities. Despite the language of the Declaration of Independence, American society in the early Republic was premised on a pervasive distinction between “gentlemen” and the rest of society. Boonshoft takes issue with Gordon Wood’s nuanced depiction of the decline of this social cleavage in his 1991 book *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (p. 191n36). *Aristocratic Education* contains no consideration of gentlemanly status, invoking instead an undifferentiated and undefined elite.

Of course, Federalists were most invested in preserving the highly stratified society of the early Republic. Boonshoft asserts that Federalist trustees and founders of early academies explicitly intended to form the elites, as the quotes above allege. The evidence? Mostly talk. Drawing on considerable primary research, he quotes publicists and politicians on the value of education to form wise and liberally educated leaders. He quotes the rhetoric of ceremonial occasions as if it were unadorned truth. But there are good reasons for questioning this thesis. The education of children and adolescents would have been a minor contribution to shaping future elites. Contemporaries regarded a college education as far more consequential. Academies played a role here by preparing students in Latin and Greek. But acquaintance with the classical languages was only one component of the gentleman package. There was no substitute for family, wealth, and manners. Finally, although academy education was socially skewed, it also represented a demand for advanced education—what today would be secondary education. There were simply no other alternatives for those with aspirations beyond farmer, laborer, or artisan. Privately organized academies reflected social demand arising from a pervasive American faith in the value of education, which governments of the period were unable to provide.

The first of the book’s three parts covers developments up to the Revolution. However, the attempt to meld elites and religion are problematic. Boonshoft asserts that “the Awakening emerged . . . out of a crisis of religious elite formation” (p. 13). This is simply wrong, since the Awakening was aimed against colonial elites. George Whitefield, the evangelist credited with launching the Awakening, attacked Yale and Harvard; and all the Awakening colleges were founded in opposition to prevailing religious authorities—the College of New Jersey against the Presbyterian establishment; Rhode Island against prevailing Congregationalists; Rutgers against the Old Side Dutch Reform faction in New York; and Dartmouth offered a New

Side alternative to Yale. Even the Presbyterian (New Side) academies in Virginia defied the control of education by the dominant Anglicans.

For an example, he introduces the Elizabeth Town Academy (founded in 1766) as an “institution of elite formation, designed to train ministers to fill pulpits” (p. 13). But academies did not train ministers, and neither did colleges. Congregational and Presbyterian ministers trained with established clerics after receiving the necessary liberal education. The Elizabeth Town Academy undoubtedly prepared students for the College of New Jersey, where they might or might not proceed on this path. As for elites, New Side ministers, who largely served non-elite congregations, were well down the colonial pecking order.

The second part of *Aristocratic Education* covers the 1780s and 1790s, the height of Federalism, and the American Enlightenment. Academies were typically founded by groups of prominent citizens, likely to be Federalists, who often sold shares to finance the institution. Boonshoft casts them as elitist for publicizing the achievements, or merit, of their best classical students and for promoting ornamental subjects like dancing and French. These decades were the peak of French influence for many reasons. French schools, mostly taught by expat Frenchmen, proliferated for a short time, and academies “offered ornamental subjects as additions to the main curriculum” (p. 113). Academies in fact tended to offer a menu of separately priced subjects. The French fad was short-lived, as Boonshoft notes. Federalists first embraced French as a mark of refinement but then were horrified by Revolutionary *égalité*, while the more democratic Jeffersonian Republicans were pro-France yet skeptical of ornamental education.

In terms of showing the social background of academy students, the book depicts only one academy in Leicester, Massachusetts, in 1817, but this example fails to support the author’s aristocracy thesis. Of the academy’s ninety students, Boonshoft provides the family income for the twelve (of fifteen) students in the classical course—the students preparing for college. Ten of their families were in the top local income decile or quartile (p. 88), which in itself scarcely made them elite. There is no mention of the other seventy-five students who, presumably, were being “taught some combination of advanced English grammar, bookkeeping, geography, navigation, and other subjects that appealed to middling young men who wanted to work as clerks or merchants” (p. 85).

Part Three is entitled “From Aristocratic Education to Reform, 1787–1830,” and thus broaches popular education in common schools. American enthusiasm for education was matched by the reluctance to pay for it (understandable, considering the meager tax base). Academies became a political issue in the 1790s when states first provided limited financial support. Often this was no more than permission to raise funds via a lottery, a long-standing practice. New York was unique in establishing a Board of Regents to control advanced education, including the authority to charter academies. Charters included property requirements that the wealthier academies could meet, those having property and a school building. The Board was thoroughly Federalist, and when it acquired funds to disburse in 1792, only chartered “regents academies” were eligible. Political maneuvering to establish publicly supported common schools ensued for another two decades before Republican legislation in 1812 and

1814 created a framework for locally supported common schools—under the auspices of a Republican state superintendent, not the Federalist Regents.

The final twenty pages of this history range widely and unsystematically over several decades of the “first era of school reform,” including state adoption of school laws, some initiatives in higher education, and race and gender issues. Academies are again the focus in the 1830s when the spread of common schools created a dire need for teachers. New York and Pennsylvania, among others, provided targeted subsidies to academies to educate teachers (prior to the creation of normal schools). Common schooling became universal in this “first era,” at least in the North, and so did the possibility for merit-based educational advancement, at least for White males. However, these developments are far too large a subject to treat meaningfully in such a cursory fashion.

Aristocratic Education draws upon a great deal of historical material—the bibliography is forty pages, following forty pages of endnotes. But coverage of crucial aspects of this phenomenon is entirely lacking. For a thesis based on social distinction, there is no discussion of the social structure of the early United States—an agrarian society with huge geographical differences. The elites, whose motives are systematically disparaged, are never defined. Collegiate education is another lacuna—a gap between the alleged role of academies and the attainment of social status. The colleges were not the only path to social status, but they were more proximate than academies. Further, the insistence on the aristocratic character of academies contradicts the consensus view (p. 208n85; p. 225nn108-9 and p.225n117) without presenting contrary evidence. The only acknowledgment of the curricular diversity and mixed clientele of academies is the single sentence about middling students quoted above. Any description of the internal life of academies—the nature of their education—is absent. This volume presents material on the political colorations of academies, contemporary arguments, and unsubstantiated allegations of their intended purpose, but it reveals little of their primary mission.

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L. M. Vincent. *A Theft of Privilege: Harvard and the Buried History of a Notorious Secret Society*

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In *A Theft of Privilege*, L. M. Vincent tells the tale of Benjamin Joy, a Harvard elite upper-class student, in a somewhat amused tone, which parallels the tone of the book’s subject, the notorious secret society known as the Medical Faculty Society.